Engagement And The Color Line: Race, Renewal, And Public Archaeology In The Urban Midwest

Paul R. Mullins
Department of Anthropology
Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis

ABSTRACT: This paper examines how a community-based archaeological project in Indianapolis, Indiana uses field excavation, documentary research, and oral knowledge to examine life across the color line. Local memory typically reduces Indianapolis' near-Westside to an overwhelmingly Black slum between 1860 and 1960, when most of the neighborhood was razed. Archaeological and historical research reveals that the area was actually a historically dynamic multicultural community with considerable neighborhood diversity. Archaeological research attempts to illuminate how and why urban renewal interests championed seeing this neighborhood landscape as Black and impoverished. The paper examines how this archaeological research is conducted between the University that now claims most of the near-Westside and African-American elders and a neighborhood association from the lone surviving residential neighborhood in the area.

On a typical day, several thousand people drive along Michigan Street in Indianapolis, Indiana's near-Westside. They

are greeted by a rather undistinguished urban university campus that passes mostly unnoticed: Vast parking lots and institutional architecture have been strewn over the landscape over nearly a half-century, leaving behind gulfs of asphalt, 50-year-old buildings, and a handful of starkly contemporary structures borrowing from most architectural trends of the past 30 years. After World War II several thousand homes dotted this landscape, just as they had as early as the 1850s, but today that neighborhood is invisible. Not surprisingly, few of the visitors, staff, and students traveling along Michigan Street have a particularly coherent sense of the space's heritage, and many have no sense of how the Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI) campus relates to the surrounding city.

As the Indiana University Hospital and IUPUI undergraduate campus expanded after the early 1960s, the near-Westside's residents moved to a variety of places. This migration left no clearly defined community in space, and the vibrant living community was often replaced by allusions to stale caricatures. In 2001, for instance, Indiana State Senator Lawrence Borst told the IUPUI student newspaper that he could not understand why IUPUI originally had been placed "in the middle of a Black ghetto" (Sagamore 2001). Borst's missive came in support of a bill he introduces each year to either abolish the University or separate it from its mother campuses. The effort to depreciate the now-disbanded community borrows from centuries of similar campaigns to demean neighborhoods and their residents through racial stereotypes used in the service of "slum clearance" programs (Mayne and Murray 2001:1; Solari 2001:35). Apparently Borst believed that stigmatizing the campus as an impoverished Black space would fuel support for his long-unsuccessful legislation.

Like many post-war urban neighborhoods, the near-Westside did indeed deteriorate after the 1920s, and by the

1960s it included many impoverished African-American residents. The near-Westside's decline was propelled by ever-increasing population densities, migration to the city, and the predominance of an increasing number of transient renters, all of which were commonplace problems in post-war urban America. Characterizing these neighborhoods as Black or impoverished, though, is, at the very least, historically inaccurate, ignoring vast sociocultural diversity, historical shifts in class and ethnic settlement patterns, and city and University forces that made mass depopulation of the near-Westside possible in the first place. At its worst, such caricatures irresponsibly link race and poverty, align the power of the state and University with White interests, and evade the ways in which race is implicated in the formation of public spaces in the past and present alike.

When Indiana and Purdue Universities jointly took aim on the capital city in the 1960s, they were following in the footsteps of the Indiana University Medical Center, which had periodically expanded into surrounding neighborhoods since the 1920s. In 1948, a historian of the expanding Medical School concluded that: "As the Medical Center develops there is sure to be a parallel growth of private institutions in the neighborhood—hospitals, apartment houses, fraternity houses, office buildings and the like. The fact that we are surrounded on all sides by `blighted areas' gives large room for expansion" (Rice 1948:285). The zenith of this expansion came in the 1960s. From the 1960s into the early 1980s nearly 1000 properties were purchased by the University: All eventually fell to the wrecking ball and were replaced by perfunctory institutional architecture and an expanding sea of parking lots.

