

# How have barriers to fair housing changed over time?

Presentation for [Impediments to Fair Housing Choice Task Force, State of Connecticut](#)

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online at <http://bit.ly/Dougherty-2013-12-04>

# Questions:

- How have barriers to fair housing evolved over the past several decades in the Hartford region?
- What role has government action -- or inaction -- played in this process?
- How does this history affect us today?

# Summary:

While racial barriers have become less overt and more subtle over time, local & state government continues to allow exclusionary housing by wealth-based zoning. Both past and present actions shape our communities today.

Evidence from historical sources in Hartford region

## The Cities, Suburbs & Schools Project

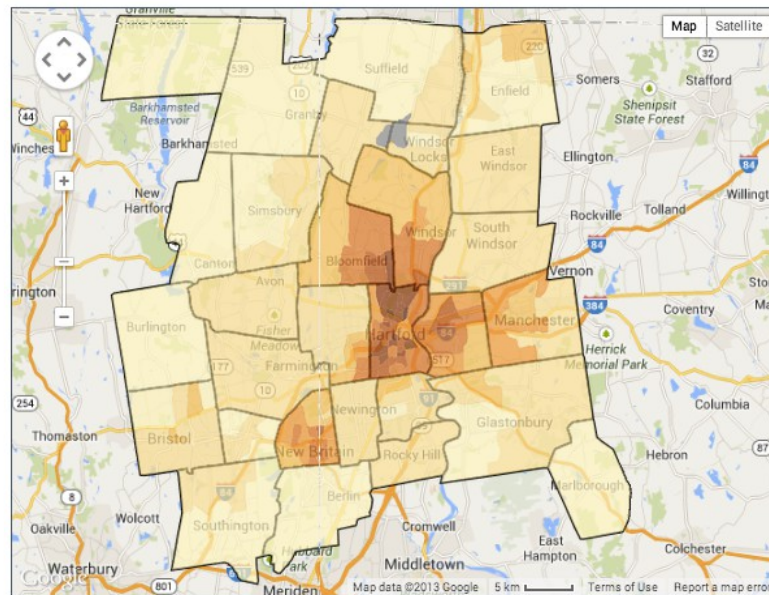
*an undergraduate seminar and community-learning research project with at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut*



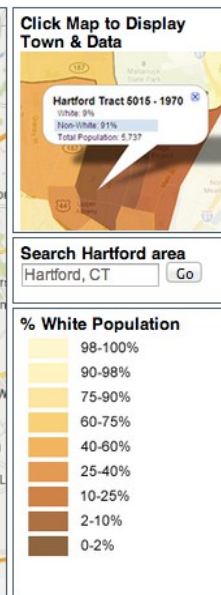
# Racial change in Hartford region, 1950-2010



Currently Viewing: 1950



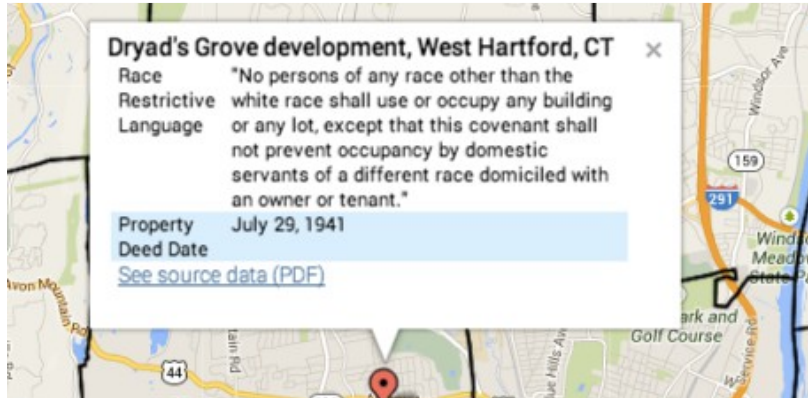
Currently Viewing: 2010



How do we explain racial differences between towns?

Explore map and learn more at UConn MAGIC

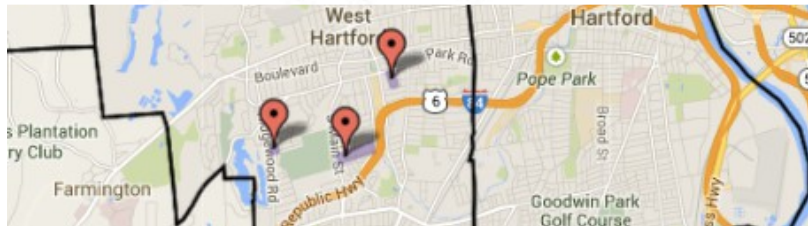
# Racial restrictive covenants, 1940s



Local and state government approved racial restrictions written into official property deeds

US Supreme Court ruled racial covenants to be "unenforceable" in 1948, but legacy continues with us

(e) No persons of any race except the white race shall use or occupy any building on any lot except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race employed by an owner or tenant.

