ENCYCLOPEDIA OF INDIANAPOLIS

PEOPLE HERITAGE CULTURE

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at
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A City of Neighborhoods

Indianapolis prides itself on being a city of neighborhoods. But newcomers often find it difficult to recognize these neighborhoods because the city lacks the ethnic divisions seen in Chicago or the physical boundaries important in Pittsburgh or Cincinnati.

How has Indianapolis defined its neighborhoods? Here, the definition of neighborhoods stems from historic patterns of settlement, the development of speculative housing, and the incorporation of previously independent communities into the expanding city.

Alexander Ralston's 1821 plan for the new state capital assumed that future growth could be accommodated in an area of one square mile. However, settlement quickly expanded beyond the city's original boundaries to outlying villages such as Allisonville, Millersville, West Newton, Southport, Stringtown, Cumberland, Bridgeport, and Augusta.

Throughout the city's history, transportation improvements stimulated urban growth and created new neighborhoods. Canal construction in the 1830s led to the establishment of Broad Ripple on the north and an industrial district on the near westside which became the home for many African American citizens. The growth of railroads after 1847 prompted the establishment of neighborhoods of industrial workers contiguous to the Mile Square, including Brightwood, Martindale, Irish Hill, and Haughville. By the 1850s, railroad depots anchored new towns such as Castleton, Lawrence, Oaklandon, and New Augusta. As late as 1906, entrepreneurs established the industrial town of Beech Grove around the repair yards of the New York Central.

The introduction of mule-drawn streetcars after 1864 brought the suburban ideal to Indianapolis in planned developments such as Irvington, Woodruff Place, and Mapleton. Curvilinear streets and sweeping lawns contrasted the rurality of suburban life with the industrializing city. By the turn of the century, electric streetcars and interurban railroads carried commuters farther from the Mile Square to semi-rural outposts such as Warfleigh, Ravenswood, Fairview, and Broad Ripple on the north side or University Heights and Edgewood to the south.

First introduced at the turn of the century as an expensive novelty, the automobile allowed wealthy citizens to motor to Brendonwood, Golden Hill, Crows Nest, and Woodstock, exclusive areas on the highlands overlooking White River and Fall Creek. The growth of the automobile industry, centered locally in the town of Speedway (platted in 1912), increased the affordability of vehicles. By the 1920s, many middle-class residents regularly commuted by car to Forest Manor, Warren Park, Emerson Heights, and Tuxedo Heights or to northern suburbs now known as the Meridian-Kessler and Butler-Tarkington neighborhoods.

With the exception of affluent suburbs such as Meridian Hills and Williams Creek and public projects like Lockefield Gardens, economic depression and wartime shortages impeded growth during the 1930s and 1940s. But the end of World War II brought the GI Bill and federal highway funds. A new suburban boom occurred when completion of highway I-465 in 1970 transformed Indianapolis into an eight-county metropolitan region.

The outward growth of Indianapolis was accompanied by deterioration in the old city. Since 1950, over 155,000 residents moved out of Center Township. Construction of the IUPUI campus and the I-65/I-70 inner loop displaced additional residential neighborhoods. Beginning with Lockerbie Square in the

Continued inside

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Director's Notes

Four years ago, the *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* project was little more than an ambitious dream. It boasted one staff member, a small office, and an important commitment from Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. Today, the *Encyclopedia* is within eighteen months of publication—if there is sufficient funding to complete the project on time.

The community's support of the *Encyclopedia* has been both encouraging and disappointing. First, the good news. Over 400 writers from Indianapolis and elsewhere are preparing articles for the volume. Almost half that number have waived the modest stipend we offer. More than twenty experts have assumed the additional role of contributing editor, a role that requires extensive knowledge of the topic and a willingness to identify and enlist qualified authors. Most writers and editors are from Indianapolis, making the project truly community-based. Without their leadership and support, the *Encyclopedia* would still be a dream — or a nightmare.

The most disappointing news is that the Indianapolis community has not supported the project financially. Even though we ask the community only to match the funds raised independently by POLIS, and although the proposed contribution is barely one-quarter of the project's total budget, the community has given only $104,000 toward its goal of $417,000.