State and local governments contributed to these transformations in the city's landscape. During the 1960s African-American Indianapolis was de-populated and dispersed by massive interstate construction projects that sliced through many historically African-American communities in

the heart of the city, including neighborhoods just north of campus. In the 1980s the city embarked on yet another renewal campaign in preparation for the Pan-American Games, which included many events on the IUPUI campus. City founders championed the wholesale removal of numerous structures along Indiana Avenue, once the heart of African-American Indianapolis and the home for a nearly century-old African-American business and leisure district. Campus roadways were rerouted as well, removing yet another physical reminder of the neighborhood landscape that had once covered the area. Consequently, this widespread community today bears few material traces on the landscape, and its residents are sufficiently scattered to render them silent.

This would not seem like an ideal place to conduct a community-based archaeology, but in fact it could not be better suited to a socially relevant neighborhood archaeology. The near-Westside's story is in many ways a typical tale of urban decline, the imprint of racism, and the complexity of class and ethnic identity in multicultural communities. All these factors should and do have absolutely unequivocal material evidence that archaeologists can use to examine the historical roots of contemporary life. In this case, descendants of the now-obliterated community remain scattered throughout the city, and many of these descendants are committed to ensuring that their former neighborhoods are, at the very least, simply remembered; beyond that, they have a strong interest in representing the community in ways that defuse its commonplace caricature as a "Black ghetto." An archaeological project can confront the historical roots of such places and use material culture to foster public dialogue. Promoting this kind of self-conscious awareness is essential to any hope of fostering genuine social and political change.

Today a six-block historic district sits at the edge of the IUPUI campus in a historically African-American neighborhood now known as Ransom Place. The neighborhood

escaped the wrecking ball and was made a Conservation District in 1998. It survives today as the sole remnant of what was once a much vaster neighborhood. Ransom Place's Neighborhood Association has now emerged as the clearest community voice for those people who once lived in the near-Westside. The Association sees itself as the steward for near-Westside history, even though some members never lived in the near-Westside before coming to Ransom Place late in their lives. African-American elders are most active in the Neighborhood Association, so their visions of what constitutes the near-Westside's now-dispersed "community" are the most powerful influences on how these neighborhoods are today portrayed. The Association focuses primarily on the near-Westside's African-American heritage, especially the rich history of Black entrepreneurship in neighborhoods throughout the area. The Association's vision of community does not ignore the near-Westside's multicultural dimensions, but most members see African-American heritage as the dimension of Indianapolis' past that is most commonly ignored today. Today Ransom Place is in the midst of modest rejuvenation: The neighborhood attracts a mix of upwardly mobile bourgeois urbanites, African-American elders, and working-class families. The city often touts Ransom Place as a preservation success story, and its neat rows of colorful vernacular homes and spiraling housing values do make a strong case for urban preservation. Yet many of the campus' former residents moved to Indianapolis neighborhoods that today suffer from many of the same social and material dilemmas that faced the near-Westside 50 years ago.

Archaeology can produce a powerful history of these neighborhoods that makes the invisible campus community part of a narrative entwined in racism, class inequality, and state and University relationships with the contemporary community. Today historical archaeologists accept and in most cases embrace the notion that their scholarship is embedded

in such living communities. Few if any archaeologists would now consider conducting their research without some sort of coordination with local constituencies, and some state officials even require that community outreach be part of any research design. However, most communities are themselves so disparate and often so dispersed that every constituency has a distinct, often-disputed sense of its heritage, and archaeological material culture rarely provides an unequivocal reflection of past or present lives. A broadly conceived archaeology involving sustained field excavation, oral history, and documentary research can illuminate the complicated interplay of racism, class, and power on the landscape, but to do so requires pushing beyond straightforward site tours. Our project uses archaeological sites as public spaces to examine how past communities became "invisible," to scrutinize cultural complexity in those communities, and to situate the contemporary landscape within over a century of urbanization patterns. For those thousands of people who drive through the invisible IUPUI campus, archaeology can confront them with the racialization of mundane objects and spaces. We hope that public archaeological interpretation can help them see how race survives in a contemporary world in which few people consciously embrace racism. Archaeology can potentially re-claim a space that is now de-historicized, transforming the asphalt and University buildings into a landscape with historical depth and uncovering the now-obscured impression of race, class, and urban inequalities written into that place.

