

Title: Barrows v. Jackson

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## Barrows v. Jackson

1953: U.S. SUPREME COURT decision that weakened the use of RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS to prevent nonwhites from buying property in formerly segregated neighborhoods.

In this decision the Supreme Court ruled that a Los Angeles resident, Leola Jackson, could not be sued for damages incurred by her neighbors after she sold her house to AFRICAN AMERICANS even though the real estate contract under which Jackson herself had purchased the property contained a restrictive clause forbidding its subsequent sale to nonwhites.

A few years earlier, in *SHELLEY V. KRAEMER* (1948), the Supreme Court had ruled that states could not enforce restrictive covenants, but it left the question of the legality of the covenants themselves open. In some states participants in restrictive covenants had successfully sued for damages. With *Barrows v. Jackson* the Court found that the use of racial clauses in restrictive covenants—whether or not states were involved in enforcing them—violated the constitutional rights of nonwhites by depriving them of EQUAL PROTECTION under the law. A landmark decision in the progress of civil rights in the United States, *Barrows v. Jackson* effectively forbade the use of racial criteria in restrictive covenants in the sale of private property.

—Nancy Farm Mannikko

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