Environmental Justice and Activism in Indianapolis

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Chapter 4

Railroads, Race, and Water

The Development of Two Indianapolis Neighborhoods

In this chapter the history of Indianapolis is examined to reveal how intimately connected the political, social, economic, and environmental realms have been over the course of Indianapolis' development. These different forces are considered in order to construct the notion that many different natures or socio-natures have been and continue to be produced across and within the city of Indianapolis. These socio-natures are constructed via the aforementioned forces interacting through issues of race, class, economic development, and quality of life to produce a patchwork of highly differentiated landscapes or socio-natures of people and environmental hazards. This chapter discusses the history of Indianapolis, emphasizing how these different spaces or socio-natures came to be produced. The political economy framework guides understanding of such historically produced spaces including the ways in which the environment influences development decisions, divisions in terms of race and/or income, and the distribution of dollars.

Early Development of Indianapolis

Indianapolis has experienced several periods of population and economic growth since its establishment in 1820 (Figure 4.1).[1] The population of Indianapolis tripled during the years following the Civil War with the migration of African-American residents from the South as well as an influx of many Irish and German immigrants (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). In 1891, the city created a new municipal charter which included a widening of the city boundaries. It was at this time that the city of Indianapolis expanded to encompass areas beyond the city center, including the study areas and former suburbs of West Indianapolis and Brightwood, in addition to other areas such as North Indianapolis, Haughville, Mt. Jackson, and Irvington. Hulse (1991) describes the expansion of Indianapolis stating "as the native-born middle class moved to these new neighborhoods to the north and east, neighborhoods in the old city displayed an increasing degree of residential segregation" (Hulse and Zeigler 1991, 23).

See Figure 4.1. 1820 plat of Indianapolis (Indiana Historical Society).

This form of escape contributed toward the increasing segregation of older neighborhoods in Indianapolis by race, ethnicity and class. The increased development of land in Center Township resulted in a population growth rate of 27 percent during the 1920s (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). As more development led to more people, the increasing population density in the oldest area of Indianapolis led to increasing pollution (industrial and noise) and crowding. In turn, residential areas of downtown were soon converted into commercial and industrial facilities. This alteration of the downtown area led to wealthier residents relocating to the edges of the city, thereby beginning the suburbanization of Indianapolis (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). To accommodate the relocation of residents to the outlying areas, railroads and streetcar lines became popular (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). However, the increase in railway traffic was not always a welcome sight as it brought pollution and increased numbers of people to residential areas.

Railroads

Railroads and street car lines played a significant role in the development of Indianapolis from its early days in the 1870s on through the early part of the twentieth century. Streetcar lines increasingly traveled outward from the city's center to foster greater suburban development. In the early 1870s the south side of Indianapolis experienced significant growth in residential development. This newly expanding area was located south of the existing railroad tracks and was often "cut off" from downtown by the heavy rail traffic. This inconvenience to south-side residents would continue as 1874 welcomed the proposal which involved consolidating all of the existing railroads serving Indianapolis at the time to form a "belt extending on three sides of the city" (Hulse and Zeigler 1991, 24). The new railway increased the amount of industrial traffic which helped the development of such industrial suburbs as North Indianapolis, West Indianapolis, Haughville, and Brightwood.

This development illustrates the long standing position of both West Indianapolis and Brightwood as industrial hubs within the larger Indianapolis area. While the industrial development increased employment and financial prosperity for the city as a whole, it also brought pollution, including smoke, noise, and traffic associated with the railroads (POLIS 2000). Trains passed through three of the four sides of the city, thereby spreading this form of pollution throughout the area. The railroads were routed only on the east, west, and south sides of Indianapolis. The north side of Indianapolis was the only area of the city that did not contain railways, an attractive amenity for the wealthier population.[2] The north side of Indianapolis soon gained a reputation as an area offering park like settings for residents free of the pollution found in the rest of the city. Streetcar companies moved quickly to provide service to the north side, and they even actively promoted increased residential development in the far north side of the city. Fitting the image of a wealthier area, both financially and in terms of environmental amenities, the north side of Indianapolis was even codified as a "high grade" area for residential development within the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of 1922 (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). In addition to the lack of railroads and their associated pollution, many wealthier residents on the north side of Indianapolis were attracted to the area by several recreational parks developed, in part, at the urging of streetcar companies themselves (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). Since early in its development the north side of Indianapolis has been seen as "refuge for the wealthy"; a place where wealthy residents still can rid themselves of the pollution and traffic of the city.