The Politics of Archaeology and Urban Renewal

A half-century of University expansion and broader urban renewal projects have profoundly influenced the politics of community history in the contemporary near-Westside. Indianapolis' City Hospital was completed in the near-Westside

in 1857, when the surrounding area was almost entirely unsettled open space in poorly drained and frequently flooded areas along the White River drainage. Nevertheless, by the 1870s the surrounding expanse had been divided into lots and most were already settled (Holloway 1870:104). Indiana University first taught courses in Indianapolis in 1891, including Medical School courses at the City Hospital. In 1914 the University's first hospital was opened on the present-day IUPUI campus, near the existing City Hospital, and in 1919 the Indiana University School of Medicine relocated to the same area.

When the University Medical Center emerged in the early 20th century, the neighborhood immediately around it was a predominately African-American community. That population around the Medical Center tripled between 1870 and 1920, during a period when a series of migration waves delivered a steady stream of African Americans fleeing the Jim Crow South. In 1910, for instance, 61% of the 362 residents living along neighboring North Street were African Americans, and half of them were born in Kentucky. Most African Americans arriving in Indiana came overland from (or at least through) Kentucky, so most African Americans in the city today trace their families to Kentucky and the Upper South. Ten years later the census along North Street identified an astounding 94% of the same neighborhood as Black. Many Indianapolis neighborhoods became strictly segregated around World War I, so the rapid shift to an overwhelmingly Black neighborhood was relatively common in many other communities as well. A few of these local Black residents worked in the neighboring City Hospital, but most men worked in factories along the White River, where massive pork packing plants, railroad yards, and foundries employed African Americans. Most women were domestic day laborers: In 1920, for example, 390 residents were living on North Street, and 39 of them were Black women employed as laundresses for private families.

The first major renewal project in the near-Westside came in the mid-1930s, when the Public Works Administration razed 22 acres of vernacular homes adjoining the Medical Center to make way for Lockefield Gardens, an exclusively Black public housing project (Darbee 1994:926-927). There is little evidence for significant neighborhood unrest following Lockefield's construction, primarily because the showpiece complex that opened in February 1938 provided 748 African-American homes. Much of the Medical Center's expansion between 1920 and 1960 occurred in space that was either unsettled or sparsely settled, and there is little evidence of tension between the University and its neighbors. By the mid-1950s, though, the only remaining space for Medical Center expansion was surrounding neighborhoods, and both University and city planners joined in a nationwide urban renewal movement that intended to reclaim supposedly "rundown" neighborhoods. In the wake of World War II, many of the houses neighboring the Medical Center had in fact deteriorated significantly. Some portions of the near-Westside remained relatively affluent neighborhoods: California Street, for instance, was home to many physicians, lawyers, and African-American professionals who built model genteel homes. In other neighborhoods, though, once-spacious homes had been extensively subdivided to accommodate newly arriving African-American renters. The homes near the Medical Center occupied particularly low-lying space along the White River, and many lacked city water or sewer service. In 1947, Medical Center faculty member Thurman Rice (1947:64) described the neighborhood around the Medical Center as "an extremely ugly slum that needs to be eradicated inasmuch as it is directly in front of the Medical Center." Indianapolis city planners seized on that evidence of decline—and federal support for such projects—to legitimize wholesale community removals. In 1956 the City Redevelopment Commission declared that 19 acres neighboring the Medical Center must be cleared of "slum

housing" (Star 1956:1, 9). The commission's director "emphasized the clearance was ordered solely on the basis of blight there and not for the convenience of the school" (Star 1956:1). However, it seems significant that the commission agreed to turn the land over to the University in exchange for repayment of the tract's acquisition costs. Known to the Redevelopment Commission as "Project F," this was one of two federally supported renewal enterprises on campus; the 1956 project alone required purchasing 104 homes for $503,000 and relocating 106 families including 372 residents.

In 1958 the Metropolitan Planning Department included the Medical Center in an ambitious plan to remake the city's Central Business District. Their master plan noted that neighboring "the present medical center is a large area of blighted dwellings and scattered commercial and industrial buildings. The Department proposes that this area be redeveloped for housing to primarily serve the university campus" (Metropolitan Planning Department 1958:14). The Department proposed to empty roughly half of what is today the IUPUI campus, building a shopping center, student housing, and high rise apartments along the neighboring White River. Today, though, this tract and the 19 acres acquired in 1956 are almost entirely parking lots.

