

Continuing to straighten out the crooked story of the Indianapolis Public Schools

A critique with insights, recommendations, and resources

“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.”
~ Mari Evans, from *Clarity as Concept*

Trying to straightening out the *NUVO* IPS desegregation story, the Shortridge *Wikipedia* entry, the Attucks Curriculum and Discussion guides, WFYI’s resources for the *Attucks* documentary, and the 9 years of missing *Indianapolis Recorder* newspapers

“Don’t make waves; don’t be unpleasant; and if Truth is unpleasant, then avoid the Truth.” ~ Mari Evans, on Indianapolis in *Clarity as Concept*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary Page 3

Quotes Page 4

Example A The *NUVO* story, “Which IPS doors will close?” Enabling the crooked history of IPS Page 5

Example B Shortridge’s Wikipedia entry: The fox writes the history of the henhouse Page 7

Example C The Attucks Grades K-12 Curriculum Guide: Why the fascination with the KKK? Page 9

Example D The Attucks Discussion Guide: Why the continued fascination with the KKK, and is WFYI a local history expert now? Page 11

Example E The 9 years of missing *Indianapolis Recorder* newspapers 1917-1925: *Qui bono?* Who benefits? Page 16

References Page 19

Appendix I Curricular/Instructional Resources from WFYI/PBS Learning Media: Constructivism vs. Direct Teaching Page 20

Appendix II Part I-A 1864-1921 A Critical History of the Indianapolis Public Schools 1864-1930 and Part I-B 1922-1930 A Critical History of the Indianapolis Public Schools 1864-1930 Page 22

Appendix III Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce Page 23

Appendix IV The Federation of Civic Clubs Page 24

Appendix V The Citizens School Committee Page 25

Appendix VI General IPS History Recourses Page 26

Appendix VII Indiana’s 1920’s Jim Crow High Schools: Gary Roosevelt, Indianapolis Attucks, and Evansville Lincoln: What do they have in common? Page 28

Appendix VIII Religion: The missing factor of the 1920s Indianapolis education puzzle: Proposed \$1,000,000 Cathedral High School Page 30

Appendix IX The Indiana Federation of Women’s Clubs: What part did women play in segregating schools and neighborhoods in 1920s Indianapolis? Page 32

Appendix X Surviving the 1927 Butler College quota; A History of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Founded November 12th, 1922 on the campus of Butler College Page 33

***Continuing to straighten out the crooked story
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Summary An introductory story: On June 1, 2017 *NUVO* published, “Which IPS doors will close?” The edition’s “BIG STORY” feature was a response to the latest education debate on which Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) high school the district will close. From the perspective of the Charles E. Loflin & Virginia P. Vornehm-Loflin Center on the History of the Indianapolis Public Schools ([Center](#)), the feature was full of naive generalities and a vocabulary so innocent and amiable it could mislead the reader to downplay, if not avoid, race/racism as the major factor when understanding IPS and its infamous history exposed by the acclaimed *Attucks: The school that opened a city* ([Attucks](#)) documentary.

For example, one of the most racist/hostile eras in Indy history--the 1970s/1980s “white flight” response to a belated integration of IPS and consequent loss of thousands of white IPS students/families enabled by the hegemonic politics of UNIGOV, is just explained away as, “The population shifted.”

I don’t think *NUVO* did anything on purpose. This would mean they knew better. Regardless, the piece will not put off any of the city’s new gentry class with the reality of an ugly past and current contentious relationship between local public education and Indy’s African Americans. Besides, the portrayal is so well-meant, it will not challenge the mainly white professionals who read the magazine.

Still, the interpretation of the last 100 years of IPS/Marion County history and non-political vocabulary used to tell the IPS story in “Which IPS doors will close?” was astonishing; and, in light of the *Attucks* film, it was disturbing. I was compelled to look closely at the latest city-wide conversations, the media coverage, the many citizen meetings and IPS/citizen meetings I attended, and the actions by IPS recommending closing 3 high schools.

Then, while riding IndyGo, I heard, “They won’t close Shortridge...and they better not close *Attucks*.” This insight, plus my critique of the *NUVO* story, prompted me to become more familiar with the *Attucks* and Shortridge stories. Closing one or both would be very controversial. So, I deconstructed Shortridge’s *Wikipedia* entry. I looked at *Attucks* again.

I particularly interrogated the recently published *Attucks* “Grades K-12 Curriculum Guides” and companion “Discussion Guide” ([Guides](#)). Each is written to facilitate an understanding of the political implications of the documentary which validated *Attucks*’ historical and cultural gravitas.

Unlike the film each supplements, my analysis argues that either guidebook “beats around the bush” by not calling out the 3 organization (the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Citizens School Committee, and the Federation of Civic Clubs) fingered in the film as the culprits who created *Attucks*--that is, the city’s white business, political, civic, cultural and Protestant establishment (“[The Mind Trust](#)” of the 1920’s), a local education oligarchy which created the high school out of hatred in 1922.

Instead, the Guides mention the Indy/Indiana Klan many times, insinuating they were the only bigots in town. Although these 3 local organizations were on par with hate groups of 1920s Jim Crow South, the guides use the generic term “white community leaders” to refer to, though indirectly, these 3 segregationist organizations the film noted were the behind *Attucks*. Thus, either guidebook chooses the sensationalism of the KKK’s local history over the recognized conscientious counter-narrative revealed via the 40 years of research by the Center and so courageously validated in *Attucks*.

Though *Attucks* means to once and for all clarify and remedy the crooked circumstance surrounding our local schools, still knotted forms of this history, the documentary intended to disentangle, continue.

(c) John Harris Loflin January 1, 2019 Indianapolis

But, it wasn't the Klan who created Crispus Attucks High School.

-- Narrator, 5:20 mark of *Attucks: The school that opened a city*

The key to understanding the Klan and segregation...is to understand that Klan politicians were far more interested in patronage and power than ideology...the Klan and segregationist movements...were, [mainly] independent of each other. The decision to segregate the public schools was made in 1922 by the board of the Citizen School Committee at the urging of not only the white neighborhood protection associations, but also the Chamber of Commerce and other business groups that backed the citizen's board. The segregation program did not depend on the Klan support and would have been carried out had the Klan never existed. -- Leonard J. Moore, *Citizen Klansmen*, p. 150

Not until many years later, after the state law that abolished school segregation was adopted in 1949 and "establishment" whites wanted to remove the stigma of racism represented by segregated schools, a tradition developed that the Klan was responsible for Crispus Attucks high school.

-- Dr. Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks In the 20th Century*, p. 60

Named after Crispus Attucks...the school opened in September 1927, but from the foregoing account it is clear that the decisions to develop a Black high school...were made by the school board elected in 1921. The so-called "Klan" board was not elected until November 1925. These facts refute the popular tradition that the "Klan" board was responsible for authorizing a segregated high school.

-- Dr. Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks In the 20th Century*, p. 58

The completion of [Attucks] during the Klan reign, along with the attempt by the Klan city council to enact the [1926] residential segregation order ordinance, led to a pervasively belief in later years that the segregation campaign of the 1920s grew out of the Klan movement and was implemented primarily by Klan politicians. While the claim made an excellent scapegoat for later generations of politicians attempting to justify decades of legally sanctioned discrimination, this was simply not the case...

-- Leonard J. Moore, *Citizen Klansmen*, p.149-150

In the end, the Klan was merely one of the architects of Indianapolis's segregated schools. The policy of segregation was instituted before Klan-supported candidates took office, continued while they were in position, and was maintained after they were ostensibly removed from the school board. The simple but unpopular explanation is that the majority of white voters wanted segregated schools. Faced with a seemingly ever-increasing black population, whites created formal, structural barriers.

-- Dr. Richard Pierce, *Polite Protest: The political economy of race in Indianapolis 1920 to 1970*, p. 31

Continuing to straighten out the crooked story of IPS

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In September of 2016, *Attucks: The school that opened a city* ([Attucks](#)) presented Indianapolis a clear history of Attucks: who created it and why. *Attucks* also enlightened our city about Shortridge High School and Butler College (now Butler University) which also affected and were affected by the decisions of the 1922 IPS school board.

Through connecting the dots from 1922 to 2019, this analysis calls the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Citizens School Committee, and the Federation of Civic Clubs, the 3 1920s organizations of local business, political, civic, social, educational, and cultural elites who created Attucks, and a Jim Crow school district and segregated neighborhoods, "[The Mind Trust](#)" of the 1920's. This is because members were of the same stratum of Central Indiana society who now run and support [The Mind Trust](#).

The following 4 examples of crooked local and IPS history by Indy's *NUVO* magazine, Shortridge HS, "Grades K-12 Curriculum Guides" and companion "Discussion Guide" ([Guides](#)), and the 9 years of missing *Indianapolis Recorder* newspapers show how the crooked story of Attucks, the Indianapolis Public Schools district (IPS), and other schools in that district continue. The intent of the examples is to foster community conversations, so public and transparent, nothing crooked will exist.

"It [Attucks] was created out of hatred."

~ A'Lelia Bundles stated at 5:00 mark of *Attucks: The school that opened a city*

Example A 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 34th 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 Appendix II for the [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,¹ 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 34th 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 34th /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 Appendix XIII for more about Attucks, as well as Indiana's 1920s all-black high schools Gary Roosevelt and Evansville Lincoln.

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

Example B The Shortridge High School Wikipedia entry: The fox writes the history of the henhouse

While doing research on IPS high school closure issues, I read the following 3 sentences (bold italics mine) in the *Wikipedia* story on [Shortridge High School](#).

