

# Fighting for Their Homes: The Contract Buyers League

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We discovered our project in AP Human Geography class last year, during a discussion on redlining and gentrification. In class, we looked at redlined graphs of the city of Chicago, and watched an Atlantic video which introduced us to the Contract Buyers League, an organization formed to stop the housing segregation crisis. We were both incredibly interested in the topic and the League (in fact, one of our group members has lived in North Lawndale, the neighborhood where the League originated) and found it to be an incredibly complex topic, and decided to do it for NHD.

Our research originated from the Atlantic video highlighting the purpose of the Contract Buyers League, and branched outward. We read the related article from Ta-Nehisi Coates, which helped us immensely with the development of our argument. From there we continued by looking at the internet about our topic, as well as to gain some context, thus connecting our topic to broader movements such as housing segregation, Jim Crow and the Great Migrations. We both took a trip to Chicago's Harold Washington Library, where we were able to access newspaper archives from the 60's and 70's that gave accounts on the League and their struggle. We also depended heavily on first person accounts from key players such as Clyde Ross and Jack Macnamara, using their accounts to further understand the topic and develop our thesis.

We decided to create a website because it was the most convenient for us, considering we both have busy schedules and live very far away from each other. We both knew how to utilize Weebly, and figured it would be an efficient way of presenting our topic. With a website we were able to collaborate and work without having to meet face to face, which could not have occurred had we chosen a board or documentary. We were also able to easily receive feedback from others on certain aspects of the project (aesthetics, argument, sources, etc.) Additionally, we felt that a website would best portray the plethora of images and quotes that we found around this topic. We conducted research separately, then met together on several occasions to piece together the elements as well as our thesis. We also met several times with both of our teachers to receive their feedback on our projects, and used their constructive criticism to tweak it.

The housing segregation struggle and the CBL are prime examples of the theme of conflict and compromise. The CBL is an example of resistance to the oppression and conflict that many African Americans endured. The CBL strove for compromise in the form of renegotiated contracts, legal action and reforms. It extended voice to a group of people who for years had been oppressed, even at times creating conflicts in order to achieve justice. While segregation is still a rampant issue, especially in Chicago, the legacy and empowerment that they helped instill still lives on.