Producing an 800-page comprehensive reference work is expensive, made more so by the absence of a written record of the city's history. Is the $1.45 million investment worth it? People outside Indianapolis think so. The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded the project a $98,000 challenge grant because experts from across the country advised that the encyclopedia—and the related projects undertaken by POLIS—was "clearly having the benefit of turning Indianapolis from a relatively unexamined place into a center for urban studies."

But what about benefits other than academic ones? From civic education to corporate recruiting, the *Encyclopedia* will pay rich dividends to Indianapolis. The experience of Cleveland, Ohio, the first city to produce a modern encyclopedia, suggests that the volume will serve needs and find uses that no one can now predict. New York City believes its volume, also scheduled for a 1994 publication, will have this benefit. So does Atlanta, which will use its volume in conjunction with the 1996 Olympics to promote itself to the world. And what about other, less market-oriented rewards? Surely it will mean much to the future of this city to have our children learn the lessons of urban life from the experience of Indianapolis rather than from Chicago, New York, or Los Angeles, the examples most commonly found in school texts.

The *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* project is in its final eighteen months. It has followed an ambitious schedule and, unlike other complex projects elsewhere, has met every deadline to date. For this progress to continue, it is vital that the community commit an additional $300,000 to this effort. No amount is too small, no contact or request for funds too insignificant. Your gift can also be pledged now for future payment. The project needs your financial contribution. It also needs you to enlist others to make an investment in the future of Indianapolis. If you will help, give us a call at 274-2455. ■

Neighborhoods — from page 1

1960s, historic preservation efforts successfully revitalized several downtown neighborhoods. However, some citizens criticized historic preservation for replacing lower income, largely minority residents with middle-class "gentrifiers."

The passage of Unigov in 1970 expanded the borders of Indianapolis to Marion County, encompassing many towns which had been independent. The cities of Beech Grove, Lawrence, Southport, and Speedway were excluded from city-county consolidation and remained self-governing municipalities.

Neighborhood associations became important in the 1980s; by 1990, over two hundred neighborhood organizations existed. Community development corporations such as Eastside Community Investments (ECI) have played important roles in addressing issues involving housing and economic development. Many neighborhood organizations, however, languished in the wake of the downtown development which dominated the 1980s.

The 1991 mayoral election highlighted the importance of neighborhoods as political and cultural issues. Political leaders must confront historically derived definitions of neighborhoods in Indianapolis if they are to implement a system of municipal federalism. Other citizens, seeking smaller, more comprehensible communities within the larger metropolis, explore the heritage and culture of their neighborhoods as a tool for building community. Whatever the reason, Indianapolis, known in the nineteenth century as a "city of homes," is rapidly becoming a "city of neighborhoods." ■

Meet the Contributing Editor — Neighborhoods, Suburbs, Cities, and Towns

Lamont Hulse, senior associate at POLIS Research Center, serves as the contributing editor for Neighborhoods, Suburbs, Cities and Towns. Hulse holds a bachelor's degree from DePauw University and a master's in history from the University of Delaware, where he was a Hagley Fellow. He is the author of several publications, including *A Century of Service: The West End Neighborhood House* and *Taking Fund Raising Seriously* (edited with Dwight Burlingame). Most recently he co-authored *The Main Stem: The History & Architecture of North Meridian Street* (with David J. Bodenhamer and Elizabeth B. Monroe). Before joining the POLIS staff, Hulse interpreted history and material culture for Conner Prairie Pioneer Settlement and was associated with museums in Delaware and West Virginia. With POLIS, he initiated research into the suburbanization of Indianapolis and managed research projects for Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, the Association of Indiana Museums, and St. Alban's Episcopal Church.