Water

Since the year 1820 when Indianapolis was first established on top of a wet, low-lying floodplain, Indianapolis residents have had constant issues with water in the area. As with other cities in the United States, including such magnificent examples as New York City (Gandy 2002), New Orleans (Colten 2005), and Chicago (Cronon 1991), Indianapolis leaders have historically engaged in modifications to water bodies and other "natural" features in order to promote economic development (Germano 2009, Hulse and Zeigler 1991). In 1914, the city of Indianapolis diverted a creek by the name of Pogue's Run, just southeast of downtown, in order to gain more "dry" land for future development (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). There have been similar examples of Indianapolis city government making changes to water features to serve the needs of the public, government agencies, and business leaders of Indianapolis.

The growing population placed pressure on the city administration which ultimately led to the development of areas thought to be unsuitable for development, thereby leading to some catastrophic results (Germano 2009). West Indi-

anapolis, one of the two study areas for this research, lies along the White River. After development of various residential, commercial, and industrial uses in West Indianapolis on land that regularly flooded, the area was eventually inundated by extensive flooding in 1913 (ibid). As Germano (2009) writes "the flood hit West Indianapolis the hardest (86) . . . and that in some places the water was 10 to 15 feet deep (89) . . . (ultimately costing) the lives of scores of people and rendered many thousands homeless (91)" (Germano 2009, 86, 89, 91). As a result of this event a long dike was built along the banks of the White River thereby stemming the flooding of West Indianapolis and also opening up land immediately east of the White River for business and residential development.

Natural Gas

Much as the railroad and waterways influenced (both positively and negatively) the growth of Indianapolis, the discovery in 1886 of natural gas east of Indianapolis offered a new form of development to the city. Within two years of its discovery, a pipeline was constructed thereby connecting Indianapolis to the larger gas pipelines of the region and country (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). Once again industry was the catalyst for development of Indianapolis as the natural gas economy contributed toward both the economic and physical expansion of the city through the turn of the century.

With the continued growth of industrial and residential development in the city, residents of Indianapolis watched as industrial and commercial sites edged closer and closer to residential areas (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). In response to these concerns, the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of 1922 was enacted which provided the city with a mechanism by which it could control any further development of the city (POLIS 2000). It was at this time that the fate of communities such as West Indianapolis and Martindale-Brightwood as industrial areas would be sealed as the zoning ordinance simply recognized and codified the socioeconomic characteristics of neighborhoods (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). The industrial heritage and future of several urban communities of Indianapolis soon led to further population shifts as more people left the city center and relocated to newly forming suburban areas. While the county's population actually grew for several decades, the negative growth rate in the city's center reduced the overall population growth of the city significantly. During the 1950s the center of Indianapolis lost approximately 1 percent of its population, a trend that would continue to climb for the following forty years (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). In fact, between 1961and 1970, Center Township lost approximately 18 percent of its population (id). Further, those residents remaining in the center of Indianapolis were more likely to be poor and African-American as "white flight" toward the suburbs took hold. In 1974, the departure of white middle- and upper-class residents from downtown Indianapolis and even Marion County was exacerbated by a judicial decision regarding forced busing to encourage a more equal racial balance in local schools (id). As a result of these and other forces, the

population of Center Township during the 1970s declined by approximately 24 percent (id).

Adding to the social, economic, and environmental damages suffered by the lower-income communities of Indianapolis, including the two study areas of Martindale-Brightwood and West Indianapolis, there developed a need for easier access to downtown from the newly created and quickly growing suburbs of Indianapolis. This resulted in the development of an "inner loop" of Interstates 70 and 65 in 1976. The development of this interstate roadway cut directly through both of the study areas thereby displacing numerous residents, erecting a partition within the community, and creating an environmental hazard comprised of noise, air, and soil pollution along its pathway.[3] Unfortunately this interstate system continues to move vehicles across the city of Indianapolis and through both study areas, thereby earning its position as a significant contributor of pollution to the two study areas.

