Three Gilded Age Suburbs of Indianapolis: Irvington, Brightwood, and Woodruff Place

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The growth of cities was one of the most important developments in late-nineteenth-century America. Between the Civil War and 1900 the United States moved much closer to becoming an urban nation. Recently historians have begun to examine the process of urban growth and its effects on American society, particularly through studies that employ statistical methods in an attempt to capture the experiences of the anonymous people who made up the vast majority of the population. The methodology and the conclusions reached with it have been both exciting and fruitful.[1] At times, however, the so-called new urban history has exaggerated the atomistic quality of city life. Studies of ethnic groups, for instance, indicate that new urban residents sought to create communities within the cities in an effort to provide order in their lives—something the new urban historians frequently overlook.[2] Some of these historians also seem to forget that many Americans continued to live in small towns rather than in large cities. Investigation of life in those towns has lagged behind studies of life in the cities.[3]

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[1] Examples of the new urban history include Stephan Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964) and *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880-1970* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973); Howard P. Chudacoff, *Mobile Americans: Residential and Social Mobility in Omaha 1880-1920* (New York, 1972); and Peter R. Knights, *The Plain People of Boston, 1830-1860: A Study in City Growth* (New York, 1971).

[2] See, for example, Humbert S. Nelli, *Italians in Chicago 1880-1930: A Study in Ethnic Mobility* (New York, 1970); Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962); Josef J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks in an American City, 1890-1950* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975).

[3] See Page Smith, *As a City upon a Hill: The Town in American History* (New York, 1966); Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (Bloomington, Ind., 1954).

Perhaps one way to correct these oversights is to pay more attention to suburbs. Suburbanization is not only a post-World War II phenomenon; it has been occurring for over a century. Moreover, as historian Kenneth T. Jackson has persuasively argued, urban growth was both demographic and geographic: American cities expanded in population partly because they expanded their boundaries to include communities on their outskirts. In Jackson's words, "If annexation (the addition of unincorporated land to the city) or consolidation (the absorption of one municipal government by another, usually adjacent) had not taken place, there would now be no great cities in the United States in the political sense of the term." The ability of cities to absorb towns on what Jackson calls "the crabgrass frontier" was essential to the growth of cities in the nineteenth century.[4]

In addition to augmenting urban growth, suburbs also contributed to the increasing social and economic differentiation occurring within the cities. As cities grew, segregation of the population by income level increased; people of roughly equal wealth began to live in homogeneous communities. In addition, the economic use of urban space became more differentiated. Rather than having a mixture of industries and residences, or even factories and stores, in the same small area, each type of economic enterprise began to develop within separate parts of the city. Eventually zoning was developed to plan and order the use of urban space, but initially some business concerns chose to move away from the central city voluntarily in search of more land on which to build larger facilities. Both the sorting out of the urban population by income level and the differentiation of urban space by economic use were reflected in the growth of the crabgrass frontier.[5]

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[4] Kenneth T. Jackson, "Metropolitan Government Versus Suburban Autonomy: Politics on the Crabgrass Frontier," in Kenneth T. Jackson and Stanley K. Schultz, eds., *Cities in American History* (New York, 1972), 442-62; quotation is on 444-46. See also Kenneth T. Jackson, "The Crabgrass Frontier: 150 Years of Suburban Growth in America," in Raymond A. Mohl and James F. Richardson, eds., *The Urban Experience: Themes in American History* (Belmont, Cal., 1973), 196-221; and Kenneth T. Jackson, "Urban Deconcentration in the Nineteenth Century: A Statistical Inquiry," in Leo F. Schnore, ed., *The New Urban History: Quantitative Explorations by American Historians* (Princeton, N.J., 1975), 110-42.

[5] David R. Goldfield and Blaine A. Brownell, *Urban America: From Downtown to No Town* (Boston, 1979), 202-205, 217-20, 225-28; see also their discussion of urban ecology on pages 9-13. Jackson, "The Crabgrass Frontier," 201-202, 209-10.

Many communities maintained their original socioeconomic characteristics after they were incorporated into the larger cities, with the once independent towns becoming identifiable and distinctive neighborhoods. Certainly not all developments on the crabgrass frontier were successful: some became merely failed real estate ventures. But in some suburban developments like-minded people sought to build specific kinds of communities, often trying to recapture what they believed to be the virtues of small town life. Suburban founders with such visions often succeeded in building towns that remained distinctive long after their annexation by growing cities.[6]

The ability of groups to create distinctive communities and the consequent socioeconomic segregation of urban space can be explored by examining three Gilded Age suburbs of Indianapolis. Irvington, Brightwood, and Woodruff Place indicate the variety of ideas that motivated suburban development and the types of men involved. The early histories of these towns also reveal the problems founders confronted and how they tried to overcome them. In short, an examination of these three suburbs of Indianapolis illustrates how various parts of cities obtained differing characters due to the choices made by individuals when those areas were first laid out.

Irvington, Brightwood, and Woodruff Place were platted and incorporated between 1870 and 1876, and all were located east of the city. Each town had an identifiable group of founders, and each developed a character expressive of the founders' intentions. Despite the Panic of 1873 and the ensuing depression, these towns became the kinds of communities envisioned by the town fathers. Irvington grew to be a middle-class university town; Brightwood evolved into a working-class industrial suburb; and Woodruff Place developed into an upper-class residential park. The differences among the groups of founders, the initial plans for the towns, and their early institutions and residents combined to make these three suburbs distinctive.

Jacob Julian and Sylvester Johnson, the founders of Irvington, purchased 320 acres of farmland lying about four miles east of Governors (later Monument) Circle, the center of Indianapolis, in 1870. In November of that year they divided 304 acres into 109 lots of varying sizes.[7] At the time both men

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[6] On the motives for founding suburbs see Peter J. Schmitt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (New York, 1969).

[7] Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis: The History, the Industries, the Institutions, and the People of a City of Homes* (2 vols., Chicago, 1910), I,

THE FOUNDERS OF IRVINGTON,
JACOB JULIAN (LEFT)
AND SYLVESTER JOHNSON

Courtesy Indiana State Library, Indiana Division Picture Collection.

were prominent residents of Centerville, Indiana. Julian was president of the First National Bank of Centerville, a former Wayne County prosecuting attorney, and a one-time member of the state legislature. Johnson had served as Wayne County auditor since 1863. Apparently because of a bitter struggle over the relocation of the county seat, the position of neither man was very secure. Once the supporters of Richmond won the fight over the relocation of the county courthouse, the prospects of Julian and Johnson in Centerville declined. The development of Irvington offered a means to rebuild their fortunes and to live in a community that reflected their personal tastes.[8]

Both men moved to the suburb in 1872 after having fine brick houses built and became active in community affairs; they sold lots, took part in the successful incorporation drive of 1873, and then served as town officers. Julian was a trustee of the town from 1873 until May, 1877, while Johnson served as town treasurer for many years after 1873 and also was a member of the school board. Both men promoted improvements in the town. Julian, for example, built several houses to sell to new residents, and Johnson was among the organizers of the Irvington, Stratford, and Indianapolis Street Railroad in 1875. Julian moved into Indianapolis in 1878 or 1879 in order to further his legal career, but Johnson remained in the suburb until his death, which occurred well after the turn of the century.[9]

Six individuals who made the first additions to Irvington were, like Julian and Johnson, professional men who lived in the town and took part in community activities. Only one of these individuals, Nicholas Ohmer, was primarily a busi-

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434-38; B. R. Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana* (Philadelphia, 1884), 620-22; Gertrude Winders, *A Glimpse of Irvington Then and Now, 1870-1970* (Indianapolis, 1970), 7; "The Beginnings of Irvington from Notes by Sylvester Johnson," *Indiana Magazine of History*, IV (March, 1908), 88-89.

