

## The *NUVO* story, “Which IPS doors will close?” Enabling the crooked history of IPS

A closer look at the June 1, 2017 *NUVO* story on the future of our IPS, ["Which IPS doors will close?"](#) shows an example of how the district's history is glossed over by generic and naïve terminology. Though *NUVO* had good intentions, it still published uninformed/misinformed sentences about the past covert racism and prejudice surrounding IPS history.

Here are sentences from pp. 6-7 of the story (bold italics mine):

“George Washington High School was one of new three high schools IPS built in 1927 as a ***part of the district's expansion plans***. George Washington, Crispus Attucks and Shortridge were ***approved for construction by the Indiana General Assembly***. (Shortridge had already been around since the dawn of the state, ***but had outgrown its downtown structure and needed room to grow.***)”

In this context, the term “expansion” is misleading; and, in light of the multiple showings of *Attucks* on WFYI and the DVD's availability for purchase, this *NUVO* story is irresponsible journalism.

“It [Attucks] was created out of hatred.”

~ A'Lelia Bundles, author and great, great granddaughter of Madam C. J. Walker

For example, a benign term like “expansion plans” hides the truth that it was the racial hatred of Indy's establishment organization which conspired with residents of certain city areas and the 1922 IPS board to purposely segregate both Indy neighborhoods and schools. Moving Shortridge north to 34<sup>th</sup> and creating Washington and Attucks was not “...part the district's expansion plans,” but a blatant pre-meditated action “created out of hatred” to remove Indianapolis westsiders, Jews, and other southsiders/eastsiders from Shortridge while the actual “expansion” came as a result of increased social, cultural and geographical distances between Shortridge students, faculty and communities, and the other IPS students, faculty and communities. See the Loflin [Center's](#) videos: [A critical history of IPS 1864-1921](#) and [A critical history of IPS 1922-1930](#).

Let us review similar tragic history where the “expansion” rationale was used disguise racism. In the late 1800s, as the United States was becoming filled with self-importance, its contrived “Manifest Destiny” was eager for more land and the raw power and wealth it represented. From the standpoint of our government, neither the murder or removal of Native populations was genocide. It was just the fulfillment of America's Western “expansion plans.”

What Indy has here is that *NUVO*, in one fell swoop of the pen, lets the villains of the *Attucks* movie (the Indy Chamber of Commerce, the Citizens School Committee, and the Federation of Civic Clubs) off the hook. “Which IPS doors will close?” implies that Attucks was all due to the members of Indiana's legislature. If this were the case (*NUVO* cited no sources), it was after the fact that many of Indy's upstanding, church going, educated, community minded men and women who were dedicated parents and spouses were also segregationist--no better than the bigots in the Jim Crow South--who were the leading characters of one of the darkest chapters in the story of the underbelly of Indianapolis.

Next, there is/was no proof the Shortridge at Michigan/Pennsylvania was getting over-crowded. Yes, after WW I, the First Great Migration and increasing immigration from Europe, Indy's demographics were changing. And, Manual and Tech were also open. Question: what is the connection between Shortridge's need for “more room to grow” and the school's principal, Mr. George S. Buck,<sup>1</sup> speaking for a “separate school for the colored” at a September 1922 school board meeting? See board [“Minutes, Book W.”](#)

September 19, 1922 p. 397. By moving north to 34<sup>th</sup> St., Shortridge found “room to grow” alright-- room to grow away from the comingling of the races as well as having to rub shoulders with the city’s pedestrian class. Or else, why not invite all the same Shortridge students, and more, uptown to the bigger/better school at 34<sup>th</sup> /Meridian?

Continuing the old Shortridge up at the new Shortridge was not going to happen. Why? The real issue is inadvertently exposed in a 1922 *Indianapolis Times* editorial, ["The Negro Problem"](#):

“At the very time these [northwest side] women were meeting [to discuss their fears of the possibility Black neighbors], it was necessary to station police about Shortridge to protect girl students from insults of negroes and depraved whites, while on the inside of the building, one of the indefensible anomalies of our educational system—the co-mingling of black and whites in the classroom.”

**The problem**, as the *Times* editorial exposed, **was not NUVO’s “over-crowding” interpretation; it was the Negro problem.** In that the “problem” was eventually solved by opening Attucks (and Washington) in 1927, and still more by moving from downtown in 1928, Shortridge, in doing so also found ways to both socially shun as well as directly discourage other particular students from following the school north. This move north made it simply geographically harder for Indy’s African American and the Southside’s Jewish students, along with its Italian and German students, and the Southside’s and near Eastside’s poor whites, as well as Indy’s Westside Southern and Eastern European students to co-mingle with Shortridge “girl students” ...and boys.

See Indiana’s all-black high schools Gary Roosevelt and Evansville Lincoln which also opened in the 1920s <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/1927-1928-Indianas-1920s-Jim-Crow-high-schools-Gary-Roosevelt-Indianapolis-Attucks-and-Evansville-Lincoln-What-do-they-have-in-common.pdf>

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1. IPS even named a school after this Indianapolis segregationist: No. 94, Geo. S. Buck Elementary at 2701 N. Devon Ave.

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