As contributing editor, Hulse has identified a variety of essays and general entries that will examine the development of Indianapolis neighborhoods. Over two hundred neighborhoods have registered with the city of Indianapolis. Space will not allow entries on each one. However, longer essays will discuss the growth of communities in the nine townships in Marion County, as well as the seven surrounding counties. Other essays will address significant interpretive themes, including historic preservation, neighborhood organizations, and downtown development. ■

Encyclopedia of Indianapolis Staff

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ERRATA

In the winter 1992 issue of the *Encyclopedia* newsletter, the essay, "The African American Community in Indianapolis History," erroneously identified Freeman Ransom, rather than his son, Willard, as a leader in the local NAACP movement. Willard B. Ransom, a graduate of Harvard Law School and a veteran of World War II, also serves on the *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* advisory committee. We regret the error. DGV

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Neighborhoods, Suburbs, Cities, and Towns - Approved Entries to Date

Mini-Essays

Annexation
Downtown Development
Historic Preservation
Neighborhood Associations
Public Housing

General Entries

Acton
Allisonville
Antrim
Augusta
Beech Grove
Ben Davis
Boone County
Brendonwood
Bridgeport
Brightwood
Broad Ripple
Bunker Hill
Butler-Tarkington
Camby
Carmel
Castleton
Center Township
Chatham Arch
Clermont
Concord
Cottage Home
Crows Nest
Cumberland
Decatur Township
Drexel Gardens
Eagledale
Edgewood
Fishers
Five Points
Fletcher Place
Forest Hills
Forest Manor
Fountain Square
Franklin Township
Friendswood
Garfield Park Neighborhood
Glens Valley
Golden Hill
Greenwood
Hamilton County
Hancock County
Haughville
Hendricks County
Herron-Morton Place
Highland-Brookside
Holy Cross-Westminister
Holy Rosary (Danish Church)
Home Place
Homecroft
Indian Lake
Irish Hill
Irvington
Johnson County
Johnson's Woods
Julietta
Lawrence
Lawrence Township
Lockerbie Square
Lynnhurst
Mapleton-Fall Creek
Mars Hill
Martindale
Maywood
Meadows
Meridian Hills
Meridian Kessler
Midtown/Indiana Ave. District
Millersville
Morgan County
New Augusta
Nora
North Indianapolis
North Meridian St. Corridor
Northwest (United)
Oaklandon
Old Northside
Perry Township
Pike Township
Plainfield
Ransom Place
Ravenswood
Rocky Ripple
Shelby County
Southport
Speedway
Spring Hill
St. Joseph
Stringtown
The Valley
Traders Point
University Heights
Wanamaker
Warren Park
Warren Township
Washington Township
Wayne Township
West Indianapolis
West Newton
Wholesale District
Williams Creek
Woodruff Place
Wynnedale
Zionsville