The 1958 city planning document indicated that "consideration should be given to this area for a combined undergraduate campus for Indiana and Purdue Universities," which is among the earliest indications of interest in a joint urban campus. In May 1962 Indiana University administrators first met to contemplate moving their downtown Indianapolis programs to the Medical Center campus, and within two years the University began to purchase individual properties in the near-Westside (Hardy 1989:27). Indiana's other major University, Purdue, was interested in establishing Indianapolis programs as well, and in 1969 the State Legislature merged

the Indiana and Purdue satellite campuses into a single institution.

IUPUI is sometimes painted as the villain who consciously forced resettlement of the near-Westside, effectively engineering the community into a more "desirable" space. The reality, though, seems somewhat more complex. Indiana University initially believed that the City would use federal funds to conduct urban renewal projects in the University's interests, just as other cities had done and just as Indianapolis itself had done in "Project F" in the late 1950s. In the 1960s, though, Indianapolis' city leaders rejected most federal renewal funds and compelled the University to conduct its own resettlement project. Consequently, the University's own representatives went into near-Westside neighborhoods, charged with acquiring over a thousand individual parcels. This made the process somewhat different from single-episode urban renewal projects that rapidly depopulated neighborhoods; in comparison to such renewal projects elsewhere, the near-Westside's resettlement was relatively cordial. However, it was the slow pace of resettlement that actually masked the stunning extent of the change.

When the University's designs became clear, a crush of property owners (most of them absentee landlords to Black tenants) descended on the University. The director of the University's resettlement project quickly found that "the landlords, came to us in droves, wanting to sell and get out" (Hardy 1989:31). Roughly two-thirds of the campus community was rental tenants, so the University purchased properties as they became available and ran them as rentals until they could secure new housing for the tenants. It is likely that at least some University administrators were eager to remove various "undesirable" neighbors, but the University circumspectly assessed the social and political implications of their expansion into settled neighborhoods. The University was especially intent on avoiding the tensions unleashed by the University of

Chicago during urban renewal in Hyde Park. In the 1950s, the University of Chicago teamed with city officials and identified "blighted" areas that should be completely rebuilt. The U.S. Housing Act of 1949 laid the groundwork for such projects by providing support to communities that removed "slums and blighted areas" and replaced them with residential housing. Chicago had experienced stunning African-American migration in the 1940s and 1950s, during the same period that rapid suburbanization saw much of the city's middle classes and elite move to the periphery: The result in Chicago's South Side was significant overcrowding and poverty among some African Americans and the destruction of a vibrant Black commercial and entertainment district. For the University, neighboring bars and clubs and associated crime in these neighborhoods detracted from the ideal academic environment, and urban renewal projects could remove both undesirable buildings and their tenants. Wholesale University acquisitions removed vast numbers of African-American residents and businesses, and the Chicago "slum clearance" projects were criticized as thinly disguised "Negro clearance" (cf. Nash 1966:527; Hirsch 2000:430).

Much of the Chicago story is similar to that in Indianapolis: Indianapolis had suffered from similar demographic trends to those in Chicago; the same federal laws encouraged urban renewal in Indianapolis; and urban renewal discourses gave Indianapolis planners the same legitimizations for slum clearance projects that disproportionately affected poor African Americans. Yet even at the height of IUPUI's expansion, many people lived in the midst of the campus, with stores, workplaces, churches, and schools among them, and the University eventually only used eminent domain in four or five cases (Hardy 1989:33). Households were in virtually all cases moved from the near-Westside to other single-family homes, rather than to public housing projects like those used to resettle many other urban renewal communities. For

instance, governmental "slum clearance" projects began in West Oakland, California in the 1930s, moving thousands of families to public housing projects (Solari 2001). The wholesale removal of neighborhoods led to acute housing shortages, and businesses, schools, and churches met the wrecking ball alongside homes. The financial settlements forced on residents were typically insufficient to allow them to buy new homes: This led to profound poverty and unrest in West Oakland by the 1960s. Near-Westside residents who were relocated by the University were not the target of such mass evictions or moves to public housing, so there was significantly less turmoil accompanying displacement. The piecemeal nature of University resettlement created a somewhat less contentious transformation than a single mass renewal project, although the slow pace of resettlement also helped camouflage the extent of neighborhood displacement. Many near-Westside residents moved by the University chose to move across the White River to the Haughville area, which was a formerly European immigrant neighborhood composed of vernacular homes much like those in the near-Westside. Today that area is itself beset with social and material decline, so the re-settlement of near-Westside residents may simply have transported many structural inequalities to another neighborhood.