[8] On Julian, see *A Biographical History of Eminent and Self-Made Men of the State of Indiana* (2 vols., Cincinnati, 1880), I, "The Seventh Congressional District," 109-11; William H. English Collection, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis. On Johnson, Jacob P. Dunn, *Memorial and Genealogical Record of Representative Citizens of Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1912), 84-88; George Irving Reed, ed., *Encyclopedia of Biography of Indiana* (2 vols., Chicago, 1899), II, 72-74. See Grace Julian Clarke, *George W. Julian* (Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XI, *Indiana Biographical Series*, Vol. I; Indianapolis, 1923), 359-60, on the struggle over the location of the county seat.

[9] Information on city officers comes from Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Irvington, Office of the City Clerk, Indianapolis, and notices of elections in the Indianapolis *Journal*, April 19, May 12, 1873; May 5, 1874; May 2, 1876; May 8, 1877; May 7, 1878; May 6, 1879; and May 4, 1880. On Julian's building houses see *ibid.*, November 10, 1874, and April 10, 1875. On the organization of the street railroad company see *ibid.*, February 1, 1875.

THE IRVINGTON HOME OF SYLVESTER JOHNSON

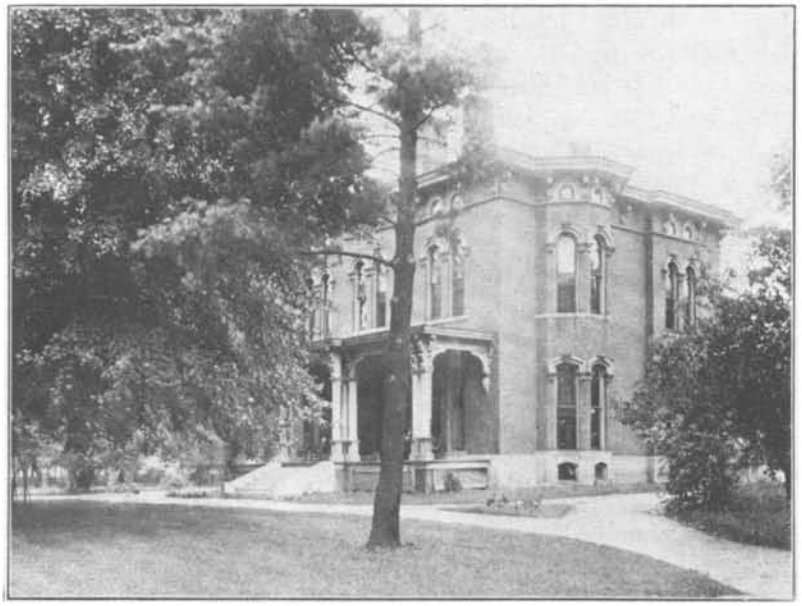
Courtesy Indiana State Library, Indiana Division Picture Collection.

nessman, and he was the only one who did not live in the suburb, although he built a house there. Three of the six held elective town offices, while most of them made some investment in the town above their initial purchases. In brief, the town fathers saw Irvington as a place for them to live and not only as a business investment.[10]

The occupations and motives of the founders of Brightwood were quite different. Clement A. Greenleaf, John L. Mothershead, William D. Wiles, and Daniel H. Wiles signed the original plat of Brightwood in September, 1872.[11] The first two were manufacturers, the latter pair merchants. Of the four men, Greenleaf probably supplied the initial inspiration for the development. He had invented a turntable to rotate railroad cars and engines and organized a series of companies to manu-

[10] The six were Levi Ritter, John W. Chambers, Joseph M. Tilford, William M. Thrasher, James E. Downey, and Nicholas Ohmer. Information regarding these men came from Cline & McHaffie, *The People's Guide: A Business, Political and Religious Directory of Marion Co., Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1874); John H.B. Nowland, *Sketches of Prominent Citizens of 1876* (Indianapolis, 1877); Indianapolis *Journal*, January 3, June 19, 1873; April 11, 1874; and February 1, 1875; and the annual Indianapolis city directories which were published by various firms under several titles during the 1870s.

[11] Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 438.



THE ORIGINAL JACOB JULIAN HOUSE IN IRVINGTON

Courtesy Indiana State Library, Indiana Division Picture Collection.

facture this device and other machinery.[12] The last of Greenleaf's companies led to the founding of Brightwood.

In August, 1872, Greenleaf organized a company "to bring capital and labor together." The charter of the Greenleaf Manufacturing Company allowed employees to buy stock in the firm. Greenleaf hoped that the prospect of sharing in the profits would give the workers an incentive to be more productive. Of the original thirty-five stockholders, at least nine were company employees, despite the requirement that initial buyers invest one thousand dollars. In March, 1873, when amended articles of association were drawn up, there were seventy-six shareholders, of whom thirteen were company employees and several were skilled workers for other firms.[13]

Apparently, from the beginning Greenleaf and his partners envisioned the company as the cornerstone of a new town. A

[12] *Pictorial and Biographical Memoirs of Indianapolis and Marion County Indiana* (Chicago, 1893), 315-16.

[13] Indianapolis *Journal*, July 27, August 24, 1872; and January 20, 1874. Both the original and amended Articles of Association for the Greenleaf Manufacturing Company can be found in the Archives Division, Indiana Commission on Public Records, Indianapolis. Biographical data on the stockholders came from the city directories.

month after its organization the company decided to build its shops three miles northeast of the center of Indianapolis along the tracks of the Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati & Indianapolis (CCC&I or Bee Line) Railroad. One week after they announced this decision, Greenleaf and the others filed a plat for Brightwood.[14] Perhaps Greenleaf dreamed of building some type of model industrial community; his concern for helping workers improve their condition suggests this possibility.[15] If there were such an intention, however, it was a casualty of the economic depression that began in 1873. The Panic drove Greenleaf into bankruptcy, and his company went out of business.[16] Eventually the Bee Line bought the company's buildings, which saved the town, but neither the railroad nor the other three men who platted Brightwood had the interest in workingmen that Greenleaf had demonstrated.

Greenleaf's misfortune left Mothershead and brothers William and Daniel Wiles in control of developing Brightwood. Although none of them lived in the town during the 1870s, all three still owned property there in 1880, and all three contributed to the town's growth.[17] Mothershead was particularly active. In 1872 he organized Mothershead & Morris, a stove foundry, which became Mothershead, Morris & Company in 1875; Brightwood was the site of the foundry until 1882. Mothershead also invested in the town's Higgins Bentwood School Furniture Company, acted as real estate broker for the Brightwood property owners, and played a role in the effort to get the CCC&I shops moved to the suburb.[18] William and Daniel Wiles were partners in a wholesale grocery business until 1875, when Daniel left the firm to become manager of the Brightwood Real Estate Company. By 1880 he had formed Wiles and Wiles Company with William M. Wiles, again becoming a wholesale grocer. William D. Wiles remained in the wholesale grocery business after 1875 in the firm of Wiles, Coffin & Company. Both brothers were active in the unsuccessful attempt to have Northwestern Christian University locate

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[14] Indianapolis *Journal*, September 13, 20, 1872.

[15] *Pictorial and Biographical Memoirs*, 316.

[16] On Greenleaf's financial troubles, see Indianapolis *Journal*, October 20, 23, 24, November 19, December 1, 19, 26, 1873; September 9, 1874.

[17] Residency was determined by use of the city directories; land ownership was revealed by the Tax Duplicate for Brightwood, 1880 (Indianapolis City Archives, City-County Building, Indianapolis).