Neighborhoods and Communities in Indianapolis

1821 The Mile Square platted.
1828 Quaker settlers established Eastern Meeting now known as **West Newton**, on Goose Creek.
1829 First settlement in Pike Township, **Augusta**, founded by George Cole, Sr. and Jonathon Ingo.
1830 **Cumberland** Hall built and immediately attracted a cluster of houses. Original settlers were laborers who had worked on the road.
1830 In Wayne Township, **Bridgeport** platted at the site of a toll house on the National Road. Named for a bridge that spanned Lick Creek.
1836 **Mount Pleasant** settled.
1838 Village of Brubaker's Mill, later known as **Millersville**, founded.
1849 **Clermont** platted on the old Ezra Meeker Trail. On the southside, the new town of **Southport** developed.
1852 **Castleton**, named for a town in North Carolina, platted by Thomas Gentry. First known by two names, Hosbrook and Augusta Station, **New Augusta** began as a railroad depot. On the south side, the town of **Acton** platted. Originally known as Farmersville, the name later changed to honor a resident, General Acton.
1853 Part of Calvin Fletcher's farm, Wood Lawn, sold for residential development. The name, **Fletcher Place**, first used in 1872.
1866 Marion County Commissioners officially changed the name of Lanesville to **Lawrence**.
1870 -72 **Brookside** and **Oak Hill** suburbs platted by Albert E. Fletcher.
1871 To the north of Indianapolis, Peter Lawson named his post office **Nora**, after his hometown in Sweden.
1872 **Brightwood** and **Malott Park** founded. James O. Woodruff laid out **Woodruff Place**, intending to create an exclusive suburban town.
1873 Jacob Julian and Sylvester Johnson platted **Irvington** as a new suburb for "people of culture."
1875 Haugh and Company moved iron works to Michigan St., west of White River. Workers settled in the area, later known as **Haughville**.
1884 Villages of Wellington & Broad Ripple incorporated as **Broad Ripple**.
1890 **Camby** platted. Formerly called West Union Station. New state fairgrounds were established at Maple Road (38th Street) and old location purchased and platted for residential lots, now known as **Herron-Morton Place**.
1902 William L. Elder platted a new addition on the southside to be named **University Heights**. Profits from lot sales were to be used to establish Indiana Central University (now the University of Indianapolis).
1906 **Beech Grove** founded with plans to build a locomotive repair shop.
1907 William Elder platted **Edgewood** as Stop 7 on the interurban route.
1910 **Ravenswood** and **Rocky Ripple** developed as summer resort communities.
1911 The Greater Indianapolis Industrial Association formed to create **Mars Hill**, a new city of factories and workers.
1912 **Speedway City** platted as a local center for automobile production. The new city was built around the racetrack used to test automotive components.
1913 Town of **Warren Park** platted.
1920 Citizens of New Bethel obtained post office and changed name to **Wanamaker**, after U.S. Postmaster General.
1921 Wealthy Indianapolis families began to build secluded estates in **Crows Nest**.
1922 Benjamin Stevenson developed his family's farm as a residential area and named it **Forest Hills**.
1923 **Homecroft** platted.
1925 Washington Bank & Trust Company developed northside community of **Williams Creek**.
1935 Over 300 houses demolished to make room for **Lockefield Gardens**.
1937 To block construction of a nearby drive-in restaurant, neighbors voted to incorporate as the town of **Meridian Hills**.
1939 Small westside community of **Wynnedale** incorporated.
1953 **Meadows** area underwent housing boom. **Butler-Tarkington** Neighborhood Organization established to promote stability in an area undergoing racial change.
1962 A portion of the proposed I-465 expressway opened in the northwest corner of Marion County. The "outer loop," completed in 1970, encouraged residential development along the county's outer perimeter.
1970 Under Unigov, city and county governments consolidated, extending all borders to the county line.
1976 Opening of I-70/I-65 inner loop connected outlying suburbs to downtown and displaced established Center Township neighborhoods. Eastside Community Investments, Inc. (ECI) founded and becomes the first operating Community Development Corporation (CDC) in the city.
1980 The City of Indianapolis, in cooperation with the Greater Indianapolis Progress Commission (GIPC), publishes the Regional Center Plan which sets agenda for a decade of downtown revitalization.
1988 Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership founded to improve the economic and physical infrastructure of neighborhoods in Center Township.
1991 Regional Center Plan II published to "breathe new life into the center city as a neighborhood."

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Urban Agenda: IUPUI on the Circle

The POLIS Research Center and the School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI continue a series of public discussions on important urban issues currently affecting Indianapolis.

These lunchtime discussions are hosted with the cooperation of the Associated Group in their headquarters at 120 Monument Circle, Conference Room A. This central location is easily accessible to downtown workers who may bring a brown bag lunch to the presentation. All discussions are presented free of charge. Coffee and tea will be provided.

All presentations are scheduled from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 14, 1993
"Indianapolis from a Religious Perspective."

James Divita, Professor of History, Marion College and President, Indiana Religious History Association.

Jan Shipps, Professor of History, Religious Studies, and American Studies

David Bodenhamer, Professor of History and Director, POLIS Research Center

Wednesday, May 12, 1993
"Indianapolis During the Hudnut Years: An Appraisal"

Mark Rosentraub, Associate Dean, Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs and Director, Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, IUPUI

Comments by William H. Hudnut, III, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute

Wednesday, June 2, 1993
"Amusement Parks in Indianapolis"

David Vanderstel, Assistant Editor, *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*

Connie Ziegler, Research Assistant, POLIS Research Center, IUPUI

For more information on this series, contact Lamont Hulse at (317) 274-2458.

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