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Land acquisition program undergoes investigation by citizens and press

by Susie Jenkins
Nebraskan Staff Writer

The University Malone land acquisition program has been "the most investigated activity since Joe McCarthy," according to University realtor George Hancock.

Since most of the Malone area residents are poor, black, old or

unemployed, purchase of that property has been carefully scrutinized both in the press and by private citizens.

BOTH THE University and the city of Lincoln possess the right of eminent domain, but as yet the two have not forced out any property owners or tenants in the Malone area. Neither

agency plans to, according to Hancock.

The University and city strictly meet the legal requirements which govern land acquisition in the State of Nebraska, he continued.

Hancock admits that relocation of a poor or black family causes problems. He also admits that "the University has neither added to nor,

unfortunately, subtracted from relocation problems.

"**PEOPLE HAVE** suggested wild ideas about paying more for a house than the house is worth," Hancock said.

"Fair market value is fair market value. That's all the owners will get."

Some people working with the Malone relocation problem disagree with this University official position. One of them is Lincoln human rights officer Gerald Henderson.

Henderson is working with dislocated Malone area residents to find new housing.

"**OWNERS WHO** received fair market value for their houses cannot replace their property for the amount of money the University or the city pays them," Henderson said.

He gave an example of a house whose "fair market value" was appraised at \$7,000 by the University.

"The owners had put at least \$8,000 into the property over a 10-year period, so the investment was around \$16,000," he said. "They can't possibly buy an equal house for the amount they received."

HENDERSON SAID he firmly believed that the University realtors hadn't been inside many houses appraised for an "insufficient" amount.

"Many of the houses are probably overdeveloped for the area," he said. They have been remodeled substantially.

Because of the appraised payment, of families can't get equivalent housing elsewhere in Lincoln, Henderson said. Consequently, many minority families are simply moving from the city.

"The occupancy rate in Lincoln is 100 per cent," he said. This means the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) has determined that there is no available new housing in Lincoln.

CONSEQUENTLY, families forced to move by a landlord, or because they have sold their Malone property have a difficult time at best in finding a family home.

Disputation of the University's position also comes from Dr. Paul A. Olson, English professor at the University. Olson works with a community committee centered in the Elliot School area, near the Malone area.

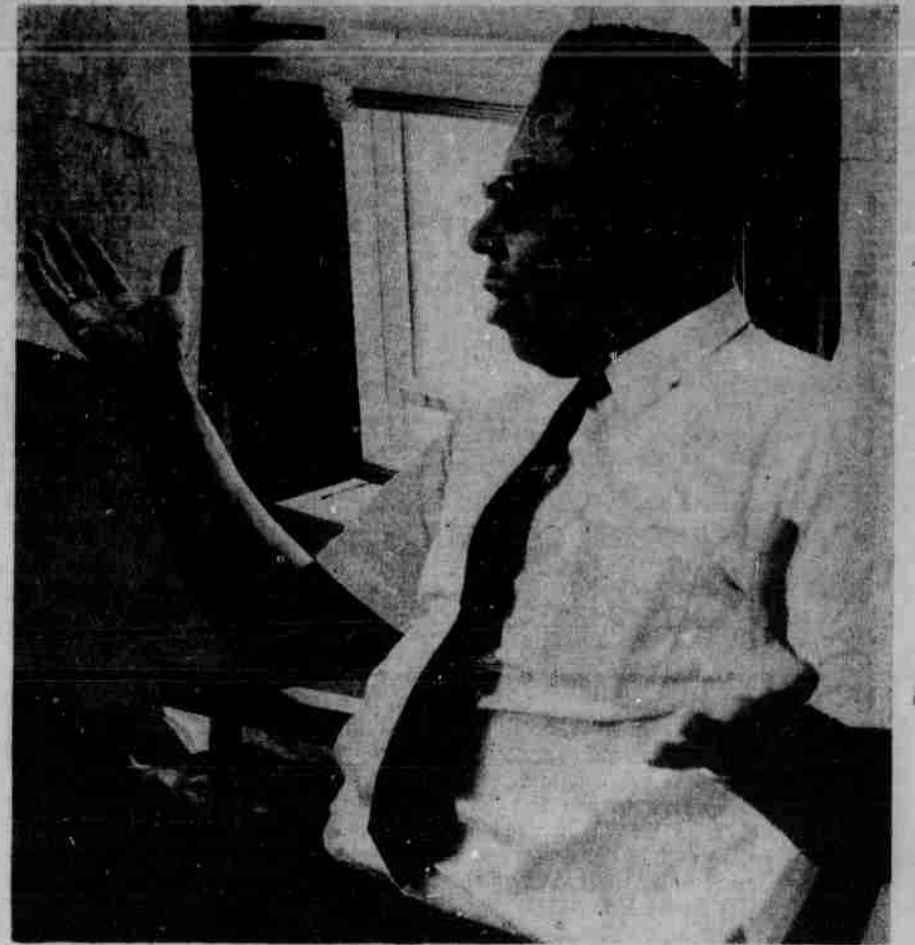
"The University's legal position may comply with Nebraska law, but it is not nationally obligatory," Olson said.

