

IPS and the mystery of the missing *Indianapolis Recorder* newspapers: What happened, who benefits, and what are we going to do about it?

The Indianapolis Recorder (Recorder) newspaper is quite distinguished. It's America's 4th oldest surviving African American newspaper! The IUPUI Library has a Digital Collection spanning 1889 to 1916 and from 1926 to 2014: <https://ulib.iupui.edu/digitalcollections/IRecorder>.

Note, today, as we try to understand events from the 1921-1925 era surrounding IPS, and particularly from the Black perspective, we find 9 years of *Recorder* newspapers are mysteriously missing! From January 1, 1917 to December 31, 1925, some 468 editions are evidently nowhere to be found. What's also relevant, how did *Recorder* editors, journalist and columnists cover what happened in the city, state, nation and world during this span?

Notably, we'll never get to read the *Recorder's* coverage of the events leading up to and following the December 1922 creation of IPS high schools: Attucks, Washington, and a new Shortridge. Today's historians won't have the *Recorder's* news items and editorials around the [real story about the Klan and IPS](#). The *Recorder's* coverage of the [Citizens School Committee](#), [Federation of Civic Clubs](#) and Indy [Chamber](#), and other members of the [inner-circle of Indianapolis education decision-makers](#) who enabled a Jim Crow school district and perpetuated a segregated city--some say still exists, is gone.

As well, of course, today's readers will not see what or which 1917-1925 African and Pan-African, and other global events, were deemed as newsworthy by *Recorder* staff and publisher.

Fortunately, our own Mari Evans reminds us we live in "Up south" Naptown:
"Indianapolis is truly dichotomous; a city in which contradictions is truly the norm. It is easy to be deluded here, especially when one prefers delusion to clarity."

The missing *Recorder's* are a metaphor. Each represents a need for both a broad and in-depth factual peer-reviewed analysis regarding exactly where and with whom the foundation of IPS's history is rooted, thus calling for an accurate history of Indianapolis as well.

Indeed, our city had the *Indianapolis World* (1883-1932), *Indianapolis Freeman* (1884-1926), *Indianapolis Ledger* (1912-1925), and the *Indianapolis World Telegram* (1929-1940), reporting on this January 1, 1917 to December 31, 1925 era; nonetheless, these Black newspapers are not the *Indianapolis Recorder*.

This session aims to challenge citizens to not only grasp the fact some 468 *Recorder* editions have disappeared, but unpack who benefits from this absence, and what to do about it.

What? So what? Now what?