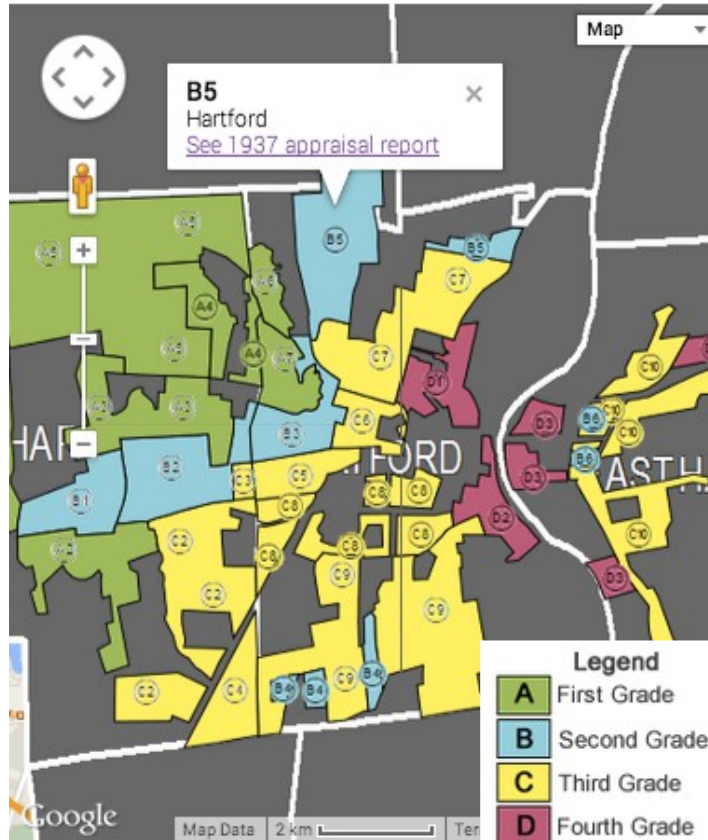


[Explore map and learn more at UConn MAGIC](#)



# “Redlining” home mortgages, 1937

Federal agency and local lenders judged mortgage risks and downgraded neighborhoods based on race, ethnicity, and social class of residents



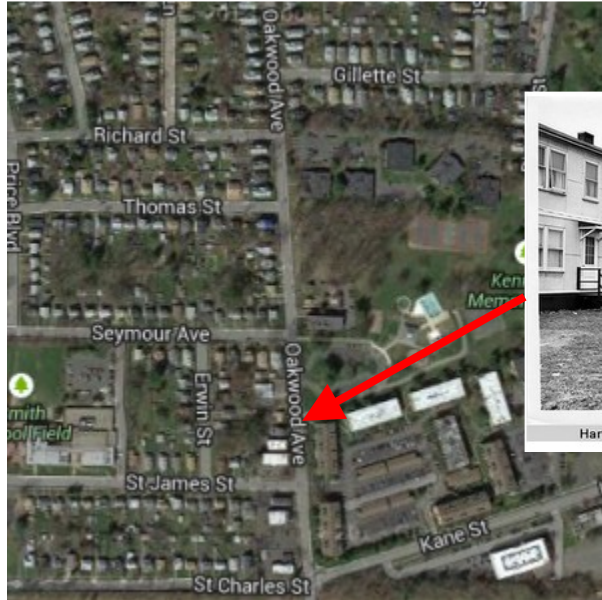
2. INHABITANTS: Shop keepers and  
 a. Occupation white collar ; b. Estimated annual family income \$ 1,800 & up  
 c. Foreign-born families 5 %; Italians predominating; d. Negro No ; 0 %  
 e. Infiltration of Italians ; f. Relief families None
5. CLARIFYING REMARKS: A somewhat newer section which extends into the Town of Bloomfield. It is largely given over to the Hebrew race although the better class Italians are now also moving there. Architecture is not overly pleasing and lacks variety. Plots are small giving the appearance of some congestion. Though some dwellings are more desirable than the average and show pride of ownership, the area as a whole rates a low "Blue".
6. NAME AND LOCATION HARTFORD, CONN. SECURITY GRADE SECOND AREA NO. B-5

