

THE CASE FOR REPARATIONS STORY OF ROBERT L. JONES

WHAT HAPPENED

In 1959, Mr. Robert L. Jones attempted to purchase a home but was denied the right of purchase for no other reason except his race as a 'Negro.' Despite offering the full asking price, the sellers decided to accept a lesser offer from a white couple. The denial was shocking, but the courts disagreed. Mr. Jones' right to purchase the home was denied not only by the sellers, but also by the Supreme Court of Washington State, stating:



"...a tribunal was correct in finding that the [sellers] had refused to sell their home to [Mr. Jones] because of his color"... but "the right of private property... is a fundamental, natural and inalienable right guaranteed by the Federal and state constitutions which includes the right to freely choose those with whom the owner will deal."

BUT ALAS...

The Board' s decision was appealed and the State Supreme Court ruled on July 31, 1959 in favor of John O' Meara. The Judge, James W. Hodson, held the order of the State Board Against Discrimination null and void, settling that discrimination on the basis of race had occurred but

"the danger is that, in our zeal to protect and enforce the right to equality, we may seriously invade and curtail the right of freedom of contract... within the right of the owner of private property to complete freedom of choice with whom they must deal."

In the case of Mr. Robert L. Jones, the FHA declared that those who took advantage of FHA benefits, including John O' Meara, would be prohibited from discriminating in the eventual sale of property, and that such regulation would be valid and binding. The courts argued, however, that the O' Meara home was purchased in 1955, just prior to the 1957 anti-discrimination clause.

Justice has been all too commonly overruled in the hands of legal clause, and there has yet to be legislation that had led to economic opportunity and housing justice for King County's Black residents.

THE COMMUNITY RESISTED

- Allies and community leaders appealed the denial with the Washington State Board Against Discrimination.
- In a landmark decision, which was the first time a state board ruled against discrimination, the Board charged the seller, United States Coast Guard Commander, John J. O' Meara, with violation of the law by refusal to sell their house to Mr. Jones on account of his race.
- Since the home was purchased with a Federal Housing Authority (FHA) insured mortgage, and anti-discrimination rules were in place for FHA loans, the Board ordered John O' Meara to cease and desist from selling the home.

Charge of Color Bar In Home Sale Probed

Charges by a Negro family and her son had inspected the house about 12:30 p. m. Sunday, before the visit by Mr. Jones, and that later in the afternoon, after the Jones' visit but before the telephone call, Mrs. Priske returned.

The O'Mearas said they offered Mrs. Priske an opportunity to buy the house for \$17,500, they said.

The next day the O'Mearas agreed to sell to Mrs. Priske for \$17,500, they said.

The O'Mearas said they had been held up pending the sale of the house, Mrs. Priske said.

The O'Mearas denied discrimination. They said they declined to sell to Jones because of a prior understanding to sell to Mrs. Mae H. Priske, 6821 30th Av. N. E., and her son, John Lang.

Jones testified he and his wife went to look at the O'Meara house last Sunday after seeing it advertised for sale in The Times.

The Joneses were shown through the house. Later that day, Jones telephoned Mrs. O'Meara and said he wanted to draw up an earnest-money agreement to buy the house.

Jones said Mrs. O'Meara told him the O'Mearas could not accept earnest money because another person was interested and they were awaiting an F. H. A. appraisal, expected in a few days.

Jones, through an attorney, offered \$18,000 for the house, \$1,000 as earnest money and offered \$18,000 for the house. The offer was refused.

O'Meara said Mrs. Priske

Decision Expected Friday in Racial-Housing Case

Superior Court Judge Jones is the author of a preliminary opinion that there was a general charge of racial discrimination in the sale of a house in Seattle.

The judge is expected to issue his decision on Friday.

The case involves the sale of a house at 3004 E. 70th St. by John J. O'Meara to Mrs. Mae H. Priske.

The O'Mearas had refused to sell to Mrs. Priske because she was a Negro.

The case was brought to the court by the Washington State Board Against Discrimination.

The board had charged O'Meara with racial discrimination.

The board's decision was appealed to the state supreme court.

The state supreme court ruled in favor of O'Meara.

The ruling was criticized by civil rights groups.

The case is seen as a landmark decision in the fight against racial discrimination in housing.

Direct From Di-



was important part of our service...

