## × THE PRICE OF PROGRESS:

IUPUI, the Color Line, & Urban Displacement

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#### Office of External Affairs Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)

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# FOREWORD

WRITTEN BY × Charles R. Bantz, Chancellor of IUPUI

**PLACE MATTERS.** Throughout our lives, each person is shaped by one's experiences in a place. Place is where we as individuals come together with the physical, cultural, and social. Our memories of place are intense. Even a newcomer to IUPUI like me has intense memories of this place.

I can still picture the rain stopping, feel the hot sun, experience pride in the new IUPUI Campus Apartments on the River Walk, smile at the hundreds of people celebrating the new homes for our students—even though that outdoor dedication ceremony for our new campus housing complex was now six years ago.

IUPUI's second chancellor, Glenn W. Irwin, Jr., M.D., was a medical student here in the 1940s (M.D., 1944), became a faculty member in 1950, and still comes to work. His sense of place used to be expressed in a slide show he called "West Side Story." In that, he recalled much of the campus's history from memory and personal experience.

This book reconstructs this sense of place, based on the memory and personal experiences of the people who lived, worked, owned businesses, and went to school in the neighborhoods that were displaced by the growth of the IUPUI campus. Commissioned as part of IUPUI's 40th anniversary commemoration, these oral histories give voice to a community long dispersed by a "1960's urban renewal" strategy that cleared large areas in search of "progress." It secures for them their rightful place in our history. It preserves knowledge of the sacrifices that people made—people who came away with mixed feelings about what happened to their lives and properties. You will hear it in their accounts. There is no institutional voice in these pages just the voices of the men and women

who at one time called this place home and these streets their neighborhood.

As best as we can determine, no other urban universities have examined their history in quite the deliberate way that IUPUI is doing. Thanks to the work of Professor of Anthropology Paul R. Mullins, who immediately recognized the archaeological significance of the campus and its surrounding neighborhood when he joined our faculty in 1999, IUPUI has worked to connect with its past. His urban archaeology program—a cooperative project involving IUPUI faculty and students, the Ransom Place Neighborhood Association, and the Indianapolis Urban League-has uncovered artifacts and stories that tell a history of the neighborhood. This project has partnered with former residents who lay claim to the neighborhood's heritage, and this book's research was conducted with Indianapolis native Glenn S. White. The archaeology and neighborhood history project have served to create an ongoing dialogue between the previous and current occupants of this land.



#### × THE PRICE OF PROGRESS: IUPUI, the Color Line, and Urban Displacement

From its European settlement in the early 19th century, Indianapolis' near-Westside was home to a wide range of immigrants from throughout Europe and other regions of America. These early settlers included a modest antebellum African-American community that expanded after the Civil War and rapidly established substantial African-American neighborhoods along many of the streets adjoining Indiana Avenue. The African-American community grew very quickly in the early twentieth century, when the "Great Migration" attracted scores of African Americans fleeing the Jim Crow South for Northern cities like Indianapolis. Indianapolis was not legally segregated, but in practice Indianapolis was governed by a complex system of unspoken racist codes that dictated the growth of the segregated African-American community in the near-Westside.

Indiana Avenue was the main corridor slicing through the near-Westside, and it rapidly became home to many African-American businesses, churches, social institutions and jazz clubs. Completion of the Walker Building in 1927 brought additional prominence to the area: The building housed Madam C.J. Walker's manufacturing company, a theatre that attracted national artists and performers, and office spaces for Black professionals and entrepreneurs. The near-Westside became "the" place for Blacks to pursue and create their segregated slice of the American Dream over more than 50 years.

After World War II, much of urban America was transformed by a series of federal, state, and local initiatives referred to collectively as "urban renewal." What this meant in practice was enacted quite differently in various communities over a half century, but urban renewal legislation almost always targeted African-American communities like the one in Indianapolis' near-Westside. Some legislation was aimed to erase urban "blight," and there certainly were very challenging conditions in many cities. However, many wholesale removals also erased thriving African-American communities that were definitely not "slums." In some cities removals secured property for the expansion of state and local governments; in others it secured land for interstate expansion; and in some it broke up powerful African-American voting blocks: All of those things happened in Indianapolis, and the social, psychological, and material repercussions of widespread racial marginalization and displacement remain an unaddressed and raw legacy in many communities, including Indianapolis.

This book is a written compilation of elders' memories that focuses on the central features of life in the community along and across the color line, ranging from faith to schooling to leisure and entrepreneurship. The book hopes to encourage public reflection on concerns that have circulated throughout the African American community for many years: That is, what were the concrete social, material, and personal prices of the displacement of a once-vibrant, African American community that resulted in the establishment of IUPUI? This book is not a standard linear history that aspires to establish one conclusive interpretation for African-American heritage and experience in the near-Westside. Instead, it is taken from 29 oral historical interviews conducted with a range of African Americans who lived, worked, worshipped, shopped, and/or were educated in the near-Westside. We have chosen excerpts from those interviews; but, as much as possible, we hope the voice of elders' experiences shapes how the near-Westside and its ultimate demise are presented in this book. The interviews were predominately focused on life since the 1920s, and we systematically discussed life on the Avenue, the social and material realities of life along the color line, and the widespread displacement that occurred in the community from the 1950s onward. It reflects residents' sentiments about the community's displacement after World War II and leading to the development and establishment of IUPUI.

Such displacements occurred throughout the United States, removing marginalized and often-Black communities for new university campuses, but virtually no urban universities have reflectively contemplated their own roles in these dramatic transformations. Our goal is to encourage a public discussion on the legacy of urban displacement and to acknowledge the University's role, recognize the prices paid for the establishment of a world-class university, and ultimately work towards respecting the rich legacy of this community and the thousands of people who lived and thrived in the near-Westside. This conversation--along with publication of the compiled memories--can be the beginning of a critical and reflective public discourse in which IUPUI can publicly examine its institutional complicity in urban renewal without ignoring the dramatic and life-changing public benefits the University brings to the city and its residents.

We want to thank the many people who contributed to this project. First and foremost, this includes the many elders who graciously agreed to be interviewed and routinely talked to us many hours long beyond the single hour they were being recorded. We are humbled to have been trusted with their words and hope this book begins to reflect the richness of their experiences. This project was fortunate to have the support of IUPUI Vice Chancellor for External Affairs Amy Warner. Amy instantly embraced the proposal to produce a history that was told in the words of community elders and confronted challenging dimensions of IUPUI's history at the very moment the University is celebrating its 40th Anniversary. The project has been thoughtfully shepherded throughout its production by Suzanne Vick, IUPUI Director of Strategic Partnerships and Promotions. Lee Vander Kooi and his students Drew Hammond, Ric Sellers, Trenton Elkins, Terri Wada, and Brandon Stuck produced a beautiful book from oral historical excerpts and scattered photographs and were essential to successfully framing the book's message. Thanks to Gwendolyn Crenshaw, Theresa L. Roberts, and Wilma Moore Gibbs for their informed consultation and support. Many more family members, community members, and friends whose words do not appear here have discussed this project with us over nearly two years, and all of them were absolutely essential to this book. Any errors of fact or interpretation are fully our responsibility.

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# JIANA AV ONE OF THE JR DIAGONAL THOROUGHFARES **IN THE 1821** LAT OF DIANAPOLIS **BY THE FINAL QUARTER** THE 19TH CENTURY ONE-THIRD OF THE CITY'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN RESIDENTS LIVED IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS ADJOINING

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# INDIANA AVE.

**INDIANA AVENUE** was one of the four diagonal thoroughfares in the 1821 plat of Indianapolis, and by the final quarter of the 19th century about one-third of the city's African-American residents lived in the neighborhoods adjoining "the Avenue." In the first decade of the 20th century a wave of African Americans came to Indianapolis from the South in the Great Migration, and many of these arrivals settled in the near-Westside around the Avenue. The Avenue very rapidly became the heart of Indianapolis' African-American community. Businesses, entertainment venues, professional

offices, and many other African-American enterprises could be found somewhere along the Avenue for more than a half-century. African-American residential neighborhoods including corner stores, churches, and schools fanned off the Avenue in all directions, and the homes included modest cottages and spacious residences alike. The Indiana Avenue area remained a vibrant African-American business district, social hub, and neighborhood into the 1950s and 1960s. Its significance and importance was tempered by factors far beyond the control of its inhabitants.

- 1.1 × "A World within Itself" × p. 22
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 The Sunset Terrace was among the best-known clubs on Indiana Avenue. Owned by brothers Denver and Sea Ferguson, this crowd gathered at the club in 1949 before a performance by Dizzy Gillespie.

Figure 1



### × "A WORLD WITHIN ITSELF": LIFE ON THE AVENUE

Indianapolis was not legally segregated, but in practice the city's spaces were governed by a complex system of unspoken racist codes. An African-American business district rapidly emerged on the Avenue, and most of residents' consumer needs, leisure, and social life were served by spaces along Indiana Avenue. Indiana Avenue was a world within itself. We had everything that we wanted right there on Indiana Avenue. We didn't have to go downtown. We had various places that we were able to go - neighborhood grocery stores and that kind of thing. --- × **ABDULLAH** 

President Roosevelt was elected in '32. He took office in the first of '33. Almost immediately prohibition ended and liquor came in. And when that happened, taverns and bars opened up all over the country. Indiana Avenue was the area where it happened for us. Mainly, there were other areas in the other parts of town... but that was the place to go, the Avenue. They'd say, where you going today? I'm going to the Avenue. Well, it was known that you went there for a good time. Because there were clubs, and bars, etcetera. --- × **RIDLEY** 

There was the Walker Theatre, we used to go to the show there, watch first-run movies for nine cents and it had the best popcorn in the world. And further down west of the Walker Theatre there was a theatre called The Lido... and the Lido was the home of cowboy hits. They had a cowboy and they had two feature movies. I don't know how many chapter plays and they had previews of movies coming up. You could go in there at ten-o'clock in the morning and probably come out at four or five o'clock in the evening. That's how long you were there, and all along... all along Indiana Avenue all the way down to New York Street there were places to eat.... It was just a community within a community, I mean we didn't have to go outside that community.

---- × ADAMS

There was a movie theater on the alley that ran down beside my house and came on up to the Avenue. It ran between Indiana Avenue and North Street and at the corner of this alley and Indiana Avenue there was this movie theater. Its original name was "Two Johns" because it was owned by two men by the name of John. And then it was changed

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later to the Lido Theater. Next door to it was a drugstore and it had a counter in there... a food counter. And it had ice cream on one end and then they served coneys and hot dogs and hamburgers on the other end of it. A coney was only a dime and a bottle of pop was a nickel. So what the heck, you get a quarter... a kid could have a date. But that was nice. They had the afternoon matinees at the Two Johns. They had the serials like "Tarzan and the Tiger" and that sort of thing... "Riders of the Purple Sage".... You go to the movie and stay half of the day watching it over and over again. You come out and get you a coney and a bottle of pop. That was a big thing... you had a good Saturday afternoon. --- × **RIDLEY** 

Oh, we went to a show three or four times a week. Went to the Walker Theater on Sundays, and then you went home... had dinner and go back to the Lido Theater on Sunday evenings. At the Lido, they had the serials that they showed every Saturday and on Tuesday, I think. And so you had to go on Tuesday or Thursday to keep up with the serials... and we'd go to the Y, too. But we'd go to the theater all the time and that was mainly it... because you didn't really go too much out of your neighborhood because you don't want to get into anything with these other groups in other neighborhoods. You had guys who sort of felt like their turf was their turf, and they protected their turf. --- × **CUMMINGS** 

Well... the Avenue during the days of Joe Louis... they'd block off the streets when the fight was on. Used to be another theatre on the Avenue called The Indiana. And I remember when the "Gone With The Wind" movie was made. You had to pay a bundle of money to go see it... ---  $\times$  **COE** 

The Avenue was not a place that everybody longed to go to. That's the first thing. People speak as if it was always as popular as it is now...

that wasn't true. Young people, like when I was in high school, were warned against going there. I guess it started going down while I was in the South teaching, and that would be in the 40's. But it was there and they were proud of it in many ways. ---  $\times$  **A RAY** 

As a teenager and a young person I didn't go on the Avenue. There was nothing there to interest me then. When I went to the Avenue I was out of high school, you know. Everybody wanted to go to Indiana Avenue and the different nightclubs. This was something new, you know.... Everybody was dressed up to show their little outfit... this is mostly what they went for. --- × **MILTON** 

We spent a lot of our time as I was going through school, junior and senior high school, doing things around Indiana Avenue. The ninecent show. Going to the Walker Theatre... walking from Haughville down Indiana Avenue... on our way to downtown. We used to walk from Tenth.... Tenth and Sheffield, to Murphy's. And I mean, we just walked down Indiana Avenue, straight across the bridge. ---× **BROWN** 

You know what I compare Indiana Avenue with now is Broad Ripple... how we would walk up and down the street and go into one little nightclub to the other. When I go drive through Broad Ripple now I go, "This is how we used to do on Indiana Avenue." Just out of one place and into another. And then, ride the street car home, ride the bus home, because that's what you had to ride home. --- × **MILTON** 

I didn't hang out on the Avenue.... I never hung out on the Avenue, I think I'd have been disowned... because I still had chores left and things to do at home. ---× **J. COLEMAN** 

I think that my feeling was its reputation was not good. It wasn't good to be on the Avenue, you know. That's not the place you were supposed



to be unless... you know... you wanted trouble. Or you wanted to get into some trouble. --- × **J. COLEMAN** 

I was in some of the clubs before I should have been. But by me being a musician, and my dad was a musician also, I just followed along with my dad. I used to go in these clubs. I used to go down to the Sunset a long time ago and especially on a Sunday when all the big names came in like Duke Ellington. All of them used to come in there and I used to stand right there by the drummer. I wouldn't get a seat—just stand there by the drummer all night long and watch them. And then, by me living on the Southside of Indianapolis, the last streetcar would leave the Circle around midnight. They stayed open until 1:00. Many times I missed that last streetcar and I had to walk all the way to the Southside because we had no cars during those days. --- × **A. COLEMAN** 

My father... met my mother, very ironically, interestingly, at some restaurant on Indiana Avenue. He would frequent that restaurant and had said to his buddy that he was kind of sweet on the waitress. ---  $\times$  **BROWN** 

You can start from Indiana Avenue and Illinois Street all the way back to the hospital... clubs, and restaurants all up and down that whole Avenue. You could go from one club right into another club... all different kinds of entertainment, you know. I know that that will never be anymore... But, there used to be clubs all up and down the Avenue: the Cotton Club, George's Bar, Paradise, Industrial Club, P&P Club, and of course, the British Lounge. Now, the British Lounge was a little bit unique because the guy that owned that was named Thompson Green. It was a little small but he had that one side there and he catered mostly to teachers and such. He made it real, real homey for me there, you know. ---  $\times$  **A. COLEMAN**  Nothing took the place of the excitement on Indiana Avenue from one trip to the other. ---  $\times$  **ABDULLAH** 

Joyner's Chili was down there.... He had the best chili in the world. They had the long White counter with the round stools in front of them that fasten to the floor. You came in and sat down on one of those stools and got you a bowl of Joyner's chili and crackers... you were into something. It was very, very well known. People came from everywhere. In fact, people that worked downtown even came up there. And that was along about maybe the 400 block of Indiana Avenue... somewhere along in there. --- × **RIDLEY** 

My father had the Funville Bowling Alley, which was there off of Indiana Ave on West Street. And there was a lot that went on. He had a terrible time trying to build his building, and to open the business because there was always something that would come up that would be an impediment to his moving on. --- × **BALLOW** 

Just below Ninth Street is where Dr. Hatch lived. And then there were offices on the east side of West St. where several doctors had their offices. And of course when the Walker building was put up a few doctors and dentists, you know, their offices were in there. We had a beautiful YWCA on the east side of West Street. It was a beautiful brick building. ---  $\times$  **RIDLEY** 

I used to go to the YMCA, I had the opportunity to see Du Bois there. We called it the three o'clock Monster Meetings, and we'd gather and sit there on a Sunday. That was fantastic. --- × **POINDEXTER** 

I know you had contact with many people who were involved in the fight of the civil rights and all at the Senate Avenue YMCA and the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA. And they had programs that they called

the "monster meetings." They would have speakers come in… Jackie Robinson, Thurgood Marshall. But it was a program where people whoever came—they understood that this was a part of civil rights… an attempt to cause those who had the responsibility for causing the laws to remain as they were to change…and to open things up. Not that White was better than Black, but that you know we had a right to have the same privileges that anyone else had. --- × **BAKER** 

There was another place on Senate Avenue... called the YMCA and that was a gathering place for young people. I remember when I was coming along, before you learned how to swim, they would tie a yellow ribbon around your neck and it had a sinker on it. If you had one of those, that meant you couldn't swim... and we swam naked during that time. You learned how to swim well before they would take the yellow ribbon off. That was the YMCA - a very, very prominent place in the Black community at that particular time. --- × **ADAMS** 

We swam without swimsuits... the guys did. The girls didn't do that. But, we did that because of the fact that not everyone had a swimsuit. So rather than not have... we'd swim naked. --- × **POINDEXTER** 



 X In July, 1913, Madam C.J. Walker and Booker T. Washington (to the right of Walker) posed for the dedication of the Senate Avenue YMCA. From left to right: Indianapolis Freeman publisher George Knox; Walker; behind her, Walker attorney Freeman B. Ransom; Washington; Indianapolis World editor A.E. Manning; behind him Walker's physician Joseph H. Ward; Lousiville YMCA Secretary R.W. Bullock; and Senate Avenue YMCA Secretary Thomas Taylor

Figure 2

COLD

LOOR



### × "THEY CAN MAKE IT ANYWHERE": MUSIC AND NIGHT LIFE ON THE AVENUE

VERMONT

Indianapolis has an especially rich jazz heritage, and many of the nation's most prominent artists lived in Indianapolis and played in numerous clubs along Indiana Avenue. Blocks of clubs dotted the Avenue from the 1930s into the 1960s, and local artists and nationally known musicians played alongside each other in clubs along the Avenue.