[18] Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis*, 278-79, 467; *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Indianapolis, Indiana* (n.p., 1883), 450; Indianapolis *Journal*, December 2, 1872, and May 18, 1874; Articles of Association of the Higgins Bentwood School Furniture Company (Archives Division, Indiana Commission on Public Records, Indianapolis).

in Brightwood, and both invested in the Higgins Furniture Company.[19]

In 1874 the Wiles brothers and Mothershead signed an amended plat of Brightwood with thirty-four others.[20] It is striking how few of these individuals lived in the suburb at any time during the 1870s. Of the thirty-seven signers of the plat of 1874, only four definitely lived there before 1880. Most of them did retain property there, however; the tax list for 1880 includes the names of twenty-four of the thirty-seven persons who signed the plat of 1874. Unlike Irvington, Brightwood was developed by absentee landlords. The occupations of thirty-two of the signers can be determined. Railroads employed one third of the total (eleven of thirty-two), and of that number the CCC&I employed seven. Six men worked for Wiles Brothers & Company. In addition, there were four wholesale grocers, two manufacturers (a brass founder and Mothershead), three teachers, two publishers, a restaurant owner, a real estate agent, and a lawyer. Railroad employees, merchants, and manufacturers played key roles in the founding of Brightwood but not in the creation of Irvington.

The Brightwood founders were not dreamers so much as hard-headed businessmen. Brightwood was a convenient (and, it was hoped, profitable) place to locate factories and house workers. It was not a company town, because there were several companies there and houses were individually owned.[21] Unfortunately, the absence of the early town records prevents learning how frequently the absentee owners intervened in town affairs. Without these records and other material, it cannot be determined if there was any motive directing development other than the obvious one of making money.

No similar problem exists in the case of Woodruff Place; one can identify a dream and a dreamer for that suburb. James O. Woodruff, a civil engineer, came from Auburn, New York, to Indianapolis in 1870 to build the city's first waterworks. He remained to attempt what one contemporary newspaper called

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[19] Nowland, *Sketches of Prominent Citizens,* 350, on William D. Wiles. Additional information was derived from the city directories and the Indianapolis *Journal,* December 2, 1872, and July 16, 1873.

[20] The amended plat is on file in the Office of the Marion County Recorder (City-County Building, Indianapolis); conclusions about the signers are based on information from the city directories.

[21] For a description of a company town, see Stanley Buder, *Pullman: An Experiment in Industrial Order and Community Planning, 1880-1930* (New York, 1967).

"the Most Brilliant Real Estate Venture in the History of the City." In 1873 Woodruff purchased eighty acres of land a mile and a half east of the center of Indianapolis for about $220,000 and then borrowed almost as much money in order to develop the area in an extravagant fashion. He envisioned an exclusive suburb bounded by a fence and decorated with a number of fountains and statues.[22] Until he went bankrupt in early 1875, work on the area proceeded swiftly; after he filed for bankruptcy, development slowed markedly.[23]

Woodruff was able to enjoy his creation for only a short time. He built a house there in 1874 and lived in it the following two years. In 1876 Woodruff led the successful effort to incorporate the area even though it then had only six voters.[24] His declining economic fortunes forced him to move from Woodruff Place in 1877, and by the next year he had left Indianapolis for New York. He died in 1879 at the age of thirty-nine in the midst of planning an ambitious scientific expedition. Woodruff did not stay in the suburb very long, but he continued to influence its development indirectly. His original plans were followed by those who came to control the land.

The three groups of founders were distinctly different from each other. The Irvington town fathers were professional men who were ready to live in and direct the growth of their suburb. The Brightwood town fathers represented businessmen who saw the potential profit in suburban development but were not interested in building a town in which they would live. Woodruff wanted to build an upper-class enclave that would testify by its very appearance to the wealth of its inhabitants. These intentions and desires are suggested by the occupations and residential preferences of the founders. They are also revealed by the plans for the towns and by their major institutions.

The plat of Irvington is the most distinctive and revealing of the three. Instead of using the common grid pattern, Julian and Johnson drew in curving streets that conformed to the contours of the land, an idea appropriated from the Cincinnati suburb of Glendale, Ohio. The desire to save as many trees as possible and to leave existing brooks undisturbed influenced

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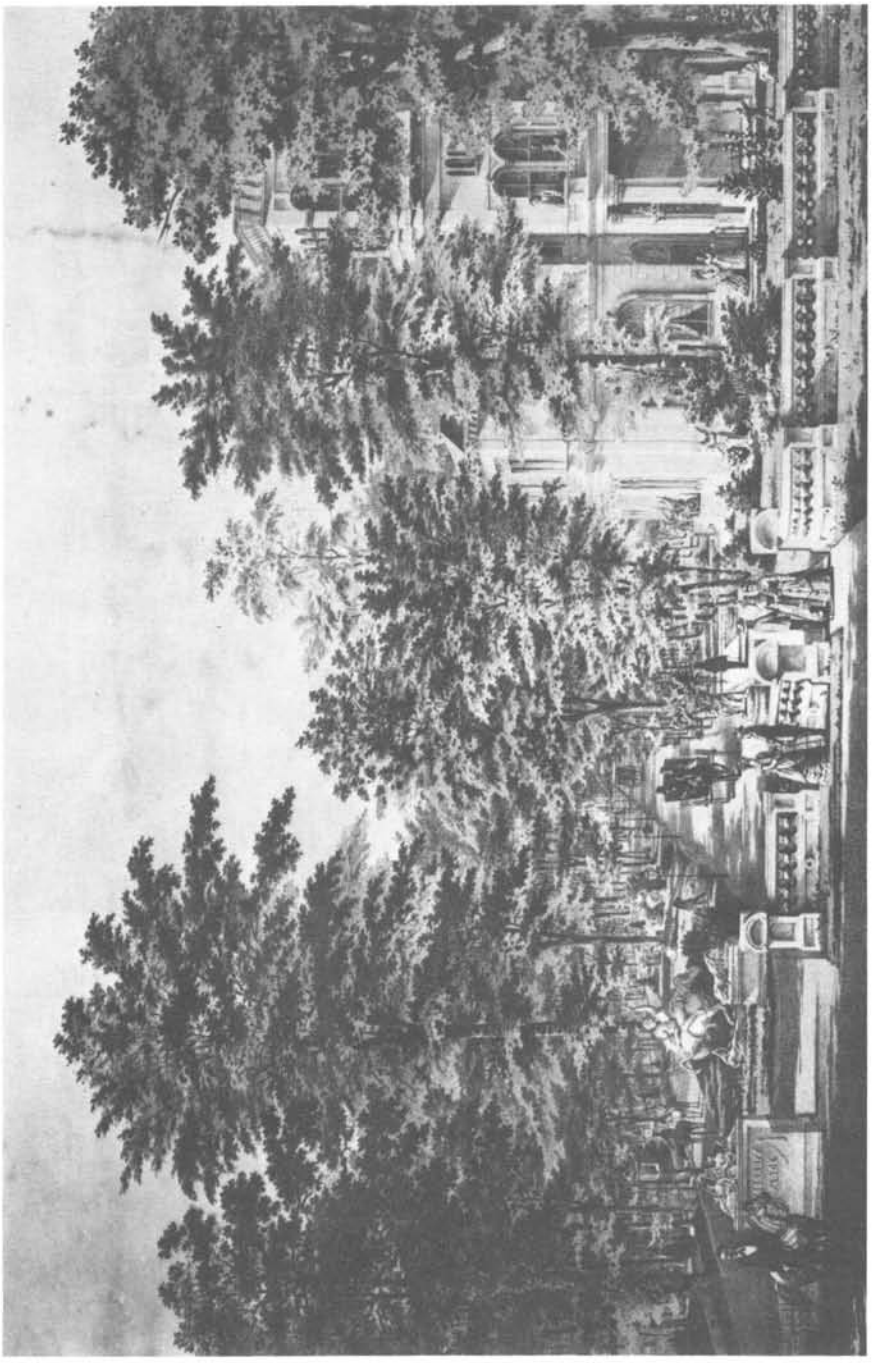
[22] Nowland, *Sketches of Prominent Citizens,* 384; Indianapolis *Journal,* June 5, 7, 1879. The quotation is from the Indianapolis *Sentinel,* May 31, 1873, which describes Woodruff's plans. A more extensive description is in the *Real Estate Gazette,* [July] 1873, which can be found in the Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis.