[Explore map and learn more at UConn MAGIC](#) and [essay by Shaun McGann \(Trinity '14\)](#)

# Racial barriers to public housing, 1940s

## Negroes May Not Move Into Oakwood War Housing Tract

West Hartford Metro  
News, Dec 16, 1943

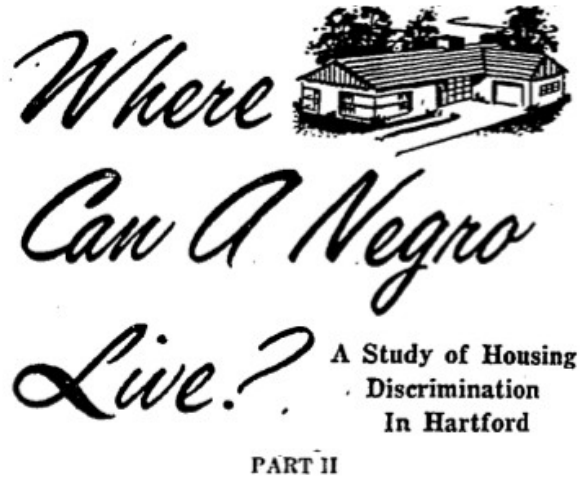


Oakwood Ave,  
West Hartford  
on Google Map

Locally-elected leaders effectively blocked federal government from allowing most black workers into public housing for wartime industry in West Hartford

[Learn more in essay by Emily Meehan \(Trinity '16\)](#)

# Racial refusal to rent or sell, 1950s



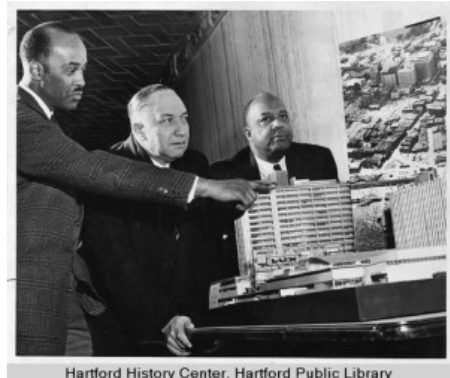
*This is the second in a series of seven articles dealing with housing discrimination against Negroes in the Greater Hartford area.*

By ROBERT ROTBERG

[Hartford Courant 20 August 1956 \(requires access\)](#)

Cases of property owners or agents refusing to rent or sell by race were widely documented in 1950s, but state government slow to enforce. Samuel Cullers (right), principal planner for Hartford Redevelopment Agency, was told “no vacancies” for Hartford apartment, and won initial discrimination case, but later overturned by CT Court.

[Learn more in essay by Emily Heneghan \(Trinity '14\)](#)



Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library



# Racial steering into the present

Black/White *Courant* reporters tested 15 firms in 1989:

- 8 firms treated white buyers more favorably
- 7 of those 8 firms sharply questioned finances of blacks, but not whites
- 2 of those 8 firms would not show homes to black without financial docs
- 6 of those 8 firms steered white and black buyers to different racial areas
- Even at other firms, whites treated slightly better, except in 1 case

More [recent news on CT Fair Housing Ctr cases](#); Need stronger gov't investigation & enforcement

## Some real estate agents discriminate against black home buyers

*This story was reported by staff writers Lyn Bixby, Vada Crosby, Brant Houston, Jeffrey Williams and Larry Williams and researcher Leah Segal. It was written by Bixby.*

© 1989 The Hartford Courant

he is told he should look in Hartford or Windsor, two communities with significant black populations.

Earlier in the day, a white man also interested in purchasing a \$200,000 house walked into this same office.



the practice of sending equally qualified blacks and whites in different directions:

- At eight of the 15 agencies, the newspaper's white testers received more favorable treatment, com-

screening became a real barrier. White testers were shown homes, but the black testers, despite having made appointments to see houses, saw only the inside of the offices. Agents told them that bankers had to

might want to look in other towns.

- Even at the seven agencies where *The Courant* did not find discrimination, overall treatment slightly favored the white tester in every case except one.