NEW-YORK

I'm not exaggerating, but 97-98% of all the musicians who leave Indianapolis make it... big time. And, the only reason the other 2 or 3% don't make it is because they are too lazy to try. But, if they leave Indianapolis, they can make it. I don't know why, but I guess because Indianapolis is so critical about musicians. But if they can make it here, they can make it anywhere... anywhere! --- × **A. COLEMAN** 

I really, really feel you know, Indiana Avenue was the hub, entertainment-wise.... You had the Sunset, you had Al's and Al Coleman had a place on the Avenue. You had George's Bar and all of these were really thriving businesses. And, on the Avenue, you also had restaurants... it was just a really thriving Black community. I can remember coming from IU to the Sunset to hear Nat King Cole. ---- × **WARNER** 

The Sunset, which is the Sunset Lounge, had entertainment with all the big bands... Duke Ellington, Lucky Millinder. I'm trying to think of some of them 'cause, they were so popular at that time. And it was entertainment... of course, you had to be of age 21. We were in our teens and one time we told our mother a story that we were going to the show. But, we slipped into the Sunset... put some lipstick on, and went... and sneaked in some kind of way. And then, by the time we thought the show was over, we came out. We had met some boys... and she was waiting for us at the corner of North and Blackford Street. --- × JOHNSON

Well, also, across the street on Blake Street, I believe, right across from Lockefield was the Sunset.... The Sunset Terrace was where they had dances... you know, like the sorority would have a dance or a club would have a dance. Upstairs they had a big place where we'd go to the big dance... all dressed up in our finery and dance to big bands.... Back then you didn't dance to any record player or

anything like that... they had a whole new band. And I mean we danced... we danced and we dressed up in our fine clothes and went.

I remember all those big bands came here to a place called the Sunset Terrace. It was right in where the food court is now on Indiana Avenue. It was on the corner of Blake Street and Indiana Avenue... a two-story dance hall. It was kind of crude you might say, in that it was unfinished a lot. But it was never dirty. Always cleaned well. And the building stayed there up until, well, until about the time that the food court was coming in. --- × **RIDLEY** 

They had a place downtown that had vaudeville too. There were several theaters that were on the circuit. And there were a lot of musicians that came in town, even Black bands and whatnot, who came to most theaters where we didn't go at that time .... But those same bands came down through the Avenue. After they were through playing down there at the theater, they came down the Avenue to play in the clubs down there. Free... just to have a jam session and you could catch them at 1:00 in the morning and sit and listen to the best music in the world being played there. White as well as Black. Bands, you know... musicians, they always did have that openness about them. They didn't care what color you were if you're playing.

At Henri's place, I imagine he paid pretty good. And, he had something over the door that I meant to take down before they tore it down. He had a plaque over the door and it was engraved in wood, "Through this Portal Pass the Best Musicians."... I heard they were going to tear down the Avenue, and I was going to get that sign. And I forgot... I forgot about it. --- × **DUVALLE**  When I was coming up we could go out and we could club all night long, and never touch a White club. Can't do that no more. And this was good music. I mean, you know... yeah, it's—that's been destroyed. And I doubt if it'll ever come back in that venue... that way. ---- × **JONES** 

Along Indiana Avenue... there were quite a few taverns. I don't mean night clubs, I mean taverns. Some of these taverns were known by the nickname "Bucket of Blood" because there was so much violence in there. But there were others that did not harbor those kind of people... did not welcome people who would do violence to one another or damage their property. Sometimes I would zigzag across the street. I didn't want to pass by the Paradise. I didn't want to pass by the Sportsman's Bar, because I knew those were places where people would have fights and talk bad to each other. Not only that, I would cross the street, cross Indiana Avenue and walk down until I got to another such place and then cross over again. --- × **CRENSHAW** 

What I recall about being the daughter of a musician, was that it was almost like a big extended family. They would have rehearsals on Sunday at different ones, member's houses. The mothers would always fix big meals and the kids played together... and the fathers would have their rehearsals. Of course every home had a piano. ---  $\times$  **JOHNSON** 



### × "THE WALKER BUILDING WAS THE ANCHOR"

RMON

NEW-YORK

Perhaps no single space on the Avenue was more significant than the Walker Theater. Opened in 1927 in honor of Madam C.J. Walker, the 48,000 square foot building was home to the Walker Manufacturing Company, but it also included an African-Art Deco themed theater, a ballroom, beauty salon, and the offices of numerous African-American businesses including physicians and lawyers.

X.ONIAL THEATAE & HOTEL

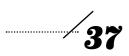
The Walker building was the anchor. The Madam J.C. Walker building was the anchor there. My auntie graduated from her school... hair stylist and all. A couple of my other cousins graduated from her program. But you had photography, you had music stores, you had professional people, doctors, lawyers. Doctor Young, Dr. Brown. You had people on Blake Street, West Street, doctors, lawyers, professional people of all levels right there in the Walker Building area. --- × **ABDULLAH** 

There was a time when everything we had went on at the Walker Building... all the big parties, big dances. --- × **BALLOW** 

My father was a musician with the big bands like Reggie Duvalle, Senior, and they opened up the Walker Theater, which was in 1927. ---  $\times$  **JOHNSON** 

The ballroom of the Walker was in constant use, dances mainly and the occasional dinner. They didn't have much of a kitchen so dinners were not that great... but they had dances. Their ballroom was the only nice ballroom in town, for Blacks... It was full of professionals at that time... And the manufacturing section for the Walker cosmetics took about I'd say half of the building... a third. And their general offices were on the top floor.... they had a pretty sizeable workforce, I would guess. Well, that office was pretty crowded. I'd say had to have been ten people in that office, and I would say at least that many in manufacturing and shipping. --- × **RAY** 

On the corner of Indiana Avenue—Walker Corner they called Indiana Avenue and West Street right in front of the building -- was the congregating point for weekends. Fridays, Saturdays and Sunday afternoons, especially. You dressed up and went to the Walker Cor-



ner. The idea was you tell your friends, "I'll see you at the Walker Corner." That was a big thing. And you dressed up. Nobody came through there that wasn't dressed. If somebody would even think about walking through there, he was disgraced if he wasn't dressed. ---- × **RIDLEY** 

I worked in the Walker Drug Store, which was on the first floor at the point of the Walker Building. And I was a short order cook, a fountain clerk. I made ice cream. And the people talked about the Walker's wonderful homemade ice cream. But it wasn't "home" it was made right down there on the first floor, because I made it. But it was good... it was good ice cream. They had their own ice cream maker; all the equipment they needed. --- × **CRENSHAW** 

We went to school, we went to the Walker. When it first opened they had live shows. They had like, the Nicholas brothers, the tap dancers... they were on there and others like, the Whitman sisters. They also had silent movies. --- × **JOHNSON** 

We'd sneak into the Coffee Pot. Well, I was a kid, so you're not supposed to be there. But anyway, we would sneak in... through the side door of the Walker. --- × **POINDEXTER** 

At the corner was the social place for kids, they had the Coffee Pot there. We went down there and they served Coke, ice cream. You saved your money from lunch every day so that you could go down and have ice cream and coke... just on Fridays. I guess it was open during the week, but we went on Fridays. ---  $\times$  **OSILI** 

They used to have what they'd call The Coffee Pot at the Walker Building. We used to go down there, and have something to eat. Or have ice cream and things like that. --- × **J. COLEMAN** 

The Walker Building opened at the corner of Indiana Avenue and North West Street (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Street) in 1927, eight years after the death of Madam C.J. Walker, and this image was taken a year later. The four-story building was perhaps the heart of Indiana Avenue, with a theater, ballroom, beauty school, myriad businesses, professional offices, and the Walker Manufacturing Company all located in the 48,000 square-foot building.



That was a big thing on Sunday afternoon, too. In those days you left church, you went to the Avenue and you went to places like the Walker Coffee Pot and several other tea rooms and restaurants to socialize. The idea was to be dressed nice and carry yourself well. The people there who ran those places insisted on that. They didn't let you clown—no clowns. And you wanted to be dressed your best because you're trying to impress. The guys impress the girls and girls impress the boys.... So those churches were gathering places more or less. A starting point for many an activity. And Jones Tabernacle—that's where my family went—they had a Sunday afternoon social for young people. They put on plays and taught you how to sing and dance. There weren't too many places where you could learn that sort of thing. --- × **RIDLEY** 

We went to the Walker every Sunday. Sometimes twice. Yeah... you went to the Walker and the Lido every Sunday. And, you went to the Lido on Saturday.... If it played at the Lido, it was a long time after it had originally been released. See, the Walker always got the movies first in the Black community. Then after that you had The Park out on the east side, and then the Lido. Then you had The Douglass on the Eastside, you see. And that's the way it ran. --- × **CUMMINGS** 

We had to go for hours at a time to see the movies. And the popcorn was just fantastic. --- × **POINDEXTER** 

Many things changed along there after they built the Walker Building. I remember going to the Walker Theater as a little kid. My mom and dad taking me there to see vaudeville shows... seeing all these acts coming through on the circuit. And they had top-notch stuff. It was for real. I saw dancers and singers and all at the Walker. ---- × **RIDLEY**  The Walker building is so historical. And it's something that shows that you can do anything if you set your mind to it. It's part of the history of Madam Walker that she came from nothing and made this... ----  $\times$  **JOHNSON** 

## \* "TAKEN CARE OF BY THE BLACK COMMUNITY": MARKETING ON THE AVENUE

As in many American cities that were either legally segregated or simply segregated in practice, Indiana Avenue's rich range of business enterprises was supported almost exclusively by African-American consumers. Many African Americans who came to Indianapolis came with entrepreneurial ambitions, and these newcomers managed businesses throughout the near-Westside. But, for most marketers, the Avenue was the most desirable and profitable space for African Americans in Indianapolis. You have to also understand that that was a time when Black people went to their own restaurants. They went to their own whatever it was. And so, if you had a business, you could depend on people coming to you to buy whatever you had to sell, or use your services or whatever. Our professional people... doctors, lawyers or whatever... they were literally taken care of by the Black community. ---  $\times$  **BALLOW** 

I remember that there was a Blue Ribbon Ice Cream Parlor on the corner of Blake and Indiana. That was a definite hang out. There was also the way that Lockefield was arranged on Indiana Avenue at Blake Street. There were grocery stores, there were beauty shops, there were all kinds of things... And there was a restaurant there called the Chewing Shack that had very, very nice food... So that was kind of a hang-out for young people. --- × **D. POINDEXTER** 

I lived at 12th Street, and we had the grocery stores and we had clothes cleaners and stuff like that in our neighborhood... but we still went on Indiana Avenue to get stuff. --- × **POINDEXTER** 

My brother and my sister and I worked on the Avenue. We would see all of the big cars and people dressed, going into George's Bar, P&P Club, Sunset, Blue Eagle. Money was circulated on the Avenue and this was going on before integration. We were flowing our money... our money was flowing back into our community and jobs were maintained. As soon as we started this integration... things changed. ---- × **WILLIAMS** 

We went to the barber shop called The Marble Palace, which was on Indiana Avenue. ---  $\times$  **J. COLEMAN** 



There were markets right there in the community. There was one in particular that my mother used to shop at and got credit. We would go up there. His name was Abe Klezmer, one of the nicest men I've ever met. I'd go up there to get the milk, get some donuts or a box of cereal, and I said, "Momma said to put it on the bill."... I didn't know how she paid it, didn't have a clue. --- × **ADAMS** 

My father had several jobs and he wound up working at Allison's for a short period of time. And then he worked for, I think it was, Holland Steel, or something of that nature. Eventually he went to Poro Barber School and became a barber. And he was a barber for, oh, 60 years. --- × **BAKER** 

My mother, before she married, studied under Madam C.J. Walker... so she was a beautician before I was born. And, of course, she had beautiful, beautiful, long beautiful hair. I arrived with nothing. I arrived with no hair. She had all this knowledge and all this hair and she had a little bald-headed daughter. But anyway, Madam Walker was her teacher... personally... down there on... what is that... Northwestern? Right by the Walker building... the little green house that used to be there. --- × **ROSE** 

On North Street and Agnes there was a place called Ida's and on Agnes and Michigan Street there was a place called Berkies. This was the first supermarket that we had that I remember. It was a big thing you know. Had all kinds of food in there. Aisles would go up and down... it was a great place to go. --- × **ADAMS** 

Strangely enough, the gambling thing was a major part of the Avenue. They had a walled-off portion where they pulled the numbers every day. The numbers thing was an Indiana Avenue institution. And, if I recall, they had a high fence so you couldn't see what was going on in there, where they pulled the numbers every day. That was around... near the juncture of North Street and Indiana Avenue. And, of course it was a common sight to see runners with their slips in the neighborhood after the drawings were made... running around, paying people off, but all of that disappeared from there in time. ---  $\times \mathbf{RAY}$ 



The construction of Lockefield Gardens required removing 22 acres of existing homes in the neighborhood that were classified as "slum" housing. Demolition of these roughly 363 homes began in December, 1934 and continued for several months into 1935, with Lockefield eventually opening in early 1938.

Figure 4



### × "WE WERE LIVING GOOD": LIFE IN LOCKEFIELD

Opened in February, 1938 as a Public Works Administration project, Lockefield was a segregated community. Lockefield was funded by New Deal programs designed to provide low-rent housing in neighborhoods that had been dubbed "slums." Its 24 apartment buildings were among the near-Westside's most important African-American residential spaces into the 1970s. Its prominence declined, however, as other housing opportunities opened-up in other areas of Indianapolis. In 1983, all but seven of the original buildings were razed.

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A lot of places still had well water where they had to go out and get their water from a well. They had to go out and use an outhouse. But we had running water, hot and cold running water. We had indoor toilets. We had steamed heat... all those things that people talked about were some of the things that I heard people say when I was coming up, you know. I just didn't recognize that because we didn't have that. You know we were living what I thought was... We were living great... We were living good. --- × **ADAMS** 

Lockefield was actually built around School 24.... I believe it took 320 other buildings to make room for Lockefield. They left School 24 standing. --- × **CRENSHAW** 

The highest rent there was 35.00 dollars a month. Well, that was hard money to get up. 35.00 a month and you had gas. And... 40% of that neighborhood had outdoor toilets and pump water. When people got in Lockefield you were way up – "on the top of the house." You had lights and water and gas and flushing toilets. So you were really "sporting." --- × **HALL** 

We moved people. I say "we" because at the time I was big enough to help. I was made to hit the road, too, and help out on the weekend. And we moved people. In fact, when the Lockefield was built in 1936, I was 15 at the time - I had to work after school and on Saturdays helping them move people. We moved quite a few people into Lockefield. --- × **RIDLEY** 

When Lockefield was built my father applied for an apartment and was granted one in... I think, we moved there in 1939. I was born in 1936, and my brother was born in 1937. As a matter of fact, Daddy tells me that when we first moved in at 619 Locke, Apartment 304,

they didn't have all the roofs finished on the apartment buildings. ---  $\times$  **ADAMS** 

Something you never actually thought about Lockefield, was that, when it first started, they put influential Black people there. They were trying to make an impression on everybody. And so, these were lawyers and what else have you... and they was there. ---  $\times$  **POINDEXTER** 

The director of the Lockefield was Mr. Lionel Artis, and the manager was Fred Ransom. His father was an attorney, his brother was an attorney. Also, there was a Mr. [William T.] Wilhite who worked over there. Mr. Wilhite was active with the Omega fraternity. And, there was a lady named Ora King who was a secretary. --- × **PETTRIE** 

Lockefield was built when I was very young, as far as I know, and it never changed a great deal during my formative years. I had an uncle and aunt who lived there, and at the very beginning Lockefield was sort of consumed by middle-class Black people. You didn't have a lot of poor Blacks living in Lockefield when Lockefield was created. You had Lionel Artis who was the manager there, and he was a very stern kind of guy, which I guess was good for that time. And we'd go over and walk through Lockefield's Gardens—a very beautiful place and visit with my uncle and aunt. And, then they had a playground over at School 24, which was on the south end of Lockefield Gardens. --- × **CUMMINGS** 

Well, here's what that statement said about rent. This was in 1938: "Rent is due at the end of the first month every tenant receives a statement from the number of days it takes a tenant to make his rent fall due on the first of the month. Therefore all rents fall due on the first of the month and a full month's rent must be paid at that time. Today every tenant in Lockefield Gardens has paid his rent. There is not a single delinquent account on the books. This is a record we can be proud to maintain." --- × **PETTRIE** 

