



# Malone neighborhood: Times are changing

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And we had to remake them  
to live in them."



Story by Lisa Nutting  
Photos by Mark Davis

Clockwise from top: Although parts of the Malone neighborhood are being renovated, most of the living space being built is intended to accommodate students. Areas like the bus stop at 22nd and U streets still are neglected.

Mac Allen, a resident of the neighborhood, said even though the bus stop has been neglected for some time, he doesn't mind because a lot of things are

neglected in "this part of town."

The deeper you get into the Malone neighborhood, the larger the dogs get. The dogs usually are chained in an unfenced yard, and few passers-by are brave enough to pass the barrier of the chain's length.

Kay Thompson stands before one of her many pictures of Martin Luther King Jr.

Wright Robinson owns a modern two-story home in south Lincoln. He and his wife live in a "nice" neighborhood. They live comfortably. Robinson is retired from the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission.

The Robinsons' three children are all grown and have moved on to begin their own lives. But they have grown up differently than their parents. And easier.

The Robinsons are black. Let's go back about 30 years. Back to 1953. Robinson worked hard to save \$2,000. That was a lot of money back then. But he says his goal — to buy his family a nice, newer home — was worth the hard work.

With \$2,000 in his pocket, he went to a real estate company to make plans to buy his family a home. The price for a fairly nice home was about \$15,000, he recalls. Loans for up to 97 percent were financed for all prospective home buyers. All but Robinson that is — and every other minority in Lincoln.

Robinson says, at the time, he wanted to buy a nicer home, but had to settle for less. So he bought a home in an area of town where his loan did go through — the same area where all blacks could buy homes — the Malone neighborhood.

"We had to buy homes in that area," he says. "And we had to remake them to live in them."

But, Robinson says, times have changed. Blacks and other minorities no longer are concentrated in one particular area.

The West Malone area covers 19th to 27th streets and O to Y streets. It is one of the oldest housing areas in Lincoln and has some of the worst housing problems.

"To some extent there is change taking place," says George Chick of the Division of Urban Development.

Chick described a number of programs that have been proposed to redevelop the Malone area.

"We are trying to preserve the housing stock in that area," he says.

The Malone area is a "target area," Chick says. It is a target for improvement — to rehabilitate the entire neighborhood.

One program, deferred loans, allows home owners in the area to borrow money to fix up their homes. The loans have 6 percent interest, and repayment of each loan is not due until the owner decides to sell the house, Chick says.

"In some cases (of homes) the conditions are so bad that the city will probably buy all the land and redevelop it," he says.

When it costs more to fix up a home than the property is worth, it is the only reasonable thing to do, Chick says.

"But we have no intent of going in and clearing everybody out," he says.

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