Historical Development of Martindale-Brightwood

Martindale-Brightwood (Figure 4.2) comprises an area on the near northeast side of Indianapolis bounded by 30th Street (north), Massachusetts Avenue and Sixteenth Street (south), Sherman Drive (east), and the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks (now a "rails to trails" recreational walkway called The Monon Trail along the west side). Once two separate communities, Martindale settled in 1874 and Brightwood settled in 1872, they were eventually merged and annexed to the City of Indianapolis in 1897 as Martindale-Brightwood. Brightwood was an early suburb known to be an attractive location for employment, predominantly within the railroad industry. The area established itself as the railroad center of Indianapolis. While Brightwood housed a large number of railroad workers and railroads, Martindale quickly established itself as an area of manufacturing and machine shops serving the nearby railroad industry (POLIS 2000).

Near the end of the nineteenth century, Martindale was a neighborhood consisting predominantly of African-American residents as well as foreign-born residents (POLIS 2000). However, Brightwood was a community which housed a substantial portion of white residents who often acquired sought-after jobs with the various railroad and auto industry shops located in both Martindale and Brightwood. African-American residents primarily lived in the area of Martindale surrounding what was long considered the industrial center of the neighborhood—Martindale Avenue, later renamed Dr. Andrew J. Brown Avenue in honor of the local civil rights leader. Some of the industries located in this area included the Monon Railroad yards as well as the National Motor Vehicle Company. Operating locally were the "Big Four" railroads, a very significant source of the economic vitality of Martindale-Brightwood. Unfortunately, the community suffered the loss of the railroad industry in 1908 when it relocated to the Indianapolis suburb of Beech Grove. Besides losing most of its railroad industry Martindale-Brightwood continued to lose the associated jobs in linked indus-

tries. Loss of these jobs led to population change, as many whites relocated to Beech Grove with the railroads after WWII. These changes in Martindale-Brightwood were bound up with changes in Indianapolis as a whole during the post-war era, as whites generally left the inner neighborhoods of Indianapolis to live in more distant suburbs. This produced a large amount of housing in areas like Martindale-Brightwood, housing that was ultimately acquired and filled by low-income African-American residents (Hulse and Zeigler 1991).

Churches and other community organizations have long been considered important sites of optimism and identity within Martindale-Brightwood (Pierce 2005; Thornbrough 2001). The prevalence of churches in Martindale-Brightwood is clear as soon as one enters the neighborhood. Churches have always served as sites of community gatherings and discussions (McAdam 1999).

In addition, churches have offered additional aid to residents over the years including medical services, counseling, and civil rights support. The Martindale-Brightwood community has often worked with or benefited from such local churches as St. Rita's Catholic Church, Scott United Methodist Church, St. Paul AME Church, Hillside Christian Church, and many others. St. Rita's in particular was a leading organization in terms of promoting social and educational activities for the African-American community in Indianapolis. As with many other churches, St. Rita's enjoyed the influence and charisma of a socially activist leader. St. Rita's had Father Bernard Strange who began his career at St. Rita's in 1935 and would go on to not only provide a wealth of social opportunities to the Martindale-Brightwood community but also fight for desegregation of Catholic schools and civil rights in Indianapolis (Hulse and Zeigler 1991).

Before the era of community development corporations there was the Brightwood Community Center, which was founded in 1935 (POLIS 2000). The community center assisted residents by offering various educational, social, and recreational opportunities. In particular, various church-affiliated organizations and the community center worked diligently to address the growing poverty of Martindale-Brightwood residents. As early as the 1940s community organizations were promoting neighborhood beautification projects (POLIS 2000).

There has been a significant African-American population in Indianapolis since the city's founding in 1820 (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). The blatantly racist state constitution article of 1851 made it illegal for an African-American to settle in Indiana (Brady 1996). Between 1860 and 1870 the African-American population of Indianapolis grew approximately 500 percent, eventually comprising 10 percent of the entire city's population (id). This population remained steady for decades until the industrial development of the 1890s and early 1900s contributed toward the tremendous boost in the African-American population of the city. The heavy industrial foundation of the city combined with a pre-existing population of blacks, all contributed toward the northern migration to Indianapolis (Brady 1996).

Martindale-Brightwood was one of the three early African-American communities to which black residents were essentially relegated. It is for this reason that any discussion of the history of Martindale-Brightwood becomes one of race, in particular the history of African-Americans in Indianapolis. In 1910,

blacks constituted approximately 9 percent of the city's total population. In just one year the black population rose to 11 percent, enough of an increase to place great strain on the limited housing and job opportunities available to blacks in Indianapolis. However, despite large numbers of African-Americans, numbers comparable to those in more liberal Northern cities of the day, the African-American population was significantly isolated both socially and economic-ally. Black populations were forced to develop and provide their own institutions in terms of social services, assistance, and economic markets. Early on, Martindale contained a large African-American population (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). Brightwood, located just east of Martindale, was comprised for many years of a predominately white population, primarily first-generation European immigrants (id).