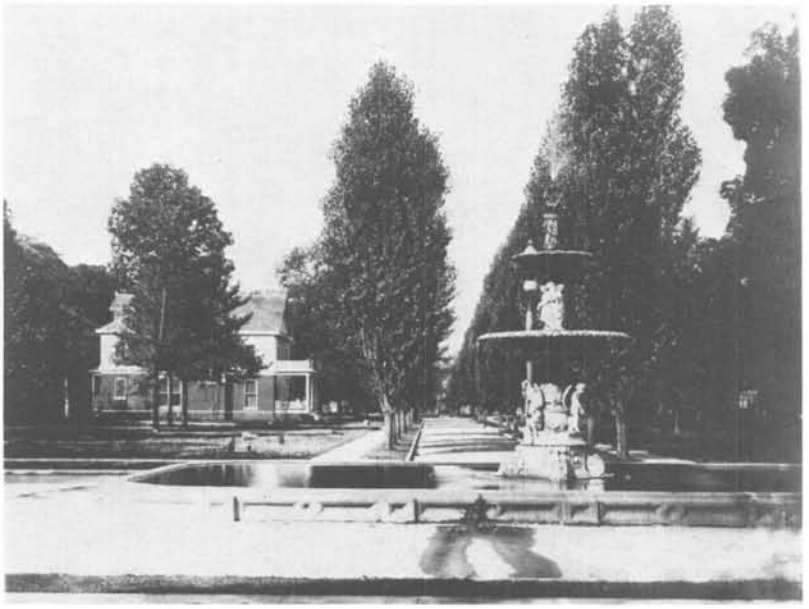
[23] See Indianapolis *Journal,* October 12, 1872; January 10, March 14, 29, July 21, 28, 1873; August 4, September 7, and October 1, 1874.

[24] *Ibid.,* April 27, 1874, and September 18, 1876.



THE ENTRANCE TO WOODRUFF PLACE

Courtesy Indiana Historical Society.



THE CENTER FOUNTAIN, WOODRUFF PLACE

Courtesy Indiana State Library, Indiana Division Picture Collection.

the street plan as well. The design itself emphasized beauty and grace over efficient use of the land. A second noticeable feature of the plat was the size of the lots. All but a very few lots were over an acre in area, and most were over two acres. The size and consequent price of the lots limited the potential market for them, and it was not long before subdividing took place. Julian and Johnson subdivided forty-two lots between the two sets of railroad tracks in the southern part of the town into 182 lots in 1873; John W. Chambers subdivided the area north of College (now Audubon) Circle into 250 lots in 1872 and 1873; and Levi Ritter and James Downey redrew the boundaries of other lots in subsequent years. Whether this subdividing was a concession to necessity or whether the large lots had been considered temporary from the beginning cannot be determined. A third obvious feature of the plat was the provision for two circular areas near the center of the town. The northern circle was "designed for the use of a Female College" and the southern one was "dedicated to the use and purpose of a public park" which would have a statue of Wash-

ington Irving as its main decoration. From the first there was a concern for education and comfort.[25]

While the plat of Irvington stressed grace and beauty, the accompanying covenant emphasized purpose and dedication. Julian and Johnson proposed to "exclude from the town everything vicious or offensive" through the inclusion of stipulations in all deeds to property in Irvington. Each buyer agreed not to allow "any distillery brewery soap factory Pork or slaughter house or any other establishment offensive to the people" to be built on his property. And no "stable hog pen privy or other offensive building Stall or shed" could be constructed within one hundred feet of any avenue. Finally, the purchaser guaranteed that he would "not sell or suffer any one to sell . . . any intoxicating beverages except for sacramental medicinal or mechanical purposes strictly." Julian and Johnson promised to abide by these same restrictions on any lots that they kept.[26]

By these stipulations Julian and Johnson did more than merely exclude anything "vicious or offensive"; they bound the buyers into a community. The owners accepted the founders' vision of a sober, beautiful, sweet-smelling town. They promised not only to obey the restrictions themselves but also to enforce them against others. The deeds explicitly stated that "the right to compel an enforcement of these conditions" rested not with Julian and Johnson but rather "in all property holders and inhabitants of the town." Merely by buying property in Irvington, indeed merely by choosing to live there, one assumed a responsibility to maintain the character of the town. One participated in the dream of Julian and Johnson, a dream that was not utopian and perhaps at this distance not very inspiring. Irvington was simply to be a suburb in which the upper middle class could live comfortably.

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[25] The plats are on file in the Office of the Marion County Recorder; the original covenant of Irvington designates the purposes of the circles. See also Vida T. Cottman, "A Historical Sketch of Irvington, Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History,* VII (December, 1911), 149-50. For similar plans in other suburbs, see John W. Reps, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* (Princeton, N.J., 1965), 339-48.

[26] These restrictive clauses appear in the original covenant of Irvington, Office of the Marion County Recorder. Parts of the covenant are inaccurately reprinted in Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis,* I, 434. A survey of the early deeds to lots in Irvington on file in the Office of the Marion County Recorder confirms that the restrictions were written into them. The idea of inserting restrictions was copied from Colorado Springs, Colorado; see "The Beginnings of Irvington," 88.

By and large Irvington fulfilled the desires of Julian and Johnson in the 1870s, and, given the high percentage of other founders who lived there, Irvington met their demands as well. Such an achievement was not a foregone conclusion, especially with the beginning of the depression in 1873. The economic crisis threatened the survival of all new real estate ventures and the prosperity of all who invested in them.[27] For the founders of Irvington the town's survival depended on the continued development of the area and a transportation link with Indianapolis. One major improvement internally was the construction and maintenance of roads. At meeting after meeting, the Board of Trustees accepted petitions regarding streets, ordered the grading and graveling of streets, and arranged to pay contractors for work done on streets.[28] A second concern was education; few people would buy lots in the town if their children had no school to attend. Perhaps more importantly, the town fathers would not have wanted to attract individuals who were not concerned about education. In 1873 and 1874 the town issued school bonds totaling $25,000 and built a brick schoolhouse. Enough of the residents took an interest in the conduct of the school that the town split into factions over the firing of a teacher in 1877. The fate of the school bonds reflected the economic problems of the suburb, because in 1879 "the greatly reduced valuation of the property, both real and personal" in the town prevented it from meeting its obligations. New bonds bearing a lower rate of interest had to be issued.[29] After 1873 the investors and residents of Irvington spent money in order to attract new residents, but they had only moderate success.

Additional investment was made in a street railway. Without reliable and frequent transportation service people could not work or shop in Indianapolis while living in the suburb. The two railroads that passed through Irvington offered only infrequent service. In February, 1875, several leading men of the town organized the Irvington, Stratford, and Indianapolis Street Railroad company, and by July tracks were laid to the outskirts of Irvington. Service began in October but had to be suspended in late November because of the poor condition of the tracks. In 1876 the property owners in Irvington invested

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[27] Jacob Julian, for example, was forced to file for bankruptcy; see Indianapolis *Journal*, September 5, 1876.

[28] Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Irvington, *passim*.

[29] Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 435-36; Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Irvington, July 10, 1879, cites declining property values.

more money in the line, and by May cars were again carrying passengers to and from Indianapolis. There continued to be difficulties, but after the fall of 1876 regular service apparently was maintained.[30] The willingness of the Irvington men to invest in the street railroad revealed both the need for the service and their commitment to the town.