National Chief of Civil Air Patrol Lauds Work of Group

Brig. Gen. Stephen H. Kelly, chief of the Civil Air Patrol, lauded the work of the group.

The group has been instrumental in the training of pilots and aircrew members.

Kelly said the group's efforts have been invaluable to the nation's defense.

The Civil Air Patrol is a volunteer organization of men and women.

It is the largest and most active of the auxiliary organizations of the United States Air Force.

The group's members are trained in flight, navigation, and search and rescue.

Kelly said the group's work is a testament to the spirit of volunteerism.

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Race Bias Hurts Foreign Policy, Says Witness in Housing Trial

Racial discrimination was detrimental to American foreign policy, says a witness in a housing trial.

The witness, a former diplomat, testified that racial bias in housing policies hurt the United States' ability to attract foreign investment.

The witness said that the housing policies were discriminatory and unfair.

The witness said that the policies were a reflection of the racial bias in American society.

The witness said that the policies were a barrier to economic growth.

The witness said that the policies were a source of shame for the United States.

MORE THAN JUST A STORY (CONTINUED)

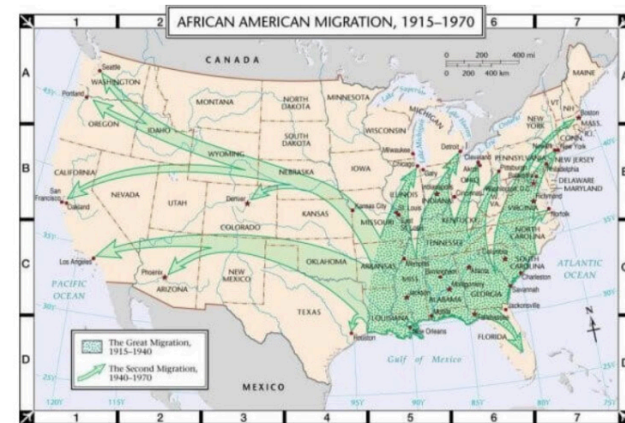
Today, Mr. Jones' historic home where he lived in the Central District in 1959 has been replaced with single family townhomes, the latest of which sold on October 1, 2024, for \$619,950. In contrast, the Ravenna home that he was denied purchase based on his race is now worth nearly \$1.3 million dollars.

As home ownership remains the most critical means by which wealth is accumulated generationally, the early denial of home ownership for Black families prevented (and continues to prevent) economic advancement. Black King County residents were, and remain industrious, hardworking Americans.

Policy alone cannot yield equitable outcomes to Blacks in King County, unless it is in the form of repair by legislative counteract.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MIGRATION TO SEATTLE & KING COUNTY

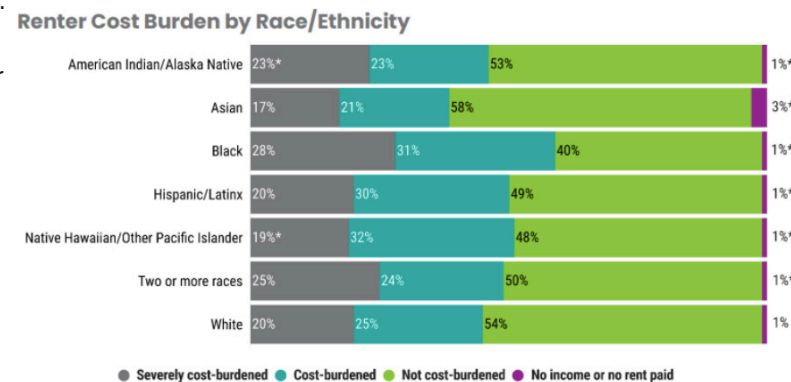
- Mr. Jones' story coincided with a period known as the Second Great Migration.
- Seattle-King County's Black community began to grow significantly between 1910 through the 1970s, where most families were drawn to the region by a hope for greater economic opportunity.
- Upon arrival, though, Blacks in King County were routinely faced with limited economic opportunities. White-led labor unions largely barred Black workers from membership, resulting in lower wages and economic segregation.
- By 1940, 56% of Black men were servants, waiters, and janitors and 84% of Black women were domestic or personal servants.



- During this period, residential discrimination worsened as redlining and restrictive real estate covenants confined the city's Black community primarily to two neighborhoods - today's Central District and International District.