Olson said that a case involving the city of Washington, D.C. was decided against the theory of fair market value for property.

"**THE COURT** ruled that money was not the important thing, but that those dislocated should be equipped to obtain equal facilities," he said.

"There is something less (in Nebraska) than an effort to do this," Olson said.

He added that the apparent insuffi-



Gerald Henderson . . . critic of University land acquisition policy.

ciency of payment by the University to Malone residents "seems to point to a double responsibility of the University."

"It would be desirable for development of loan arrangements for Malone residents to buy in other sections of Lincoln," he said. "Either no efforts have been made in this direction, or efforts have not met with enough enthusiastic support to be effective."

OLSON SAID this support would need to come from the University, the business community and the area residents.

"In circumstances of dislocating the poor, the civic agency and the neighborhood should plan jointly," Olson said. "The University has planned for the future with such groups as the Art Association. I don't know of any comparable effort with the Malone area."

Olson also noted lack of planning in the "exceedingly insensitive" situation created by the University in encouraging fraternities to move into the area.

"Fraternities have been traditionally racist," he said. The University should have sent in something like the school of social work, something at least that the residents can identify with."

HANCOCK POINTED out that the Malone expansion comprises only 16 per cent of total city campus expansion.

"We're much more interested now in buying old buildings and warehouses near 14th and Vine," he said. "Therefore, the Malone acquisition is long range."

The natural rate of vacancy of a neighborhood is about 10 per cent, Hancock said, and the University "doesn't want them to speed."

"We wouldn't change our purchasing policy even if we had all the money we need," he said. "It would still take five to eight years to purchase all the property."

THE UNIVERSITY'S attitude is

businesslike out of necessity. Land acquisition money comes from the state Legislature.

This group is traditionally hard on the University, cutting funds unless the allocation is absolutely necessary. Even Gov. Norbert T. Tiemann, a friend of the University, had originally allowed no capital construction funds in his preliminary budget. It took some prodding from the University to get him to include more money for land acquisition in his final recommendations.

That money was necessary, according to a memo from the Administration's Eastward Expansion Committee, "lest the University be in the embarrassing position, after announcing its land purchase plans, of being unable to buy properties from people desiring or needing to dispose of land."

SUCH A POSITION, the committee said, could bring more justified criticism "than has thus far developed."

Henderson said that those working with low income families had been hopeful that the 1968 Housing and Urban Development Act (HUD) would help to combat problems of housing relocation. The federal law would provide funds for qualifying tenants to purchase new homes.

"This act won't solve the problem now because local housing authorities must do so much paper work, and the qualifications are so complicated," he said.

Also, the federal government must approve the participants in the program. Henderson said he knew of a county where only two of 14 applicants were accepted by the government.

Renters with low incomes have an even greater problem, Henderson said. To qualify for federal help the low income family must first find an apartment or house which fulfills federal requirements. Often this is most difficult because minority group members are still subject to

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A volunteer teacher at the Malone center works with children whose parents are working.