Well, in my earlier years, Blacks had to live in areas which were considered Black areas.... We lived at 2327 North Parker Avenue for the first three years of my life... the first two or three years of my life. And then we moved to Lockefield Gardens, which was built specifically for Blacks.... I left Lockefield at age seventeen and I went into the United States Air Force. I stayed there for four years; and, then I took another apartment in Lockefield. --- × **CRENSHAW** 

We stayed in our place, as they call it. And we really made our own fun... the kids did in Lockefield. During the days of the Lockefield they had community functions in the building. They had cooking classes. --- × **COE** 

I can remember that at Lockefield we would have a kite contest and learn to make kites. The children would fly them. Who could make the biggest kite and smallest kite? I remember making the smallest one... and we won for the smallest one. Our biggest one broke in two before we could get it in the air so we didn't win the largest kite prize, but we won for the smallest kite. Each year things like that came along. For example, once they had a contest making Valentines... and those that were winners were put on display. And, they took them downtown to Block's Department Store and put them in the window... one of my girl's was on display at Block's Department Store. --- × **PETTRIE** 

Lockefield itself was a wonderful citadel, which offered housing and shopping, protection, safety. A lot of friends growing up there. There was, I believe, 720 apartments in Lockefield, and most of them



had at least one child in them. Quite a few children in Lockefield. ---  $\times$  **CRENSHAW** 

I think of the things that made Lockefield such a good place to grow up in was because there were so many advantages. One, the elementary school, which was in walking distance. And then in all of the actual apartment buildings you could rent space to have birthday parties, Halloween parties, all kinds of things. There was a very nice playground right behind School 24. And, I think, didn't that become the site for the dust bowl? --- × **D. POINDEXTER** 

The dust bowl was started sometime around 1945, 1946, 1947... somewhere in that area. The reason it was a "dust bowl" was because it was played on gravel and... just dirt. And as the kids would run up and down the courts and whatnot the dust would rise up from the dirt. So, as a result of that it became known as the dust bowl. In the early 50s, half of the area was asphalted and a blacktop was put on the other half. Some of the best basketball players lived in and around Lockefield. As it became better known, guys from all over the city would come and to play in Lockefield, you know. You would come over there with your boys and you know – "we got next" or something like that.... Later on when the dust bowl got its notoriety, there would be some White kids that would come in from different high schools to play in the dust bowl tournaments. --- × **ADAMS** 

They'd call it a dust bowl and... come over and practice. And out of them grew a great number of very outstanding basketball players through the recreational center of which I was a part. --- × **PETTRIE** 

There were so many outstanding basketball players... You're talking about Joe Williams, Frank Hazelwood, Richard Crenshaw, Billy Brown, Ricky House... who simply never had the opportunity to play because there were just too many of them. All of them lived in Lockefield. You talk about Bill Hampton.... Oscar lived on a street called Colton Street, right on the other side of Locke Street... and Bailey, his brother. And, Willy Gardner lived over there on Senate somewhere. But most of those guys came from the Lockefield area. --- × **ADAMS** 

Very rarely did a kid even step on the grass because that was forbidden. You didn't walk on the grass in Lockefield. And, if you were caught on it by any of the staff people, maintenance people or office personnel they could report you and often did report kids. And what would happen is your parents would be assessed... I think it was, a five dollar fee, which was an awful lot of money then. ---  $\times$  **CRENSHAW** 

I had relatives that lived in Lockefield. Everybody over there loved it. They still talk about it. How nice it was, how neighbors got along and, they never tore up. That's what everybody said, "They never tore up Lockefield." --- × **KURTZ** 

I remember we would have things and invite people to come over on the grounds. We had a big area playground and, of course, I supervised the playing so that the children didn't get hurt on the swings... you know swinging they'd often get caught. I had to supervise the swinging and encourage them to take part in games, you know... and baseball. Also I worked with the PAL Club person [Police Athletic League Club], from the police department, named Anthony Watkins. He was paid by the police department and he would organize the boys into baseball and games of that sort and they would play at various other parks in the city. I was trying to organize a girl's baseball; but, I told the girls if they didn't obey my rules we wouldn't be playing. But... we were playing and somehow they got into a fight or

something and I told them we were through. I couldn't referee fights. --- × **PETTRIE** 

Part of the first change in residents in Lockefield took place at the end of World War II. During World War II, a lot of people were able to get jobs in factories, and made considerably more money than what was allowed, but nobody had to move during the war time. When the war was over, they were expected to move. Because their income had exceeded the maximum. --- × **D. POINDEXTER** 

We were there from 1939 until about 1951 and we left.... my father made too much money. As a porter at Indiana Bell he made too much money. So if you made too much money you couldn't live in Lockefield. --- × **ADAMS** 

People were poor, and they had been regulated for living there by the amount of money they had, you know. They had to be almost destitute to even live there. If you made too much money, more than a certain amount I can't recall—but if you made too much money, you couldn't live there. So it meant that poor people sort of lived there. But out of them came people who really made a name for themselves in life. So it only goes to show you that it does not matter from whence you came, it's where you're going. It's what you have and that you can become something no matter what you came from. --- × **PETTRIE** 

And I'm trying to remember... probably, maybe, around 1950 it started going down... because by that time so many of the original, or older people had moved out. So, you started to get families where they were really poor... without any expectation of improvement. ---  $\times$  **D. POINDEXTER** 

I was a police officer for 42 years and went to many meetings where people would talk so badly about the "project heads." And I said at one meeting... I just got tired of hearing it... I finally said, "Look, I grew up in a project and the people weren't all that bad." And one man said to me "Well, you may have grown up in the projects, but your parents didn't." Meaning that I had inherited their beliefs and so forth, and their feelings about the neighborhood, proprietary rights, how kids should behave and not interfere with other people's lives and properties. It made a lot of sense. --- × **CRENSHAW** 

And so many of us who lived in Lockefield are still in touch. Even, you know, if they moved to other places, other towns and other cities, there's still that cohesiveness. --- × **D. POINDEXTER** 



### \* "IT WAS JUST A VERY, VERY CLOSE-KNIT, WARM... PROUD COMMUNITY": NEIGHBORHOOD LIFE

African Americans were denied residency in many Indianapolis neighborhoods because of a patchwork of unspoken but systematic racist codes segregating Indianapolis. Because of this, the near-Westside was home to the full breadth of the city's African-American community, with affluent professional and working-class families living alongside each. Fanned by landlord inattention to the properties and wartime migration, much of the 19th-century architecture in these neighborhoods declined after World War II, but numerous well-maintained homes remained throughout the near-Westside into the 1960s.

In that time period there were community organizations in the community that really kind of welded the community together. Like church organizations, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts... a much stronger community cohesion than exists now. There were many organizations there that would help the downtrodden—mutual aid societies. It was just a very, very close-knit, warm, high-functioning, proud community. --- × **WILLIAMS** 

My house—we lived on Center [Street]—had an outdoor toilet. But we had a sink, two sinks in the house. But water was drawn from a well... pumped. I think they were the prettiest streets in Indianapolis at the time. Everybody seemed to care about their yards. They had flowers. I know half the houses along there were just full of flowers in the front yard. And you had porches—because to keep cool at times you sat out on the porch. The houses were painted but mostly rented. Most of the houses were rented because very few people owned homes, they rented. But that didn't mean you didn't take care of your house. You did, because you had pride. --- × **RIDLEY** 

It was a very close-knit neighborhood, Blackford Street, Blackford, Bright, Douglass, West Street... and then California, and Blake. On the corner of... Blake and Michigan there was this huge drug store and at the corner of Douglass and Michigan was a grocery store. So you see, in our neighborhood there were a lot of grocery and drug stores. And on North Street, there was another grocery store. One thing I remember about it... at first Whites only, but then it was later owned by Blacks --- × **JOHNSON** 

When I reflect back when I was a small child visiting my grandmother on Paca Street it was a very close-knit neighborhood. Everyone knew one another.... It was a great environment. I went over there basically every weekend. ---  $\times$  **M COE** 



My earliest memories are when we lived on West Michigan Street. We lived on West Michigan, between Douglass and Bright, and it was very cohesive.... All of us who grew up in that area... a couple of the girls have died... but for the most part, we've all stayed in touch. --- × **D. POINDEXTER** 

Well, you know, I was very young when I was there... But, as I said, it was an all-Black neighborhood. The people who lived in the area... they did various things. Some of them were teachers and some worked in the service industry. But, you didn't have many people that you'd call intellectuals and such... although there were always doctors, some lawyers and all. But even then they were limited as to what they could do and what they could be on as far as boards. ---  $\times$  **BAKER** 

When we were young we used to go to Douglass Park to swim, and that was on the eastside. So you compared your neighborhood with the eastside neighborhood. We went to school to play in the wading pool and to Military Park to swing on the swings. So you had these various comparisons with the neighborhood we lived in because we didn't have a park in our neighborhood—we didn't have any swings, or pools, or anything. The nearest wading pool was School Number Four. That was at Blackford and North Street. --- × **CUMMINGS** 

I grew up there on Center Street. In fact, Center Street was between Walnut and North, and Bright and Douglass, one block street with an alley on each end running over to the next street. There was nobody living in those alleys. You could stand and look down those alleys and you could see through to the next street. But there were alleys nearby that people did live in. The houses were right close to the alley. They called them alleys and streets but they had never been paved. And they were very narrow and actually alleys. --- × **RIDLEY**  We lived around what they call the north side. I guess that's what's you'd call it.... Indianapolis Avenue, Northwestern Avenue, 28th Street, like that.... And what I first remember of my early childhood... it was mixed neighborhoods. I used to play with kids, and, yeah, the people lived in the neighborhood... next door neighbors... either side of us were White. --- × **KURTZ** 

There were a few streets like Blackford and California and Fayette where there were very substantial big homes. There were a few streets like that where the housing was substantial. But, there were more where they were barely above shacks. When you got south of Indiana Avenue, the housing was poor. ---  $\times$  **RAY** 

When I first came to Indianapolis I lived at my grandfather's house 421 Hiawatha Street.... I knew every little stinking house. He built a three-room house onto an eleven-room house. We had two pear trees and people would throw rocks and break the windows... trying to get to the pears. He had a big wall that he did himself... or had made. See the 1913 flood came up to Hiawatha Street... and that's why he built this. --- × **PATTERSON** 

We lived at 133 South Webster Street, which is one block east of Arlington and two blocks south of Washington Street in an area called Irvington... I grew up in that area. That area was very, very, predominantly White. However, we had a certain section of that neighborhood that was historically, this can be verified, that was a Black African area—it wasn't African American at that time—Negro community. And we were literally separated from the White community by a railroad track. We lived on one side of the track, and on the other side our street dead ended at the tracks.... We knew that there were White families on the other side of the tracks.

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Sure, there was pride in the area among the people who owned property. But most of the property, I guess, was rental property. We never—my folks never owned a home, you know. Most of the landlords were White, I'm sure. And then you had some Black real estate people who collected rent for the Whites. And so you never saw the Whites, you know. Blacks were collecting rent for them, and getting "their money"... which was business ---- × **CUMMINGS** 

I remember growing up with Sheila. They'd lived in Irvington and then they moved to Haughville. There was one house in Haughville that didn't fit in. It was a ranch style, lavish home... And, everybody talked about how... whoever was in the family was very wealthy. But... most of the people were common laborers. My father had worked at Kingan's... I forgot about that. He would come home with bloody clothes on... it was a slaughterhouse. But there were... I don't remember anybody's mother or father being an attorney or physician, or a professional at all. --- × **BROWN** 

Blue collar was our middle class, You were able to own a home. You were able to own a car. You were able to send your kid to college, you know. All of those things developed... helped to develop... a middle class within the Black community. --- × **WARNER** 

Well, I knew the schools were segregated; but, I lived in a rather mixed neighborhood. In the neighborhood that I lived in there would be blocks of Blacks... and then the rest would be White. ---  $\times$  J. COLEMAN

My grandfather owned the property in Haughville on 10th Street between Sheffield and Pershing, on the North side of the street. My aunt had a beauty shop there and my grandfather had a grocery store and a place where he sold coal and kindling... we don't even use those expressions anymore. But he owned that... it was a whole half-block from an alley. My grandfather owned everything from the alley to Hershey Street.... And so, we stayed on Sheffield, which was around the corner in the 900 block, 958 North Sheffield, because he owned that house. He owned a house up on Tremont, and he owned everything in that half block and he was... a slumlord, is what he really was. God love him. --- × **BROWN** 

We used to do a lot of things together... and I think we kind of thought alike. So we had friends that were Black... we had friends that were White. It was interesting. We could play with these kids. But, if we were to ride down on our bicycles... ride down 39th Street, for example, they'd holler racial things. --- × **J. COLEMAN** 

Michigan Street was more or less the boundary between White neighborhoods and Black neighborhoods. South of Michigan Street was White. North of Michigan street was Black. But, it had not always been that way. --- × **CRENSHAW** 

As a kid, I remember that there were grocery stores and drug stores in that area, at the corner of I believe it was West Street and Michigan there was a grocery, there was a grocery at Bright Street, and Michigan, and it was owned by a Jewish family named Nisenbaum. I remember that very distinctly because as kids we grew up together. There were five kids in that Nisenbaum family and they lived connected to the grocery. And on Saturdays... one Saturday they would come over to my house, the Holloman family, and the next Saturday we would go over to their house. And, that's where I learned to appreciate Jewish food. --- × **JOHNSON** 

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## \* "TO HAVE YOUR CHILDREN [THERE] WAS... LIKE PUTTING THEM IN A PRIVATE SCHOOL: FLANNER HOUSE"

In 1950 the Flanner House social service agency initiated Flanner House Homes in the area immediately north of Crispus Attucks High School. Flanner House originated as an African-American charity organization in 1898 in the area around St. Clair and West Streets. Its mission was to empower individuals and families to move from instability to self-sufficiency. By World War II it provided health services, daycare, a cannery, and numerous adult education classes primarily for African Americans living in the near-Westside. At Flanner House when I was in high school, we had training for young girls - setting the table, which I already knew and we had sewing classes. I knew how to sew but I didn't know how to renovate.... And, so I would get some of my aunt's old clothes and tear the seams up and make new outfits. --- × **OSILI** 

We had people from all over Indianapolis, and that means the Lockefield area, all over that area... we had people who had their children in the Flanner House social services agency. In fact, at that time, to have your children in Flanner House was kind of like putting them in a private school. Flanner House was a training spot for students at IUPUI—white students. They had nursing students who came to observe in the day care center so they could see children in action. ---- × **WARNER** 

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\* "THE FIRST TIME FOR BLACKS TO PURCHASE NEW HOMES BUILT FROM THE GROUND UP ANYWHERE": FLANNER HOUSE HOMES

The housing program began under the auspices of Flanner House was a teambased program that enabled families to move into brand new houses. The homes were built by the residents themselves through a "self help, sweat equity" model that was designed to provide both skilled trades training and sound housing for African-American families. By 1959, 205 houses were finished. The Flanner Homes was the first time for Blacks to purchase new homes built from the ground up anywhere. And the fact that it was self-help was important; I think they overplayed the self-help, though... But, anyways, it was home ownership and new construction and that was... that was big. It taught them thrift. It taught them mortgage borrowing, and all the things that go with home ownership. ---  $\times$  **RAY** 

I volunteered at Flanner House... to do some accounting work, to keep myself fresh. Then, after I'd been at that 14 months, they called me and said we've got a job in accounting for Flanner House Homes, keeping the books for Flanner House Homes. I left RCA then, and went to Flanner House Homes in November, 1951. And that's how I began working at Flanner House. I worked for five years as a bookkeeper. I was out on the job, I had to count all of the materials... they were just getting started then. And, I had to know what went in all of the houses... that's how we priced them out. --- × **WOOD** 

You had people who worked in factories. You had a cross section... You had to have money to go out and apply for a mortgage. So we based the applicant on if they had enough to qualify... good credit standing, good physical health, good faith deposit of three hundred dollars, minimum of 20 hours per week on the home, and a minimum income of \$ 3,800 a year. --- × **EDELEN** 

The Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission bought up the property, sold it to us. ---  $\times$  **WOOD** 



It was education along with the housing. Because, you know, sometimes you can move people into things and they don't know how to take care of it, so it deteriorates. But with the housing program you had an education program that talked about their insurance, the upkeep on the house. Of course, by them helping to build the house... they knew something about construction, and were able to keep it up. ---  $\times$  EDELEN

On the Westside there were 181 [Flanner House Homes] ---  $\times$  **WOOD** 

When it first started, Blacks here couldn't get mortgages no place... and had no place to live. This was Cleo Blackburn's idea. It was copied from an old mining town in Pennsylvania, the self-help housing. ---  $\times$  **WOOD** 

It made for really close-knit neighborhood. They kind of stayed together and did things. ---  $\times$  **EDELEN** 

A neighbor was in the hospital and his house needed painting. I got a paint company to donate the paint, and about ten of us painted his house in half a day. Things like that happened within the group... In '53 I needed a home now and I got into the program. Work all day at Flanner House Homes, change my clothes at 5 o'clock and work until 9. For one year. That's how I built a house.... I probably worked the most number of hours I worked in my group out of 28. As the houses were finished the person who had the most number of hours got to move in first... On the Westside there were some available... but then we would run out of lots from time to time... you know we had ten, 12 lots. We would have one of three problems... mortgage problem and we pretty well solved the land, but then we ran out of people. That's when I left... Other contractors saw what was happening,... you know, we had gone 15 years by then. Black people will pay their mortgages. They started offering housing, for what, 500 dollars. Yeah, 500 dollars, and do your own landscaping. That's all you had to do. But here with us, you had to work a whole year. --- × **WOOD** 

It was about '58 when they started bringing, tearing all those houses down for the interstate, and that really tore it down, the neighborhood. And then I said my mom and them had to have some place to get a house.... It was a Flanner House type of home over there on Baltimore, 2500 block on Baltimore. --- × **POINDEXTER** 

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 × The Flanner House homes were built by the residents themselves through a "self help, sweat equity" model. By 1959, 205 houses were finished.

