

Mapping Prejudice

PILOT Methodology: DANE COUNTY RECORDED PROPERTY DOCUMENTS WITH RACIALLY RESTRICTIVE LANGUAGE

The project team secured digital images of "covenants," "restrictions," and "plats" from the Register of Deeds. Staff generated searchable text using a program called Laserfiche for approximately 2,000 records. Note, initial work did NOT include deeds, land contracts, and other property document types. Subsequent work was expanded to include real estate documents between 1937 and 1969 and then expanded further to include indexed documents (less than 5 percent of the total) prior to 1937. It was then expanded further by including documents that are not indexed from 1900-1937.

The project team used the "Generate Searchable Text" and "Advanced Search" function in the Laserfiche software on document images for keywords like "Caucasian," "servant," "Italian" and "race". Staff were able to identify specific documents that might have restrictive text on them. This digital process flagged more than 1,700 documents for review.

The Dane County Boys and Girls Club intern in 2022 (Hipolito Perez) used the functions in Laserfiche, mapped the legal description, and populated specific fields for each flagged and reviewed record. Some documents did not generate coherent text due to poor scan quality, cursive writing, or vertical text.

This [INTERACTIVE MAP](#) shows document boundaries, the year, document number, and a link to purchase the actual document.

Documents Examined

AGR	Agreement
CER	Certificate
D	Deed
DR	Deed Restriction
DR/AM	Deed Restriction/Amendment
DR/PR	Deed Restriction/Partial Release
LC	Land Contract
P	Plat
P/AM	Plat/Amendment Of
RST	Restrictions
RST/AM	Restrictions/Amendment Of
RST/PR	Restrictions/Partial Release Of

Keyword Search Terms

- Negro
- Italian
- Caucasian
- white
- Negroes
- Servant
- Polish
- Jewish
- African
- Half breed
- Yellow race
- Greek
- Sicilian
- Asian
- Race
- mulatto
- Indian
- black