University administrators did not really ever develop a particularly well-defined plan for precisely how much space they hoped to acquire. They simply purchased properties and then resettled tenants and tore down the structures as the spaces were required for expansion. The first master plan for campus was developed in 1975, and it noted that "IUPUI cannot turn its back on its immediate neighbors. All around the University are edges which are also thresholds across which the University and the surrounding city interface and exchange responsibility and mutual support" (Woollen and Associates 1975). As this process was going on, though, the State itself was busy gobbling up property along what is now the eastern boundary of

campus, and speculators soon followed with a host of condominium projects and consumer businesses that now ring the campus. The resulting landscape of imposing State government buildings, fast food establishments, apartments, and University buildings reflects the lack of coordinated planning among the institutions that reclaimed the near-Westside.

The cumulative material transformation in the near-Westside's landscape was profound, but it is remarkably uncontested today. In large part it remains unremarked upon because it is an unknown heritage with no clear material signs remaining on the contemporary landscape. There may well be genuine reason to believe that significant changes were desirable in the near-Westside by the 1960s, but the University de-historicized the landscape by removing historical structures, eliminating many place and street names, and re-routing some of the streetscape itself. It is generally irrelevant whether or not this was intentional, because even unintentionally de-historicizing this landscape has complicated social and political consequences today. During the 1990s, for instance, an impressive new University library was constructed in a space that had once been part of the city's original grid plan. In the 19th century, Indianapolis' grid plan had been extended into the near-Westside, so into the 1960s the near-Westside was laid out much like the remainder of the city to the east. During IUPUI's resettlement of the community, however, many streets were cut off, rerouted, or eliminated altogether. Despite the campus' physical proximity to the city, it now presents a much-altered streetscape that differentiates it from the city. The new library was placed at an angle against the grid plan, and most of the surrounding streets were eliminated. Consequently, the building has no correspondence with the city's dominant physical layout, distancing it and much of the campus from the surrounding city. The University was created expressly to serve an urban constituency, so there was no institutional or

conscious effort to fabricate an especially cloistered academic campus separate from the city. Nevertheless, today the landscape physically and symbolically distances the University community from the near-Westside's heritage and from the attendant social and economic processes that transformed Indianapolis into a racially segregated city.

Some measures are now being undertaken to address the near-Westside's historical invisibility. Among these is an effort to return historical place names to the campus space. In 2003 dormitories are being constructed on campus, and roughly half the buildings will be named after figures from the near-Westside. The names include a range of professional and working-class people, some well-known and others anonymous, representing men and women from most of the cultural groups who once lived in the near-Westside. Most of these figures were identified as part of the archaeological project's research, and archaeology students produced biographies for a joint University/community committee to consider in selecting the final names. This is a modest but critical effort to materially historicize the campus landscape. Many Neighborhood Association members are not especially distressed that the near-Westside became home to IUPUI, and some concede that many near-Westside neighborhoods had indeed become quite rundown by the 1960s. However, they are more troubled that today only one building on campus bears an African-American name, and it will soon be demolished. The Neighborhood Association is interested in giving community heritage a genuine material presence on the campus landscape that will make that heritage less possible to overlook or disregard.

Archaeology also provides a material way to reclaim this social and physical landscape. Most of the near-Westside's physical landscape was dramatically altered after the mid-19th century, primarily to control flooding and drainage along the river. Much of the Medical Campus was a delta-like flat prone