Improved roads, a school, and a street railway were necessary to maintain the aura of Irvington as a good place to live; however, they could not provide an economic center for the town. The suburb needed a major institution to ensure its survival. Julian and Johnson suggested that a college would conform to the town's purposes by reserving land for one on the original plat. The residents of Irvington lacked the wealth to begin a new college during the depression, but when an existing college considered moving from Indianapolis, the town fathers acted quickly to take advantage of the opportunity. In June, 1873, the directors of Northwestern Christian University decided to move the institution from its location on the north side of Indianapolis, because the college land had become more valuable as an endowment than as a campus. Representatives from a development west of Indianapolis, men from Brightwood, and a group from Irvington all offered inducements to the college. On July 24, 1873, the university accepted the Irvington offer of about $150,000 and twenty-five acres of land. Construction of buildings began shortly thereafter, and the school opened the 1875-1876 academic year in the town. In 1877 the college was renamed Butler University in honor of one of its founders.[31]

The school was not the female college for which Julian and Johnson had reserved the northern circle, which the university did not receive, but it fit into the larger purposes of the town. The faculty and students would add to the "cultivated and intelligent society" that Irvington's residents desired.[32] The beliefs of the Christian Church, which sponsored the college, mirrored those of the town fathers. For example, university rules prohibited the use of intoxicating beverages on university property as well as "profanity, the desecration of the Lord's Day, all kinds of gaming, even for amusement, and whatever is inconsistent with good order, good taste and good morals."[33] The

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[30] Indianapolis *Journal,* February 1, July 5, 16, August 3, November 2, 30, 1875; January 5, April 1, 15, May 13, 22, June 19, and September 16, 1876.

[31] The attempt to attract the college can be followed in *ibid.,* June 18, 24, July 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 24, and 25, 1873.

[32] *Ibid.,* June 24, 1873.

[33] *The Annual Catalogue of Butler University, Irvington, Ind., for the Twenty-Seventh Session, 1881-'82* (Indianapolis, 1882), 51.

deed prohibition of anything "vicious or offensive" was effectively the same as the prohibition of anything "inconsistent with good order, good taste and good morals." Thus, the university was a fitting addition to the town. Moreover, it provided a source of employment and acted as a magnet to attract new residents.[34]

The plat and major institutions of Brightwood contrasted sharply with those of Irvington. Absent from the Brightwood plat were the curving streets so prominent in Irvington. The Brightwood plat is a good example of the grid pattern that efficiently uses the land. In Brightwood the average lot size above Sutherland Street was 150 feet by 200 feet, a far cry from the one- and two-acre lots in Irvington. In Elijah Fletcher's first addition south of Sutherland the average lot was seventy-five feet by two hundred feet. After the area north of Sutherland was subdivided in 1874, the average lot had a frontage of 37.5 feet while the addition of alleys reduced the depth of the average lot to 185 feet. In short, the lots in Brightwood were initially smaller than those in Irvington, and they were made even smaller in a short time.[35]

The other interesting features of the Brightwood plat are the absences of any restrictions on building and of any provisions for amenities. There were no restrictions written into the deeds or mortgages limiting the buyer's freedom to build whatever and wherever he wished on the property he purchased. Nor was there any language tying the owners or residents into a community to enforce certain stipulations. Furthermore, neither the original plat nor the amended one designated any lots for schools, churches, or parks. Only in Sheldon and Bennett Morris's Oak Hill addition was there any provision for a public park. That park was the only major deviation from the original pattern in the various additions in which lots averaged about 50 feet by 135.5 feet and were laid out in a grid pattern. Deeds to lots in the additions lacked any restrictions on the freedom of the buyers. In other words, the additions complemented rather than changed the design of Brightwood.

When the founders platted Brightwood they thought that its economic future was secure. The Greenleaf Manufacturing

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[34] The economic usefulness of the university is suggested by advertisements in the Indianaplis *Journal,* August 20 and November 25, 1873. That the school did not solve the economic problems of the town is evident in Cottman, "A Historical Sketch," 152-54.

[35] The original and amended plats are on file in the Office of the Marion County Recorder. On the grid pattern, see Reps, *The Making of Urban America,* 294-314.

Company would build its shops there, as would Mothershead & Morris, Higgins Bentwood Furniture Company, and several other manufacturing firms. Still other factories were located close by. Transportation to and from Indianapolis would be provided by the Bee Line, which promised to double-track its roadbed and institute half-hourly service.[36] The Panic of 1873 deflated these high expectations. Greenleaf and his company failed; the stove foundry and the furniture company also had financial problems. The attempt to attract Northwestern Christian University to the town and the subdivision of lots suggest the magnitude of the difficulties facing the suburb and its owners. The town needed a major business concern around which it could grow.

The town found its salvation when the CCC&I Railroad moved its shops to Brightwood. It became the major institution of the suburb, much as the university was in Irvington. And the railroad shops fit the original design of the town, which would remain a manufacturing suburb. The decision to move the shops to the town seems to have been due to two factors: the part men connected with the railroad had played in the early history of the town and the willingness of owners of land in Brightwood to offer inducements to the railroad when the opportunity arose.

Seven men employed by the Bee Line were among the thirty-seven persons who signed the amended plat in 1874. It is not clear why these men became interested in Brightwood. None of them owned shares in the Greenleaf Manufacturing Company. C. C. Gale, division superintendent of the railroad, did own such stock, but he did not sign the plat. Possibly these Bee Line employees bought property in Brightwood after a fire in March, 1874, destroyed the CCC&I shops in Indianapolis. Soon after the fire there were rumors that the railroad would rebuild its facilities in the suburb, and the railroad apparently bought substantial parcels of land there.[37] However, it is possible that initially the Bee Line intended merely to build a switching yard in the town because it was located where the CCC&I would junction with the proposed Belt Railroad that was to circumvent the city. For whatever reasons, employees of the Bee Line took an early interest in Brightwood, and their involvement helped to attract the company's shops to the town.

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[36] On the expectation that the factories would insure the suburb's success see advertisements for Brightwood lots in the Indianapolis *Journal,* October 10, 14, 22, November 1, 14, 1872; January 20, February 14, July 10, and August 11, 1873.

[37] *Ibid.,* March 16 and May 9, 1874.

The move of the shops was not automatic; the company expected the property owners of Brightwood to offer it a sizable portion of land. Most of the owners were excited about the prospect of the shops locating in their town. Mothershead believed that such facilities would cause five hundred mechanics to move to Brightwood, making it a town of two thousand persons very quickly. Referring to the unsuccessful effort to attract Northwestern Christian University to the town, Mothershead argued that the shops would be "worth more than forty universities."[38] Because not all of the Brightwood owners thought that a donation of land was necessary to induce the Bee Line to move its shops to the suburb, negotiations dragged on until March, 1875, when the railroad accepted a half-mile stretch of land adjacent to its tracks. The land included the buildings of the Greenleaf Manufacturing Company, which the Bee Line converted to its own uses. The CCC&I promised to build other extensive facilities as well.[39]

The Bee Line proceeded to construct "the best arranged and most substantial railroad yards and machine-shops in the country." The works were completed in March, 1877, and became the economic center of Brightwood.[40] In 1880 the town assessed the CCC&I property at $120,000, about one half of the town's total assessed valuation. Mothershead's foundry, a wagon maker, a producer of lightning rods, and a church organ manufacturer also operated in the town in 1880, but they were overshadowed as employers and as taxpayers by the Bee Line.[41] Although the shops failed to boost the town's population as much as Mothershead had predicted, they provided employment and attracted individuals and investment to Brightwood.[42] In addition, the railroad's facilities maintained the character of the town as a suburb for factories and the men who worked in them.