- 1) "While minority students had attended Shortridge from the very beginning, the majority of the students were white until 1927. In 1927, the city's first and only purposely-segregated all-black school, Crispus Attucks High School, was opened on the near west side. Designed to house all of the city's black students, regardless of residential location, ***its creation was due in large part to the influence of a branch of the Ku Klux Klan led by D.C. Stephenson, on the city's school board.***"

According to *Attucks* and my 40 years of the [Center's](#) research, the statement in bold is simply untrue. Yes, the Klan was around town in late 1922, but was not represented on the board. Now, if we want to say the 3 entities *Attucks* notes are responsible for Attucks (the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Citizens School Committee, and the Federation of Civic Clubs) were also members of leader D.C. Stephenson's "branch" of the Klan, the Shortridge narrative would be true.

"But, it wasn't the Klan who created Crispus Attucks High School." ~ Narrator, *Attucks*

The KKK's United Protestant slate (L. Sedwick, T. Vonnegut, C. Kern, L. Whiteman, and F. Kepner) did win all 5 seats in the [1925-November IPS election](#) and carried out the 1922 plans of "[The Mind Trust](#)" of the 1920's for Attucks. But again, in 1922, the KKK were not specifically on the board as they were after 1925.

The real story: Attucks would have happened without the Klan Back in the 1980s, after interviewing Mr. Henry J. Richardson in 1979, I too, like most local researchers looking into the history of Attucks, was fascinated by the KKK. I began, figuratively, chasing the men and women marching under their white hoods to see who they were and expose each one!

My investigations brought me to Butler University's historian Dr. Emma Lou Thornbrough. I talked with her when she and her sister Gayle lived at 30th/Cold Springs Rd., just south of then Marian College.

Basically saying the Klan wasn't that smart, she tried to make me understand that Attucks would have happened without them.

Her thesis is supported by Dr. Stanley Warren who noted Black children were already attending racially segregated IPS elementary schools before 1922 (Warren, 1987; Thornbrough, 2000a). Also, review the 1869 and 1877 Indiana education laws discussed in [A critical history of IPS 1864-1921](#). Realize: our

city was segregated long before the Klan arrived (Brady, 1996). And, according to *Attucks*, as early as 1908, IPS Superintendent Kendall expressed in writing that it would soon be necessary to remove Blacks from the high school.

Actually, Mrs. Otto J. “Daisy” Deeds (White Supremacy League) spoke to the IPS board for an Attucks (See IPS board “[Minutes, Book W](#)” June 13 p. 226), but she has not been associated with the KKK *per se*. Articles about her in Indy newspapers such as “[Separation of races in all manners urged](#),” show Indianapolis did not need the Klan to become racist. Her league would have existed regardless.

Couching the Klan as the “culprit” takes our eyes off the ball: Understanding the intentions of those who created Attucks vs. the intentions of those in the Klan

To help us dismantle and abandon the crooked history advanced by the Shortridge *Wikipedia*² entry, “... ***its creation was due in large part to the influence of a branch of the Ku Klux Klan led by D.C. Stephenson, on the city's school board,***” let us look at Leonard Moore (1991). Here he argues the Klan was more interested in moral issues and acquiring political power--not segregation. Catholics and Jews were more of a threat than Blacks who were mainly “party of Lincoln” Republicans.

“...the Klan gained wide-spread support in large part because of its response to popular discontent with changing community relations and values, problems of Prohibition enforcement, and growing social and political domination by elites. Moreover, Moore shows that the Klan was seen as an organization that could promote traditional community values through social, civic, and political activities....promoting the ability of average citizens to influence the workings of society and government.”

~ Buffalo & Erie Public Library review of Prof. Moore’s *Citizen Klansmen* (n.d.)

Taking into account Moore’s interpretations, one can argue that the nativist/populist-oriented Klan in fact opposed the controlling politics and middle-class sentiments of the traditional Republican Party (Moore, 1991) whose local interests were controlled by Indy’s business, political, social and cultural elite.

Thus, again, it was the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce (Appendix III), and the Federation of Civic Clubs (Appendix IV), and the Citizens School Committee, (Appendix V) as well as the *Indianapolis News* and *Times* newspapers who complicitly and with intentionality segregated Indy neighborhoods and schools...*not the KKK*.

The Ku Klux Klan as “patsy”

So why does the crooked story that the Klan were the “bad guys” who started school segregation in Indianapolis persist?

“Not until many years later, after the state law abolishing school segregation was adopted in 1949 and ‘establishment’ whites wanted to remove the stigmatization of racism represented by segregated schools, did the tradition develop that the Klan was responsible for Attucks.” ~ Dr. Thornbrough (2000b)

2. [Shortridge High School](#) highlights race, yet leaves out such important factors as social class, culture/ethnicity, religion, and even geography.

2) “While the city's elementary schools had largely been segregated by ***social custom***, the construction of Crispus Attucks High School as an exclusively African-American school created segregation by rule.”

The use of such a benign term as “social custom” to hide and dismiss the stark racism and existential threats local Blacks faced daily is astonishing. Tragically, in the South, lynching, burning, torture, dismemberment, and intimidation actually were the “social custom.” In Indy, were “[spite fences](#),” the July 1927 [bombing of a Black family's home](#) at 501 W. 29th St. by domestic terrorists, or [Butler's 1927 quota](#) limited the number of Black students to 10 per year due to “social custom”? We don’t think so. The use of the term “social custom” is just another way of disguising Indy’s overt racism, discrimination, and [pro-White Supremacy editorials](#) in the *Indianapolis Times* newspaper. These are the true descriptors, not “social custom.”

- 3) “During the 1920s, the Indianapolis Public School Board began an **expansion program**. Three new high schools were planned.”

Like “social custom,” a benign term like “expansion program” hides the truth as stated in the critique of the NUVO story on page 3-5 of this paper: Certain local resident and the city’s “power brokers” used the IPS board to purposely segregate both schools and neighborhoods. Moving Shortridge north to 34th and creating Washington and Attucks was not an “expansion program,” but a blatant premeditated action to remove/move westsiders, Jews, and other southsiders/eastsiders from Shortridge while “expanding” not only the geographic distance, but the social-cultural kinds of “distances.” Such “spaces” between Shortridge (students/staff) and other schools’ (students/staff) would discourage social class/cultural commingling and the chances of the dreaded “racial amalgamation”!

Example C The Attucks “Grades K-12 Curriculum Guide” ([Curriculum Guide](#)): Why the fascination with the KKK?

The showing of [Attucks](#) and the publication of the Attucks [Guides](#) set the stage for a public conversation for finally dismantling the Indianapolis urban legend that the KKK as responsible for Attucks.

Nonetheless, a review of the curriculum and accompanying guide for discussions shows both an over-emphasis on the KKK and no mention, in the same regard, of the 3 groups which *Attucks* exposed were actually directly and indirectly involved in creating Attucks in late 1922: the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Citizens School Committee, and the Federation of Civic Clubs; or, what these 3 groups are referred to here as, “[The Mind Trust](#)” of the 1920’s.”

To iterate, the Loflin Center’s 4 decades of research revealed and what Ted Green’s Attucks documentary emphasized: *it was not the KKK that created Attucks*. This is the Indy urban folk tale the film aimed to discredit and abandon forever.

Here are examples of this critique’s concerns:

Attucks Grades K-12 Curriculum Guide

- On p. 6 under “The curriculum guide provides educators...” on the 2nd bullet point, the guide mentions, “The divisive forces that created the school including the larger social, political, and economic forces.” This is odd since the 3 “forces” mentioned in the film: the Chamber of Commerce, Citizens School Committee, the Federation of Civic Clubs, or Butler College and its 1927 segregationist racial quota policy shown specifically with photos in *Attucks*, is not mentioned in the guide.

Now, the Indiana/Indy Klan is mentioned several times in this guide. This is perplexing. Remember, this is the same KKK the Attucks film makes a point of noting is not responsible for Attucks.

- On p. 9, bullet point 4 under, “Historical inquiry-based learning...” the Guide wants students to “Create a counter narrative to the traditional narrative surrounding the history of Crispus Attucks High School.” But, emphasizing the Klan and white “identity” groups throughout the Guide--while never mentioning the 3 “forces” that actually created Attucks in late 1922--is not a way to foster the critical thinking needed for such a counter-view.
- p. 29 The KKK was mentioned on the bottom this page: “Students research the Ku Klux Klan through writing, oral history, visual symbols, and thought provoking questions in order to understand and explain the Klan’s ties to Indiana in the 1920s.”

Here’s the concern: why were students encouraged to look into and understand the KKK, yet not also asked to “research” the Indy Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Civic Clubs? These were the exact white, mainly male,⁴ business, political, cultural, social and Protestant establishment members of the Chamber, and the white middle-class civic groups (again, not the KKK) whom the [Attucks](#) documentary (and the 4 decades of the [Center’s](#) research) show were responsible for influencing the Citizens School Committee dominated IPS board to create Attucks.

Nonetheless, a **review of the Curriculum Guide** shows both an over-emphasis on the Klan (the “KKK” was mentioned 1 time, the “Klan” 10 times and the term “Ku Klux Klan” 7 times). The groups, persons, and others mentioned in *Attucks* such as the four civic groups, the Indianapolis Chamber or *Indianapolis Times*, PTAs, Butler, or Shortridge’s principal were never mentioned or referred to.

