

Who killed Hosbrook Street? SEND and the ethnic cleansing of Fountain Square

My dad and mom (Ed and Gin), and my three sisters and me moved to the Fountain Square in 1952 when I was 9. My dad got a job working at the National Cushion Springs at 806 Beecher.

We had a two-bedroom house at 1117 Woodlawn just down the street from Shelby and Woodlawn and catty-cornered across from the 1000 block of the two-block long historically Black Hosbrook St.

I went to school No. 28 at 931 Fletcher and No. 8 at Lexington and Virginia Ave., and then on to Harry E. Wood HS with my Black school mates who lived on Hosbrook.

Throughout the 50s and 60s when I lived there, I hardly saw any Black folks shopping in the Fountain Square stores. Of course the Hosbrook Blacks were not welcomed in Peppy's Grill—although the alley from Hosbrook to Virginia and the bus stop was right there.

I left the Fountain in the mid-1960s and came back in the early 1980s where I played country music with Darry and the Bluelights at Flo's Cardinal Bar, 936 Virginia Ave, and Doug's, 1706 Prospect St. I also played at Ray's Place, 1021 Virginia Ave., and sat in at Woodcutters at 1417 Prospect.

I left again in the late 1980s. I moved back in '94 to Garfield Park. I moved from that Shelby St. address to my current Barrington neighborhood address in April of 2019. So, I am a Southsider.

USCO and SEND

In the late 1960's, the United Southside Community Organization (USCO)--a truly neighborhood organization--was one of 4 neighborhood groups of the city's Community Action Against Poverty program: NESCO (Near Eastside Community Org.); WINC (West Indpls. Neighborhood Congress); and, UNWA (United Northwest Neighborhood Assoc.). USCO faded away in the late 1970's.

A few years after SEND formed in the early 80s, I saw it was not the child of USCO. Instead, SEND was a colonizing scheme of gentrification, fueled by [neo-liberalism](#) and all disguised as actions around affordable housing issues such as fixing-up homes and neighborhoods supposedly to make them more stable by keeping long-time homeowners and renters there.

Just think, SEND has come a long way since its 1983 inception. Yet, what's ironic for this community minded non-profit, is that as of 2019, with \$316,837 in revenue and a whopping \$5.8 million in assets (<https://www.causeiq.com/organizations/southeast-neighborhood-development,351557200/>), SEND acts like it's broke. Note its annual Dessert Auction fundraiser where Indy's wealthy are invited to bid: <https://mail.yahoo.com/d/search/keyword=send%2520dessert%2520auction/messages/AB8WuZdpJqegX9eWWAOKDCPTfw>.

What is also ironic, SEND, with all that power and prestige, still has issues regarding their legitimacy due to, of all things, its ethnic cleansing of low-income neighborhoods.

The **coloniality** of SEND is exemplified in the case of Hosbrook St.

There was no major and popular effort by SEND to go to the long-time majority Black Hosbrook residents and say, "We are SEND. We are fixing up homes and neighborhoods to stabilize the Fountain Square area. What can we do to help you preserve your homes and consequently sustain the history and culture of Hosbrook St. for the good of Fountain Square and Black Indianapolis?"

The SEND/Hosbrook St. relationship: Transactional not liberatory

The hidden racism within the SEND organization did not appreciate such liberatory politics because we can only assume they wanted a relationship with the Hosbrook people that was "[transactional](#)" so as to take economic advantage of the closeness of the 2 blocks of Hosbrook to the heart of Ft. Sq.

As well, a historically Black Hosbrook St. did not fit into the SEND colonial vision. Once Hosbrook residents saw the writing on the wall and then when the church was sold, the beginning of the urban

refugee process—the dis-location/relocation of a neighborhood’s original residents—took place. It was followed with the colonization (gentrification) of Hosbrook by the settler class. Note, 2 Chicks and a Hammer now live on Hosbrook St.

SEND’s gentrification scenario would soon colonize the Fountain Square: first the artists, then the hipsters, then the first generation of gentry—displacing poor whites. Read the study of Fountain Square, “[Gentrification: A community and personal account](#)” by long-time Southsider Angie Calvert.

This was followed by “hyper-gentrification” where the first generation of gentry were priced out of the Fountain Square market. See Angie’s “[The Hyper-gentrification of Fountain Square: Erasing a working-class community and their network of mechanisms for survival.](#)”

So, from my perspective, gentrification is what happened to Hosbrook Street

Today, and in years to come, few if anyone will know that Hosbrook was an all-Black street in the heart of the Square, adding to its diversity. This will continue the legacy of our Southside being unwelcoming to Black people. Read p. 3 of “Rich local heritage lives on in forgotten areas: Exploring the spirit of ethnic and religious traditions on the Southside” <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Rich-local-Southside-Indy-heritage-lives-on-in-forgotten-areas.pdf>

With Hosbrook Street gentrified, Riverside and Norwood are next

The dominoes keep falling as Indy’s historically Black neighborhoods fall to gentrification. Analyze: <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/The-dominoes-keep-falling-and-Norwood-is-next-Stopping-the-ethnic-cleansing-of-Black-Indianapolis-by-gentrification.pdf>

Stringtown and the Valley are next

We can now see what happened to the Fountain Square and Hosbrook. Just watch what is/will happen to Stringtown and the Valley. With Stringtown just over White River to the hospitals and IUPUI campus, the culture and history this Appalachian neighborhood will soon be erased,

And now that the city has re-sold the old GM plant property for the [Elanco Animal Health](#) headquarters, just watch what happens to the people, and their long-time culture, in the Valley.

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