Woodruff Place differed from both Brightwood and Irvington in design and purpose. Woodruff used the grid pattern to lay out his land, but the dimensions he chose varied from those used in the other two towns. The main streets in both Brightwood and Irvington were fifty-two feet wide while those in Woodruff Place had a width of eighty-two feet. The lots on Woodruff's plat were smaller than those on the original

[38] *Ibid.*, May 12, 1874.
[39] *Ibid.*, May 14, 20, June 5, 20, 1874; March 6, 1875.
[40] *Ibid.*, April 16, 1877, includes a long description of the facilities.
[41] Tax Duplicate for Brightwood, 1880, Indianapolis City Archives.
[42] Indianapolis *Journal*, August 27 and December 4, 1877.

Brightwood plat, but the lots in Woodruff Place were not subdivided. The average lot remained 80 feet by 170 feet and first sold for $6500. The usual price for a lot in Brightwood before subdivision took place was $1000, and in Irvington it was slightly less than $1000.[43]

The covenant of Woodruff Place contained three significant provisions. First, Woodruff reserved a two-foot strip of land on the north, east, and south sides for a fence. He planned to enclose the entire eighty acres and mark it off from the city. From the beginning Woodruff wanted his development to be separate, if not independent. Second, the covenant stipulated that the streets and alleys were not "dedicated to public use, but only designated as such for the private use of such persons as may become owners of the several Lots in this Plat." This provision reinforced the exclusionary idea first suggested by the fence. Third, the strip for the fence and the streets and alleys were "to be held as the private property of the owners of the several Lots in the said Woodruff Place, collectively, and [were] to be perpetually held for the use and benefit of the said owners, as streets, alleys, and location for fences, and not otherwise." This requirement bound the property owners into a community, much as the provisions in the Irvington deeds did in that town. Those who purchased lots in Woodruff Place assumed a responsibility to maintain the collectively owned land.[44]

Surprisingly, Woodruff included only one other stipulation in his deeds. He prohibited the erection of any fence or other structure within twenty-five feet of the streets, a restriction that would tend to make the area seem more open and more like a park. Apparently Woodruff had confidence that those who built in his suburb would have enough good taste not to erect anything "vicious or offensive." The first residents may have agreed to additional restrictions on building. A newspaper article celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the town reported that there were stringent building rules from the beginning and that the town government specifically prohibited the keeping of cows and chickens.[45]

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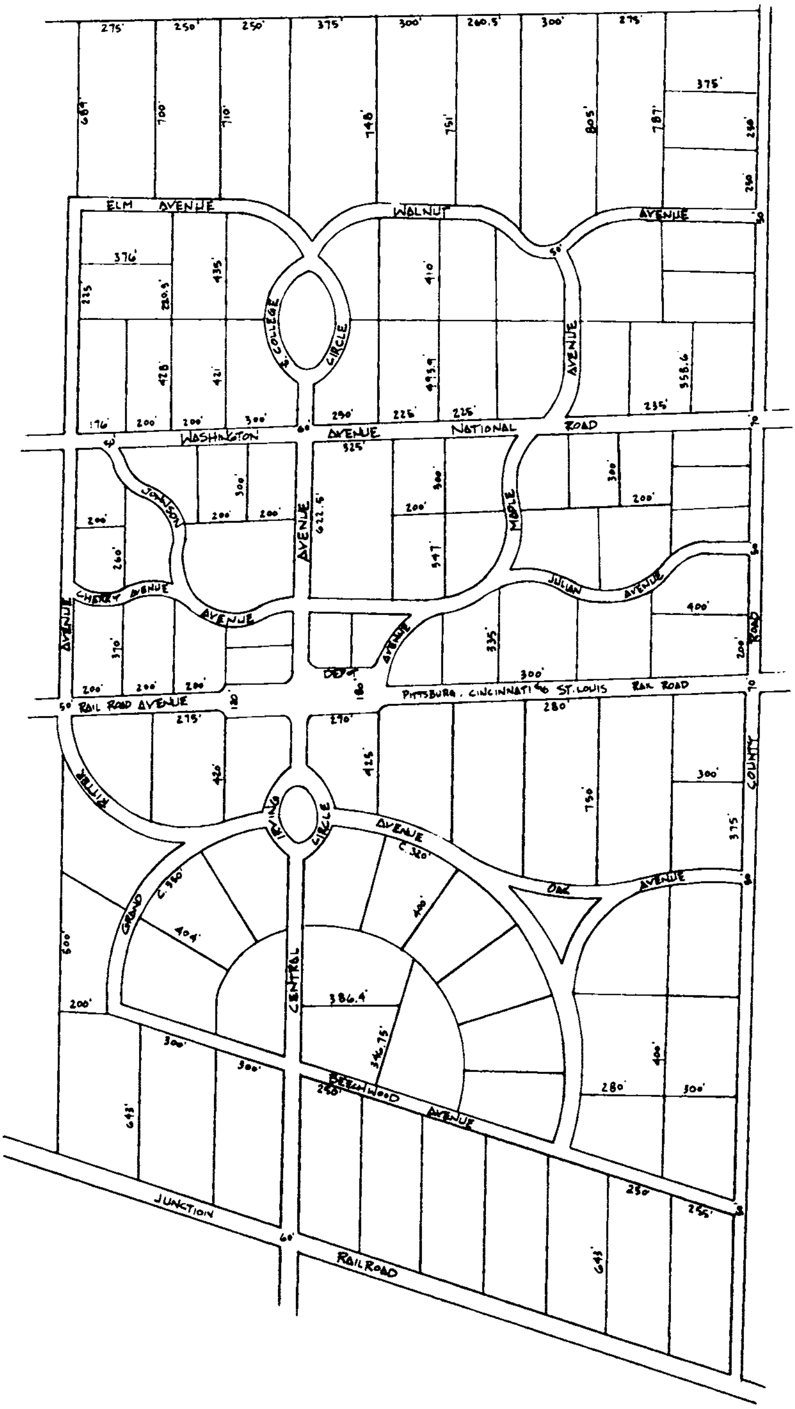
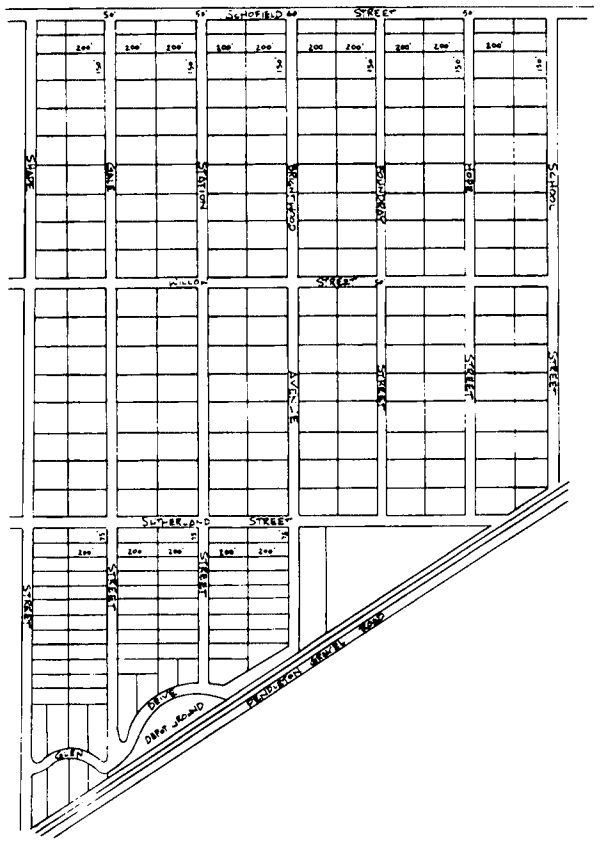
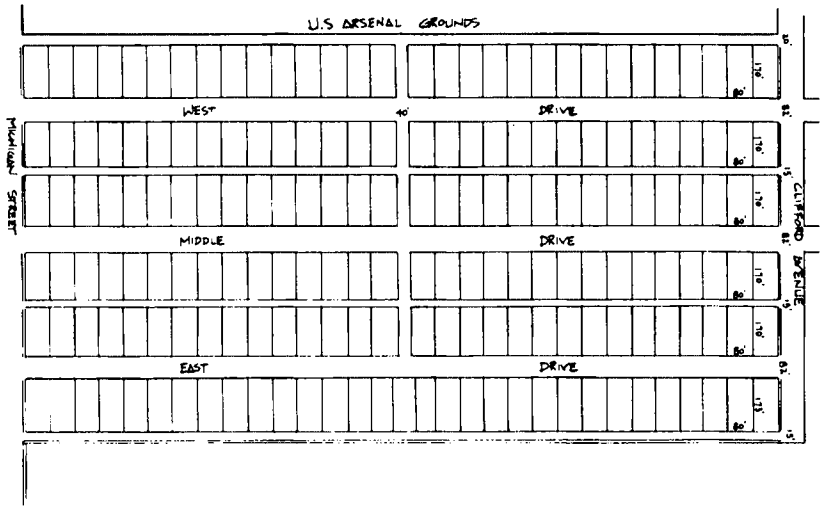
[43] The plat for Woodruff Place is on file in the Office of the Marion County Recorder. The Indianapolis *Sentinel,* May 31, 1873, provides information on the price of lots in the town; the averages in Brightwood and Irvington were determined through the mortgages on file in the Office of the Marion County Recorder.