As well, why were not students also encouraged to connect the dots back from the 1922 Indy Chamber to today’s Chamber/[The Mind Trust](#) relations and their influence on current IPS issues? See here the Chamber’s efforts to influence the board: [Indy Chamber tells IPS to right size](#), as well as by controlling the IPS board: Amos Brown’s, [Indy Chamber wants to elect an un-diverse IPS board state](#).

4. **White establishment women and Jim Crow Indianapolis in the 1920’s:** Indeed, a breakdown of the membership of the [Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce](#), the [Federation of Civic Clubs](#) and the [Citizens School Committee](#) shown here reveals most were men. So, what were the women doing, in anything? A return letter from Purdue’s Dr. Nancy Gabin challenges future historians to unpack the history of the [Indiana Federation of Women’s Clubs](#) and see what part did women play in segregating schools and neighborhoods in Indianapolis. See Appendix IX.

Can we conclude that the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, via its influence over the IPS board, is in control of IPS again?

The Chamber/Mind Trust duo had a lot to do with the dismantling the district’s high school system (John Marshall, Broad Ripple, Arlington, and Northwest) by telling the schools had to close due to low enrollment and then influencing IPS to authorize 4 other high schools (Herron, Riverside, Purdue Poly Tech, and KIPP). As well, the Portfolio Model (not a school system, but a system of schools) enabled IPS to sell-off its assets (e.g., the Coke plant, and maintenance building at 16th and Monon Trail). Thus, the whole district would be turned over to business interests through privatizing the entire system--making the district “IPS Inc.”

Also note, that during part of the tenure IPS Commissioner Mary Ann Sullivan, her husband, Brian Sullivan, was the 2017 Chamber of Commerce board chair and executive committee chair.

<https://indychamber.com/news/sullivan-chair-indy-chamber-board/>

- **p. 30** at the top: “Students compare and contrast the ideals and goals of the KKK versus the political and social principles of various identity groups of today”;
- **p. 31** under “Crispus Attucks Historical Inquiry: “ 4th bullet point : “Students identify white supremacy groups like KKK...”;
- **p. 41** at the bottom: “USH.4.3 Identify areas of social tension...the KKK....”;
- **p. 42** at the top: under “Crispus Attucks Historical Inquiry: Students provide examples of racial tension intensified by groups like the Ku Klux Klan and explain the impact of their power and presence in post-WWI era Indiana.”;
- **p. 49** Under “Works Cited” see “A Closer Look at Indiana’s Klan. (n.d.) *Indiana magazine of history*,...”;
- **p. 51** Under “Additional Resources” see “ *Grand Dragon: D.C. Stephenson and the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana*, by William Lutholtz and *Citizen Klansmen* by Prof. Leonard Moore.
- **p. 60** Under “**Racism and the Ku Klux Klan** **A Closer Look at Indiana’s Klan** Lesson plan illustrating the Ku Klux Klan activities in Indiana in the 1920s” and “**Racial Violence and Terror**”: SECTION 06

Once more, there is no direct mention of the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Civic Clubs, and the Citizens School Committee--just more references to the KKK.

Example D The Attucks “Discussion Guide” ([Discussion Guide](#)): Why the continued fascination with the KKK, and is WFYI a local history expert now?

“But, it wasn’t the Klan who created Crispus Attucks High School.” ~ narrator *Attucks*

p. 9 The Discussion Guide continues the Curriculum Guide’s emphasis on the KKK, but in this case, it’s reinforced by WFYI/Ch. 20, Indy’s PBS station. See more in Appendix I. “**The Film’s Storyline (read to group, provided by WFYI Public Media)**: When all-black Crispus Attucks High School was built in the 1920s, Indiana’s governor, the majority of the state legislature, the mayor and the entire School Board were *Klansmen or Klan-backed*. The school was designed to fail. But it did not fail.”

- From the standpoint of this analysis, the quote is misleading because it:
 1. conflates the KKK and the creation of Attucks;
 2. the “built in the 1920s” wording is too vague because it avoids the exact October-December 1922 dates when the IPS board actually discussed and then voted to create Attucks. (See [1922 events leading up to creating Attucks](#) and the IPS board “[Minutes, Book W](#)”) and so when the Klan’s political influence was just beginning in the city. The, “built in the 1920s” generalization enables the “1920s=the Klan” meme and **helps lead teachers and students away from** critical research on who the “white community leaders” actually were. See Appendices III, IV, and V;
 3. the paragraph’s over-emphasizes/dramatizes the main KKK power era which actually was not that long. In March of 1921, Grand Goblin C.W. Love and Kleagle J.S. Engleerth established a KKK office in Indy. The Klan’s *Fiery Cross*³ newspaper appeared in 1922. See the [digital archive of the Fiery Cross](#) here.

Note the [1923-Distribution of Klan strength in Indianapolis](#). We know that although it counted a high number of members statewide, yet the Klan’s importance peaked with the November 1924

election of Gov. Jackson. A short time later, the scandal surrounding leader D.C. Stephenson ([Stephenson v. State](#)) destroyed the Klan's image as upholders of law and order. By 1926, the Ku Klux Klan was crippled and discredited. Also, the Klan's Protestant Schools slate lost the 1929 election to a revived Citizens School Committee. (See [1929 IPS election Pt. I](#) and [1929 IPS election Pt. II](#)); and,

4. Attucks may have been designed to fail, but it was mainly designed to segregate housing and neighborhoods to prevent a co-mingling and eventual amalgamation of the races that would threaten the genetic survival of the white race. In other words, the push for a separate high school to top off an entire Jim Crow public school system was the scheme of the white business, political, and cultural mainstream collaborating with white-area neighborhood associations (See Appendix IV) **to use an anti-black agenda to camouflage a pro-white racial ideology.**

Here is an example of my concerns:

A review of the Discussion Guide shows both an over-emphasis on the Klan (the "KKK" was mentioned 4 times and the "Klan" 10, and the term "Ku Klux Klan" 0 times). The groups, persons, and others mentioned in *Attucks*: the four civic groups, the Indianapolis Chamber of *Indpls. Times*, PTAs, Butler, or Shortridge's principal were never mentioned or referred to.

4. "The Fiery Cross made its first appearance on July 20, 1922, with Ernest W. Reichard as managing editor. Milton Elrod joined the paper in April, 1923, and assumed the title of editor-in-chief. In October, 1923, the paper was being published by the Fiery Cross Publishing Company. This KKK publication, which had formerly been titled the *FACT*, was discontinued around 1925."

~ John W. Miller, *Indiana Newspaper Bibliography*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1982, p. 268

The position of the [Center's](#) commentary is WFYI must realize that owing to the Attucks documentary, when they provide unsubstantiated historical assertions (as above), in the context of the *Discussion Guide*, the station can be seen as associated with sustaining the lie that the Klan created Attucks.

"Not until many years later, after the state law abolishing school segregation was adopted in 1949 and 'establishment' whites wanted to remove the stigmatization of racism represented by segregated schools, did the tradition develop that the Klan was responsible for Attucks." ~ Dr. Thornbrough

Does the efforts by WFYI to enable the myth that the Klan was responsible for Attucks let the station and its supporters off the hook?

WFYI must appreciate it represents the same strata of Indianapolis "establishment whites" Dr. Thornbrough mentions above. Common sense would say now that *Attucks* is out, one could conclude the station intentionally avoids the historical facts of the documentary in order for its employees, board, volunteers, and paying membership to benefit from maintaining the Indy urban "KKK started Attucks" legend.

- **p. 14** Top of the page, which is a continuation of p.13's "**Menu of Questions CATEGORY #2 (reflection, internal relationship with film, memories, associations)** *13th bullet point* (italics mine). "In the film, what did you notice about how **white community leaders** viewed African Americans in the 20s and then again in the 50s? Do you think that was a universal view among all white people?"

- What did you notice about the response of African American leaders? Of students? Why do you think people acted and responded as they did at the time? Would students respond differently today? ***How are things the same or different now?***

The 13th bullet point listed on p. 14 is a good opportunity to directly name/call out the groups of local segregationists who created the high school as exposed in *Attucks*.

From the stand point of this analysis, this is a chance to mention groups--specifically--as does *Attucks* and like the Attucks Curriculum Guide/Discussion Guide do regularly of the KKK. Here's the version of the above 13th bullet point by the Charles & Virginia Loflin Center on IPS History:

"In the film, what did you notice about how white community leaders⁵ (groups such as Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Citizens School Committee, the Federation of Civic Clubs, and those behind the Butler College quota) viewed African Americans in the 20s? What about the 50s? Where these organizations still around? If so, were they involved in IPS? Do you think that was a universal view among all white people? What did you notice about the response of African American leaders? Of students? Why do you think groups such as Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Citizens School Committee, the Federation of Civic Clubs, or those behind the Butler College quota acted and responded as they did at the time? Would students respond differently today? How are things the same or different now?"

Please understand, this critique is not arguing the guidebooks stop using "the Klan." The Center just wants the Discussion Guide to have integrity and be authentic and clear, and stop using the vague "white community leaders" term and say what they mean regarding the white community leaders the Center's research and Ted Green and *Attucks* said created Attucks. Ted did not use "white community leaders." He came out and said, "the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce," "the Citizens School Committee," and "the Federation of Civic Clubs." Why can't the guidebooks do that?

5. As a part of this particular discussion, we have Mrs. Otto J. "Daisy" Deeds (248 W. 38th St.) of the White People Protection League [urging separation of races in all manners](#). I do not see Mrs. Deeds as a community leader of the level of responsibility and status as the political, economic, and cultural mainstream who were members of the Indianapolis Chamber, Citizens School Committee, and Federation of Civic Clubs. There's no record of her being a member of the KKK or not.