See Figure 4.2. View of Martindale Avenue in Brightwood in 1940s (P0130, 63:2, Indiana Historical Society).

It wasn't until the 1920s, however, that overtly racist practices re-emerged in Indianapolis (Thornbrough 2001). In particular, the large population of blacks coming to Indianapolis after World War I increased tensions between blacks and whites. As a result, various segregation policies were implemented, including the segregation of high schools, which had been integrated up until 1928 (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). A driving force behind these various segregationist policies was the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) (Figure 4.4), a group which was a strong influence in Indianapolis politics during the 1920s (Thornbrough 2001). By 1930, the black population comprised 12 percent of the city's total population, a portion deemed by many whites as being too large to easily confine in a few particular neighborhoods (Pierce 2005). The Marion County Colored Orphans' Home was listed as being in Martindale-Brightwood in the 1930s, a stark reminder of the segregation of races which shaped the discursive and material spaces of Indianapolis. This blatant racism continued on through the Jim Crow segregationist policies of the 1960s (Thornbrough 2001).

See Figure 4.3. Example of the prevalence of the KKK in Indiana ca. 1920s (Brdsd, Indiana Historical Society).[4]

Martindale-Brightwood residents struggled against various social ills including racism, unemployment, housing decay, health issues, red-lining, lack of social services, and industrial development (Figure 4.5). The year 1967 is cited as a particularly memorable year as it was then that Martindale-Brightwood was declared a "poverty target area" by the federal government (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). Unfortunately, attempts to alleviate the host of ills affecting the neighborhood did not bring the desired results.

The following excerpt from The POLIS Center's History of Martindale-Brightwood describes the process of disinvestment and deterioration in the community:

By the mid-1970s the street had lost a doctor's office, accounting and bookkeeping services, a cafe, insurance company, Salvation Army store, pool hall, a pet store, and Cohen Bros. Department Store which had first opened its doors in 1897. By the mid-1980s the last remaining bank, a branch of Merchants, had announced plans to leave the community (POLIS 2000, 2).

See Figure 4.4. Document from Indianapolis Neighborhood Commission Plan (1952, Indiana Historical Society).

Through the 1980s to today Martindale-Brightwood residents continued to deal with unemployment, crime, housing needs, and industrial pollution. The Martindale-Brightwood community continues to battle the same historical negatives today including environmental hazards. The presence of particularly polluting industrial operations in the neighborhood has left both a symbolic and material scar on its residents. The African-American community has responded in its own unique way to a host of social, environmental, and economic ills throughout the history of Indianapolis. The following section describes the unique form which this response (or activism) has taken.

African-Americans and Activism in Indianapolis

The African-American population of Indianapolis has very rarely chosen to practice more disruptive and chaos-inducing forms of activism (Pierce 2005). One exception is the riot which took place in June 1969 in an area of Indianapolis historically occupied by African-Americans known as Lockefield Gardens (id.), which now currently houses substantial commercial properties and higher-end apartments for students attending nearby Indiana University–Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI). According to the *Indianapolis Recorder*, a long-running newspaper covering the African-American community of Indianapolis, the riot lasted a few hours (*Indianapolis Recorder*, "Quiet Returns to Indiana Avenue" June 6, 1969). While many issues were cited in the cause of the riot, the development of the interstate as well as increasing poverty and violence were primary sparks of anger and frustration in the community (id). Such rioting and aggressive protest is rare among the African-American community in Indianapolis.

Blacks in Indianapolis have a history of formal organization and attempts to voice opinions via legalistic means (Pierce 2005). Pierce explains how black residents of Indianapolis often sought working relationships with whites based on the belief that befriending whites would lead to meaningful change (id). In addition, black residents recognized that a potentially more effective means of change would be to partner with an interracial organization that includes whites, thus increasing the potential for political influence. However, the dilemma with this arrangement, as laid out by Pierce (2005), was that whites had a mistaken belief referred to by Pierce (2005) as a "progressive mystique" that race relations in Indianapolis were quite positive. However, as Pierce (2005) argues, this

was a false belief that only made it more difficult for blacks to convince whites to join them or speak in unison with the black community. In actuality, race relations in Indianapolis reflect a long history of racial discrimination and inequality. Therefore, this "partnership" of sorts did not work as well as hoped by some in the black community of Indianapolis. There was a belief among the majority of blacks in Indianapolis that if one were to act respectfully and courteously then strides would be made and justice would be attained (Pierce 2005). The frustration by some members of the black community lay in the fact that "African-Americans never effectively marshaled their numeric strength into successful political agitation" (Pierce 2005, 56).