Figure 5

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## EDUCATION AT THE OUTSET OF THE CLUSSET OF THE CRUCINE AVAILABLE AFRICAN AMERICANS WERE BARRED FROM INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THOSE RECEIVING EDUCATION WERE GETTING IT FROM PRIVATE AFRICAN-AMERICAN SCHOOLS

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# EDUCATION

**AT THE OUTSET** of the Civil War, African Americans were barred from Indianapolis public schools, and those receiving education were getting it from private African-American schools. In 1869 African Americans began to be admitted to segregated classes in the public schools, and the high schools were integrated in the 1870s. In 1876, the first African-American graduated from Indianapolis (later Shortridge) High School, but post-Emancipation elementary schools in Indianapolis remained segregated. There was not a separate African-American high school until the 1920s. In 1922, however, the school board began construction of a separate African-American high school, which eventually opened as Crispus Attucks High School in 1927. Indiana banned school segregation in 1949, but most African Americans lived in predominately African-American neighborhoods and remained in overwhelmingly segregated schools until the school system was forced to desegregate in the 1970s and 1980s. **2.1** × "A Polished Product" × p. 74

2.2 × "I Thought You Had to be a Genius" × p. 82



# × "A POLISHED PRODUCT: CRISPUS ATTUCKS HIGH SCHOOL"

In 1922, the Indianapolis School Board voted to create a single segregated high school for the city's African-American students. When Crispus Attucks High School opened in 1927 a staff of African-American academics was assembled as the first teachers, and the school always had a reputation for academic excellence driven by well-trained teachers who had often been denied jobs elsewhere because of racism. Attucks won renown for athletics and its music programs as well, with exceptional athletes and musicians alike passing through its halls. The school began desegregation in the 1970s, and Attucks became a junior high school in 1986. It is now the Crispus Attucks Medical Magnet High School for Indianapolis Public Schools and houses the Crispus Attucks Museum.

Attucks was fantastic. You know, what I appreciated so much was the caring of the teachers. Look, the teachers knew we didn't have to be as good... but we had to be better. So they really worked hard to make sure that they produced a polished product. We were that polished product.

They said we had the best teachers because when they built Crispus Attucks there was no place for Black men and women to teach when they had finished college because they couldn't teach in a White school. And then they didn't have enough Black teachers to staff the school. So they went south and pulled teachers into the city, and most of them were college professors. But the pay here was more than they were getting in the South as college professors. We had PhDs and everything else teaching over at Crispus Attucks when I went.

They had more teachers with their masters and their doctors degrees than they had in any other school in Indianapolis, maybe in Indiana. And they—Attucks—produced a whole lot of fine, outstanding people... you name it. From generals all the way down to garbage truck workers. Yes, just a lot of fine people. --- × **A. COLEMAN** 

At Attucks—which had an excellent faculty—they really had an interest in your learning. And they wanted you to succeed. Everybody that I came in contact with there... they had a mentality that they believed that they could accomplish whatever they sought to accomplish. And the fact that segregation was involved and all just meant that they believed this obstacle was not an obstacle. But, really, it was an impetus to cause them to go forward. Many think of Attucks as a great athletic institution, but the athletes had to study, or they weren't on the athletic team. Education was the thing that was foremost. ---  $\times$  **BAKER** 

I attended Shortridge High School for two years, Attucks High School for two years... I helped to open the school up. I was in the second graduating class. ---  $\times$  **HALL** 

I went to Crispus Attucks. The only school. The greatest, the greatest school, greatest high school as far as I'm concerned. As far as home economics, we didn't have cooking equipment so we would go to School 17, which was adjacent to Crispus Attucks. --- × **JOHNSON** 

We went to Crispus Attucks High School. It was a good experience. My son—I have one son—and he is forever asking me, "How do you know everybody in Indianapolis?" I say we all went to Crispus Attucks... so everybody—if you don't know this person—you know the sister, or the brother. I say everybody knew everybody. He says, "Every time we go somewhere you know everybody before we get back home." But, well... not now because we're getting old, we're in our eighties and so forth now... but it was a beautiful experience. I had no problem with Crispus Attucks High School. And I don't know whether some people know it or not but we had the best teachers in the city. --- × **MILTON** 

I went to high school at Crispus Attucks, down the street you know. That was the only school available during that time. And that experience... I wouldn't give anything for. We had teachers who were really interested in us and we knew most of the teachers outside socially. We all went to church together... they belonged to the same sorority. I finished in three and a half years, I could have finished before but I wanted to stay at Crispus Attucks as long as possible. --- × **OSILI** 

Of course I went to Crispus Attucks High School. You had to catch the trolley and transfer... I suppose it could have been worse. But it was an all Black high school and something that we all got used to... an all

Black high school. We had some very good teachers there. Teachers from all over the country... and they were very good. ---  $\times$  **DUVALLE** 

The year my class was coming out, which would have been, must have been about '49... '49 or '50. They gave you one of those tests. And if you did well on the test in math, and English, then they would clear you to go to Attucks or Shortridge. I had the option of going to Attucks or Shortridge. Some kids went on to Cathedral if they were Catholic; but if even you weren't you could go. It wasn't the same type of restriction that the public school had because it was a private school. But, we went to Attucks and we were bused. --- × **BAKER** 

I graduated from School 26 and then, what happened... We had to go to Crispus Attucks. We were right within four blocks, four or five blocks, of Arsenal Technical High School, but we couldn't go there. Now my oldest brother had started at Tech before they built Crispus Attucks High School. Some of my cousins graduated from Arsenal Tech High School but it was 1928 that... I think it was '28... that they built Crispus High School for the Blacks. My older brother and sister had started to Tech, but they took them out. And, they all dropped out, because they did not, they could not accept transferring from a big school... they'd gotten accustomed to it. And then to have to catch a bus or walk, or ride all the way to 12th and [North]Western to this all Black high school.... [It was] Similar to the way—that same thing in reverse situation -- with my nieces and nephews who went to all-Black schools and when they integrated, they didn't want to go to the mixed schools. They had been accustomed to going with their own peer group at the Black schools. My sister's boys and my oldest sister's sons, they had gone to the black schools and then here in the '60s, the '50s when they integrated, around '54-'56, they didn't want to transfer. --- × **REDD** 

My husband taught at Attucks High School. He graduated there and then went back and taught there a few years. He was in the Army, World War II... came out of the Army as Lieutenant Colonel... was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel of the Army... and his uniform is on display in the Attucks museum. --- × **PETTRIE** 

Our principal stood in the hallway every day with a yellow pencil, "Five minutes more," "Three minutes more" We dearly loved him. --- × **OSILI** 

I wasn't planning on graduating, tell you the truth of the matter... but the teachers, I had Helen Brooks. My momma was from the South and there was ten of us children, and I was the oldest boy... and my momma wanted me to get a job, and put school down. My momma got after me, "Get you a job and go help your daddy out." I didn't want to do it, but I said, "Okay, okay." So I decided to do that. But, Mrs. Brooks come to my house. My momma got so mad with her it wasn't funny: "You leave my children alone, blah, blah, blah, blah," and everything like that. And the lady came back and said, "Charles, you're going to need your education, come on back, let us help you." Like I said if it hadn't been for Mrs. Brooks I wouldn't have had mine. --- × **POINDEXTER** 

When I went to Attucks it was fine, but I left about the 11th grade or something, I didn't finish Attucks.... I went to work. I had to go to work. --- × **KURTZ** 

My father died in 1934, the year that I'd just started to high school, and left my mother with 11 children. My oldest brother... Depression time... had helped the family... And then after my father died... It was two years later, my oldest brother died. I was in high school -- and when my oldest brother died -- my mother had no income. She would just have to go out and do day work to send all of her children to school... 'cause my oldest sister married. Therefore, to help my mother with care... Now you can imagine, she's got four, five, six little youngsters at home and they're starting to school. And, I'm trying to go to high school—having to catch the bus in the morning. She has no money. And, I'm trying to get something... give me a nickel or dime, for lunch money, to go to Crispus Attucks. Me having to catch the bus and go all day. Then I'm having to hurry home from school because she's at work... take care of my brothers and sisters at home. That was quite a job. I went until I was seventeen years old. But it was very hard for me to rush home... So anyway, I had to drop out. --- × **REDD** 

One thing a lot of those people were, were constant students. They were teachers, but you get like, Mr. Morton-Finney's family, and Phylis Waters, and my dad. I think a lot of these people at Attucks High School, faculty members—and I know my father—when they weren't teaching they were students. They were in school. I know my father spent many summers at the University of Chicago and Indiana University. I think he got his masters at the University of Chicago, and then he continued taking work at IU, at Indiana University. A lot of these people took classes at what was known as Indiana Extension, which was located on Michigan Avenue between Delaware and Pennsylvania. They called it Indiana Extension. Then after I had graduated from high school, they acquired a building that was on Delaware... so they were also on Delaware. That was kind of like priming the pump for IUPUI... because then IUPUI began coming on the scene.

My mother told my brother that if he didn't get his grades up she was going to send him to Attucks High School—as if that was a punishment. Actually that would have been a blessing for him because we had better credentialed educators than any other high school in the

area. All of our teachers were outstanding. We were not seen as being equated with inferiority. ---  $\times$  **WILLIAMS** 

I started my career in grade school, School No. 19, Frederick Douglass School, on the Southside of Indianapolis. From there I went to Crispus Attucks High School. I was there the whole four years. I was in the band the whole four years under Mr. Brown and also some other great men. Mr. Newsome and Mr. Compton, were great teachers at Attucks. ----  $\times$  **A. COLEMAN** 

I was a pianist for a long time and organist. And if I had not gone to Crispus Attucks high school I might not have learned to play the pipe organ. Jay Harold Brown was my teacher. My favorite beloved teacher. He was a very talented at playing the pipe organ, which he loved. ----  $\times$  **ROSS** 

People who worked and taught at Crispus Attucks were very qualified to be at the university level. However they subjected them to the high school level, which was a plus for us. It was a plus for our children. I so wanted to go to Crispus Attucks and couldn't go. Mom wanted me to go to Washington High School. We were always integrated as far as school. We went to Holy Angels, we went to Holy Trinity—my brothers and I. My mother was Catholic so she wanted us to get kind of the top education as possible. Later on she transferred me into the Mary Cable School. I really didn't want to go because I had seen the difference between the kids that went to local schools... I went to Catholic schools dressed up with hats and some ties—the whole works.

Yeah, Blacks had attended Shortridge before Attucks. They were at Tech, Manual, and Shortridge. So, yeah, I was aware of it. But it was an interesting thing, because I went to segregated schools when I was growing up. ---  $\times$  **J. COLEMAN** 

My commercial arts teacher, Mrs. Dawson, said that she had read an article about the University of Chicago and its college program for the gifted and she thought that I could go. She talked to my parents about it, and they were interested. And, we followed through and I took the entrance exams and passed and went. --- × **BALLOW** 

All of my children went to North Central, they don't know a thing about Attucks High School. But they hear me talk about it so much that they know. They know where I came from. They know if this is important to me, it's important to them. It'd better be. --- × **ADAMS** 

When I went to Shortridge, there weren't too many Blacks there. Most of them went to Manual. And, it made no difference in me. When there was ballgames, we all went together. There was no prejudice at that school, at all.... I never had a Black teacher in my life except at where I went to 7th and 8th grade. All of them were White teachers over there, even the Spanish teacher. All of them. I hurried up and went to summer school twice, because I didn't want to go to Attucks. I was used to all White teachers, and I just stayed where I was. But, my daughter went to Attucks. --- × **BETTY** 

### × I THOUGHT YOU HAD TO BE A GENIUS: SCHOOLING IN THE NEAR-WESTSIDE

African Americans throughout America placed considerable hope in education, and Indianapolis was no different. Adult education classes began to be offered to African Americans in the 1870s, and the fervent commitment to education continued through the 20th century. In 1908 there were seven African-American elementary schools in Indianapolis, and prior to the opening of Crispus Attucks African Americans had attended Shortridge, Arsenal Technical and Manual High Schools. Despite myriad barriers and challenges, many African Americans went on to attend regional and national colleges and universities.

I thought you had to be a genius to go to college. I just never entertained the idea one way or the other, except that it wasn't for me. But then as I went on I realized that there were other people who went on to college from Lockefield, quite a few others who did have that mind. I got out [of the Air Force] and I went to Butler University. ---  $\times$  **CRENSHAW** 

I attended School 24, on North Street, almost between Agnes and Minerva. You would be late if you came to school after 8:30, because morning exercises started. And I lived on 421 Hiawatha Street and that's on the other side of Michigan Street and I crossed Michigan Street and come up to the north and I walked. And there was Emerson Hall with all the doctors... a college. ----  $\times$  **PATTERSON** 

My mother attended Manual High School—when she was growing up—and graduated from Emmerich Manual High School. At that time Manual stressed the German language a lot. That was the big language in that day out of Emmerich Manual. And my mother spoke German fairly well. You know... they used it a lot. --- × **RIDLEY** 

I was assigned to go to School 63. I had finished fifth grade and was entering sixth grade, only to discover, very quickly, that in sixth grade at School 63, everything that they were struggling to learn, I already knew. And see, that started to form—in a very immature mind—a lot of prejudices. The kids were rowdy. The teacher was not exemplary of the kind of teacher I was accustomed to. In the Irvington school system all of my teachers were White. They all spoke to the kids and I will imitate, "Well, good morning boys and girls, and how are you today?" My first teacher at 63 was very boisterous and she used what I considered, from my experience, poor grammar: "Y'all. Y'all don't know how to act." --- × **BROWN** 

My elementary school was Public School 24. I guess—because of them building Lockefield—populations in the schools exploded and they had to find someplace to put these children. And by me being in the first generation of Lockefield children, I was one of those assigned to a kindergarten in the Lockefield commercial rooms. --- × **CRENSHAW** 

My perception of Black and White was quite different from most people. Everybody thinks, "I'm from Indianapolis, I went to Attucks." I did not. I went to Pike Township. There were... in my high school, my graduating class... three Blacks. One was a cousin, another was a girl I dated every once and a while. --- × **WOOD** 

Most of us who went to Catholic schools had relationships with the other kids living in the neighborhood, so it wasn't like it was them or us. We all played basketball together and we all rooted for Crispus Attucks. But nevertheless we were going to the Catholic schools, and coming back into the community. It was our home, our families that made a difference... and everybody was part of that village. ---  $\times$  **ABDULLAH** 

I graduated from Washington High School, which was mainly because we were residing on the Westside. Because after School 63... I was so far ahead of the kids that when it was the end of my first semester, my teacher let me take the final test, for the kids who were getting ready to go into seventh grade, and I scored the highest. So I only spent one semester at 63, then I went to School 75 which was... guess what... a mixed school. --- × **BROWN** 

Even in high school, telling my teachers that I had formal education and experiences around the world from world travel, as an Army brat, they scoffed at it, they made fun of it. The teachers really didn't believe I went overseas... they didn't believe I could speak German. They didn't believe that I had any knowledge of the Japanese language, or their culture... I was told in my senior year I was going to be flunked in Econ, only because of the fact that we had enough Blacks as athletes. So, therefore, you're not going to get this Econ grade and therefore it will probably jeopardize your scholarship to go Purdue or Indiana University to wrestle. I went to that summer school that summer and got a B out of the Econ course and graduated with my class on time and went on to Indiana University and Purdue University and graduated in 1975. --- × **ABDULLAH** 

I went to School 17, that was 7th and 8th grade. And, then, I went to Shortridge. And, then, I went to teachers' college for two years. ---  $\times$  **BETTY** 

I did very well at Washington High School. At an early age I had decided that I wanted to be a teacher. So when I graduated from Washington High School, I had earned two scholarships to go to Ball State University. But in the meantime there were some prejudices at Washington that as I reflect back... racism was there. I was very popular—was in National Honor Society and sang in the highest music group. I could show you my year book and show you Future Teachers of America, this and that and the other. There was a special honor at the end of senior year. Young women were chosen for this court and it wasn't based on beauty. It was based on scholarship. It was so funny because my girlfriends said: "Well, Saundra, you know you are going to be selected." And, well, the bottom line was that I wasn't selected and everybody was shocked. There had never been a Negro girl, and it wasn't going to happen. 1960 was my year of graduation. --- × **BROWN** 

I didn't enjoy IU because the classes were so big in number and I didn't feel like I was getting all the information I wanted to get. At Butler there were nine or ten in the classes and you put your feet up on the chair. It was just like you were home. You could ask questions and so forth. I enjoyed that. ---  $\times$  **DUVALLE** 