- **p. 14 Under: "CATEGORY #3 (interpretation, life meaning, broader value or significance of story)"** the 11th bullet point unabashedly points out the KKK: "While there were unjust laws on the books in Indiana, Indiana was considered a fairly tolerant state. Progressive in many social ideas. But, in the early 1900s, the KKK changed tolerance among white Hoosiers very quickly. What do we know about the history of the KKK in Indiana (or our state?) What do we know about the KKK or other neo-Nazi/supremacist groups in Indiana (our state) today? How does something like segregation or intolerance happen so quickly in a community that appeared to be headed in a more progressive direction? Could you imagine the tide changing that quickly today? What's to stop it?"

"But, it wasn't the Klan who created Crispus Attucks High School." ~ narrator *Attucks*

"It [Attucks] was created out of hatred." ~ A'Lelia Bundles

- **Here's the concern:** From my perspective, students/participants are not asked directly by the *Discussion Guide* (as in the paragraph above regarding the Klan) to research the groups who actually were the “bad guys” exposed in the 2 well attended public viewings at the Madame Walker Theater⁶ and numerous showings of *Attucks* on WFYI: the Indianapolis Chamber, Federation of Civic Clubs and Citizens School Committee. By intimating one has to be an official member of the KKK, a neo-Nazi, or a white supremacist organization to be prejudice or even a practicing racist is misleading. *Attucks* showed one can be a member of a local chamber of commerce, a block club, or an education group running a school board slate and be a segregationist filled with hatred.

To illustrate, for the sake of argument, please consider, from this paper's point of view that another version of the “11th bullet point” paragraph is more honorable and politically relevant regarding this issue if rewritten as:

“While there were unjust laws on the books in Indiana, Indiana was considered a fairly tolerant state. Progressive in many social ideas. But, in the early 1920s, as mentioned in Attucks: The school that opened a city, the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce changed tolerance among Marion County white Hoosiers very quickly. What do we know about the history of the Chamber in Indianapolis? What do we know about our local Chamber or other pro-business patriotic groups in a right-to-work supermajority Republican state like Indiana (our state) today? The film mentioned the Federation of Civic Clubs. Why were club members supporting separation of the races in neighborhoods and IPS schools? How does something like segregation or intolerance happen so quickly in an early 1920s Indianapolis community that appeared to be headed in a more progressive direction? Could you imagine the tide changing that quickly today? Is gentrification changing Indianapolis quickly, re-segregating Center Township neighborhoods by class as well as color? Is there any correlation between Indy's charter or Innovation schools and gentrification? Are the changes producing domestic refugees displaced by this ‘urban renewal’? What's to stop it?”

The above version, in italics, of the Attucks [Discussion Guide](#) scenario is written to make a point. This line of reasoning may seem far-fetched and speculative, even “leading the witness” (teachers and students), but it is not as misguided as the constant over-emphasis and consequent preservation of the widely distributed untruth that the KKK were the bigots and segregationists who created Crispus Attucks High School.

6. Please take note that none of the local TV or print media reviewed the Attucks documentary or the event. A photo of the dignitaries on a red carpet entering the Madame Walker gala was published in the *Recorder*, but again, none reviewed the film.

Constructivism or direct teaching..., or both?

Now, since the *Discussion Guide* did not directly ask readers/participants to deconstruct any relationship to Attucks and “[The Mind Trust of the 1920's](#)” (namely the Indy Chamber, Citizens School Committee, the Federation of Civic Clubs, *Indianapolis News*, and leaders of Butler College and Shortridge), are facts/details regarding these 3 organizations and/or individuals in the groups to be discovered and constructed eventually (*or not*) by students?

- **p. 24 Top “A Set of Questions that Explore Revisionist History after Viewing the Film”** This “Set of Questions” must not avoid asking about the biggest and most successful attempt at revisionist history in Indianapolis: **the 9 years (1917-1925) of missing *Indianapolis Recorder* newspapers.** That is around 468 editions! See for yourself: www.ulib.iupui.edu/collections/IRecorder. This is a

new form of revisionist history only Hoosiers, and invariably the Indianapolis establishment, could pull off and get by with it. *All is wiped away; all is silenced.* See more in Example D.

“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.” ~ Mari Evans

The contradictions here are that there have been no questions, outcry, or series of public forums or workshops about the missing editions by the *Recorder*, and/or Indiana Historical Society, or Marion County Historical Society, or Indiana State Museum, Indiana State Library, let alone the IUPUI Digital Library or Marion County Public Library. And, this does not include the local and state university Black history departments. Finally, what about the national and our local NAACP chapters, the Indianapolis Urban League, or even the Black Press USA/National Newspaper Publishers Association? *All look the other way; all are silent.*

The fact that, to date, the *Recorder* editions are missing is even beyond the concept of “historical amnesia” or “collective forgetting” ([Discussion Guide](#), p. 28). To make clear: amnesia implies someone had something to forget; “reinterpreting historical events through a selective revisionist lens” implies there is something to reinterpret. The issue is *we do not know what was published in the first place.*

This is a new form of manipulating history equal to the use of the “memory hole”⁷ in the workings of the “Ministry of Truth” throughout Orwell’s dystopian *1984*, or the antics of the former Soviet Union under Stalin or Khrushchev which would simply erase a suddenly disesteemed comrade the Communist Party wanted removed from any official state historical photos.

“I woke up in the middle of the night screaming from a dream. This had never happened to me before. I was running downtown [Indianapolis] through a park filled with war memorials and tombstones, giant obelisks and monuments to the dead, and a small man stood on the marble steps, his face covered by a hood and he told me to turn around, but I did not.”

~ Transcript from Caller #12, *The Manufactured History of Indianapolis* (Reeves, 2013)

7. A [memory hole](#) is any mechanism for the alteration or disappearance of inconvenient or embarrassing documents, photographs, transcripts, or other records, such as from a website or other archive, particularly as part of an attempt to give the impression that something never happened.

At this point, Hoosiers with integrity can only assume the 468 editions of the *Recorder* are missing on purpose. No one believes every single edition is missing by chance.

“[Here in Indianapolis,] we are programmed to disbelieve what we experience, this impacts how we view society and how we view ourselves.” ~ Mari Evans

Remember, 1917-192 editions of the *Recorder* (America’s 4th oldest surviving African American newspaper) covered multiple significant global, national, and local (state, county, city, and neighborhood) African American events--tragic, violent, deliberate, homicidal, psychotic...horrific events. As well, the *Recorder* covered African American accomplishments: the triumphs of spirit; actions of culture, honor, courage; and, entire cultural/political movements, and each in spite of constant intimidation and blatant systemic racism.

We will not see the *Recorder* stories/editorials/columnists/letters to the editor covering the “Red

summer” of the Oklahoma race riots; the torture, burnings, lynchings in the south; and, what’s most relevant, the *Recorder*’s coverage of the 1922 actions by our Indy Chamber and the Federation of Civic Clubs, and the meetings/decisions by the Citizens School Committee influenced IPS board to create Attucks.

Yes, the Chicago *Defender*, the Indianapolis *Freeman*, and *World*, plus local papers (*Star*, *News*, *Times*) are not missing, but they are not the *Recorder*.

- p. 27 Here’s even more reference to the KKK under “**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**”
 - “**Ku Klux Klan Moment of Indiana History**”
 - “**Old List of Klan Members Recalls Racist Past in an Indiana City**”
 - “**How the Klan Captured Indiana**”
 - “**List of materials at the Indiana State Library regarding the KKK in Indiana**”

Below are 3 facts proving it is vital to follow the lead of *Attucks: A school that opened a city* and call out the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, Citizens School Committee, the Federation of Civic Clubs, and *The Indianapolis Recorder*:

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

~ A’Lelia Bundles stated at 5:00 mark of *Attucks: The school that opened a city*

1. “Another delegation of black ministers and NAACP leaders told the [IPS] board that segregation inevitably meant inequality of opportunity, and that the **Chamber of Commerce** (Appendix III), which advocated a separate school, was pervaded by a ‘...malicious spirit that would produce a serf class” [bold font mine] (Thornbrough, 2000c). p. 57
2. The **Citizens School Committee** (Appendix IV), whose commissioners on the late 1922 school board, voted unanimously to create Attucks, went on to sustain/maintain its racist, segregationist, bigoted policies by winning elections, dominating the IPS school board for over 4 decades: 1921-1925/1928-1970 (Thornbrough, 2000d) p. 151
3. The **Federation of Civic Clubs** (Appendix V), an association of community groups (i.e., northwest Indy’s Mapleton Civic League) who organized to make sure their neighborhoods stayed white, lobbied the IPS board and “...the school board responded to pressure from [these] **civic clubs**, the **Chamber of Commerce**, and other respected ‘establishment’ groups by authorizing the building of a separate high school for blacks...” (Thornbrough, 2000e) p. 55

Example E The 9 years of missing *Indianapolis Recorder* newspapers 1917-1925: Qui bono? Who benefits?

Why are 9 years of the *Recorder* still missing? Raising the curtain hiding the underbelly of Indianapolis

Back in 1979, after I talked with Indy’s Mr. Henry J. Richardson and began my research on the Indianapolis Public Schools, I discovered the downtown library did not have microfilm on the *Recorder* from 1917-1926.

Just think, we will never know what *Recorder* journalists said or editorial writers wrote about the end of WW I, the national race riots, (more than 3 dozen race riots occurred, e.g., Red Summer of 1919; Oklahoma 1921: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gvoq7oWkqRg>); local, state, and national elections; lynchings, the rise and fall of the Indiana KKK, the creation of the Citizens School Committee and the Federation of Civic Clubs, and how these new organizations teamed up with the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce and some local media to create and enable Jim Crow neighborhoods, parks, hospitals, theaters, and an entire segregated public school system.