Interdisciplinary course status of 'Negro culture' questioned

by Jim Pedersen
Nebraskan Staff Writer

Should the "Negro in American history" course be interdisciplinary? Should courses involving Negro culture be started in many departments? Two of the professors now teaching the course disagree.

"For a first course, I think this one is working out fine," Dr. Jack Siegman, who teaches the sociology portion of the course, said Thursday. "But I would hope that this is just the beginning of a series of different courses in different departments."

SINCE IT is a combination of three departments in one course and is topical, it attracts many students, he added. This is a mere cursory introduction into what should be called "Black History; White Racism," he added.

The "Negro in American History" course can be taken for credit in the English, history and sociology departments. It is headed by Siegman, Dr. Robert Knoll of English and Dr. Phillip Crowl of history, each for a five-week period.

"This course opens up the possibility of holding smaller classes and going into more detail in different departments," Siegman said. "There are many aspects of education in which the contribution of the black can be studied."

ACCORDING TO Siegman, other universities in the U.S. have black courses in political science, anthropology and music.

Siegman said that the staff teaching the course expects to take a survey of the students to find out if they want the course to be continued and if they want to see the program expanded to other departments.

"The motivation to create this course came from both black and white students because it is a legitimate area of inquiry," he said. "It is obvious that it is directed at

white students, however."

WHITE STUDENTS don't know about black history, black literature and black culture, according to Siegman. That is why there is stereotyping and ignorance of blacks in white America.

"I don't think at this point there are enough students who would major in a black studies program to warrant establishing one," he added. "Given the number of black students we have on campus, I don't think it would be feasible."

"There would also be a problem with faculty to teach the studies. I am not saying that it is impossible to have a black studies program in the future. But not now, here in Lincoln.

"**THERE NEEDS** to be an examination of the invisibility of black people in the U.S. It is long overdue in all American universities. This course is a start."

Knoll differs with Siegman on what the structure of the course should be.

"I think the interdepartmental nature is desirable," he said Thursday. "It is not a very rich subject."

"**IF YOU** put it into three departments, you would have three thin subjects," Knoll added. "Consequently the student would have to take three thin courses to get what he is now getting in a single course."

According to Knoll, there really isn't a deep interest in the course anyway.

"To expand the course into several departments would be silly," he continued. "This is the best solution to a difficult problem."

THE COURSE is topical and therefore it should be interdisciplinary, Knoll said. But it should also be temporary, lasting only three or four years.

"Not every university should have a black studies program," he added. "We don't have the faculty or experts to teach a black studies program professionally."

OF THE nearly 350 students in the class, only approximately 15 are blacks.

According to Claude Bolton, a black student taking the course, there are many reasons for the small number

of blacks taking the course.

"**SOME BLACKS** think it is necessary to have a black professor teaching the course," he said. "Therefore they don't want to participate"

Some Black students, and myself included, could care less about what happened 100 years ago," he added. "We want to know what has happened in the last five or ten years. We want to know what we can do in the future for blacks."

George Plimpton is a professional amateur. He has quarterbacked the Detroit Lions, boxed with Archie Moore, pitched to Willy Mays and played forward for the Boston Celtics.

After writing about all these experiences and more, Plimpton has taken time to be editor of the "Paris Review" and an actor, musician and politician.

He has written about all these experiences and more, and he kept his audience in continual laughter relating parts of his life.

"I have lost at practically everything I have tried," Plimpton smiled. "When I joined the football team, I didn't even know how to put my hands behind the center which was terribly embarrassing."

When he finally got into a full scale intrasquad game, he kept falling down and fumbling the ball.

"I went on the professional golf tour for a month, playing in the Bob Hope Desert Classic and several other tournaments," Plimpton related. "I had a miserable time."

Despite his losses, Plimpton has had one triumph. But it was not in athletics.

After much persuading, Leonard Bernstein, the director of the New York Philharmonic allowed Plimpton to play in the percussion section. He went with the Philharmonic on a month long Canadian tour.