During the 1950s and early 1960s Indianapolis experienced a significant amount of formalized activism ("Reviving the Spirit" WFYI 2009). Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood twice for speaking engagements in support of local civil rights efforts. The formalized and legalistic form of protest characteristic of Dr. King's landmark civil rights efforts continues today as residents established and later formalized the Martindale-Brightwood Environmental Justice Collaborative (MBEJC).

The initial creation of the group in 2006, led by a minister at a local church, was borne of anger, fear, and mistrust which played out in the form of more confrontational practices in dealing with local, state, and federal environmental regulatory officials (for a more comprehensive history of the MBEJC see Chapter 7). Despite drawing considerable attention to the neighborhood's soil-lead contamination, in terms of media coverage and government attention, MBEJC had little input in the remediation process: The extent of remediation for the soil-lead contamination was ultimately established via negotiations between the U.S. EPA and the responsible party, National Lead Company (now NL Industries). After remediation, the MBEJC continued its efforts in a formalized, legalistic fashion, drawing in officials from the Marion County Health Department and the City of Indianapolis Brownfields Department. This interaction has produced five years of "courteous and friendly" interactions between the parties. In addition, the MBEJC has been awarded funding from city and federal sources, thereby deepening the links between state and residents. These processes are discussed in more depth in Chapter 7.

See Figure 4.5. City of Indianapolis document regarding Martindale-Brightwood (Indiana Historical Society).

See Figure 4.6. Dr. Andrew J. Brown with others at civil rights meeting (1959, P0303, 127:39, Indiana Historical Society).

Martindale-Brightwood has long been a "warehouse" for various manufacturing and industrial processes in Indianapolis and the associated environmental hazards. Historical city directories (Polk Co.) spanning from 1940 to 1990 were reviewed in order to trace the long-standing abundance of environmental hazards in each of the two study neighborhoods. In this review, sites were selected as an environmental hazard based on their name and associated type of opera-

tions which was often listed next to the name in city directories. In 1940, Martindale-Brightwood housed approximately eighty one different facilities or sites which can reasonably be classified as environmental hazards. Various operations included, but were not limited to, rubber manufacturers, foundries, coal companies, fueling stations, dry cleaners, and plating operations.

By 1950, given the boom of the post-WWII economy, approximately 139 environmental hazards were listed in the directory as being located in Martindale-Brightwood. The increase in such sites consisted of such operations as tool and die makers, more polishing and plating facilities, as well as a large number of trucking companies. The number of such environmental hazards rose sharply, peaking at 147 in 1960. In the decades following 1960, the number of hazards consistently declined (119 in 1970; 113 in 1980) until it reached its most recent number of 100 in 1990, the last year for which a City Directory was produced. The presence of so many hazardous facilities in a relatively small community has left a legacy of environmental contamination that persists to today, as discussed in Chapter 5.

West Indianapolis

West Indianapolis was incorporated as a town in 1882 and in only eight years quickly grew to become the largest suburb of Indianapolis (POLIS 2000). West Indianapolis in the mid-nineteenth century was a rural town developing its agricultural/livestock economy. Very early in its development West Indianapolis became somewhat of an agricultural center of Indianapolis with large stockyards. People were drawn to the near-west side community because of its close proximity to downtown Indianapolis (just east of the White River) as well as its promise of jobs, primarily in agricultural stockyards, railroads, and early industrial operations. The development of rail lines through West Indianapolis contributed significantly to its industrial development, including the "belt line" created to cross the west, south, and east sides of Indianapolis (Hulse and Zeigler 1991).