With respect to the distinguished honor the *Recorder* has as America's 4th-oldest surviving African-American newspaper, we will have to simply live with the fact **we will not get the *Recorder's* perspective** on events from 1917-1925. And, *cui bono*? Who benefits from this tragedy?

The authors/publishers of *Curriculum Guide/Discussion Guide* must not forget the power of the local *status quo*. Fortunately, we have our own Mari Evans to remind us to keep our eyes on the prize and not forget where we are: "Up south" Naptown.

"Don't make waves; don't be unpleasant; and if Truth is unpleasant, then avoid the Truth."
~ Mari Evans on life in Indianapolis

The fact of the missing *Recorder* editions is a metaphor: it represents a need for a clear and authentic history of Attucks and thus IPS, and so our Indianapolis. Exposing, dismantling, and making aright the blatant bunkum of our city's entrenched power structure are what is at the heart of the inspiration for the [Center's](#) research and *Attucks*. Now that the process has started, it will require a constant and courageous interrogation and dismantling of the [Matrix](#) which supports the "crooked" history.

Contemplate the following quotes to understand why the 468 *Recorder* newspapers are still missing:

"For a span of my memory this has been a city of opposing wills, two faces firmly set toward different directions—one covertly determined to maintain the status quo, to continually block any access to power, or to parity; the other advocating an active morality and its right to inclusion as an equal entity rather than a colonized one. This has been a city of perpetual confrontation, however cloaked, between the powerless and those who influence, control, and engineer the city's movement in the inexorable and often ruthless march toward 'greatness'..." ~ Mari Evans, *Clarity as Concept*

"I don't think Indianapolis has ever been a place for radical or even progressive politics. Historically, it has been a place where you rear your family and people smile even when there's nothing to smile about. Everybody acts right and stays in their place." ~ The Rev. Thomas Brown, Ebenezer Baptist Church

"The most frightening thing about Indianapolis is Indianapolis, the fact that it continues to undermine itself by being someone other than what it is or who it is."
~ Transcript from Callers #43-#47, *The Manufactured History of Indianapolis* (Reeves, 2013)

"[Here in Indianapolis,] we are programmed to disbelieve what we experience, this impacts how we view society and how we view ourselves."
~ Mari Evans, *Clarity as Concept*

“The city [Indianapolis] shows us the things we want to see while we ignore the things you cannot face. In this way the city becomes a fractured mirror.”

~ “Axes & Mirrors” *The Manufactured History of Indianapolis* (Reeves, 2013)

“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.” ~ Mari Evans, *Clarity as Concept*

“It is a classic American story, the leitmotif of a nation whose contradictions are all the more searing in a prospering highly visible ‘all-American City,’ than elsewhere.”

~ Mari Evans on Indianapolis, *Clarity as Concept*

“What may set Indianapolis apart, though, is the local emphasis on getting along. Being a team player, fitting in, seems more crucial here than in many other places. To get ahead in Indy, you mustn’t want to change things, but improve them, oh so gradually.” ~ David Hoppe, NUVO magazine columnist

“What is more acceptable [here], more comfortable, is a high level of acculturation. Acculturation being defined as ‘to alter...through a process of conditioning.’” ~ Mari Evans, *Clarity as Concept*

“And so it is with Indianapolis. Looking back over the last 40 years, everything has changed and nothing has changed. This is a tale of 2 cities: “Locked in” to one city, “locked out” of the other. “Being ‘locked out’...one has to experience the acid psychological locking out that depends on color as the referent—not money, not manners, not clothing, not caste. Color.” ~ Mari Evans, *Clarity as Concept*

“‘Locked out’ is something that can be changed, something that must be changed, because for me, even at an early age, it produced an enormous rage, a rage that should not be dismissed as merely youthful or isolated.”

~ Mari Evans, *Clarity as Concept*

“Many Black folk thought of Indianapolis as urban, ‘Up South.’ It was better than being ‘down South,’ but it retained many of the negative propositions of the deep South and was not yet enlightened of ‘progressive’ as the West or East Coast counterparts. Conservatism and racism were alive and compatible.”

~ Mari Evans, *Clarity as Concept*

“Indianapolis, I tell friends in other places, is a city where the preservation of Euro-American cultural traditions and the enhancement of those traditions has been consistent. Not only consistent, but increasingly an economic factor too significant to be ignored or dismissed.”

~ Mari Evans, *Clarity as Concept*

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“Continuing to straighten out the crooked story of the Indianapolis Public Schools” is composed through a collaboration among the Charles E. & Virginia P. Vornehm-Loflin Center on the History of the Indianapolis Public Schools, Parent Power—Indianapolis, and the Education-Community Action Team.

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APPENDIX I

Curricular/Instructional Resources from WFYI/PBS Learning Media: Constructivism vs. Direct Teaching

Along with the Attucks Curriculum and Discussion [guides](#) for teachers and students was published the WFYI [PBS Learning Media](#) which is a part of larger www.pbslearningmedia.org. An analysis shows the PBS Learning Media were a variety of PBS grade level/age-appropriate shows, programs, and resources on important Black history events around the country. Indeed, seeing what happened in other cities and states will give students and teachers points of reference with which to compare Indianapolis and IPS.

Evidently, since PBS had no official programs or videos specifically about Indianapolis, no other resources which the local affiliate WFYI (<https://www.wfyi.org/>) could have easily been found, were not sought. Here are 2 examples:

1. Books, videos, programs, papers on or by the Indy Chamber of Commerce could have been listed such as the Chamber's website: <https://indychamber.com/about-us/>, or for example the very relevant 1920's Chamber activity magazines found on www.digitalindy.org:
 - <http://www.digitalindy.org/cdm/search/collection/icc/searchterm/education/field/topics/mode/all/con/n/and/order/nosort>
 - <http://www.digitalindy.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/icc/id/365/show/339/rec/5>
 - Butler's Dr. George Gieb's *Indianapolis First: The Centennial History of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce*
2. IPS Teachers and students could have been directed the Butler library were Butler board minutes and letters surrounding the Sept 1827 Butler College quota limiting the number of freshmen, who were Black, to 10 per year.
 - [08.23.27 Lionel Artis YMCA letter to Butler President Aley on quota](#)
 - [08.25.27 Butler President Aley to Lionel Artis of YMCA on quota limiting new Black student to 10 per year](#)
 - Read Appendix VIII "Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority: Surviving the 1927 Butler College quota" for personal accounts of the women who were part of the Butler quota experience.

Below, are 2 instances from PBS Learning Media having the potential of perpetuating the false narrative about the 1922 creation of Attucks which the [Attucks](#) documentary was made to discredit.

Constructivist orientations vs. Direct teaching?

Page 3: Math Level 2 (3-6) Crispus Attucks Historical Inquiry Indicators:

The seemingly constructivist orientations of the PBS Learning Media flow along the same lines as those found in the Curriculum and Discussion [guides](#): although the *Attucks* film *directly* mentions those who were responsible for the creation of Attucks throughout 1922 and who enabled an entire Jim Crow public school district and eventually segregated neighborhoods (The Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Civic Clubs, and the Citizens School Committee), the PBS Learning Media leave Teachers and students to figure this out (construct) for themselves who these local

segregationists were. For example, there's the task: Design investigations to explore proponents and opponents to the creation of Crispus Attucks as well as rationales provided.

If they searched the Attucks Curriculum or Discussion guides for examples, students asked to "Design investigations to explore proponents..." may never explore or uncover the real Attucks "proponents" ([The Mind Trust](#) of the 1920's) as well as a majority of the city's white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. These groups of bigots and racists, who were eventually segregationists, for some reason were not mentioned in the guides.

Remember too, copies of the *Indianapolis Recorder* published during this eventful time would be quite helpful, however copies through this very important era (1917-1925) are missing. See Example E, p. 16.

Social Studies Grades 7-12 Crispus Attucks Historical Inquiry Indicators:

The 2nd bullet point on page 13 states:

- Students analyze the multiple and intersecting movements, events, and figures that resulted in the creation of Crispus Attucks High School.

From the perspective of this examination, this is a good question. Yet, once more, in light of the fascination with the KKK shown in the Curriculum and Discussion guides, one cannot be sure if a true analysis of the variables of intersectionality will be focused on the point of the Attucks film: the perpetrators and instigators of Attucks were not Hoosiers marching under hoods, but respectable, well-educated, well-mannered, well-connected, well-heeled, and upstanding Indianapolis citizens.

Regardless, at this point in the conversation, the arguments and resources/research provided by the [Center](#) and the appendices of this critique will complement and supplement the current WFYI/PBS Learning Media resources.