BLACK RENTERS IN KING COUNTY

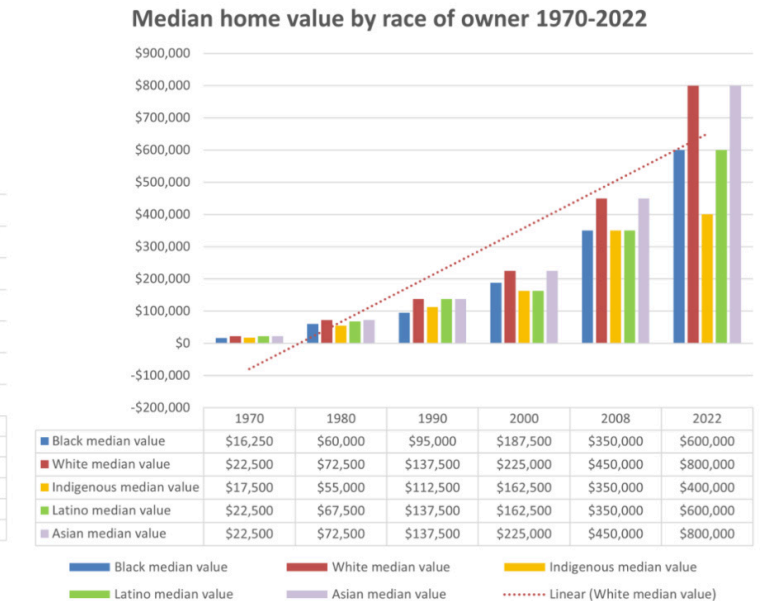
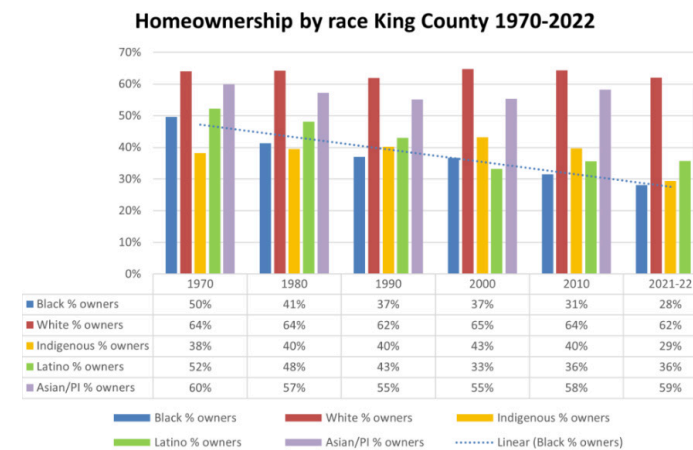
- Most Black families in King County are renters.
- Blacks in King County are more likely to be cost-burdened, paying more than 30% of their incomes on rental housing.
- Specifically, the median household income for Black families who rent their homes is \$43,000 (less than all other groups) compared to the median income of \$94,533 for white families.
- Because of racial inequities in home and land ownership in King County, including the disproportionate number of Black renters, Black families' household median net worth is \$23,000 compared to a net worth of \$456,600 for White households.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample. *Estimate has large margin of error, use with caution.

BLACK HOMEOWNERSHIP IN KING COUNTY

- Black homeownership in King County is the lowest compared to all other racial and ethnic groups, at a stark 28% (2021-2022).
- According to the American Community Survey (2022), At every level of median household income, white families are more likely to own homes than Black families in King County.



BLACK EMPLOYMENT & WAGES

- Black individuals in Seattle are 3x more likely to be unemployed than white workers.
- The value of White-owned businesses (\$1,006,920) is two times that of the national rate (\$440,343) while Black businesses are only worth \$81,777.
- In King County, even within the same job sector, Black adults make consistently less money than White adults. This is even more compounded by race and gender where "women of color experience the most persistent and pervasive..."

...wage gaps when compared to their White, male counterparts. The wage gaps across race/ethnicity and gender persist even when factors such as education level and job position type are accounted for."

- In King County, Black adults are more than 2.9 times likely to be living in poverty or near poverty compared to white adults. Black workers in Seattle, are 11 percentage points more likely than White workers to be in jobs that are susceptible to automation.

Annual Income Gains with Racial Equity in the Workforce, Seattle Metropolitan Region, 2018



TMH STRATEGIES