to flooding, so over more than 50 years immense volumes of refuse were used to fill low-lying spaces and flatten the space. When homes were demolished, the spaces typically were simply filled and then paved. Therefore the campus today is remarkably flat and betrays no hint of its historical uses or original topography. When parking lot surfaces are removed archaeologically, though, there are dense stratigraphic deposits harboring household goods that reach back over a century, despite the apparently mundane surface. Archaeological tours inevitably present the juxtaposition of a barren contemporary landscape at the surface with structural foundations, discarded household goods, and a range of yard features and natural ecology that clearly reflect quite different past uses of the space. Ultimately this should accomplish two ends. First, because visitors are quite literally confronted by a series of landscapes that sit atop each other, this sight makes an ideal foil to stress the relations between those landscapes. Archaeologists once were reluctant to admit the connection between past archaeological contexts on the one hand and the present-day world on the other, but most archaeologists today are willing to recognize and confront the complicated relationship between past and present. Second, connecting these landscapes raises the issue of why each looks so different: i.e., what social processes produced these landscapes over the last century-and-a-half? Inevitably this question stresses that our archaeological research is intended to illuminate the historical roots of the contemporary world. Our site tours acknowledge from the outset that our scholarly interest in race and the color line is profoundly shaped by our desire to understand it in the contemporary world: There are no self-evident research questions framed by the archaeological material culture itself. In fact, anybody looking at an archaeological site can clearly see that it has no self-evident meaning; rather, the disparate pieces are reassembled to illuminate the past and probe both the alien and familiar dimensions of the past.

Ethnic Neighborhoods in a Multicultural City

Indianapolis prides itself today as a city of ethnic neighborhoods, but this hyperbolizes basic ethnic settlement patterns, ignores the city's utterly racialized landscape, and evades Indiana's historic expressions of naive provincialism and outright xenophobia. Indiana is typically considered an ethnically homogenous WASP-dominated region, and into the 1920s most of the near-Westside's residents were native-born White Hoosiers; however, virtually every European immigrant group and many African Americans also made their homes in these neighborhoods. This demography could vary significantly within the space of just a few blocks: Some areas in the near-Westside were overwhelmingly African American in 1870, yet a block away neighborhoods remained almost universally White for another half-century. That complicated demographic story and its roots in inequality do not receive much attention in local historical discourse. The long-term predominance of White Hoosiers, complex ethnic settlement patterns, and the city's increasing racially based segregation are almost universally ignored in favor of easy caricatures.

The near-Westside is typically considered a Black community, and at various points in time this certainly was true of many neighborhoods. Nevertheless, the more compelling dimensions of life in the near-Westside are, first, how and why it changed over time and, second, why contemporary residents desire an ethnic history at all and are reluctant to embrace a multicultural past. The transformation of the near-Westside owed much to expanding European immigration and African-American migration in the early 20th century, and this was greeted by widespread xenophobia; nevertheless, this demographic shift in itself does not explain Hoosiers' marked xenophobia. As Hoosier xenophobia simmered at the outset of the century, this multicultural community rapidly became segregated. African-American life

in Indianapolis was focused on Indiana Avenue and the neighborhoods closest to the Avenue, which included Ransom Place; these neighborhoods became overwhelmingly African American within a few years at the turn of the century. By 1920, the near-Westside had its first Black population majority, though a few neighborhoods in the near-Westside remained home to pockets of European immigrants.

African Americans occupied a troubled position in Indianapolis' racialized social hierarchies. The straightforward Black/White distinction that structured Southern life was never easily transported to Indianapolis. Even when the Ku Klux Klan secured control of city government in the mid-1920s, the targets of their nativist apprehension included Catholics, Jews, and Germans as well as people of color (Moore 1991). Indianapolis had quite significant German-American and Irish-American communities from the mid-19th century onward, and the 19th-century city had many truly ethnically integrated neighborhoods. This spatial integration, though, may not indicate any measure of genuine social or class equity, and in the early 20th century the city became quite rapidly segregated along a color line similar to the South's polarized Black/White continuum. Many Southern White animosities toward people of color clearly assumed much the same form in Indiana. In 1904, at the outset of rapid African-American migration into Indianapolis, Ray Stannard Baker (1968 [1904]:118) toured the city and noted that an Indianapolis White complained to him about "the increasing presence of Negroes in the parks, on the streets, and in the street cars. He said: `I suppose sooner or later we shall have to adopt some of the restrictions of the South.'" Despite such sentiments, Indiana never embraced the anti-Black segregation codes championed in the Jim Crow South. Nevertheless, all public privileges were governed by implicit racial regulations that positioned Blacks at the base of the racial continuum and afforded Europeans some potential measure of equality with White Hoosiers.