[44] These are provisions on the original plat.

[45] Indianapolis *News,* February 5, 1926. See also Craig Beardsley, "Woodruff Place: Proud Past, Uncertain Future," *Indianapolis,* IX (August, 1972), 52.


ELM AVENUE
WALNUT AVENUE
COLLEGE CIRCLE
WASHINGTON AVENUE NATIONAL ROAD
JOHNSON
CHERRY AVENUE
AVENUE
MAPLE
JULIAN AVENUE
DEPOT
PITTSBURG, CINCINNATI & ST. LOUIS RAIL ROAD
RAIL ROAD AVENUE
RITTER
IRVING CIRCLE
AVENUE
GRAND
CENTRAL
OAK AVENUE
BEECHWOOD AVENUE
COUNTY ROAD
JUNCTION RAILROAD



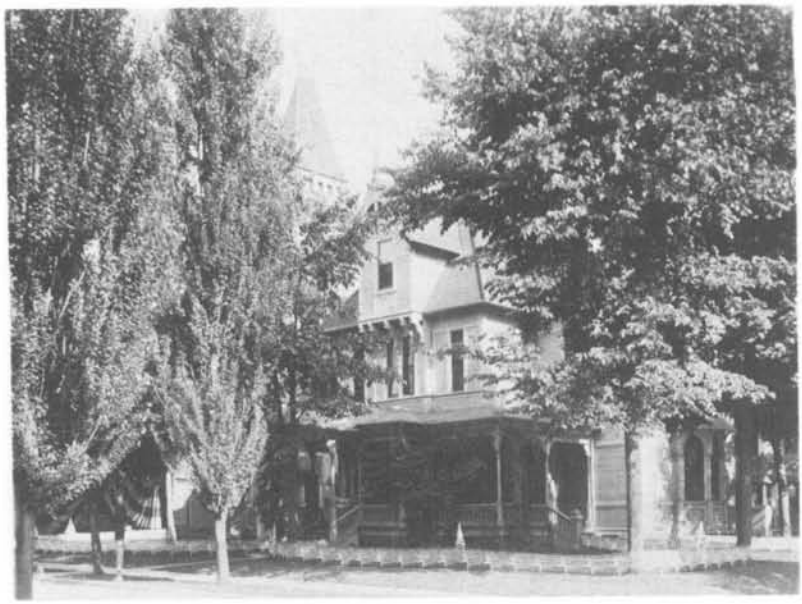


PLAT MAPS OF IRVINGTON (OPPOSITE PAGE), WOODRUFF PLACE, AND BRIGHTWOOD (LEFT), ALL DRAWN FROM ORIGINAL PLATS

Courtesy of Author.

The nature of Woodruff Place solved some problems common to suburban developments while it left others nearly unsolvable. Because only the well-to-do could afford to live in the area and because it was closer to the center of Indianapolis than either Irvington or Brightwood, concern over transportation was limited. Residents probably could afford to own carriages to take them into the city. Education was a more difficult problem because there was no room for schools within Woodruff Place itself. The only available public schools were in Indianapolis, and after incorporation in 1876 the town made arrangements to pay tuition to send children from Woodruff Place to city schools. The suburb also contracted with the city for fire protection.[46]

Woodruff Place's dependence on Indianapolis for schools and fire protection underscored the absence of large institutions in the town. From the start it was meant to be a residential suburb without businesses that might employ the residents. The suburb could not have survived without Indianapolis, which soon surrounded it. As Indianapolis prospered, so did



THE WOODRUFF HOUSE, WOODRUFF PLACE

Courtesy Indiana State Library, Indiana Division Picture Collection.

[46] Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 439; Indianapolis *Journal*, March 17 and September 18, 1876.

A WOODRUFF PLACE STREET SCENE, SHOWING THE OPEN SPACE AND STATUARY FOR WHICH THE SUBURB WAS KNOWN

Courtesy Indiana State Library, Indiana Division Picture Collection.

Woodruff Place. The relationship between the suburb and the city is indicated by the pattern of population growth of the town. During the 1870s, when depression gripped Indianapolis, Woodruff Place grew slowly; it had only twenty inhabitants in 1880. As business improved in the 1880s and into the 1890s and the city grew, the population of Woodruff Place increased as well. By 1890 it had grown to 161 persons and ten years later reached 477. Certainly the development of Brightwood and Irvington also depended on the general economic state of the county and city. However, they had institutions that helped them to grow even during the depression. In 1880 Brightwood had 679 residents while Irvington had 652.[47]

Despite the slow growth of the town's population and the bankruptcy of James Woodruff, the residents of Woodruff Place

[47] Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 439; Census Office, Department of the Interior, *Compendium of the Eleventh Census: 1890*, Part I: *Population* (Washington, D.C., 1892), 137. The factories spurred population more than the university; in 1890 Brightwood had a population of 1,387 while Irvington's population was only 650. Although the United States entered a depression in 1893, Indianapolis grew throughout the decade; see Robert G. Barrows, "A Demographic Analysis of Indianapolis, 1870-1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Indiana University, 1977), 27-32.

in 1900 lived in a town that conformed to the founder's original dream. Woodruff planned that thirty feet in the center of each of the three main avenues would be decorated with statuary, fountains, shade trees, and other ornamentation. In 1873 he purchased a number of statues from a firm in New York; many of the statues were of mythical figures, some of which were partially undraped and caused comment in the city.[48] During the 1870s these statues and fountains suffered from neglect and attacks by vandals, and a compromise had to be made on the projected stone fences on the north and south sides of the area.[49] Nevertheless, in 1900 and long afterward, Woodruff Place boasted of its nine major fountains, stone fence, and numerous statues. The maintenance of the basic design testifies to its appeal. Woodruff's dream had a lavishness and gaudiness typical of the Gilded Age and had an allure in an era in which wealth was celebrated and flaunted. What sustained Woodruff Place through hard times was not a large institution but rather the snobbish desire to evidence one's wealth in physical display.