I decided I needed more education so I signed-up and went to Purdue. I was a graduate student but couldn't live in the graduate facilities there. So we had to find a room out in Lafayette—out in West Lafayette. We moved into an area where we didn't belong, my roommate and I, and they told us we had to move. We went to see Dr. Hovde, who was the president of Purdue. We told him it was exam time and we didn't have a place to live. He said, "I'll get in touch with you this afternoon." And he opened up that area for "graduate students"... they didn't have any other Blacks there. We stayed there until we graduated. I got my degree from there. --- × **OSILI** 

At IU they were prejudiced—very prejudiced. I was one of the top musicians at Attucks. I was the captain of the band and I had a good ear. Russell Brown was there and he helped everybody. He helped me with my music before I went to IU. I knew all of my scales by ear. I went down to IU to employ all of my skills. But the first day I was there, I was coming down the street to go into this house. It was a house where students lived—Black students. Coming the other way was a young man from Gary and he also played trombone. We became roommates, and come to find out he was in a band, marching. He got in and I didn't... he looked White. That turned me against IU right there. At least at Butler you got what you earned. --- × **DUVALLE** 

I found out about the ugly head of racism when I was going to Butler. Because when I went to Butler, there were like two or three hundred students who would take the admittance test, but only ten were accepted a year . So... I had made very good grades, and I showed my grades to Mrs. Harris and she was so proud of me. She told me, "Well Nancy I want you to go downtown" -- and she gave me the money to see "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves" which was showing at the Indiana Theater, there at 140 West Washington Street where IRT is now. I told her, Mrs. Harris, I cannot go there, because I am a Negro—that was when they were saying Negroes. So anyway, she couldn't understand... and she broke down crying. --- × **JOHNSON** 

From Butler I got a degree in Chemistry, something which I never did anything in. My second degree from Butler was in educational psychology. My third degree from Purdue was in clinical psychology and I worked as a psychological intern. I was the first Black professional at the medical center here. --- × **OSILI** 

School 4 was a very old building and they didn't have any room for me. I was teaching music and all the rooms were taken; and, the only place for me was out in the hall. It was outside this lady's room who I was interested in. I had a young man put his drum up against the door, and I said, "Now hit that thing as hard as you can." That drew her attention. Several times a day she would come to the door. I had no idea at the time that that would be my future wife. Unfortunately, the principal's office was across the hall. So after that drum, they found a place for me in the basement of that old building and I had lots of company—lots of four-legged animals running around on the floor. But we had class down there anyway until they built the new School 4. And there were a lot of rumors that that wouldn't last long because IU was going to take up that building, which they did. --- × **DUVALLE** 

When I got my teaching assignment, my assignment to teach at School 4. And I was thinking how I would relate to those kids and what will my teaching experience be? I really enjoyed having the kids that I had. My whole approach to them—and this would be true if I had students now, Black, White, Native American, whatever—was strive for the best. Never underestimate your ability. I felt it was my task to moti-

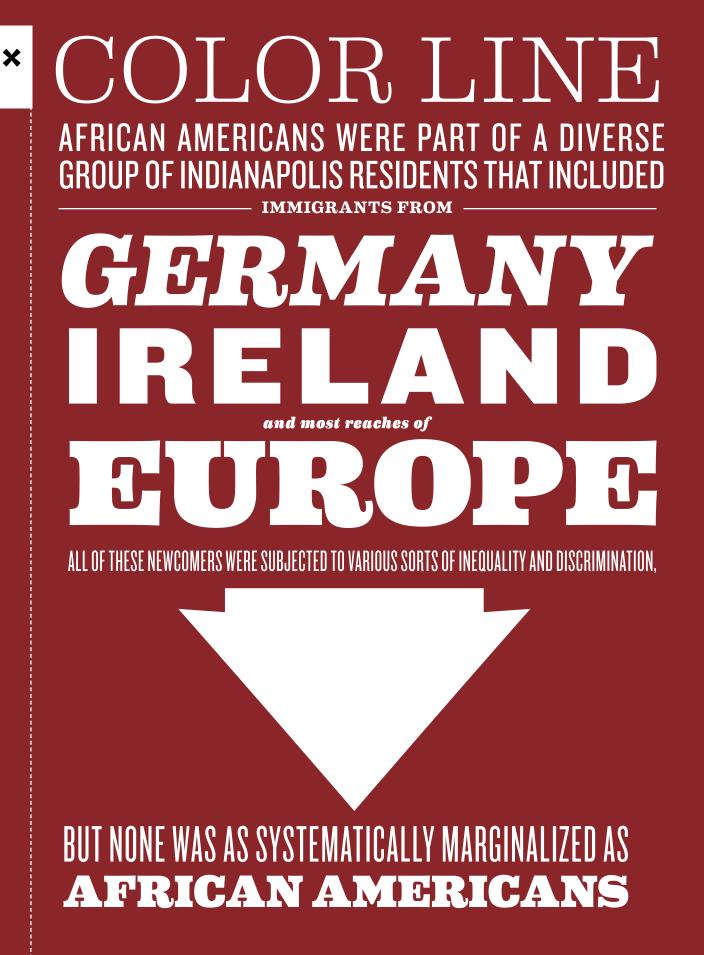
vate the kids that would come to me and frequently stay after school and share horror stories about things that were happening at home. ---  $\times$  **BROWN** 

I was born into a family of teachers. All of my sisters were teachers. Lois, my oldest sister, taught science. My sister Marian was the only one who didn't teach school. And I just wanted to do something—get a job. I wanted a job that was consistent enough to keep money coming in because I could see what a hard time the family was having and I didn't want to go through that. I said I would never be... . My father used to come in late at night off of the job, and I would lay up in bed and say that I would never do that. I don't want to do that. But, that's the very thing I did. I chose to be a jazz musician, and I'd come in very late at night... but that was mostly on weekends because I did get a job teaching. --- × **DUVALLE** 



× Public School Number 4 sat at the northeast corner of Blackford and Michigan Streets. A series of buildings sat on the site, including this one in 1923.





# the COLOR LINE

**AFRICAN AMERICANS** were part of a diverse group of Indianapolis residents that included immigrants from Germany, Ireland, and most reaches of Europe. All of these newcomers were subjected to various sorts of inequality and discrimination, but none was as systematically marginalized as African Americans. In 1900, almost 10% of the city's population was African American, and 30 years later it was at 12% as the result of Southern migration from the turn of the century onward. These newcomers and long-term residents found a variety of barriers to basic citizen rights such as home ownership, and over the 20th century a segregated African-American community flourished in the near-Westside even as those same residents continually pressed for full citizen rights.

I remember talking to my grandmother, who worked on Indiana Avenue in the early '20s... around that time. She worked for a German tailor, and she would talk about how many German stores, or immigrant stores, European immigrant stores there were around the Indiana Avenue area. --- × **JOHNSON** 

- **3.1** × "There is a thing about segregation" × p. 94
- **3.2** × "Now, You Know that's Not Right" × p. 108
- 3.3 × "The Costs We Paid" × p. 116
- **3.4** × "Somebody Probably Knew About it Downtown" × p. 122
- **3.5** × "It was for Progress" × p. 130

# \* "THERE IS A THING ABOUT SEGREGATION": RACISM AND THE COLOR LINE IN INDIANAPOLIS

Indianapolis was not legally a segregated city, but in everyday public space a host of unwritten codes regulated African-American public privileges. Parks, stores, and neighborhoods were often implicitly understood to be White or Black spaces, and the African-American recognition of such unspoken codes was a critical key to African-American life and resiliency in 20th century Indianapolis.

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There is a thing about segregation, in a city like Indianapolis... it was there and everybody knew it. But it had gotten to the point where... well, there it is. But then we've got some nice places, too. So we don't need to worry about it, you know. You weren't deprived, because you did have places to go. We had tearooms and restaurants and just a lot of nice places. We had a bowling alley, a nice new one, Ferguson's bowling alley. It was across from the YW. The YW was as nice as any in town. And you had the YM over on Senate Ave. --- × **RIDLEY** 

As long as segregation was the system under which we were commanded to live... there was nothing noticeable about any changes. And the changes were so gradual that those of us who came up under the established system... Many of us, I guess, didn't particularly notice the changes until later on. When we were coming along, everything was segregated: the parks, the playgrounds, the swimming pools, the theaters. Everything was segregated. --- × **CUMMINGS** 

The Avenue—you could walk through—was just like Harlem. It was bustling with people and all. Everything going on. They were all supportive of the Attucks teams and all. And it was a good experience in spite of the segregation, because you felt equal. Although, in fact, you were not... you felt equal. --- × **BAKER** 

Strolling down from Attucks on down West Street you passed all these nice places. We did have so many nice places. And that's the reason why when people talk about segregation, I never experienced segregation... as far as being called names, or this other thing I heard about, having to get off the sidewalk and all that. Being called names... that upset you. I didn't experience that because we had such a nice way of living. I know it was there, but we didn't experience it on a day-to-day basis. --- × **RIDLEY** 

As a young person you didn't experience it... you was already told what to do by your parents... and you didn't experience too much racism because you wasn't allowed to go anywhere. --- × **KURTZ** 

I carried newspapers, I carried The Recorder, The News and The Times for a while. I decided at one point—I dropped out of school when I was 17—I decided that Indianapolis held nothing for me... that I wasn't going to go nowhere... Unless I was going to be sweeping floors, mopping floors at Allison's, working in restaurants for the rest of my life. --- × **CRENSHAW** 

I had an experience with the Ku Klux Klan... I guess I was about ten years old. I looked out our back bedroom window. I looked out the window and they were already dressed in our backyard with their white robes—the Ku Klux Klan. My mother saw me and pulled me away by the back of the neck and pulled the shade down so they wouldn't see me. They just happened to do it in my yard... to get dressed. They were having a meeting someplace but they were getting dressed in the backyard. I was just a kid, I was probably no more than ten years old, maybe nine. And I said, "Mommy look!" She pulled the shade down and pulled me away from the window. I thought that was unusual. --- × **DUVALLE** 

My grandfather was quite an interesting character. He was a Civil War veteran. His name was Charles Marshall. He had fought in the Civil War on the Union side. He was born in Kentucky as a slave... and he enlisted and served with the 19th Regiment as an infantryman. And when the war was over he was given some land—so many acres and mules—and he was a farmer in Kentucky. Then later on he met my grandmother. Her name was Harriett Hodges and she lived in Hodgesville, Kentucky. She was also born as a slave. She was a good deal younger than my grandfather but they married and raised a family, there in Greensburg, Kentucky until the White farmers burned them out several times. Yes, set their house on fire. And then they later moved to Indianapolis because it became unbearable. He moved his family to Indianapolis. --- × **HALL** 

I can vividly remember a service station and it had a restaurant on the corner of Shanghai and Lafayette Road. A sign up there, "We cater to Whites only" and another one at 71st and Michigan Road. It's gone, long ago... "We cater to White only." Now, when we left our Flanner House home, we moved back out here, and I would pass that restaurant. My son would ask, "Dad why don't we stop there?" I wouldn't answer. Later on I told him. --- × **WOOD** 

The only problem I can remember... White Castle. I think it's still there. Blacks could not go in there. My brother, by playing with these kids, when they got some money they'd want some White Castles -nand they'd all go together. They would go in and get the White Castle sandwiches and bring them back so my brother could eat with them. Now I remember that. This would have been about, in the early 40's. ---  $\times$  **MILTON** 

[Her husband] said he was born at General Hospital, and his sister couldn't be born there, because Blacks could only have one child at that time in the hospital.--- × **EDELEN** 

When I was in fifth grade in School Number 4 my tonsils had to come out. And my mother was in the back kitchen in Methodist Hospital. So she made contacts with one of the doctors at Methodist Hospital and he came to our house on Boulevard Place. And they stretched me out on the dining room table and removed my tonsils. --- × **ROSE** 



I decided that I had to get away from Lockefield... from Indianapolis. There was nothing here for Black people. ---  $\times$  **CRENSHAW** 

The thing that I can remember, vividly, about my high school days and my grade school days... we went downtown to the Legislature to take classes down there and to see the legislature work. We ate at Fry House on Washington Street. There were four Blacks in my class, and we had to eat in the kitchen. --- × **WOOD** 

Well, the most blatant act of racism, and it really disturbed me, was on the real-estate page. The real-estate was listed "for colored." I never listed mine that way and I told The Star to never put that on my ads... But that was the first thing that hit me. "For coloreds." This was in 1946 and seemed ridiculous to me. The other thing that disturbed me was I saw Black kids waiting in the winter time for a bus to take them to a school miles from where they lived. Miles from where they lived, when there was a school right around the corner. --- × **RAY** 

Racism affected the Police Department every bit as much as it would affect any other job, especially since being a police officer was a government job. It was subject to people who had political influence and was populated by people who had a lot of political influence.... If you knew the right people then you could get a job as a police officer. If you knew the right people you could get promoted or you could get a particular assignment. It wasn't all that way... but racism and political influence played a great role in the personnel actions on the Police Department. --- × **CRENSHAW** 

I drove different vehicles for the motor court during World War II and worked at the Servicemen's Center. It was south of Michigan Street on Senate Avenue, not too far from the YMCA. At that time there were a number of troops stationed at Camp Atterbury, and they would come into town to the Servicemen's Club. Everything was segregated, even the motor cars we had the Black unit and then the White unit. We had our own unit, and they had theirs. Our instructors and all... when we were organized... were White. And they would come to our meetings and give us guidance. They were very nice. We had uniforms and all. But everything was separate then. --- × **HALL** 

A White employer told my mother to tell me to come out and get a job there because he had come to Indianapolis and he understood that C.T. Worth wanted him here to help to integrate that business of his. I got to the employment office and walked in and there were no Blacks in the employment office. All white kids sitting around and filling out these applications and taking these aptitude tests and all, and the girls behind the counter passing out applications. And so I walked up to the girl at the counter and she asked me how could she help me. I said, "I'd like to have an application." She said, "I'm sorry, we're not giving out applications." And there's a White girl standing right beside me asking for an application and she gave her one... and she said they're not giving applications out. So I walked out, turned around and walked back in and said "thank you"—and turned around and walked out. Now that's the way I always had learned to treat people. I went home and J.P. Worth called me and asked how did you do with the application? And I said, "The girl said they weren't giving out any applications." He said, "Dorothy, at 2:00 I want you to be there and don't ask for the application. You walk up to the same counter and ask for J.P. Worth. He's the superintendent of that office, Dorothy." I walked up to the counter the next day at 2:00, and said "I'm here to speak to J.P. Worth." The same girl that had told me there were no applications the day before turned red as a beet and opened the gate and had me come in and go around to his office. Everybody in the other part of the office stopped working for me to come in... And he told me about what my mother had said about me and how he felt if I was anything like

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my mother I could do the job, I'd work out. I could get along with the people. And I did. That was at 2:00... . At 4:00 I was a film reader—had gone through all the examinations, had been finger-printed, and was on the job, at 4:00. Up in the metallurgical laboratory, as a film reader. ---  $\times$  **REDD** 

The only thing you could be at Allison's when I was there was a janitor... and that's the reason I left. When I came back from the service, I had the same job when I came back as I had when I left. I worked out there three weeks and I left. --- × **KURTZ** 

I just went out and got me little jobs and worked domestic work... most of the places my mother worked. People in their homes with families, would take me. My mother was a cook in the homes in those days. We were all domestic workers, even out of high school, most of the jobs, up until after World War II were domestic jobs, even for men... For the Black men and women in this city... to have a job, to be a cook in somebody's home, to be the maid, you know. It wasn't much pay, but everything was cheap then. You could get a loaf of bread for a nickel.

I cooked and kept house for people in Muncie... for families. They tipped me one dollar.... We didn't do many things on campus. You couldn't stay on campus and you couldn't swim in the swimming pool at Ball State at that time. ---  $\times$  **ROSE** 

My grandfather taught me it's not necessary to say "yes, ma'am" and "no, ma'am." He said that belonged with the feudal system—that belonged with the slave system. It means "I know my place, Mr. White Man." ---  $\times$  **PATTERSON** 

When I got out after three years in the service in 1950, I tried many places to get a job in accounting, that was my degree. But because of the color of my skin I couldn't get a job. I bought a car, had to pay for it, so I went to work at RCA... I think they had hired someone in their accounting department and thought maybe I might break into that... But I unloaded trucks on a dock for 14 months, beside a fourth grade education guy. Same money, same thing. --- × **WOOD** 

My husband... worked at Lilly's. But, when he first went to Lilly's I know he had to work in the service department but had his degree in accounting.... Lilly's was the one place, the one place in Indianapolis that didn't lay off during the Depression. But it was segregated.