The historical development of West Indianapolis was as closely tied to the railroads as that of Martindale-Brightwood. Railways serviced the large stockyards throughout West Indianapolis and helped structure a working-class, economically productive suburb attractive to many residents (id). It was the economic productivity of West Indianapolis, and its concentration of industries and employment, which prompted the City of Indianapolis to annex the suburb (along with Brightwood, Haughville, Mt. Jackson, and Eastside Terrace) in 1897 (Hulse and Zeigler 1991). The City of Indianapolis saw a "gain of $36,000 in annual revenue from annexation of the new territories" (POLIS 2000). Because of the largely agricultural character of the area, combined with the introduction of major railways, West Indianapolis soon became an attractive site for new industries, spurring tremendous industrial growth. In part, the large parcels of land formerly dedicated to agriculture or livestock were well suited to development of large industrial sites. The economic growth of West Indianapolis due to its stockyards, railroads, and industrial sites came with an environmental and health cost to the residents of the area. West Indianapolis was the site of large dumps comprised of industrial, animal, and human waste, which would make its way into the streets, noses, and stomachs of West Indianapolis residents (POLIS 2000).

The many years of unregulated and uncontrolled disposal of such harsh wastes led to the accumulation of serious threats to both human health and the environment. However, for many years wastes (including animal and human waste) were simply deposited on land within the corporate limits of West Indianapolis (Germano 2009). It wasn't until 1883 when West Indianapolis officials recognized the nuisance that had been created by years of uncontrolled dumping on property within West Indianapolis (POLIS 2000). Partially in response to the association of West Indianapolis with a "smelly dump", the Board of Trustees of West Indianapolis made it illegal "to slaughter cattle, sheep, hogs, or other animals within the corporate limits of the town, except on the banks or margin of White River" (Germano 2009). Adding to the accumulating environmental and health risks was the fact that West Indianapolis housed a dump used to store the waste produced by the entire city, a population of approximately 100,000 people.

In response to the ever-growing waste problem, the City of Indianapolis hired a renowned engineer to resolve its waste disposal issues. However, the newly engineered and constructed system simply led the waste to the White River for ultimate disposal (id). As was typical of the era, waterways were often seen by residents and city officials as appropriate and effective waste disposal and transport mechanisms (Colten 2005; Cronon 1991). However, the White River eventually became so polluted that residents would not use the river for drinking or even cooking or laundry (Germano 2009). The environmental health outcomes included an increase in typhoid fever cases in the area (id). The river was rumored to produce an odor that could be sensed as far as forty miles downstream, which contributed toward farmers not even planting crops along the river within that distance (id).

A significant difference in the development of West Indianapolis as compared to Martindale-Brightwood was the role of water in shaping the West landscape. Sitting on the low-lying banks of the White River, West Indianapolis was constantly vulnerable to flooding. The addition of large amounts of waste to the river, as well as rapid development along it contributing large amounts of silt, ultimately produced a river very prone to flooding. Some minor flood events occurred during the late part of the nineteenth century. One challenge facing the city at the time was the proximity of the City Cemetery to the White River. Regular flooding would pick up and wash away bodies and tombstones (Germano 2009). In response, the City condemned the cemetery and forced family members of those buried at the site to have their loved ones moved to a new cemetery on the north side of Indianapolis (id). The City then turned the former cemetery into a park even while bodies were still buried at the site (id).

The most devastating event for West Indianapolis was the 1913 flood (Figures 4.7 and 4.8) that buried the area under ten to fifteen feet of water (Germano 2009). The flood is still considered the worst flood event in the history of Indianapolis as it rendered thousands of people homeless (Germano 2009). There was an increased risk of disease associated with the severe flooding as residents had to remove layers of mud (likely containing various waste products) from their homes (Figure 4.9). Just as the community of West Indianapolis had earned a reputation as dirty, smelly, and wet, so the residents acquired an image as "filthy" people. In response to the 1913 flood the City of Indianapolis eventually constructed higher banks along the White River to prevent such severe flooding in the future. However, the characterization of West Indianapolis as a flood-prone, dirty area would remain for decades to come. As time went on, the flooding issues were more securely addressed. However, the continued industrial growth of the area provided, if not necessarily a new hazard, certainly a more extensive and potentially hazardous environment. Stockyards and residential areas gave way to large global industrial corporations and the associated influence on both the government and economy of Indianapolis, and the local environment in West Indianapolis (Germano 2009).

See Figure 4.7. View of Morris Street during the 1913 flood (P0391, Box 15, Neg#07, Indiana Historical Society).

See Figure 4.8. West Indianapolis after 1913 flood (P0391, Box 15, Neg#2, Indiana Historical Society).

