

A Reckoning with Race: The Mapping Prejudice Project

The Mapping Prejudice project is mapping racial covenants in the Twin Cities. Racial covenants are clauses--a couple of lines of text--that were embedded into property deeds to bar people who were not white from buying or even occupying the parcels of land to which they were attached.

The project just finished the map of Hennepin County and has turned its attention to Ramsey County. It has developed a process that harnesses the power of community to reveal this hidden history of race in the built environment. Three thousand people contributed to the map of Hennepin County. Even more volunteers have stepped up to read property deeds in Ramsey County and extract the information necessary to put these racial restrictions on a map.

Covenants were made illegal by the 1968 Fair Housing Act. But their legacy continues today in the Twin Cities, which has some of the largest racial disparities in the country. The Mapping Prejudice Project is designed to reveal the “racism behind these racial disparities,” in the words of Ibram Kendi. It illuminates how structural racism shaped the urban landscape, blocking African Americans from critical avenues for housing stability and wealth accumulation.

Delegard will narrate this history and describe the innovative methodologies used in this work. Together we will explore the question of next steps to address the damage wrought by these policies.

Delegard biography

Kirsten Delegard is the Director and one of the co-founders of the Mapping Prejudice Project, which is located in the Borchert Map Library at the University of Minnesota. She is a third generation Minneapolitan and public historian. To explore the complex history of her hometown, she established Mapping Prejudice as well as the [Historyapolis Project](#).

Delegard is a graduate of the Minneapolis Public Schools and Wesleyan University. She also holds a Ph.D. in history from Duke University, where she spent her graduate school years exploring American social movements, comparative women’s history and the history of women and politics in the United States.

She also has a faculty affiliation with the Department of Geography, Environment and Society and the Heritage Studies and Public History Program at the University of Minnesota.