I got the job as a psychological intern at the medical center. So they asked, the psychologist under whom I was doing this work said, "Well, where are you going to eat?" I said, "Well, where do you eat?" She said, "I eat in the dining room." I said, "Then I shall eat in the dining room, too." And she turned very red and didn't say a word and I went down with her. The people behind the counter weren't really sure what to do… I was always very well dressed—because like I said—my mother made all of our clothes... I went through the line, and they looked at one another. I had my tray and went on through the line. They had one more look, you know, the domestic staff... they didn't have any real Black professionals. But, I took care of that. No more questions were ever asked. --- × **OSILI** 

I went to Indiana Extension in the afternoon and I worked at Long Hospital at night. I was a nurse aide. And then they called me over to General Hospital. They had an ad in the paper at General Hospital... said it wanted someone who was a high school graduate and had some science background. I had taken all the science courses except phys-

ics. So, I go to answer the ad and they let me know I wasn't from the right high school and they weren't hiring any colored—but, they were going to train you for lab technician job and all. So I went back to do my nurse aide work. I worked on the diabetic ward at Long Hospital. They called me back—was I still interested? Of course, in the large hospitals they have someone who works in the darkroom all the time; so they hired me to work in the darkroom. And boy, did I go through hell there. --- × **PATTERSON** 

My mother was a domestic for a while. As a young girl I can remember my sisters and brothers going with her to clean some homes. But soon after, as the family increased, she became, I don't want to say "just" a housewife... but, she just stayed at home. My father did various things, but basically he was a construction worker. --- × **BROWN** 

All the Blacks and Whites came and played with my family.... So this little girl, she was around my age, Anita. When it came time to eat, she'd ask her mother if she could eat—stay over and eat with Dorothy —and they would say yes. Okay. My mother would give her the best plate, best seat and all, because there was so many of us—made some of us sit on the washboards. But made room for her to eat, you know. Now, this is the first time I recognized segregation... discrimination. When I was at her house playing with her and her mother told me to ask my mother if I could stay for dinner at dinner time I did. Anita had an old table, two chairs... little girl's table in the kitchen. And that's where Anita and I had to eat. Around the dining room table all the family, the grandmother and grandfather and Anita's two brothers, mother and all them was at the dining room table. Right there, as a child, I told my momma, I didn't get to eat at the table with the family...

My father was the only Black employee at a wholesale candy and tobacco place named Hamilton and Harris. Mr. Harris was the president. He was about ten years older than my father, but they were like brothers. He lived at 3510 Washington Boulevard... I never will forget. And we didn't know anything about racism or oppressions or anything like this when we were coming up... because it was always... they were down at our house. He had older children and when I was a little baby they would pick up me and my sister, and they just nurtured us. And then we would go out to their house... they were millionaires.

#### ---- × JOHNSON

At that time we had the Indianapolis Recorder. But then in the Indianapolis News on Saturday, we had one column... on the last page of the Indianapolis News. It was written by Francis Berry Costen and it was a social column.... For the "colored people." That was our news in the White papers. --- × **HALL** 

On Sundays, musicians would get together and have dance sessions. I had a step-uncle who could tap dance, and he played the horn and the drums —and I always liked to dance. We went out to a Municipal Gardens dance session. A White girl and Bill got up and danced—immediately it was cut off. No more dance sessions. He was Black and dancing with a White girl. ---  $\times$  **COE** 

When my mother and grandmother negotiated for the house, she had to have a Caucasian do the negotiation for her because... it was difficult for them to get mortgages and things. When we moved there was a family catty-corner across the street from us right on the corner of 29th and Indianapolis.... They set their house on fire because they were Black and moving into the neighborhood. --- × **WARNER** 



I experienced the South differently from what I'd heard when I went to Dallas.... Dallas was a lot better and further along than it was here, in my hometown. The first thing I noticed when I went to Dallas was a hotel that was run by Blacks—it was the same as the Marott here... And you went to the big shows. You'd catch the elevator and go upstairs and you'd sit in the middle and on each side was White. You were in the middle and you saw everything... and the people treated you better than they treated you here. --- × **KURTZ** 

A German doctor delivered us... and I got the birth certificate. In 1917 and 1919 when me and my brother were born, they didn't put a birth certificate in the parents' hands. But momma went to the place to be sure that everything was good and in order because... sometimes you born today in a snowstorm and it may not get recorded until the next day. So anyway, when we asked for our birth certificates he comes back and says we were White. Jessie thought it was funny, and I didn't because I couldn't take it. And I called right away - long distance. I talked to somebody named Olga and she was very indignant because she thought I was questioning her credibility about what happened. In Franklin D. Roosevelt's days they copied records and assumed that if we lived in that area and we had a German doctor, we must be White. --- × **PATTERSON** 

My husband was in the infantry. And he later served in Italy with the 92nd Buffalo Division in Italy. In 1991, my husband went to the White House. One of his comrades, Vernon Baker, was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Clinton. --- × **HALL** 

We went to Okinawa and we stayed until 1955. In 1955 we came back for a little time here in Indianapolis... kind of looked around, saw family and we took off again to Germany. We stayed in Germany for seven years coming back here in 1962—and that was the real start of the Black community. When I came back I was just a kid, 14, 15 years old... . The freedom marches and the lynchings and things were going on. It was really, really traumatic for me. Coming back from Europe and coming back from Okinawa, Japan... having the opportunity to look back from America... look into America from outside of America. I never really experienced any prejudice until I came back to America and landed in Hawaii and they called me the N-word and served me some cold food there... in 1962. Then, when we came back here again... there was a little bit of change. --- × **ABDULLAH** 

At that time - my husband and I - we weren't married. We were going together. He enlisted in the service... in the Navy, in '42. After he left I transferred out... to Puget Sound Navy Base. I worked in the Puget Sound Naval Base, oh, for over a year-and-a-half. And then I left there and I went to Seattle. I got on at Boeing Aircraft. I was a riveter and a welder. And then, in 1945, when the war was over, my husband insisted upon me coming back to Indianapolis where he had left me when he went into service. --- × **REDD** 

I was stationed in Washington D.C. I was sent there in 1955 and stayed till '58 when I was discharged. They said, when Eisenhower became President, Washington D.C. was as segregated as any segregated city in the South of the United States. But Eisenhower came in and he said "It's over. No more segregation in the capital of democracy." It was overnight, it changed. So when I came back to Indianapolis, I guess I was a little bit on the edge, looking for it... --- × **CRENSHAW** 

I was very involved in politics and civil rights. I could speak Spanish since I was a sophomore at Attucks... and, I won the State's Spanish contest. So, I got into politics and different organizations—the Black Panther Party, The Migrant Flower Union Program, The Crusade for

Justice —And I was working very closely for tenants rights in the Denver Housing Authority. ---  $\times$  **WILLIAMS** 

Your parents would tell you, you can't do this, and you can't do that. You could ride the street cars, but... I remember you could ride the Indy Urban out of here, but when you got to Louisville, even on the train, you had to split up. You know... discrimination. --- × **KURTZ** 

In Danvers, Massachusetts—the lady there, in charge of the psychology department was Dr. Grace Kent—the foremost female psychologist. She produced psychological tests and all. They had a Halloween party at the hospital and they depicted Negroes with black faces and white lips. You know, at this party at the hospital... a mental hospital, mind you. Wow! She was so appalled, her parents were abolitionists. So she said to the psychologists here, if she could recommend a Negro to work under her at the hospital in Massachusetts... Well, by the time I got there they were having some sort of party and I went. And the reception I received was so cold that I thought, "I'm not going to like this." But I did... I enjoyed it. They thought I was the colored girl—but not like anybody else. I was the exception? --- × **OSILI** 

I remember the first time I saw a White young lady jogging down Indiana Avenue. I had to shake my head. I said, "When I first came over here, that never would have happened... That never would have happened." But that was just a sign then... that change is coming. ---  $\times$  **JONES** 



# × "NOW, YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT RIGHT": THE COLOR LINE DOWNTOWN

Most consumer spaces in Indianapolis always accepted African-American dollars, but they also often inflicted everyday indignities on African-American consumers: Some stores would not allow African Americans to try on clothing, restaurants might require an African American to eat at a particular space or go outside altogether, and service was often dehumanizing. However, many African Americans routinely included downtown stores among the venues they frequented and developed distinctive coping skills and strategies to negotiate and surmount racism in those spaces.

I had two sisters and three cousins who worked for Hooks Drug Store, at the soda fountain and they prepared food for people.... They insisted, since they hadn't seen me for a few months, that I sit down and eat. Well, I knew we weren't supposed to sit down and eat at the lunch counter, and I didn't want any trouble. I had seen and heard about the Civil Rights sit-ins and so forth in the South.... I did not want to sit at that counter, but they insisted and I said "Now, look, you know, I don't want any trouble. I know how these people are." Their supervisor was a White lady, her name was Nelly. And Nelly came over while they were insisting that I sit down and she said "Now, you know that's not right." She said that to my sisters, and my cousins and they said to Nelly, "If we can cook and wait on all the other people that come in here, we are going to wait on our brother, our cousin, who is standing there in the uniform of the United States Air Force." Now, that surprised me, I had never experienced them talking about some deep-seated feelings... but it surprised me. It shocked me. It scared me, because I knew that the police were next and they were gonna cart me off to jail... I sat in my little Air Force uniform, scared to death and hurried-up and ate and got out of there. --- × **CRENSHAW** 

I can remember sitting on the Circle... at a store, you know... down on Washington Street. I was sitting, because they wouldn't let us sit at the store's counters. Now kids can go anywhere and everywhere, and they think it's always been. --- × **WARNER** 

We would see the White kids try on shoes. They had a store policy where coloreds couldn't try on shoes... or, if you tried them on you owned them. That... and I also knew when we would go into Kresge's to have a hotdog or a submarine sandwich, whites could sit at the counters. But they would have a little area near the door—with a round circular tabletop—and we would stand there and eat our submarine

sandwiches. We could see in plain view Whites sitting comfortably. ---  $\times$  **WILLIAMS** 

One of the things that might be interesting to people who aren't aware of what we African Americans endured: My mother and I were in Woolworth's on Washington Street, and I said, "Momma, I'm hungry, I'm hungry. Let's go... can we go sit down?" She says, "Oh no, we can't sit down if you're hungry. We have to go to the stand-up counter." And she got a me a hotdog and whatever... But I have never forgotten that because I thought it was so unfair. I was tired and I was hungry and I couldn't go sit down. --- × **D. POINDEXTER** 

The only thing downtown you went to was the department stores. You had your own shows... . I never was exposed to too much racism until I got into the Army. ---  $\times$  **KURTZ** 

I certainly had the experience of going to the five-and-dime stores downtown and you'd have to sit at one end of the counter... not being able to sit on the first floor in the Circle Theatre not being able to eat in Fendricks Restaurant at all on Illinois Street. I can remember that. That has happened in my lifetime. --- × **RADFORD** 

There were big hotels downtown like the Lincoln Hotel, Claypool Hotel. There was a time -and theaters too - Black people could not frequent until, you know, the '60's. --- × **JOHNSON** 

We were on this streetcar, and my mother sat down next to a man, and I was sitting... I guess, maybe in the front or something. But I heard my mother say, "Quit punching me." And I heard her say again, "Quit punching me!" Finally she said, "What is... what's wrong with you?" And this man says, "I don't want you sitting next to me." So she said to him, "Then you get off." --- × **RADFORD**  × Woolworths stood on Washington Street and was among the downtown department stores near-Westside residents patronized throughout the 20th century.

#### Figure 7



12-23













The only socializing you'd do downtown at that time was... well... there wasn't any socializing downtown. But, I never had any trouble about department stores or anything like that. In fact, I knew sales people in some of those stores. I'd walk in the store and they'd recognize me.... There were some small shops that you didn't go into because the people were weird. You knew they were, and you didn't fool with those people. But the department stores, Block's, Ayres, Penney's, all the big stores... you didn't have any problem. You buy what you want. You got the money for it. I'd wear Arrow shirts when I was 12 years old. My brother bought the best clothes... stayed sharp. And he insisted that I had to. --- × **RIDLEY** 

Every Saturday this was a ritual. Every Saturday my mother would take the bus and we'd ride... This was a big thing. I liked to stay on Illinois Street and Washington Street... because Block's was on Illinois Street. Ayres and Wasson's were on Washington Street. We would go through there...but we would end up down on the end of Washington Street where there was the Leader Store. There was all these stores... Kresge's, that type of stuff. I liked to stay in the big beautiful stores... Of course, she couldn't afford that kind of shopping. --- × **MILTON** 

We could shop downtown... we certainly could. There has been talk people would say that there was segregation at that time and there certainly was. However, we could go downtown and shop for whatever you might need. So there was a lot of diversity in the way people furnished their homes, the way people dressed. --- × **ADAMS** 

I can remember my mother used to go to the City Market. When you went there you had to catch a streetcar and go all the way downtown. It was at the same place that it is now. And, course my mother was young and she would get off the street car and she would have two market baskets. ---  $\times$  **HALL** 

The main stores downtown were L.S. Ayres, William H. Block, and H.P. Wasson's, and that's where we shopped. There was one lady... she was a Jewish lady and her name was Miss Wolfe. She was in the children's department on the fifth floor at Wasson's, that's where our mother took us. And the thing that was so delightful about downtown shopping, was at Christmas time, the holidays. The windows were all decorated and they had all these animated figures. --- × **JOHNSON** 

We could go to Florsheim Brothers, LS Ayres, L Strauss, because my grandmother had charge accounts at all those places. So, you know, our money was green, too. They had the sense to know that. Of course, I'm talking about in my time. Maybe earlier it was quite different. And then there's some people that will suggest to me that the theatres were segregated at that time. I don't remember that. For the most part there was a theater on Indiana Avenue called The Avenue and there was, you know, of course, the Walker Theatre and then there was the Lido Theatre. So we were self-contained. We didn't have to go to the Lyric or the Indiana or the Circle if you didn't want to. --- × **ADAMS** 

I got me a little spare job down at Ayres in the Tea Room, you know, like from about 11:00 until the lunch hour was over... I had worked at Ayres extra during the summertime, you know. And, I knew Lyman [Ayres]. Like, I was 15 and I told him I was 16 and he was 17—I was born in 1909 and I was 15 when I worked down there—I told him I was 16. I was so little though, you know. He probably didn't know that I was working there at that time in the Tea Room. He was kind to me. --- × **BETTY** 

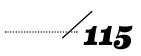
One of my girlfriends and I, we were... I wouldn't call us rebels, but... as soon as Woolworth's allowed us to sit down, we were there. It was the same way with the movie theater. The downtown movie theaters.



I don't remember what year it was that they allowed Blacks to go those.... I just remember that, Sue Ellen and I... we were bound and determined that we were going to go, and so we went to the Indiana Theater. I don't remember what we saw. --- × **D. POINDEXTER** 

I would have to take the train, the Spirit of St. Louis, and it would take me to Indianapolis... to Union Station. I was so set against the treatment I received at Union Station that when the city bought that place and renovated it and everybody was talking about how wonderful Union Station was, and hold their events there. I would not go to any event in Union Station... and still won't. Glad it's closed.

---- × **CRENSHAW** 





### × "THE COSTS WE PAID": INTEGRATION AND THE NEAR-WESTSIDE

In the wake of World War II, the growing African-American community in Indianapolis pressed for citizen rights that had been state and federal law since at least the 19th century but were universally ignored in everyday life. Housing, employment, schools, and public accommodations were near the top of this list. And as segregation's barriers began to fall away, the African-American community concentrated around Indiana Avenue began to gradually move into neighborhoods beyond the near-Westside. When Blacks began to really integrate and move around, they began to utilize the businesses in the new neighborhoods where they were moving to... and all of those businesses were owned by Whites, because the neighborhoods that they were moving into were White. And that was one of the costs we paid to integrate. I guess, most of the Black businesses couldn't afford to make those moves becomes of economics. But you had White businesses that were already established there. And besides that, a lot of the White businesses in those fringe areas were patronized by Blacks anyway, even before integration. --- × **CUMMINGS** 

We had a lot of friends that lived down in this area who moved to other areas later.... World War II came around, and so many of us went in the army and left town. When we came back after the war, they had the GI Bill that came in, right away. As soon as we got out, you could go to school, you could buy your home and all this sort of thing. And they moved to areas they had not lived in before. Find a house and you can just move in the next day. So there was a big change-over. And this is what caused a lot of the rental houses that were on this side of town to become rundown... because they had to rent to anybody. And a lot of the people that were coming in from other places didn't have the home-feeling like the people that had been here since the turn of the century. --- × **RIDLEY** 

I would say if you look into the 1940s into the 50s... that span of 25 years in that particular period of time, post-World War II. Once they began to come back, the soldiers coming back to their jobs, coming back to their communities, marrying, having children... a lot of the things that Black men and women wanted to do and never had that opportunity to do so. If there were young men coming back wanting to sell cars, and automobiles, and things like that in the 50's, or to sell real estate and those types of things... it was very, very hard for them



to break into that industry. Most of the people who were very educated to do those things, or very astute to want to be a part of them, were denied their opportunities to be a part of the American Dream, really.