Though not "official" PBS Learning Media, surely WFYI (and PBS) could have come up with this short list of relevant resources: all will mention the 3 culprits mentioned in *Attucks*: The Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Civic Clubs, and the Citizens School Committee:

- Leonard Moore's, 1991 book, *Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921—1928*.
- Emma Lou Thornbrough's:
 - 1961 "Segregation in Indiana during the Klan Era of the 1920's" *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*. Vol. 47, No. 4 (Mar., 1961), pp. 594-618
 - 1993 "The Indianapolis Story: School Segregation and Desegregation in a Northern City" <https://www.chalkbeat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/The-Indianapolis-Story-School-Segregation-and-Desegregation-in-a-Northern-City-thornbrough.pdf>
 - 2000 book, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*
- Richard Pierce's 2005 book, *Polite Protest: The political economy of race in Indianapolis 1920-1970 and the story of the Indianapolis Black community's fight against segregation*. http://www.untag-smd.ac.id/files/Perpustakaan_Digital_2/POLITICAL%20ECONOMY%20Polite%20protest%20%20the%20political%20economy%20of%20race%20in%20Indianapolis,%201920-1970.pdf
- Stanley Warren's, 1987, "The Evolution of Secondary Schooling for Blacks in Indianapolis: 1869-1930" *Black History News & Notes*, Nos. 29-30 (August, November, 1987)

APPENDIX II

Part I-A 1864-1921 A Critical History of the Indianapolis Public Schools 1864-1930

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kKigk3m4kc&t=1323s>

An overview of presentation's topics, issues and questions is made. Mr. Henry J Richardson and the Richardson-Loflin concept of early IPS history introduced. Mystery of the 9 years (01/01/1916-12/31/1925) of the missing Indianapolis Recorder newspapers is studied. Zeitgeist of early 1920's reviewed. 1869/1877 Indiana laws defining public education for Black Hoosiers reviewed. Global/national/local events for each month of 1921 reviewed and analyzed regarding their influence on Indianapolis. Points are made around Indy's increased population due to pre-/post- WW I European immigration and America's 1st Great Migration of southerners to the north. Political and social issues arose as to where these new arrivals were going to live and go to school. Early beginnings of IPS Shortridge and Manual HS summarized. The creation of the Citizens School Committee and its victory in the 1921 IPS school board election analyzed. The role of Indy Chamber of Commerce in IPS affairs introduced. Indiana's 1907 Eugenics Law and local Eugenics personalities (IU Pres. Dr. David Starr Jordan and Indy's Rev. Oscar McCulloch) studied.

Part I-B 1922-1930 A Critical History of the Indianapolis Public Schools 1864-1930

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqwJKBBoruY&t=221s>

Presentation topics, issues and questions proposed. The Richardson-Loflin concept regarding IPS is summarized. Local/national/global events for the 12 months of 1922 reviewed. Quick reviews of events for 1924-1929 given. That before Sept. of 1927, IPS students could go to any high school: Shortridge, Manual or Tech explained. Roles and aims of the KKK are compared to the aims and parts played by the Chamber of Commerce, The Citizen School Committee as well as the newly formed Federation of Civic Clubs in the creation of an entire Jim Crow school district in late 1922 analyzed. The "one big deal" via political, economic, and social trade-offs used by these 3 Indy education power brokers ("The Mind Trust of 1922") exposed: in 1927, Attucks would open for Blacks and Washington HS for Indy's west side for Southern Europeans; and, plans to expand Manual for the Jewish, German, and Italian students, and start plans to move both Shortridge HS (and Butler University) to new locations in 1928 investigated. The plans for a Cathedral HS to open in 1927 at 13th and Meridian mentioned. The roles of the Indy News and Indy Star newspapers in the educational politics of IPS inspected. 1926 Indy segregation ordinance studied. The 1926 Butler quota, limiting the number of Black students to 10/year is analyzed. Klan-backed winning 1925 United Protestant school board ticket continuing the Jim Crow policies started in 1922 by the Indy Chamber, the Federation of Civic Clubs and now-defeated Citizens School Committee examined. The 1929 school board election won by the revived Citizens School Committee over United Protestant school board ticket studied. A political/racial link between the Madame Walker Bldg. (1927) and Fountain Square Bldg. (1928) suggested. What to do about the 9 years of missing Recorder newspapers discussed. Efforts to link late 1920's IPS racial/class issues to similar 2016 IPS events made. The century-long role of the Indy Chamber (now working with The Mind Trust, Eli Lilly, Teach for America/Marian University, and Stand for Children) in influencing IPS probed.

APPENDIX III

Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce

<http://vorcreatex.com/indianapolis-chamber-of-commerce/>

Information regarding the Chamber and its activities during the city's and the IPS board's decisions to create Attucks High School

1922 Indy Chamber: Info on Board of Directors members

1922 Indy Chamber: Info on Education Committee members

1922 Pt 1 Chamber Newsletter asks for segregated IPS system

1922 Pt. 2 Chamber Newsletter asks for segregated IPS system

1923 Breakdown Indy January newsletter Education Committee members

1923 Chamber Newsletter High rate of TB among Indy Blacks

1923 Indy Chamber January newsletter--All Chamber committees

1923 Indy Chamber January--Info on Education Committee members

1923 February Indy Chamber Education Committee Determined on Constructive School Building Plan

1923 February 2 summary Chamber issues with IPS building plan

1923 Indy Chamber February newsletter--Indy Chamber Education Committee Determined on Constructive School Building Plan

APPENDIX IV

The Federation of Civic Clubs

<http://vorcreatex.com/federation-of-civic-clubs/>

Information regarding the Federation and its activities during the city's and the IPS board's decisions to create Attucks High School

01.20.22 Plans made for a Federation of Civic Clubs

03.13.22 First meeting Federation of Civic Clubs

03.13.22 Officers of Federation of Civic Clubs

04.02.22 Community group doing great work in city

04.05.22 Bios Committee chairs Federation of Civic Clubs

04.25.22 17 Clubs to meet at Federation of Civic Clubs

04.26.22 Committees of Federation Civic Clubs named

04.26.22 IPS discusses Washington, Shortridge and Howe

04.28.22 Second meeting of Federation of Civic Clubs

05.27.22 Federation of Civic Clubs: Segregation of Negroes advocated

06.13.22 TB sanitarium for Blacks urged by Federation of Civic Clubs

06.14.22 Mapleton Civic Association wants segregated school system Pt. 1

06.14.22 Mapleton Civic Association wants segregated school system Pt. 2

07.28.22 Mapleton Civic Association, IPS Supt. Graff backs Butler move to Fairview Park

APPENDIX V

Citizens School Committee

<http://vorcreatex.com/citizens-school-committee-2/>

Information regarding the Committee and its activities during the city's and the IPS.

1921 Citizens School Committee forms October 25

1921 *Star* supports Citizens School Committee October 27

1921 Citizens School Committee members

1921 Breakdown of Citizens School Committee membership

1921 November IPS election results

1922 November 29 High school for colored opposed

1922 December 13 Citizens School Committee-backed IPS board creates Attucks

1922 December 27 Citizens School Committee-backed IPS board creates Washington HS; discusses Shortridge HS move

1925 November IPS election results

1929 Bios IPS school board candidates

1929 Pt. I November IPS election results and story

1929 Pt. II November IPS election results and story

1934 Citizens School Committee membership

1934 Breakdown of Citizens School Committee membership

1942 Citizens School Committee members

1942 Breakdown Citizens School Committee membership

1951 Citizens School Committee brochure claiming the organization started in 1928

APPENDIX VI

General IPS History Recourses

<http://vorcreatex.com/general-ips-resources/>

1900-1920 Indianapolis at the Time of the First Great Migration

1921-1929 Events leading up to and through the creation of Attucks and Washington, and the relocation of Cathedral, Shortridge, and Butler College

The “Mind Trust” of the 1920’s: Connecting the dots: The Indianapolis oligarchy of education decision-makers

01.06.21 “Spite Fence” case: Dr. Lucian B. Meriwether vs. Capitol Avenue Protective Association

06.12.21 Who supported Butler College move to Fairview Park?

07.26.21 Racist children’s activity “Drawing Lessons for Our Kiddies: A bottle of Ink turned into a pickaninny” *Indianapolis Star*

11.06.21 Civic leagues backed George Beaman’s ad for IPS school board

01.31.22-12.26.22 Indianapolis Public Schools board minutes

04.28.22 The Negro Problem” Editorial *Indianapolis Times*

04.28.22 Separation of races in all manners urged

05.10.22 “Regulating Negro Cabarets” Editorial *Indianapolis Times*

05.29.22 Democrats should include Negro problem in platform

06.12.22 Minister declares real US citizen must be Protestant

10.22.22 Butler’s Irvington students want to move to Fairview

11.16.22 Racist Cartoon “Roger Bean” *Indianapolis Star*

11.29.22 High school for colored opposed

12.13.22 IPS creates separate high school for Negro students

12.27.22 Washington H. S. voted on; Shortridge H. S. discussed

1923 Distribution of Klan strength in Indianapolis

02.09.23 “Yea! Butler” KKK’s *Fiery Cross* newspaper praises Butler’s move to Fairview Park

02.20.23 “White Supremacy” Editorial *Indianapolis Times*

05.28.23 Warns racial melting pot as threat to 100% Americanism

12.10.23 Racist Cartoon “Roger Bean” *Indianapolis Star*

01.04.26 Racist Cartoon “Roger Bean” *Indianapolis Star*

03.05.26 Catholics to open Cathedral HS: Religion expands as a factor in Indy's Jim Crow education system

03.15.26 Indianapolis neighborhood Segregation Ordinance

05.16.27 Dr. W.E.B. DuBois to Butler President Aley: Number of Black 1927 graduates

05.16.27 Butler President Aley to Dr. W.E.B. DuBois: Number of Black 1927 graduates

07.23.27 Vandals bomb home: Negro family recently moved into house at 501 W. 29th St. p. 1 *Indianapolis Recorder*

07.23.27 Vandals bomb home: White People's Protection League vows no Negroes north of 30th St. p. 3 *Indianapolis Recorder*

08.23.27 Lionel Artis YMCA letter to Butler President Aley on quota

08.25.27 Butler President Aley to Lionel Artis of YMCA on quota limiting new Black student to 10 per year

1927 Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority: Surviving the 1927 Butler College quota

1927 & 1928 Indiana's 1920s Jim Crow high schools: Gary Roosevelt, Indianapolis Attucks, and Evansville Lincoln: What do they have in common?

