

Negro Effect On Property Prices Put To Test

By BOB CREAMER

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segregation. We found its disci-
ples everywhere we went from
the shacks on the Near South
Side to the mansions overlooking
the river.

Studies made by researchers in
San Francisco, Philadelphia, Chi-
cago, Kansas City, Albany, Roch-
ester, and other cities have
shown one thing:

The entry of Negroes into all-
white neighborhoods most often
doesn't hurt values and in many
cases it boosts them.

Here in Peoria, we are now
satisfied that the same thing ap-
plies.

IN THE TWO "mixed" neigh-

borhoods above Peoria's bluff and
in the many blocks on the Near
South Side where Negroes and
whites live together we put the
Iron Law to some tests.

The classic offense of Negroes
against property is that they let
it run down, and everybody does
know that many Negroes do live
in run-down houses.

But if you want to find a Ne-
gro in the Gale-Nebraska, Wil-
son-Emburt, or Park Road areas,
or even along Howett; don't look

for a shack—look for the best
house on the block.

This is especially true around
Gale Avenue. As a typical Bluff
area, the neighborhood was on
the decline before Negroes could
buy there freely.

But the decline didn't bring
Negroes into the area. They did
not want to buy crummy houses
although the whites had many

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"Negroes wreck property val-
ues wherever they get in." So
goes the Iron Law of Falling
Values.

This "law" is the
favorite "reason"
for keeping Ne-
groes out of
the neighborhood,
even among those
who consider
themselves en-
lightened on other
problems of

Our
House
Divided
II

We put it to a number of tests
and found that, as far as Peoria
is concerned, the Iron Law is
dead wrong—nothing but a chain
of myths forged by the same
fears and prejudices that under-
lie other excuses for discrimina-
tion.

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Effect on Real Estate Prices Put to Test

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to sell. A lot of colored families
built new homes, while those
who didn't frequently added
paint, siding and storm windows
to the houses they bought.

They are pulling up this fallen
area—rather than tearing it down,
and many people are beginning to
realize it. One white homeowner
challenged us to compare his Ne-
gro neighbor's lawn to the others
on the block. "If you can find a
leaf on there," he said. "I'll eat
it." Another admitted, "the col-
ored homes put ours to shame."

The same could be said of Em-
bert Place and the 800 block Wil-
son; yet the Negro home seeker
still gets a cold shoulder. This
bugs a lot of Negroes—like the
one who asked us: "How can
they kick when you build a \$25,-
000 home next to a \$10,000 one?"

THE ANSWER IS found in two
other "proofs" given for the fall-
ing value theory. The first is that
whites will not move into
"mixed" areas, and the second
is that it is impossible to get
your money out of a house in
in such a neighborhood.

We could cut the argument
very short by citing one case—a
white family who bought a house
on Gale near two colored homes
in 1957 for \$4500 and sold it last
month for \$9000.

But everybody doesn't double
their money. A more average
case is the white man who bought
in the neighborhood in 1953 for
\$8,000 and sold in 1961 for more
than \$11,000.

But most of the other whites
who have moved into this neigh-
borhood in recent years have
stayed.

Seven volunteered to tell us
they had moved into the Gale-
Nebraska area with full knowl-
edge that Negroes were in the
neighborhood. A check at the
county recorder's office showed
eighteen more houses now occu-
pied by whites were purchased
there in the past five years.

So whites have moved into a
"mixed" area, and at the same
time and at almost the same rate
as colored.

As for getting your money out
of a house, that is a good trick
in any neighborhood. But it isn't
any harder on Gale than it is
elsewhere.

multiple Listing Service and the coun-
ty recorder, we collected the sale
prices of over 60 pieces of prop-
erty that changed hands in the
Gale area and on Wilson within
the last five years.

These figures show no drop
in the resale value of property.
According to the prices actually
paid in these areas, a man can
get as many dollars and cents
for his house today as he could
five years ago.

The prices of five homes sold
in the 500 and 600 blocks of
East Wilson in 1963 are practi-
cally identical to those paid in
1958 (one house), in 1959 (one
house), in 1960 (two houses), and
in 1962 (one house.) This is to be
expected in the normal course of
things, since the houses them-
selves are practically identical.

Around Gale and Nebraska,
there are houses of all sizes and
shapes, the better ones belonging
to colored, as we have already
said. Armed with our price list,
we tried to determine whether in-
dividual houses had been sold too
cheaply.

We came away with this con-
clusion: If anyone is on the short
end, it is the Negro buyer—not
the white seller. The Negro is
paying high prices to buy old
houses in an old area bounded
by three heavily travelled streets
—Gale, Nebraska, and University
—and a construction company
complete with rubbish piles and
heavy machinery.

Since this is about the only
place he can go to escape the
Near South Side, the Negro is
forced to pay a premium to move
into a deteriorating neighborhood.
But the Iron Law has had
some force. It has made property
hard to move in these areas be-
cause a lot of people still believe
it.

Fearing a loss, many whites
have put their homes up for sale,
the worst thing they could do.
Any realtor will tell you that
houses are tough to sell where
there are many on the market.
Would you settle in a forest of
"For Sale" signs?

Experience in Peoria's Bluff
neighborhoods has shown that
having a Negro down the block
doesn't have to cost you a cent—
and it won't unless somebody
tries to sell out in a panic.

Panic has made the Iron Law
come true in some instances in