

Numerous Pacts Bar Negro Residents

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**No Substantial Migration Possible
Under Present Restriction Patterns**

BY JAMES M. HASWELL

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Nobody knows how many hundreds of restrictive covenants and neighborhood agreements there are in Detroit binding property owners not to permit Negro occupancy. The number has increased greatly in response to the Negro search for new residence areas. There are said to be 150 associations of property owners promoting these agreements.

The City Plan Commission is preparing a map of the city showing the area under restrictive covenant; but the work is not completed.

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SECTIONS of the city which have been studied show a conglomeration of restricted and nonrestricted areas. The areas are so mixed that no substantial Negro migration is possible.



Haswell

The impulse to preserve one's neighborhood against any sudden change in the character of occupancy is a common one. The second impulse, when something happens that breaks down the barriers against change, is to withdraw. This sometimes causes panic sales of homes, and financial loss to property owners.

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JOSEPH M. BUFFA, who has been active in promoting neighborhood associations and restrictive agreements in northeast Detroit, says the

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agreements should properly serve to facilitate the orderly transfer

of blocks of property from white occupancy to Negro under conditions which would prevent panicky flight and financial loss. He also thinks that departing residents should receive damages.

There is more to this resistance than mere fear of dollars and cents loss, however. The recent hearing granted residents of the Oakwood district by the Common Council furnishes an example.

Oakwood is the southwest end of Detroit, popularly called the 'Dog's Hind Leg.' It is a semi-settled area at the end of the Fort car line. It was a village until 1923. Approximately 16,000 people live there; 1,500 are away at war.

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OAKWOOD has seven churches, including two large Catholic churches. The residents are largely of Italian, English, Welsh and Scotch descent. There are no Southern whites. The people who live in Oakwood have no previous

experience in living in or near Negro neighborhoods.

The housing Commission has reported that it can find no more sites for public housing for Negroes which conform to the Common Council's orders not to change the racial character of any neighborhood in locating emergency war housing.

It has further reported that Oakwood offers the most opportunity for changing a neighborhood to accommodate thousands of Negro families.

The protest from the Oakwood residents was practically unanimous. None at the Council hearing mentioned money.

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"**WE HAVE A** prior claim on this area," said Louis Barolo, chief spokesman.

The letter below, from a second-generation American woman of Italian descent, sums up this attitude:

"I have been living in Oakwood all my life, which is 24 years. I was born here, went to school and made friends here. I grew to womanhood and married one of the boys from down the block. We've always planned on living here among all of our family and friends.

"Right now he's somewhere in the Pacific, dreaming of the day when he'll return to pick up where he left off.

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"**DO YOU THINK** it will help his morale, or the morale of the other hundreds of boys from Oakwood who are also fighting for their country, to know that we are letting the Negroes in here to pickup where the boys left off?

"Why not wait until our boys return from over there and see what they have to say? I am protesting in their behalf and mine. Please don't allow the colored race to come here to Oakwood to live."

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THE HISTORY of the expansion of segregated districts contains instances in which syndicates and companies have been formed to transfer properties in blocs.

The common form of expansion is by infiltration, then voluntary withdrawal of the older occupants.

Government machinery for orderly, mass relocation of displaced populations does not seem to have been used.

Continued tomorrow