11.02.29 Bios of 1929 IPS School Board candidates

1900-2016 List of IPS Board Membership

APPENDIX VII

Indiana's 1920's Jim Crow High Schools

Gary Roosevelt, Indianapolis Attucks, and Evansville Lincoln

Research question: What do they have in common?

Crispus Attucks High School opens in September of 1927

After being created in late 1922 by Indy's *status quo* (Chamber of Commerce, the Federations of Civic Clubs, and the Citizens School Committee, e.g., [The Mind Trust of the 1920's](#)), Attucks opens in the fall of 1927. See [1922 events leading up to creating Attucks and to its opening in 1927](#).

As emphasized in the film [Attucks](#) and by 4 decades of research of the Charles & Virginia Loflin [Center](#) on IPS History, the KKK did not create Attucks.

Research is needed on these questions:

- Did Indiana's KKK influence school decisions in Gary or Evansville?
- Or, like in Indianapolis, were Gary's or Evansville's *status quo* ("white establishment") responsible?
 - Or, was it a combination of all these bigoted organizations?
- Like in Indianapolis, were efforts made decades later by Gary's or Evansville's *status quo* to hide their involvement in school segregation by trying to blame the KKK?
- Did efforts in Gary and Evansville to build a segregated high school also, like in Indianapolis, create an entire Jim Crow school district and segregated neighborhoods?
- What parts did Gary's and Evansville's newspapers play?
- Did any of Gary's and Evansville's colleges establish a racial quota like Butler?

Gary Roosevelt September 1927 The Gary System: Jim Crow in education

"Although the [the city of Gary] continued to maintain segregated schools, some black students were enrolled in schools designated for white students on a space-available basis. *In September 1927, after eighteen black high school students were transferred to Emerson School, the school's white students walked out in protest, beginning what was called the Emerson School Strike. The four-day strike ended when a settlement was reached that called on the Gary city council to appropriate funds to construct what be-came known as Roosevelt High School, as well as a temporary school to help alleviate school overcrowding. Emerson's African American students were transferred to the temporary school after the resolution and funding appropriation for the school buildings were passed. Gary's mayor, Floyd E. Williams, assured the city's African American community that the new high school would have facilities 'equal to existing high schools in the city, as well as having qualified teachers and staff.' This concept of Jim Crow segregation in education became nationally known as the Gary System.* William Wirt, the city's first Superintendent of Schools, developed the Gary System during the early decades of the twentieth century. It offered vocational training and college preparatory classes in the city's high schools, as well as extracurricular activities and athletic programs, an innovative

idea the influenced the development of modern education. The Gary System was adopted by other school districts across the United States.” (Italics mine)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_Roosevelt_College_and_Career_Academy

Evansville Lincoln High School opens in September of 1928

“Lincoln opened in 1928, the same decade that saw Ku Klux Klan members win the Indiana governor's office and more than half the seats in the Indiana Legislature. Segregation was the law of the land.”

“Lincoln High School, the school for African-American students opened in 1928, a consolidation of other ‘colored’ schools in the area, including Frederick Douglass High School. It served students in grades K-12, not only from Vanderburgh County, but surrounding counties as well. The last all-black high school class graduated in 1952, and it was converted into a K-8 school. It fully desegregated in 1972.” <https://www.courierpress.com/story/sports/high-school/2019/02/21/evansvilles-lincoln-high-schools-rich-sports-history-remains/2803388002/>

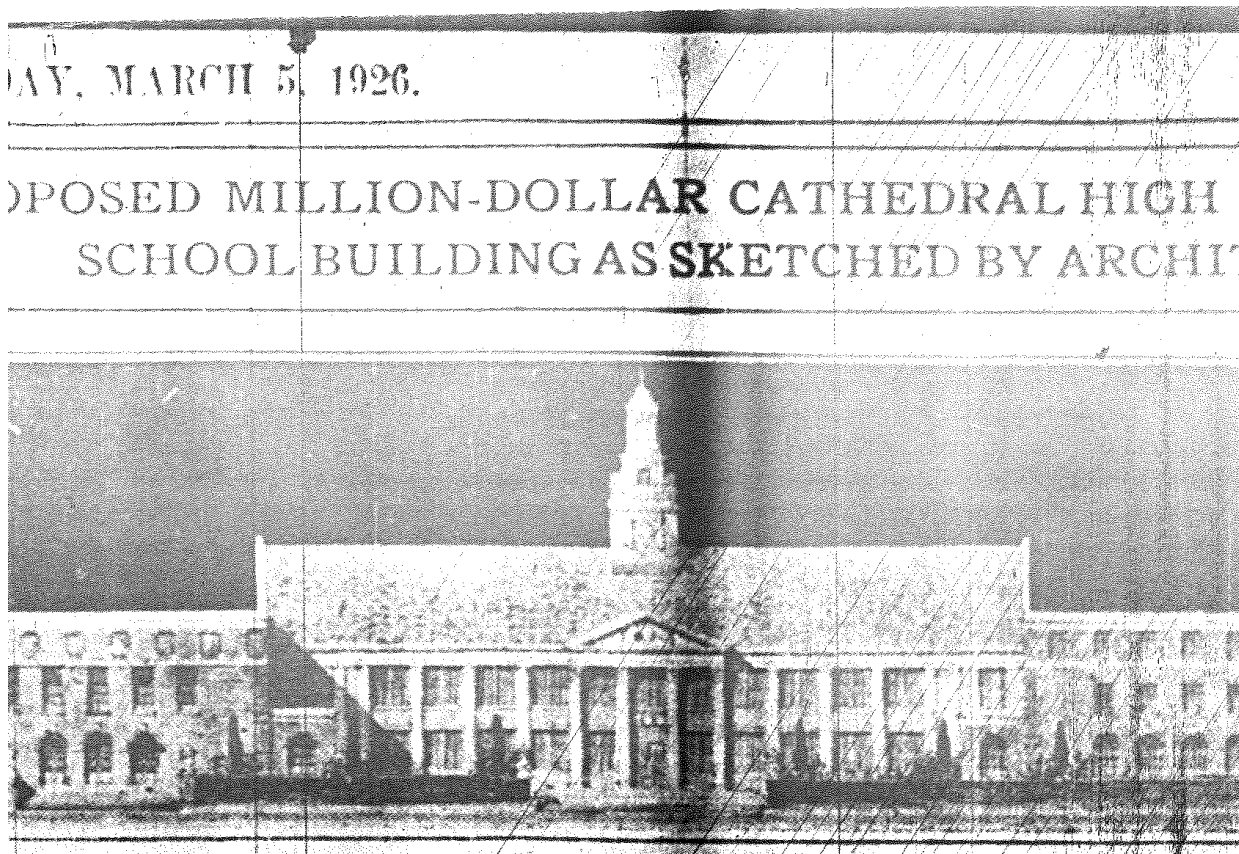
"Lincoln was the first new school built in Evansville for the black minority community. The school cost \$275,000 to build. The school included 22 classrooms, a gymnasium, auditorium, sewing room, home economics kitchen, study hall, and manual training center. However, Lincoln didn't have a cafeteria. The library had no books and the board refused to allocate money for that purpose. To stock the library, Mrs. Alberta K. McFarland Stevenson, Lincoln's first librarian, went door to door collecting books and money donations. Classes were first begun in 1928. It was a K-12 school. Since Lincoln was the only black high school for miles around, black students from Mt. Vernon, Rockport, Newburgh, and Grandview were bussed to Evansville to attend Lincoln. In 1928, the enrollment was over 300. The last all-black high school class was graduated in June 1962. Lincoln was made a K-8 school in 1962. By September 1972, the Evansville-Vanderburgh schools began desegregating under the order of federal court Judge Hugh S. Dillin. In order to achieve integration, the inner city was cut into a pie and neighborhood children were bussed to other schools. Over the years, many new programs were put into place. Title I, after school programs, scouting, and business partnerships."

The above history s from "Times Never Forgotten-A History of the Central Attendance District 1824 to 1994" https://lincoln.evscschools.com/about_us/history

APPENDIX VIII

Proposed \$1,000,000 Cathedral High School

Religion: The missing factor of the 1920s Indianapolis education puzzle



The above photo in the *Indianapolis Times* shows the proposed \$1,000,000 Cathedral High School, which is to be built at 14th and Meridian streets. The school was dedicated 09.11.1927 (Divita, 1983).

The formation of Cathedral was announced 09.28.1917. The following September the school opened for 9th and 10th graders on the 2nd floor of the Cathedral Grade School, 14th and Meridian Streets.

The new structure will consist of three units. The first will be a gymnasium large enough for three basketball courts to permit games to be played simultaneously. The second unit will be a senior high school with classrooms, library, laboratories and study halls each large enough for 150 students. Quarters will be available for administrative officers. The third unit will be comprised of the chapel, parlors, and living and recreation rooms for the brothers.

Cathedral High School: A coincidence or was religion a missing piece needed to understand the circumstances surrounding the creation of Attucks?