"Playing the bells and the gong looks easy, but it's terrifying," he commented. Besides that, Plimpton cannot read music.

Things began rocky, however, as Bernstein said Plimpton destroyed the fourth symphony. The bells were taken away from Plimpton.

In another number though, Plimpton had his greatest moment. At the climax of the song, he struck the gong harder than it has ever been struck before. Bernstein loved the effect, and when the Philharmonic recorded that number, Plimpton was recalled to strike the gong. The record jacket lists Plimpton as one of the soloists.

Plimpton is not content just to watch the professionals at work. He wants to find out "what makes them tick." He wants to feel the emotions they experience and the mental and physical punishment they often endure.

His career began years ago, as a student at Harvard. He ran in the Boston Marathon, a 26 mile running race. "I didn't run the entire race," he quipped. "I entered the race, just behind the leader, about 100 yards from the finish line. The winner, who had

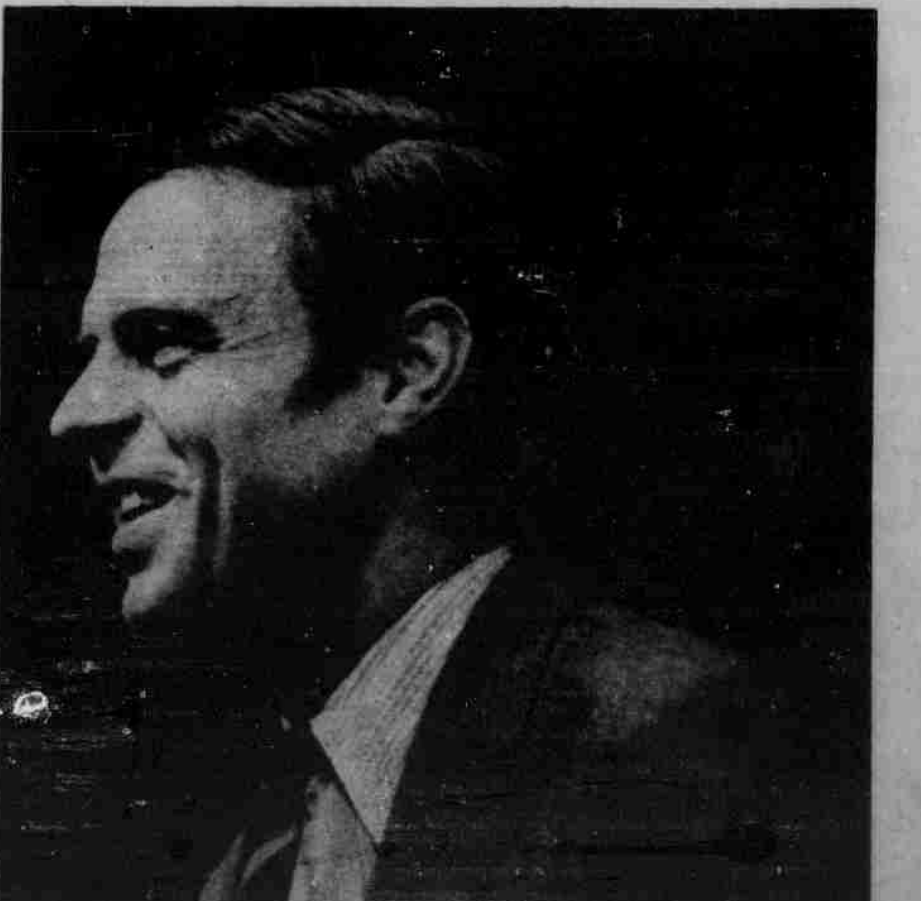
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India assoc. to meet Feb. 21

The India Association of NU will meet at Love Library Auditorium at 7:15 p.m., Feb. 21. All are invited at an admission fee of \$1.

A program of Indian customs and culture will be presented.

Raconteur George Plimpton, the all-around amateur, takes time out to speak to NU students.



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