When I went to Butler University, they only allowed ten students in a year... ten Black students. Now, that began to break down when the veterans came back from World War II. And they had the advantage of the G.I.B.—the G.I Bill of Rights. So the veterans came in and that's when they started admitting Black folk more frequently than they had in the past. --- × **RADFORD** 

I attended Butler University. I received my masters there and at the time I enrolled there was a quota system, only so many Black students could be admitted per year. So after I began to teach I decided I wanted a Masters. I went out one day after school to enroll. I went in the office, filled out some papers. The secretary went behind the little door. I don't remember the gentleman's name now, but I heard him ask her "is she a teacher?," and she said "yes" and he said, "It would a good idea if you ask all of them that question as to whether or not they're already teaching." So she came back out and I was admitted because I was one of all those that was teaching. It was very hard. They wouldn't take but just so many a year. --- × **ROSE** 

Now, with the bowling alley... my husband and I made an attempt to keep that going because he helped my father with that after we were married. But people made the decision to go to the other bowling alleys, and so we did not have the same business. Plus, we did not have the police protection in the area that we needed. We had terrible problems with the hoodlums coming in and stealing people's stuff. You know... things off the cars and whatever. --- × **BALLOW** 

I think you could gradually see the decline in the patrons... Same class of people, but not as many as before, because times were getting harder as the years went on. Pretty soon it got so bad that they had to close everything on the Avenue. They started tearing down the buildings.... But you could see that each year you had to do more than before. You had to do twice as much... it was harder and harder. --- × **DUVALLE** 

As soon as we started this integration, things changed. They didn't want you down there, but they had to let you in there. So as a consequence money was re-directed from the coffers of the Avenue to outside the Avenue. And the businesses on the Avenue suffered to the point that they went out of business... the ball room and the Cotton Club. Ferguson had the Sunset Club and then he had the Oriental Café... but all of these businesses suffered because of integration.

The night life had already almost vanished. The one bar that I—I didn't go to any bars—but the one bar that Black professionals went in with confidence was not owned by Blacks... that business had gone down based on the fact that a couple of men, the Ferguson brothers, passed away. Denver died first... and when I came his brother, Sea, who was a fraternity brother of mine, was up in age and wasn't pushing real hard. So their business was on the downslide when I came here... almost gone. ---  $\times \mathbf{RAY}$ 

You had the Elks Lounge right there on Indiana Avenue. You had the Masonry, you know, the Masons. You had some, I guess, real strong Black institutions that were there. You had some members of the Marcus Garvey Club there on Indiana Avenue... So you had some remnants of the 1920s coming up into the 50s and 60s... . But, that later on gave way to urban renewal and some of the people just really died out.

When I was president of the NAACP, the big concerns were education reform, getting rid of the segregated schools and opening up access to theatres and bars and employment—pushing for employment all over the city. It was not just an Indiana Avenue thing. We were pushing the department stores to hire Blacks as something other than maids, and we were pushing the bars to open and for the theatres to not segregate in the theatres. And of course integration of the schools was a big thing... so that was the focus at that time. ---  $\times$  **RAY** 

[In 1969] My dad came to me and said, "There's a place on Indiana Avenue that you ought to buy."... Well, anyway, that started me out on Indiana Avenue.... It was right next to the Walker Building, 643 Indiana Avenue. It was the British Lounge. The reason I attempted to go ahead and do something there was because my dad told me I should go ahead and do it. I knew that the music industry thing was really going down on Indiana Avenue. People were closing it up and I've been in Indianapolis all my life. I knew what the music scene used to look like. Being a musician as a kid I used to go down on Indiana Avenue all the time. I associated with all the musicians in town. And, I... well you know... maybe I'll go down there and start something. Maybe it's time to revitalize that thing - that Avenue thing - because everybody else was closing up. I guess I was going against the grain.



### \* "SOMEBODY PROBABLY KNEW ABOUT IT DOWNTOWN": DISPLACEMENT IN THE NEAR-WESTSIDE

Urban renewal transformed American cities from World War II onward, and it disproportionately took aim on African-American neighborhoods. These widespread displacements radically changed urban politics, disrupted church and school communities, devastated many African-American business districts, and compelled many African Americans to migrate once again. Federal funds allowed many state and local governments to rapidly raze massive neighborhoods, but a complex range of local forces championed urban renewal in Indianapolis over more than 30 years.

The first change was when Lockefield was built in '37 and they tore down a lot of those houses over in through there to make room for Lockefield. But they lost a lot of streets... That was the first section of Lockefield, which came over to Blake Street. And then the second [urban renewal] additional part was put on, oh, a couple years after the war. Then over to Blackford Street. And that got rid of more houses over through there. Of course, I know it was probably a big city plan... somebody probably knew about it downtown. Whoever it was, it did happen. And it was good. It needed to change. I'm for progress. I definitely believe in progress. And I think the city is growing to a point where it needs to keep making changes and adjust to the growth. --- × **RIDLEY** 

I can remember the Coffee Pot, which was in the basement of the Walker Building. And the high school and college kids used to congregate there on Sunday afternoon at the Coffee Pot.... I don't remember what year the Senate Avenue Y closed... but it closed and the bowling alley closed, I guess gradually they must have begun closing the places. ---  $\times$  **RADFORD** 

The Cotton Club was three stories high. Gamble on one floor and... so forth on another floor, tavern downstairs. I think the reason that they took the Avenue, I may be wrong, but I think they wanted it because there was so much money floating around down there. And it was hurting the businesses down on Ohio Street and places like that close by because on Friday nights half of the people were White. It [Cotton Club] was a big, big brick building... that's the first thing they tore down... business was tremendous. Everybody was enjoying the music, and they had singers and dancers. They had good food, you know. But, [Sea Ferguson] said, "I don't think I'm going to have it long, because now most of my customers are White." So, that was taking it away from the White people, see, when they came down there on Friday and

Saturday nights and have a good time. I lived right across the street... It hurt me to a certain extent financially... but it was all right after that. ---  $\times$  **BETTY** 

The plans for the city automatically changed out from underneath the Black community as a whole... and it affected E-Z Bake, it affected Diamond Chain, it affected Link Belt, it affected Chevrolet, it affected High Grade, the meat packing companies. A lot of people had lost their family structure by the fact that they were displaced now. They had no jobs. They had no ability to re-educate themselves because you had a lot of people who couldn't read or write but they had had laborious jobs in those industries. I think the displacement came in and around, started around 1966, '67 and really, really moved itself into the early 70s to where we were really actually seeing that transformation take place... in terms of jobs, the turnaround from these manufacturing, and, companies that did a lot of manufacturing and processing.

I had to sell a house on Cross Street. And then most of the Blacks were dislocated—they had to go. They went east. Away from down—well, Center Township is what they called it. --- × **KURTZ** 

I know that in the case of my father there were some areas that I was eminent domained for. And, when they declare eminent domain, you know as well as I do, there's nothing you can do. So I would again think that it was a political maneuver... After he died, I was the executrix of my father's estate. And so I was the one who had to do whatever there was to take care of things. --- × **BALLOW** 

The only thing I know is you had no choice. They called it eminent domain. Well, I was ready to sell anyway. --- × **KURTZ** 

They demolished the Sunset, which is on the Avenue. They said they demolished it by mistake. ---  $\times$  **COE** 

I mean, everything is tore down there. There isn't anything down there now. You start off at Illinois Street, there's all them high-rise buildings, and you come on down to the Walker, even, they tore down the Sunset... said they did it by mistake. --- × **KURTZ** 

This was no slum as some people, you know, wanted to say that it was like. This was a vibrant and professional area. --- × **JOHNSON** 

These houses that were around here were... very old houses and that was one of the reasons given for wanting to build Lockefield. They called it a slum clearance, because the houses in that area were considered a slum. Well, everybody, all the houses weren't slum type houses, and all the people were not slum dwellers. There were some professional people, because there had to be. They couldn't live anywhere else. They had to live in the Black neighborhood. This was a prime example of how there were a varied strata of people, social stratas, economic stratas of people in this area. --- × **CRENSHAW** 

Now there were areas that were really rundown and really needed a lot of work. Most of those areas were south of New York Street. But, otherwise, that was a decent neighborhood. People had houses better than the one I lived in, and they were kept nice and everything, and it wasn't as if, you know, the way they described it. I never did picture it the way they described it. --- × **JONES** 

Four of my family members got together and... we purchased a house for my mom and dad, probably 57 or 58... . And right about then we found out they were going to tear down the neighborhood because Interstate 65 was coming through. --- × **POINDEXTER** 



Middle class. We had teachers. It was really a village. If you had to make a choice of what you want to be in life, there was an example there in the neighborhood. We had mailmen, businessmen, lawyers, teachers, alcoholics... it was cross-sectioned, but it was a very well-kept area. And, it strived, until they decided to build something called I-65 and run it right smack dab in the middle of it, and displaced it ----  $\times$  **JONES** 

Had a friend who moved from that area, and I can remember when they put in the interstate.... it was all of a sudden her street ended and they were tearing out houses to put in... what would it be... 65 or 465?... Someone moved right up here off of 71st, because I remember going to her house once and thinking, "this is like going out of town." Because then Black people didn't live too far north of 38th Street... then they eased across 38th Street to maybe 42nd street, 46th Street. But, you know we didn't live off of 71st street because this was all country or farms... White. --- × **BROWN** 

Everybody was making big money, you know. They just cleared it out completely from beginning to the end of Indiana Avenue.... Everybody on the Avenue had a place of business. There were about five taverns on the Avenue. It was a busy place. But, all of a sudden, they didn't just take this part... they just cleared it completely out. People bought little houses someplace else and went to apartments someplace else. Did away with everything... we had three taverns in one block once that was the 500 block, right below the Canal. This man I went with had two places of business, one on that side of the street and one on the other side. --- × **BETTY** 

By the time I got back from the Army in '53, there was movement afoot... At The Recorder, you know, we of course knew everything that was going on in the community. And there was a lot going on... people were beginning to move north, they had begun to move north early on. They tell me that you were not supposed go across the creek at 21st street to live. There weren't many Blacks living north of 21st Street. And, sometime later on, things just sort of broke loose... and Blacks just exploded on that whole northside scene up to 38th Street. ---  $\times$  **CUMMINGS** 

They were buying up a lot of the properties... The banks were not giving us any money to make any types of renovations or improvements to the property, so they basically redlined the Black community after the city planners and the city fathers said that there would be a 25 year plan, there would be a tremendous turnover in the Black community. There would be a change, a face-lift in the community, said the master planner. --- × **ABDULLAH** 

I would be sitting there reading my Recorder... and I would read it every week when I got off of work I would read it. And I could tell from the articles in The Recorder what was going on. And I was surprised that the people who lived in town did not know that the Avenue and the Westside was being snatched from them... right from under their noses. They would be acquiring this or so and so. Or this land had been sold, or this place was closing after so many years. I said, "Can't you see that this is classic encroachment?" But out in Denver... a thousand, twelve-hundred miles away... I could see it. --- × **WILLIAMS** 

Unfortunately, people who owned their homes or were just about able to pay for their homes in the early 50s and 60s, 1960, 1970, were now looking at "severance pay"... they were looking at buyout in the early sixties and seventies. Now all of a sudden they were at the twilight of paying off their homes to now and here comes the sweetheart deal for those developers wanting their property. It was really

bad... it was really sad for a lot of older citizens in our community. ---  $\times$  **ABDULLAH** 

I still believe that when you want somebody to move, and you want their property, that's their property, see. You had second and third generations living in those houses. Now, all they had to worry about paying was the taxes. I don't care... you can put them in a house that's three times better... but the expense... can they keep it? --- × **JONES** 

Well, you get your life planned how you are going to retire and everything, and when you get there it's done changed. That's what the old people had a problem with. ---  $\times$  **COE** 

My wife's grandmother was in her sixties or seventies then, see. Most of the people averaged about that age at that time.... Those people that would be my grandparents and some were a little bit older than that... trying to start all over again, which I thought was just terrible. ---  $\times$  **ABDULLAH** 

For the people who were displaced I'm sure that it was very hard for them to find replacement properties at those price ranges, because they had had those homes forever. If you go a couple of streets over from Paca you will see some of the original homes on Camp, are still there. ---  $\times$  **M. COE** 

There were no hearings, nothing like that. You didn't hear community discussions about these things... or even if they did have them, we were not privileged to them... to have known what they were about.

I was raising a family, but it almost seemed like a part of me was torn away because that was my whole world. None of the group houses are there now. I understand that along with the bulldozing, progress has to be made and that was... we were just a casualty of progress. ---  $\times$  **ADAMS** 

I can't exactly remember when I heard it was changing. Seems that all at once I looked up and it was changed. You know, I married, I started my family and I wasn't down there like I was when I was young. And it seemed like overnight it changed, but I know it took longer than that. But, the neighborhood changed, living conditions in the apartments changed, and they tore down a lot of buildings. The Walker building was the only building that was left. --- × **MILTON** 

#### × "IT WAS FOR PROGRESS": IUPUI AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN DISPLACEMENT

Discussions about a university campus in Indianapolis' near-Westside began in the 1950s, just as federal urban renewal funds were being used to expand the Indiana University Medical Center. In the 1960s Indiana University began to acquire individual properties throughout the near-Westside, a more gradual process than the rapid and widespread displacements associated with massive urban renewal projects, but by 1969 a vast swath of space had been acquired by the newly established Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis. That piecemeal purchase pattern continued into the 1980s.

That's the thing that was the hurting thing... to see a vibrant neighborhood beginning to decay because of removal of neighbors and replacement of some other people who did not take [care] of the housing. But then IUPUI was growing and... so they started. Our house was one of the last houses to be taken, because we were trying to keep it. But after the death of our father, we really didn't have any need for it. It was a beautiful house, we wanted to hang on to it, but we knew that it had to go, because of development. It was for progress. --- × **JOHNSON** 

The price was the displacement of a whole Black community—the dividends were not equal. And so therefore, it has always been the displacement of us no matter where we go. It's that way all over the United States. You take Chicago, you take Washington DC, any place that Black folks have ever been... anywhere urban renewal, or gentrification of the neighborhood, has always taken place it has always been at the expense of the Black people as a whole. But then, at the same time, you go around the world... we're seeing people of color are being displaced no matter what—at the hands of those who have versus those who have not. --- × **ABDULLAH** 

The university moved into that area in the 50s. They were just buying property... people were being dislocated. Then there was no big movement on the part of any Black organizations to defend the Blacks . I think that some of them were aware, because, like... some of the real estate guys were making money in the process. They were acquiring property for the university. --- × **CUMMINGS** 

We were misrepresented for the reason that it was for the better good of the society... that this urban university was coming through. The shakers and movers of the Black community felt that was the best way to go because they were the product of those universities—graduating



from the universities, graduating from law school... had the better connection to the people... felt a certain alliance to them to say, "thanks for my education." And they didn't have to do a damn thing to thank them for nothing. They earned it themselves, outright. But in turn, they sold us out—those who were not privileged to be there at the table. Now, I think that that's so bad. --- × **ABDULLAH** 

Generally, the houses were not in particularly good repair. This had been a rather well- populated area, first with—I guess [it was] predominately White some decades ago... and more recently, a large number of Blacks were in it. For a time it was somewhat mixed, but at the time that I guess the public law [went into effect] which gave the University the kind of extra clout for getting the property, the area was in a state of disrepair, which gave the justification for it being so classified. Prior to that, well, the University might have wanted the property, but it had no particular, extra clout to get it. --- × **TAYLOR** 

I don't know about the White. I know about the Black people in the Black community. Some of them were involved in securing land and buildings for the university. --- × **CUMMINGS** 

Yeah, you noticed a lot of things changing, especially on the Avenue, and in the area. I remember Indiana Extension because I took classes over there, and so I don't know just when it became IUPUI.... I assume like that engineering building was one of the first buildings... and then IU Hospital, the Medical School were expanding, and developing, and including more and more. Indiana Avenue, it was beginning to change, some of places that had been there were closing. --- × **J. COLEMAN** 

Well, back in those days, you didn't have any true activism, you see. And so, you relied on information. You got in conversation with some people. The best place to get information was at the barber shop, I guess. People would just talk freely at the barber shop. But nobody was attacking the system which was implementing the change in the Black community that I ever heard. --- × **CUMMINGS** 

There was some discussion in the community about how the University is taking this property and throwing all these fine, poor people out that have been there for years and years and years. New York on the south and Michigan on the north and Blake over here on this side and Agnes, or what's now University on this side. There were 93 families in that lot... And I think it was a total of 27 of them in which we found nobody related to the people that owned the property that was living in the house. --- × **TAYLOR** 

There've been a lot of changes everywhere, all over the country that had to do with integration as it were. Nothing stays the same. You have people who are in charge of things, people who are on top, and whatever. But, everybody gets old... everybody is born, and everybody dies, So you are going to have continuous changes all the time. So that's what happened here. In this case, we had a community that underwent a great deal of change, and I think that change was planned certainly. Certainly the people planned with IUPUI to move and pick up that community there. --- × **BALLOW** 

Nobody really spoke out, there was no demonstration or any-thing about—Indianapolis is just a complacent kind of town ---  $\times$  **CUMMINGS** 

You know they had... they marched against it and everything else. I guess—yeah—there was some resentment. It didn't last long. ---  $\times$  **EDELEN** 



The properties were becoming an eyesore and health hazards in both the Avenue's census tract and in the census tract going north to 16th street, beyond, say, 10th street, I guess. So that both of them were in very high areas of dilapidation so that everything bad—in terms of good, healthy neighborhood areas—could be applied. The incidence of infant mortality, communicable disease, high crime rate, high rate of unemployment—just about anything you wanna say bad, and of course, these are the things that make for the dilapidation of an area. It's difficult to say which came first, you see. --- × **TAYLOR** 

And they really didn't feel that there was a great deal of reason, I guess, to raise a lot of hell about some things. But they might have if they had sat down and thought through it... but you know, they just sort of sat there and let things happen. And of course now when things get to the point where Blacks aren't going to take it any more they raise up in this town, you know. --- × **CUMMINGS** 