*Hartford Courant*, May 21, 1989 - no online database this year, but available on request by [email](#)

# Rise of exclusionary zoning, 1920s

Zoning Maps of West Hartford, Connecticut, 1924 to present



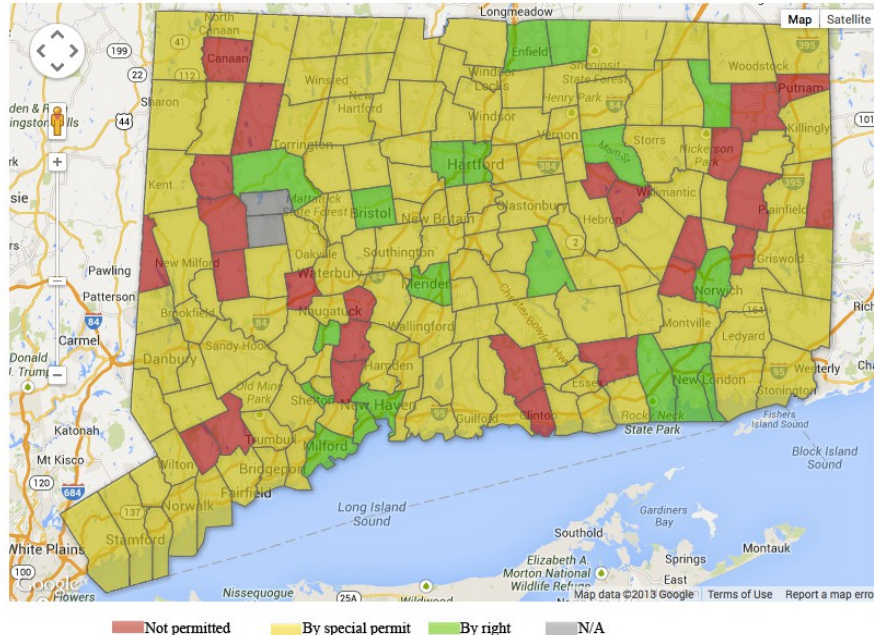
While three family houses and apartment houses are not prohibited in the A, B or C area districts their erection will for the most part be rendered uneconomic by the lot area, lot width and side yard requirements, all of which increase with the number of families to be housed on the

West Hartford, the first municipality to enact zoning under Connecticut law in 1924, regulated land use to promote more expensive single-family home construction in several neighborhoods. The plan intentionally made affordable multi-family housing “uneconomic” to build, without expressly prohibiting it, thereby blocking most lower-income families.

[Explore MAGIC map](#) & see [1924 zoning study](#)

# Exclusionary zoning today

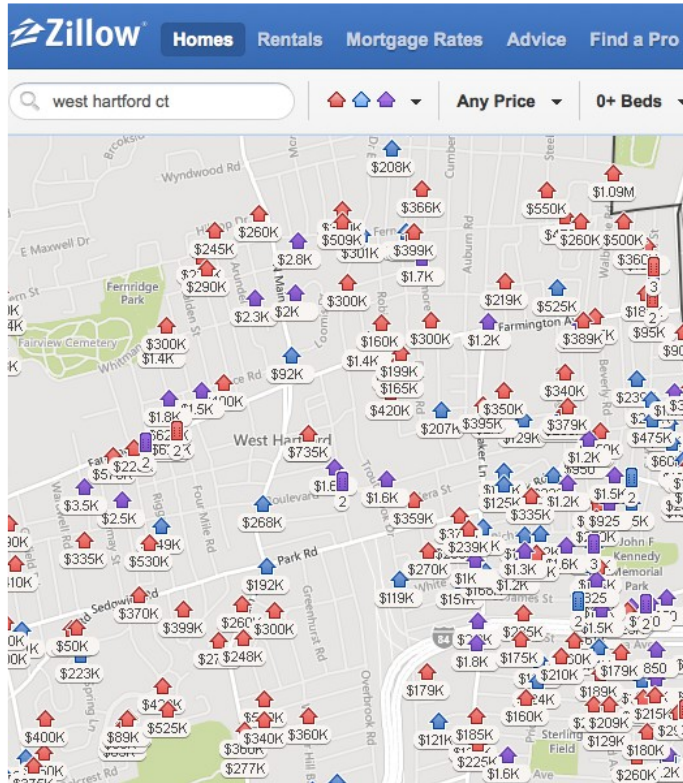
**Map 3: Multifamily Housing Permitted** shows whether a town's zoning regulations allow multifamily housing of three or more units, and if so, whether the zoning regulations require a special permit or if they allow multifamily housing by right. (Click on any town for more details.)



Collaborated with CT Fair Housing Center to create Connecticut Zoning Initiative, which compiled and analyzed local zoning regulations across state for exclusionary practices. We did this because state government is not closely monitoring local policies and how they shape our communities.

[Explore maps and zoning data](#)

# How do past & present barriers affect us?



Housing prices -- and privileges granted by our race or wealth -- are not simply caused by market forces, but also the accumulation of past and present government actions (and inactions).