Looking over Indianapolis educational history, most attention is paid to the creation and opening of Crispus Attucks in September of 1927. Yet, we cannot forget George Washington High School opened at the same time. See [1921-1929: Events surrounding the creation of Attucks.](#)

Indeed, the events started in 1922 around the creation of Attucks were mainly about race, but we can see now the intersectionality of class, culture/ethnicity/nationality, patriarchy, local neighborhood geography, politics and *yes, religion*. We cannot forget, there were 3 synagogues within 2 blocks of Manual, (The United Hebrew Congregation/Madison & Union; Shara Tefilla /Merrill & Meridian; Azarus Achim/708 S. Meridian St.) There were also 2 more in neighborhood: Congregation Knesses Israel/1021 S. Meridian; Congregation Bikoor-Chaleem Ansha Hoaree/1051 S. Capitol.

The move of Shortridge from downtown to 34th Street essentially isolated Jewish students at Manual—along with its Irish, Italian, German, and Appalachian students. The creation of Washington isolated the Southern Europeans (and their churches) on the west side of White River. Indy's Eastside students were marginalized to Tech HS.

What gets little or no attention is the opening of Cathedral in September of 1927

What this just a coincidence Cathedral open at the same time as Attucks and Washington? With all the immigrant, racial, religious, and politics of the 1920's, plus the influence of the KKK, pure happenstance is unlikely

Perhaps the 1920's successful national move to have the *Bible* (King James version) read in public schools (https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057%2F9780230106796_9) and the less successful national movement to pass Compulsory Schools laws (aka parochial school laws) that would force most school age children to attend public schools (<https://cuomeka.wrlc.org/exhibits/show/osc>) influenced the Indianapolis Archdiocese to realize they needed more high school classrooms. In particular, is the fact in the summer of 1922, the IPS board allowed the *Bible* to be read, without sectarian comment, in classrooms. See the June 13, 1922 IPS board "[Minutes, Book W](#)" p. 228.

Coincidence? Both Shortridge and Butler open at new north side locations in September of 1928

As well, it is important to remember that one year later, in September of 1928, both IPS Shortridge moved from Pennsylvania and Delaware streets to 34th and Meridian streets, and Butler College moved from Irvington to Fairview Park at 46th Street and Sunset Avenue. The schools were 5 miles apart, are now less than 3 miles.

Note, the decision to move Shortridge and Butler were made in late 1922 and were part of "one big deal." See Appendix II for Part I-A of IPS video. These decisions were all made at the same time and were part of those made by the board regarding Attucks and Washington. See October-December events/decisions in [1922 events leading up to creating Attucks](#).

In summary, what is most significant, **5 major education institutions opened within 1 year**, exemplifying the inter-connectedness of forces arising during establishment of Indy's Jim Crow school system, one created and enabled by [The "Mind Trust" of the 1920's](#), Indy's oligarchy of education decision-makers.

Divita, J. (1983). *Remembering Bishop Joseph Chartrand of Indianapolis*. Indianapolis, IN: Marian College Campus Ministry Committee

APPENDIX IX

The Indiana Federation of Women's Clubs:

What part did women play in segregating schools and neighborhoods in 1920s Indianapolis?

Most of the instigators who created an Indianapolis Jim Crow public school system and city during the 1920s, were educated, religious, community-minded, and successful men.

This letter from Purdue Prof. Nancy Gabin about the [Indiana Federation of Women's Clubs](#) hints at the role of women. Further research is needed to see if, when, how, and to what extent these clubs and other organized women's groups, whose membership were Indiana's and Indy's society-minded and well-connected "whose who," helped create and perpetuate a segregated Indianapolis.

APPENDIX X

Surviving the 1927 Butler College quota

A History of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority

Founded November 12th, 1922 on the campus of Butler College

<http://www.znsboston1922.org/about-the-sorority>

First Our Vision: Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority's aim is to enhance the quality of life within the community. Public service, leadership development and education of youth are the hallmark of the organization's programs and activities. Sigma Gamma Rho addresses concerns that impact society educationally, civically, and economically.

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Incorporated was founded on the campus of Butler University in Indianapolis Indiana in Sunday November 12th, 1922, by seven School teachers - Mary Lou Allison Gardner Little, Nannie Mae Gahn Johnson, Vivian White Marbury, Hattie Mae Annette Dullin Redford, Bessie Mae Downie Rhodes Martin, Dorothy Hanley Whiteside and Cubena McClure. The sorority became an incorporated organization on December 30, 1929.

In postwar 1920s America, Blacks found themselves as targets of widespread racial bigotry. Only a few years earlier in 1918 did scholar-activist W.E.B. Du Bois as editor of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) Crisis Magazine urge Blacks to "close ranks" and, at least for the time being, support the Allied Forces in their effort to defeat the Central Powers of Europe. Making up 400,000 in uniform, almost one million in wartime factory personnel, and many more as loyal supporters of the war effort, Blacks did just that. Regrettably, African American patriotism did little to damper racial hatred. Met with random acts of violence, anti-Black labor union strife, unemployment, underemployment, housing discrimination, poor city services, educational inequities, scientific racism, and condescending employers, African Americans turned inward and relied on the principle of self-help to secure autonomy, hope, and constructive resistance.

In the city of Indianapolis seven African American educators masked their anxieties, put aside their individual needs, and formed a self-help organization that sought ways to promote intellectual distinction among female schoolteachers and education majors. Either Midwestern natives or Southern migrants, the women, all from working-class backgrounds, recognized the power of agency for people of color. The teachers founded Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority in 1922 on the campus of Butler College (renamed Butler University in 1923). Community builders and idealists at heart, the educators refined their

goals over the course of the next few years. By 1925, they expanded their membership requirements to include Black women outside the realm of education. In an effort to strengthen their collegiate programs and commitment to community agency and racial autonomy, the sorority in 1929 formed alumnae chapters and established scholarships for undergraduate members. A decade later, the organization comprised sixteen undergraduate chapters and four alumnae chapters in thirteen states.

Interestingly, in the backdrop of the sorority's genesis stood the very powerful and dangerous Ku Klux Klan. Racism, no doubt, thrived in both Indiana and the country; racial injustice therefore sparked the birth of the second the Ku Klux Klan. Established in 1915 in Stone Mountain, Georgia, the new Ku Klux Klan of the twentieth century evolved from two national events that year: the anti-Semitic lynching of engineer Leo Frank in Atlanta; and the release of D. W. Griffith's masterpiece, *Birth of a Nation*. Unlike the original Ku Klux Klan of Reconstruction, the second Klan targeted a variety of groups, including Jewish Americans, Catholics, recent European ethnic immigrants, Latinos, East Asians, and feminists. The secret society grew to record proportions in the 1920s, especially in the Midwest. Indiana particularly stood out as a major center of Klan activity. With 300,000 members in the early 1920s, the Indiana Klan comprised one third of the native-born White male population in the state. D. C. Stephenson, the Grand Dragon of the Indiana KKK, since 1924, resided at 5432 University, in Irvington, Indianapolis, literally right next to Butler University. Madge Oberholtzer, the educator Stephenson raped and kidnapped in 1926, also lived in Irvington.

The founders of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority also faced many aspects of racism on the campus of Butler College. Since its founding in 1855, Butler had been open to African American applicants. However, at least one Board of Regents member supported the KKK. The school itself practiced de facto segregation in numerous ways. The university in 1927 adopted a quota system that admitted only ten African American students annually. As a result, the university's Black enrollment declined from seventy-four in the 1926-1927 year to fifty-eight, and included nine entering freshmen. In 1925, the university yearbook, the *Drift*, placed photos of Black graduating seniors in the back of the book, away from the alphabetical listing and pictures highlighting other seniors. These realities suggest that African Americans on the campus were met with a degree of racial hostility.

Nevertheless, the sorority's founders pressed on. Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., founders Mary Lou Allison, Nannie Mae Gahn, Vivian White, Bessie Downey, Cubena McClure, Dorothy Hanley, and Hattie Mae Dulin quietly began their society for teachers and sought to make a difference. In doing so, they indirectly challenged perceived early

twentieth-century notions about race and gender. They subtly defied the local KKK when they established their society for college-educated African American women. Ignoring the commonly held view that African American women were intellectually, culturally, and sexually inferior, the seven founders relied on racial autonomy, community building, and constructive activism in an effort to topple racism, poverty, and hopelessness.

The first three years were devoted to organizing. The first call for a national Boule (convention) was held in Indianapolis, December 27-29, 1925. The second was held in Louisville, Kentucky at which time Fannie O'Bannon became the Grand Basileus. In a time when education for African Americans was difficult to attain, the founders of Sigma Gamma Rho became educators. They believed that the self-respect, knowledge and discipline gained through study would help individuals to recognize their duty and responsibility for their society. Thus, Sigma Gamma Rho was founded on the precept of education and continues to promote and encourage high scholastic attainment.

From seven young educators, Sigma Gamma Rho has become an international service organization comprised of women from every profession. Sigma Gamma Rho offers its members opportunities to develop their unique talents through leadership training and involvement in sorority activities. Sorority activities provide an atmosphere where friendships and professional contacts are developed which often lead to bonds that last a lifetime. Sigma Gamma Rho's commitment to service is expressed in our slogan, "Greater Service, Greater Progress."

In keeping with the ideals of Sigma Gamma Rho, the sorority has supported the following organizations: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, National Council of Negro Women, National Pan Hellenic Council, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, National Urban League, March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, National Mental Health Association, United Negro College Fund, Martin Luther King Center for Non-Violent Social Change, Black Women's Agenda and American Association of University Women. With over 500 chapters with more than 85,000 members in the United States, Bermuda, the Virgin Islands, Bahamas, Germany and Korea, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. is committed to improve the quality of life for its members and the society it serves.

History taken from the National Website with contributions by Sorors Bernadette Pruitt, Caryn E. Neumann, and Katrina Hamilton