Charles Hardy was the one who hired me. I was the office manager for their west side office, which was there on Agnes between New York and Michigan. I managed the properties. I collected rent. I was over making the repairs, I had a staff that did the repair and collected the rent. I also assisted Ida [Edelen] in going around seeing the people who were disgruntled because of something that was said to them when people was trying to buy their houses. And I would go around in the evening with her so she wouldn't be going to houses by herself. We had a real good feel of the neighborhood, and the people in the neighborhood, and most of them came to accept us, because they found out that we weren't there to try to take anything away from them. We were there really to help them. --- × **JONES** 

Charles Hardy was the director of campus development, but our boss really was Dr. Bloom at IU. But, all I did was interview families and

try to find housing for them... those who were being relocated. The University went in to buy them out. They had it appraised, and would give the family fair market value. --- × **EDELEN** 

It was a rather mixed group of buildings, predominately residences, but garages, something that might well have been warehouses—small warehouses. I think there were several things could be called small factory type things along New York Street and generally around in the area where the—right down around where McDonalds House is now located. I think there was a garage there, because I took my car by there one time. --- × **TAYLOR** 

The people that really didn't know me didn't trust me. And IU, sometimes, they were leery that I might be telling the people more than what they should know. And so, I was in a precarious situation. But I think, on both ends, both of them came to respect me. --- × **JONES** 

People who had property, then—as it became more obvious that the University was going to want more land—were going to the University [and] asking them, aren't you ready to buy? [This was] even before you see Charlie Hardy was in the property acquisition, that was part of his major job. They set up a whole office doing nothing but that. But people would actually go to him and ask, you know, do you want to buy my property? And then, of course, again, he was an enterprising kind of individual who when he saw a ray of light of some kind, even for good or bad, he took advantage of it. And so there were people who saw this, and I said if—and they offered me only so much for my property—the offer was probably based on the appraisal that they'd made.... You had these poor old people, pushin' them out, and they don't have anybody to do all this leg work and try to find something. That's where Ida Edelen came in.--- × **TAYLOR** 

I know there was a lot of resistance to IU buying the property. Well one thing they, they felt like they were not getting enough for the houses. They could not buy with what they got. --- × **EDELEN** 

You had absentee landlords and quite a few of them wanted to sell anyway. Then you had the other homeowners who wanted to sell and move out. And then you have the rest, who wanted to stay there because they loved the neighborhood It was close to downtown. They had entertainment, they had different kinds of eating places, small grocery stores, and it was very convenient. It was a very convenient area. And, they could walk downtown. It was a convenient area, and they loved it, and they didn't want to move. --- × **JONES** 

Nostalgically, some people lived here for awhile and enjoyed something. They vaguely remember what they used to have, and sometimes they remember something quite favorably. But our psyche has the capacity for blotting out a lot of bad things, you see, and so we remember only good ones. --- × **TAYLOR** 

At that time they [residents] didn't have problems with it, because they were coming out of very poor circumstances. A lot of those houses had no indoor plumbing south of Indiana Avenue. ---  $\times$  **RAY** 

I wouldn't call it racism. What I see, what I came to get a good feel for, was the eminent domain statutes that they used to take not only that land but all land. And it works against people who don't have the money to take them to court, and to try to get more. --- × **JONES** 

The university could only pay for so much money you know. When you got the appraisal you could only pay so much money. Of course the people there thought their homes were worth much more than that. And I'm sure that left some hard feelings—like their house had been stolen. But, you know... you can only do so much. --- × **EDELEN** 

If you wouldn't sell me your property then they could use eminent domain. You still have a right to go to court, and whatever's decided in the court then, you know, that's the ruling. I'll make this clear, every-thing Indiana University did, they did within the law. But, there's one variable, and this is coming from me. There's one variable they're leaving out in paying these people... see, there's equity in the fact that I own my house, and I don't want to sell. I'm comfortable here, and you want to buy my house, and I don't want to sell. Forget about how much it's been appraised for. There's an equity in the fact that I have to move somewhere, or move out of my house that I don't want to move out of. There is, that's money equity in that. I think that should be considered too. And that's still coming for me—this is not written down. And I think that's a big part of what they leave out. --- × **JONES** 

Basically they were approached by different people knocking on their doors. They were offering them, well, they said, you know, there are people here to kind of give you an opportunity to sell your house if you're interested in doing so. There were others that came in by saying, "we're going to take your house with eminent domain." There were all kinds of different scare tactics, and also different types of things told to them by the Black community leadership that they must do this for progress in the Black community as a whole. So a lot of them were just hoodwinked and pressured into releasing their homes to these people and speculators at that time for the big payoff later on we came to know of, which was the university complex they were developing.

The areas down where the housing was very poor, I acquired a lot of that for the university.... I worked for the university acquiring a number of those homes and they paid a fair price ---  $\times$  **RAY** 

Many of them were able to purchase better homes. Some of them did not, and didn't want to. But most of them, well, you had some older people who really didn't. You had a lot of older people in that area. As soon as they moved out, the houses were stripped of anything of any value, like copper --- × **EDELEN** 

Miss Missouri had a rooming house. You know, a two-story rooming house... It was located on Blake, between New York and Michigan. On the west side of the street. And it wasn't a beauty, it needed some work done on it, but it was her house.... And then one thing she said. She said, "They never asked me what I want." And that was the case quite a few times. "They never asked me what I want." Miss Missouri, she told us what she wanted for her house, and we went back, and took it to them, and she got it. We found her a two story duplex that was four units on College or Central, one of them. She was happy. --- × **JONES** 

Indiana Avenue was just hanging on, but we were also displaced by other leadership that was seeing the bigger picture because they were educated, they were much more educated than we were. We were just trying to get to the university and at the same time they were meeting with the principals—the leadership of the university and also leaders of the community, the Black community, as we knew them to be. And when we found out anything about it was a little too late because a lot of families were saying, "Look, I'm not going to sell." But some families said, "Yes, I am going to sell" and they took their money and went off... into Haughville, east side, northside, buying homes. Basically what monies they received on their properties were just kind of a drop in the bucket. They had just enough to make a down payment on another property and... pretty much start all over again. --- × **ABDULLAH** 

When it's all said and done, they were usually angry. You know, they called it "poor folks' removal "—eminent domain. "Poor folks' removal" or "Black folks' removal." That's the way they look at it. Because they think that they don't have any rights. "They're going to get my property." --- × **JONES** 

Well, from the articles I read in The Recorder, they were giving a weekly account of what was the development of those areas. But you could read between the lines and see what was going on. If you had a sharp eye, you could read between the lines—IUPUI is gaining more and more control, and it's just a matter of time before [it] will spread like a cancer. Just gobble up Indiana Avenue. --- × **WILLIAMS** 

We had quite a few older people too, and those were the ones who really didn't want to leave. And Ida and I, we tracked them for a while, because we had a good relationship. We built good relationships and we knew all the people who needed help. On Thanksgiving, and Christmas, we had stores that would give us turkeys and stuff. We'd fix baskets.... I went to Charles Hardy, and Charles Hardy would get some money from the university. But, these grocery stores would give us stuff, too. And we would give away baskets. I remember, we took baskets to this one guy, and he had a family, young kids: It was on a Friday because Christmas came on either Saturday or Sunday, and we wouldn't be working, so we delivered the basket that weekend. And we opened the door, and those kids looked around, and saw the food, and everything in there, and you know, and they thanked us and everything. And when we were going off the porch I told Ida, I said, they're going to have Christmas tonight. Because, you know, they probably were hungry and they didn't have a refrigerator either. And so they

were going to have Christmas that night. I know they did... . It wasn't my responsibility, no. My responsibility was managing the property. But, this is some of the stuff Ida and I did on our own. --- × **JONES** 

I think most of them bought, generally in the area around Fall Creek. That area was, was I say from Fall Creek, north to 38th. --- × **RAY** 

I feel as if the African-American culture was stolen from us when the decision was made by whomever, and however, to change what was going on. I would have loved to see how things would have evolved had there not been this "let's move them out and build a university." I don't know what businesses would have flourished, we will never know. We don't know what the homes would have been like because they were taken down. Would it have died a natural death or would it have flourished? That's the unanswered question that I think will remain unanswered. What would have happened? Have you thought of that? You know the potential to have had a beautiful set of buildings, department stores on Indiana Avenue owned by Black men. --- × **BROWN** 

I felt that they didn't know enough to organize to get more money for their property, try to stop it, somehow, you know. That was a nice neighborhood. People really didn't want to move, and they didn't know enough about what was going on at that time to organize, and do what they had to do to get more, or stop it. But I don't think they ever really could stop it. ---  $\times$  **JONES** 

I think that it could have remained a Mecca. Thank God we still have the Madam Walker area. But I believe that Madam Walker's building still exists because some non-African American decided that it was okay. Because if they wanted to they could have come up with a way to get rid of that. They couldn't just buy it, because of her renown of being the first African-American woman millionaire. So you couldn't justify, well, tearing down that building. So, I think that is why it still remains. --- × **BROWN** 

These dudes, you know, really stuck out, especially John Lands, as he came back into the community. The brother was being very dynamic, very articulate about how change was going to come, how it was going to affect the Black community. John was very much concerned about the displacement of Black folks, and so he was encouraging people not to sell in those areas where the university had bought previously... those houses there at Blackford that had been taken up and our own school, Mary Cable School. --- × **ABDULLAH** 

I remember families in Lockefield who after the father, may have gotten a job, he may have gotten a job at Lilly, maybe ten dollars more a week. They would have to move from Lockefield. So that middle class core began to leave Lockefield and other families who may not have been able to take care of their property moved in and you could kind of see a gradual deterioration of the apartments... the grass, broken windows, what have you. But that was purposely done to get Lockefield in a position where they could say, "Oh yeah, well, this looks condemned. So, IUPUI come in and take over." It was all a plan. --- × **WILLIAMS** 

I was really upset and disturbed when they starting changing Indiana Avenue. I had nothing against IUPUI, but I was one of the main protestors against it... IUPUI, it's fine, we needed that, you know. But we needed to let the Indiana Avenue alone because that's the reason why some of the people were selling out. They were being offered some nice money, and they figured that some of their customers would be leaving. I protested that... I had a little incident one time. They had a little march down to the education center... it was when they were trying to close up Attucks. So, they marched all the way down to the IPS building protesting closing-up Attucks. I didn't want to join the

march, so I drove down there. I got outside where everybody was gathered. The photographers were out there taking pictures of everybody out there. I told my wife, I said, "I bet you before the night"—it was on a Friday—"I bet before the night expires, the police are going to be in here and give me some problems." And, sure enough, they came in. ----  $\times$  **A. COLEMAN** 

I imagine ministers and local politicians, they were all in cahoots. And the end-product would be to take the Westside and give it to IUPUI. That's exactly what they did. Get the Avenue, get Attucks High School, the old Westside... that should all be IUPUI's property... and they worked indefatigably. The next frontier will be Flanner House. They will find some way to get those houses, because their aim is to connect Methodist Hospital with IUPUI. And if that means getting rid of all of the Black folks in between, so be it. --- × **WILLIAMS** 

I have heard very few expressions of a negative nature regarding what IUPUI did, or the results of it. ---  $\times$  **CUMMINGS** 

One hundred and one percent of people whom I spoke about this whole nefarious scheme were very, very bitter. They felt like they had been sold out by their politicians, they were sold out, they hated the name "Indiana University Medical Center." To them that was the slave mission, the cavalry coming to your Indian village and destroying all of your property and taking all of your land. --- × **WILLIAMS** 

One thing, and you can't find this here because it's not written down, but when they was buying the property, and talk was going around what they were going to do for the kids who lived there that had to move... that they were going to see then if they could get their education price reduced, and all that, which would have been good., But

## it never happened... it died down, you never heard any more about it. --- $\times$ **JONES**

I think it [IUPUI] helped. My daughter moved back here from Florida, and she was really impressed as to how IU had sprung up. ---  $\times$  **COE** 

They came in with eminent domain to take some of the property; and, actually not all of the property was taken for the university itself. There was a strip mall that was placed over there right off of 10th street, which was a nice development—but it did take out my grandmother's house. Actually, it's a vacant lot now. The house probably could have stayed in that spot. ---  $\times$  **M COE** 

Eminent domain... It scares people because they feel they don't have the right to negotiate. And I really think that that equity idea, in the end, should be looked into. You know what you were asking those people? Yes, IUPUI has improved the city. I go over now, and I look, and I shake my head, you know? And, in such a short time, it has really become an outstanding university. I got my Masters degree from there. --- × **JONES** 

I've worked with many, in mentoring students that have gone to IUPUI, and, my, I have two sons that went through that minority engineering program... . in the 70s I think... one graduated in '79, one in '81. ---  $\times$  **J. COLEMAN** 

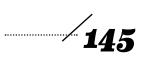
Our house at 510 North Blackford Street was the birthplace of an Ambassador to South America, Meredith Wilson, I think was the name. But anyway, it was a beautiful house, it was a huge house. It was a house that now, if IUPUI hadn't gotten it, we could have taken it and moved it into a big lot. It had a long front porch; it has two living rooms, two bedrooms, stepped down into a dining room, French doors,



French windows, we had our own playroom, a basement with a coal furnace, and we had a huge kitchen, and a pantry, and a back porch that was long as the house, a huge back yard with four cherry trees, all the kids, oh, and a grape harbor where you actually could pick the grapes. ---  $\times$  **JOHNSON** 

I would like to see some of the buildings stay. I'm not going to impede progress if there is something, but it is obvious that these apartment buildings have been advantageous for some of the students at IUPUI, so let it be that. Don't tear it down, it's a monument to what was. You know, we're not going to tear down the pyramids. We are not going to tear down the Tower of London so let's not tear down Lockefield. ---  $\times$  **ADAMS** 

We as the Black community and the leadership of the Black community as a whole should establish some type of forum to not only give them, IUPUI students, this education but also make them aware of the hallowed ground that they are walking on, and of the many people who made tremendous sacrifices for the Black community as well as for the White community to even be there. --- × **ABDULLAH** 



# × ORAL HISTORY MEMOIRISTS

**PATRICE ABDULLAH** [1943-] **KENNETH ADAMS**, JR. [1936-] **TAYLOR BAKER** [1935-] MATTIE FERGUSON BALLOW [1927-] **CHARLIE R. BETTY** [1909–2008] **SAUNDRA BROWN** [1943-] **DOLORES COE** [1928-]MICHELLE COE [1962-] **ALBERT COLEMAN** [1927-] JULIAN COLEMAN [1929-] **RICHARD CRENSHAW** [1936-] **JIM CUMMINGS** [1929-] **REGINALD A. DUVALLE** [1927-2010]**IDA G. EDELEN** [1933-] MILDRED MARSHALL HALL [1911-] **NANCY HOLLIMAN JOHNSON** [1921-] WILLIAM FULLER JONES [1937-]

LUTHER KURTZ [1921-] **SADIE FLOWERS MILTON** [1928-] **A'LELIA JOSEPHINE OSILI** [1924-] FRANCES OCTAVIA FOWLKES PATTERSON [1917-2010] **CELESTINE PETTRIE** [1915-] **CHARLES POINDEXTER** [1932-] **MARY RADFORD** [1929-]ALICE BROKENBURR RAY [1916-2010] **WILLIAM T. RAY** [1916-] **DOROTHY REDD** [1922-] **THOMAS RIDLEY** [1922-] **MARY ETTA ROSE** [1917-2008] **JOSEPH T. TAYLOR** [1913-2000] **IZONA WARNER** [1924-] **DAVID WILLIAMS** [1946-] **CLARENCE WOOD** [1925-]

x AFTERWORD

The oral history project that forms the basis of this book was produced as part of IUPUI's 40th Anniversary Celebration. Full transcripts of the interviews will be placed on file for public access in the IUPUI University Archives in 2011. The project also supported two public meetings for community insight and comment. The first public forum "The Price of Progress: A Conversation with Mari Evans and David N. Baker" was held at the Madame Walker Theatre Center on November 11, 2009, as a part of the Spirit and Place Festival. A public discussion about life on the Avenue and the impact of urban renewal and the establishment of IUPUI was led by Glenn S. White, Mari Evans, and David N. Baker. The second event, "IUPUI: The Creation of an Urban University," was held February 18, 2010 and sponsored by the IUPUI University Library Undergraduate Diversity Scholar program and the 2009-2010 Diversity Scholar, Autumn Lowry. The public forum was moderated by Glenn S. White and led by Thomas Ridley, Nancy Johnson, and Charles Poindexter.

### $\times$ **FIGURES**

Fig 1	Indiana Historical Society COL. M513, NEG.#002
Fig 2	Indiana Historical Society MADAM C.J. WALKER COLLECTION, NEG. $\#$ C2137
Fig 3	Indiana Historical Society BASS PHOTO CO COLLECTION, NEG. #208121
Fig 4	Indiana Historical Society BASS PHOTO CO COLLECTION, NEG. #333354-1
Fig 5	Indiana Historical Society bass photo co collection, NEG. #82007-f
Fig 6	Indiana Historical Society COL. M513, NEG. #005
Fig 7	Indiana Historical Society BASS PHOTO CO COLLECTION, NEG. #242025-F