One of our archaeological project's central challenges is to compel site visitors to acknowledge the racialization of the city's landscape a century ago, if not the present. Many visitors are quite willing to accept that a century ago Indianapolis was in fact a city structured by anti-Black racism, but this is typically attributed to historical context ("it was a different time") or blamed on misguided deviants. The recurring scapegoat in Indianapolis is the Klan, which enjoyed enormous success in 1920s Indiana and had unprecedented political victories in Indianapolis itself (Moore 1991). In the 1920s the Indiana Klan was foremost a nativist group that championed conservative moralism and Prohibition with the support of a vast range of White people from the cities and countryside alike. Between one-quarter and one-third of all native-born White men in Indiana who were eligible for Klan membership paid to become members: This does not include those who quietly supported Klan goals or women and children who belonged to Klan auxiliaries. By 1925 27% of White men in Marion County (which includes Indianapolis) were dues-paying Klansmen (Moore 1991:58). In 1923, at least one-third (and perhaps as many as a half) of the White men living in the near-Westside were Klansmen (Moore 1991:142-143). Klansmen included more White collar laborers than in the city's overall population, perhaps in part due to the stiff $10 membership fee, but also because the Klan's middle-class appeal found a receptive audience among the upwardly mobile. Based on local membership counts, there was no more popular social organization in 1920s Indianapolis than the Klan, with as many as 40% of the city's eligible members joining. Consequently, by the 1920s there were significant social and racial tensions among people who had in many cases once been neighbors. Yet the superficial vision of the Klan as a voice of anti-Black hatred and violence evades its widespread (and very successful appeals) to nationalism, WASP conservatism, and ethnic insularity; instead, contemporary caricatures of the hooded

order as violent, working-class thugs provide an illusory distance from present-day people who quietly defend or deny various forms of class and color privilege.

This convenient obliviousness to racism and life on the color line is one of the sentiments that our archaeology project continually confronts. A century ago, Ray Stannard Baker (1968:117) noted that "the people one ordinarily meets don't know anything about the Negro, don't discuss him, and don't care about him. In Indianapolis, and indeed in other cities, the only white people I could find who were much interested in the Negroes were a few politicians, mostly of the lower sort, the charity workers and the police." As Baker recognized, African-American life was completely unknown to most Whites, and most White racial privileges were unquestioned and were unexamined. In contrast, people of color knew quite a bit about Whites. Some of this was due to the racialized labor market that placed African Americans in intimate positions serving and working for White people, but much of it was because conscious negotiation of racial privilege and constraints was part of Black life. In the summer of 2001 this obliviousness to Black labor was a central element of archaeology site tours conducted at an early 20th-century African-American boarding house on the IUPUI campus. Excavations in the boarding house identified a concentration of straight pins and buttons that were likely lost by African-American women who lived in the home and worked as laundresses and seamstresses. Site tours are most powerful when they can use the most apparently innocuous objects, such as straight pins and buttons, and relate them to broad social and structural issues, like the racial and gendered ideologies that consigned many African-American women to domestic labor.

The creation of a segregated school system may have been the most significant impact of 1920s racism. In 1922 Indianapolis' Citizens Committee School Board made the

decision to segregate the city schools. The School Board was backed by the Chamber of Commerce and a series of segregationist neighborhood organizations that had resisted extensive school improvement projects because they would impose a tax burden. In 1923 the Board redrew the school boundaries and removed Black children from racially mixed elementary schools, effectively segregating the city's elementary school system. Faced with public outrage at deteriorated schools, the Board reluctantly began several improvement projects in 1924, including the construction of a new Black high school that would eventually be named after Crispus Attucks (a Black man whose 1770 death in the Boston Massacre made him one of the Revolution's first casualties). Support for the school building project came too late to satisfy voters, and a Ku Klux Klan school board calling itself the "Protestant School Ticket" lorded over the segregation of Indianapolis' Black high school students. Attucks provided a common social experience for a half-century of Black Indianapolis students who were required to attend the school, and it eventually became one of African-American Indianapolis' most significant institutions. Many professionally trained African Americans who could not secure work in an otherwise racist job market became teachers and established a standard for demanding educational preparation. Many of these teachers moved into Ransom Place, which lay immediately south of Attucks, and former Attucks teachers remain people of considerable status today.

