

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SEGREGATED NORTHERN NEIGHBORHOODS

The influx of the new migrants put great pressures on the overcrowded South Side of Chicago and other northern and western ghettos, swelling them to the bursting point. But banks often refused black people mortgages and white people commonly refused to sell them homes. Clauses in home deeds called restrictive covenants prohibited home sales to non-whites. (The Supreme Court declared restrictive covenants unenforceable in court in *Shelley v. Kraemer* in 1948 but the custom persisted until civil rights laws of the 1960s outlawed private discrimination.) Unscrupulous landlords got rich subdividing apartments into poorly maintained one-room units called kitchenettes which they rented at inflated prices to black people trapped in the ghetto.

Soon sleazy real estate agents known as panic peddlers began moving black families called block-busters into white neighborhoods while warning the whites they better move out before it's too late. Fearful white homeowners sold their homes at rock bottom prices to the speculators who promptly cut them up into tiny kitchenettes or resold them at a quick profit to black families. In no time a neighborhood could change from white to black. Chicago's Lawndale district, for example, changed from 13% black in 1950 to 91% black in 1960.

QUESTION:

Despite antidiscrimination laws now on the books, most U.S. neighborhoods remain as segregated as ever. What obstacles to residential integration remain today?