West Indianapolis in 1940 was a combination of industrial and agricultural sites existing alongside pockets of residential areas. A review of the City Directory for 1940–1990 reveals an industrial history replete with various environmental hazards, consisting of foundries, fertilizer/chemical manufacturers, and junkyards. In 1940 there were only twenty-five such sites within West Indianapolis. While the number of sites was significantly lower than in Martindale-Brightwood as of 1940, the sizes of the sites in West Indianapolis were consistently larger according to a review of Sanborn maps.

> *WWII changed everything. With its open land, rail lines, and Kentucky Avenue serving as a major truck route, the southwest side quickly became the city's industrial hub as businesses scrambled to help feed the war machine* (*Indianapolis Star* Feb. 2004, A8).

In a fashion similar to that in Martindale-Brightwood, 1950 saw a larger number of hazards in West Indianapolis, reaching approximately 116 such sites. A portion of West Indianapolis and its predominant industrial character can be seen in Figure 4.9. Foundries, trucking companies, and chemical manufacturers dominated. Waste transfer and storage companies were also prevalent.

See Figure 4.9. West Indianapolis (City of Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission Plan 1952, Indiana Historical Society).

A unique feature of West Indianapolis leading up to the 1950s was the presence of agricultural industries such as numerous large stockyards, rendering plants, and agricultural chemical manufacturing. The year 1959 saw the appearance of Reilly Tar and Chemical, a chemical manufacturer that would eventually become classified as a Superfund site decades later. There were 140 different hazards listed in West Indianapolis as of 1959, including many junkyards, trucking companies, and foundries. Approximately 99 hazards were listed as facilities in the 1970 City Directory for West Indianapolis. Agricultural industries continued to operate in the area, including over 30 livestock yards, a rendering plant, cattle exchanges, and fertilizer plants. Alongside these reminders of West Indianapolis' earliest origins stood its heavily industrialized sites such as foundries, plating shops, metals-related operations, and gas stations. The year 1980 saw 131 different sites that could be classified as hazards based on the types of operations. Along with the growth of companies like Ulrich Chemical, Reilly Tar and Chemical, Chrysler Foundry, Allison Engines, and CAMOR Oil Company, many trucking companies and numerous livestock-related sites still occupied sites in West Indianapolis. As opposed to Martindale-Brightwood, which experienced a large decline in the number of hazardous industries in the 1970s and 1980s, West Indianapolis still had approximately 129 such sites listed in 1990.

The review of city directories shows a trend in which one community (Martindale-Brightwood) lost a significant number of hazards while another (West Indianapolis) maintained a high number of hazards through several decades. Martindale-Brightwood's hazard landscape changed from 139 sites in 1950 to 100 sites in 1990, whereas, West Indianapolis experienced an increase from 116 in 1950 to 129 in 1990. This explains, in part, why Martindale-Brightwood currently houses the largest number of brownfields in Indianapolis since they often stand as memorials to a time of greater economic fortunes and more lax environmental standards. In addition, the presence of brownfields points toward the broader disinvestment and deindustrialization that Martindale-Brightwood and its predominantly African-American population experienced throughout much of the twentieth century and beyond.

One additional difference between the study areas is their geographic structure. This concerns the form which each neighborhood has taken in terms of the spatialization of environmental hazards and residents in each area. West Indianapolis houses a number of large industrial sites which have contributed to the formation of a variegated neighborhood. Small pockets of residential areas are separated from others by these industrial sites, thereby producing spatially isolated residents. This spatial isolation may play a role in the lack of any collective activism. In contrast, Martindale-Brightwood houses the majority of its environmental hazards in the western extent of the neighborhood. In the next chapter, the more recent concentration patterns of these various industrial sites and environmental hazards are assessed.

Notes

1. In its first form, Indianapolis was one square mile. This remained for quite a while until a period of intense annexation in the late 1800s.

2. Ironically, despite having some railways in its early days, Martindale-Brightwood now has a "rails to trails" project called The Monon Trail. It is a very popular rereational trail through the north central part of the city.

3. While briefly mentioned here, the construction of Interstate 70 through both study areas was an extremely significant historical event. Future research would be interesting regarding how such construction physically separated and split portions of the Martindale-Brightwood community in particular.

4. This graphic is provided here just as a means of showing how pervasive racism and the KKK in particular was in Indianapolis during the 1920s.