Attucks was simply one institution in the African-American near-Westside that was committed to education, entrepreneurship, and personal discipline despite anti-Black racism. Indiana Avenue, for instance, was lined with African-American entrepreneurs who often overcame overwhelming boundaries to secure material security, if not genuine affluence. Many visitors to our archaeological sites are especially receptive to an African-American and ethnic history that seeks out such

"success stories." The African-American near-Westside has perhaps the archetypal success story in Madam C.J. Walker, who established her hair care business in Indianapolis in 1910 (Bundles 2001). Walker established her beauty and hair care enterprise in Indianapolis during the Great Migration, and she quickly became one of the nation's wealthiest citizens. Yet Walker's life is typically reduced to a Black American Dream tale that minimizes racist and gender barriers, instead celebrating her entrepreneurial vision and work ethic. Indiana Avenue was lined with businesses run by people whose originations and ambitions were much like Walker's, and those African Americans who succeeded in the face of overwhelmingly obstacles are celebrated in community memory. This Horatio Alger story is also prominent in other local ethnic histories. Germans, for instance, were the most common European immigrants to Indianapolis after the mid-19th century, and the new arrivals rapidly became the city's most prominent merchants (Hoyt 1994). For our African-American constituents, the dimension of struggle against racism is key to understanding their experience; however, their concern is that racism has sometimes been painted as though it were a phenomenon that utterly vanquished all African-American achievement and claims to agency. Their interest seems to be in portraying the boundaries of the color line in ways that remind contemporary peoples that those boundaries did not prevent ambition and, despite all obstacles, success.

Engagement and Community Archaeology

Today a large community sits across the White River from the IUPUI campus, faced by social and material problems that urban planners hoped to eradicate in the near-Westside a half-century ago. In many cases, though, structural inequalities simply followed displaced residents to their new

neighborhoods, removing them from the city's visible western boundaries. As in many other American neighborhoods that fell to post-war urban renewal, consistent class, racial, and urban inequalities have produced much of the same social and material decline that plagued the near-Westside after the 1940s. Consequently, when a state senator reduces such neighborhoods to "Black Ghettos," it seems to contemporary descendants that this historical characterization is being used to legitimize wholesale transformations that obliterate the entanglements of past and present. At the very least, it is historically inaccurate to conclude that all the near-Westside's neighborhoods over 150 years were Black or impoverished. Archaeology in the near-Westside has focused on examining the historical complexity of the near-Westside to defuse such ideological hyperbole. Archaeology can emphasize that the community's past is clearly quite unlike its recent past, so caricatures of poverty along the color line simply rationalize a continuing stream of dominant government, institutional, and ideological interests.

It seems important that archaeology in the near-Westside is conducted between current residents, elders who once lived in these neighborhoods, and IUPUI faculty and students. Virtually all our own project's teachers and excavators are IUPUI faculty and students, and we recognize our own position within an institution that has contributed to the creation of the contemporary landscape. Consciousness of the individual and institutional privileges such changes brought is key to confronting how similar inequalities remain remarkably resilient today. An unwillingness to recognize the near-Westside's complex heritage or to acknowledge its contemporary persistence either evades the justification for contemporary privilege or simply ignores that such privileges even exist. We want archaeology to situate the University and the city residents firmly within processes and ideologies that transformed the near-Westside's landscape. That

transformation created an urban University that has sometimes served its suburbanite commuter students better than city residents, and failing to recognize our connection to the neighborhood and descendant communities is part of what continues to make this disenfranchisement possible.

All archaeology and archaeologists have a politics, whether they recognize this or not, but engagement requires that archaeologists openly struggle with how to articulate these politics. An engaged archaeology aspires to confront community interests with archaeological data in ways that create dialogue between and within constituencies. The near-Westside discussion revolves around class, material, and racial caricatures that have effectively removed politics, inequality, and history from the landscape, but archaeology can illuminate the historical complexities of these spaces. Archaeology in the near-Westside can paint the social and historical complexity of this landscape in ways that make contemporary people confront their own embeddedness in these social processes and begin to see the politics in their own visions of space, identity, and the past.

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