

# **Equal Access for All?**

## **Racial Discrimination in the Champaign-Urbana Housing Market**

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**Unit/Topic: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade—American History , The Civil Rights Movement**

### **Abstract:**

In this lesson, students will learn that African-Americans in Champaign-Urbana faced discrimination even though they did not live in the segregated South. Students will read and analyze Champaign-Urbana newspaper articles from the early to mid-1960s to see how African-Americans were not given free access to real estate in all areas of Champaign and Urbana. Students will then discuss the ways in which African-Americans were discriminated against in our own community with regard to housing, both rental properties and when purchasing homes. They will learn about ways that people in the community worked to fight these discriminatory practices.

### **Essential Questions:**

- Did African-Americans only face discrimination in the South, or was it also a problem in the North?
- How were local African-Americans discriminated against with regard to housing and real estate until the mid-1960s?
- How did the African-American community and other people try to end these discriminatory practices?

### **Assessment:**

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to explain how African-Americans were prevented from renting or buying homes in certain areas of Champaign and Urbana. Students will be able to explain how this occurred when the homeowner or landlord was unwilling to sell or rent to African-Americans, and also when realtors refused to show homes to African-Americans. Students should also be able to explain that African-Americans and others in the local community worked to change these practices through peaceable ways such as letter writing, rallies, and speaking out at community meetings in order to establish non-discriminatory ordinances.

### **Setting the Purpose:**

Students will have learned how African-Americans faced discrimination due to segregation and Jim Crow laws in the South. They will have also learned about nonviolent ways of protest as a part of Unit 4's 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Civil Rights social studies unit. The teacher should ask, "Do you think that African-Americans only faced discrimination

in the South? Do you think African-Americans in Champaign-Urbana also faced hardships and limited opportunities?" The teacher will then tell students that they will have the opportunity to read some newspaper articles from Champaign-Urbana newspapers to gain some insight as to what life was like for African-Americans in our community during the 1960s.

### **Analysis of Primary Sources:**

Students will be divided into groups of 3 or 4 and provided with a packet of newspaper articles from the Urbana Courier and a letter from Bernadine Stake. Each group will read and talk about the articles and letter and take notes about anything that strikes them as important about the topic and addresses the essential questions.

The groups will come together and as a class, will discuss the primary sources with respect to the essential questions. This will allow students to learn from the thoughts of others. The teacher will tell students that although there were no laws prohibiting the rental or purchase of any property by African-Americans daily practices in the community accomplished the same purpose as if there had been a law. This is known as **de facto** segregation. As a result, people worked to put ordinances and laws in place that specifically prohibited discrimination and segregation in housing with respect to race.

### **Ties to National Primary Sources:**

Students will link the information found in the local newspaper articles and letter to what they have previously learned about segregation, discrimination, and nonviolent protest in the unit, which deals with the Civil Rights Movement on a national level. Students will be able to refer back to primary sources used earlier in the unit such as photos, films of the period, personal writings, etc.

### **List of Sources (All from the 2010 AHTC Summer Institute CD-ROM)**

- "House for Sale, But Not to Negro," Urbana Courier, September 23, 1963. ("Not to Negro" on CD-ROM)
- "Housing Talk Brings Negro Sales Debate", Urbana Courier, September 20, 1963. ("Housing Talk 1" and "Housing Talk 2" on CD-ROM.
- "Rally Calls for Further Picketing," Urbana Courier, May 21, 1964. ("Rally" on CD-ROM)
- Letter from Bernadine Stake to Urbana Mayor Zipprodt and Fellow Aldermen from November 13, 1969. (StakeLetter on CD-ROM)