Table I: Occupations of Males over Age 16 in Brightwood and Irvington, 1880, and in Woodruff Place, 1900

Occupational Category	Brightwood		Irvington		Woodruff Place	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Skilled Workers	137	63	20	12	8	6
Unskilled Workers	45	21	47	27	0	0
Servants	0	0	6	4	5	4
Professional/Business	8	4	38	22	96	70
White Collar	5	2	10	6	12	9
Students	3	1	19	11	4	3
Farmers	10	5	13	8	1	1
Unknown	8	4	18	11	12	9
Total*	216	100	171	101	138	102

Sources: U.S., Tenth Census, Population Schedules for Marion County, 1880 (Enumeration Districts 100, 105); U.S., Twelfth Census, Population Schedules for Marion County, 1900 (Enumeration District 187).

*Some percentage totals will not equal 100 because of rounding.

The occupations of the founders and the early plans and institutions of the three towns point to their differing characters (Table I). The occupations, nativity, and race of the residents of Irvington and Brightwood in 1880 underlined these differences and the success of the founders in attracting the kinds of people they desired. Brightwood's character as a manufacturing suburb is confirmed by the occupational breakdown of its male population. Of 216 males over sixteen years of age

[48] Indianapolis *Journal,* March 14, 29, June 21, 1873.
[49] *Ibid.,* October 1, 1874; August 28, 1875; and August 16, 1877.

listed in the 1880 federal census, 137 were skilled workers. If one excludes the eight men whose occupations could not be determined, nearly two thirds of the men were skilled workers. Carpenters formed the largest single group (thirty-three), followed by machinists (eighteen). Thirty-six men were skilled railroad employees—engineers, firemen, conductors, and brakemen. Unskilled workers constituted the next largest category: forty-five of the 216 men gave "laborer" as their occupation. It is likely that most of the skilled and unskilled men were employees of the CCC&I. Only three men listed in the census held managerial positions, and all three of them worked for the Bee Line. A grocer, a minister, a physician, a millwright, and a druggist completed the professional and business class of the suburb. Five men held white-collar clerical jobs, while three others were students. Ten were farmers and dairymen.

In Irvington the occupational structure was quite different. Only twenty of the 171 Irvington males over sixteen years of age were skilled workers. Five of these men listed themselves also as laborers, suggesting either that they were not yet master craftsmen or that there was not enough work available in Irvington for them to be craftsmen exclusively. Forty-seven men were unskilled laborers, a surprisingly high number possibly explained by the farms within the town and by the amount of housing and road construction taking place. The biggest difference between the two suburbs was in the number of professionals and businessmen; thirty-eight men in Irvington fit into this category. Twelve were teachers, while there were four clergymen, four grocers, four lawyers, and four physicians. Ten men held white-collar jobs, most as clerks, and nineteen were students. Thirteen farmers still worked their fields in Irvington. Lastly, a new category—servants—appeared among the Irvington men. The presence of six servants marks the importance of the upper middle class in the suburb. The number of teachers and students emphasizes the role of Butler University, a role made more obvious when one adds the fifteen female students and one female professor listed in the census. Still, the university had an enrollment of over 150, which leaves many students unaccounted for. Either they were overlooked by the enumerators or many students commuted from Indianapolis.[50]

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[50] The inclusion of individuals who are listed as living in the two suburbs in the 1880 city directory, but who are not listed in the census, changes no occupational category by more than two percentage points in either town.

Table II: Nativity and Race of Males over Age 16 in Brightwood and Irvington, 1880, and in Woodruff Place, 1900

Nativity	Brightwood		Irvington		Woodruff Place	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Native Born	123	57	153	89	102	74
First Generation	34	16	8	5	24	17
Foreign Born	59	27	10	6	12	9
Total	216	100	171	100	138	100
White	207	96	153	89	133	96
Black	9	4	18	11	5	4
Total	216	100	171	100	138	100

Sources: U.S., Tenth Census, Population Schedules for Marion County, 1880 (Enumeration Districts 100, 105); U.S., Twelfth Census, Population Schedules for Marion County, 1900 (Enumeration District 187).

The differences among these towns appear again when their ethnic and racial compositions are examined (Table II). Fifty-nine of the 216 men in Brightwood were foreign born while thirty-four others were first-generation Americans, having at least one parent who was born outside of the United States. In Irvington only ten men were foreign born and only eight were first generation. In both cases almost all of the foreign born came from Ireland, a German state, Great Britain, or a British colony. The number of Irish and German immigrants in Brightwood helps to explain the appearance of a Catholic mission there in 1881. In contrast, Irvington did not have a Catholic church until after 1900.[51] In racial terms a reversal of proportions occurs; there were more blacks in Irvington than in Brightwood. The eighteen blacks in Irvington, all of whom were servants or laborers, equaled the number of foreign-born and first-generation Americans there. Most of the nine blacks in Brightwood worked on farms. Apparently blacks were not welcomed into the shops in Brightwood, while the Irvington residents were willing to hire blacks, but only in menial positions.[52]

The census of 1880 listed only ten men over sixteen years of age living in Woodruff Place. Of the ten, five held managerial or white-collar clerical positions; one was a carpenter; two

[51] Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis,* I, 619, 620-21.

[52] By comparison, 86 percent of the total population of Marion County was native born or first generation and 14 percent was foreign born in 1880. Ninety-two percent of the county's population was white and 8 percent was black. Computed from data in *Compendium of the Eleventh Census,* I, 16, 484.

were laborers; one was the town marshal; and one listed no occupation. All but two of the men were native born. The one black male was a hired laborer who doubled as a servant. These figures are too small to make meaningful comparisons with the other two suburbs. Data from the next available census (1900), although separated from the figures for Brightwood and Irvington by twenty years, confirm that Woodruff Place developed much as its founder had hoped. Men involved in business constituted the largest proportion of residents in Woodruff Place at the turn of the century. Few men who worked with their hands lived in the suburb. Over 60 percent of the heads of households owned their own houses and over 50 percent of those households employed at least one servant.[53] The town did not have as socially distinguished a population as Woodruff might have wished, but it was certainly an upper-middle-class town with strong ties to the business community of Indianapolis.

By 1900, and probably earlier, Woodruff Place had a distinctive character both in the social attributes of its residents and in its physical appearance. Well before 1900 Brightwood and Irvington in their own ways were socially and physically distinctive; one was a working-class industrial town while the other was a middle-class university suburb. In each of the three cases the character of the suburb reflected its founders and their aims. None of the founders was a utopian thinker; their dreams were mundane and basically materialistic. Nevertheless, the ordinariness of their visions should not obscure the crucial points that in late-nineteenth-century America certain kinds of dreams could be fulfilled and that towns were sometimes the results of conscious decisions. Some communities were purposeful creations of identifiable men who deserve to be recalled if urban growth is to be understood. Irvington, Brightwood, and Woodruff Place, which were founded within a narrow time span and limited geographic region, illustrate how varied the backgrounds and purposes of the founders of suburbs could be and how different the towns themselves could become.[54]

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[53] Computed from data in U.S., Twelfth Census, Population Schedules for Marion County, 1900 (Enumeration District 187).

[54] Studies of other late-nineteenth-century suburbs similar to Irvington and Woodruff Place are Harry G. Schalck, "Planning Roland Park, 1891-1910," *Maryland Historical Magazine,* LXVII (Winter, 1972), 419-28; and Robert W. Heidrich, "A Village in a Park: Riverside, Illinois," *Historic Preservation,* XXV (April-June, 1973), 28-33.

Finally, the development of these three towns calls into question some generalizations about suburbanization. At least in Indianapolis the founding of suburbs did not depend on the invention of the electric streetcar. Unquestionably the trolley made it easier for people to move farther away from the central cities and still commute to work downtown. But other transportation means existing in the 1870s allowed development of the urban periphery before Frank Sprague introduced the trolley in 1888.[55] The history of Brightwood demonstrates that not all suburbs were for the middle and upper classes. As industry expanded in the late nineteenth century it sometimes moved to the crabgrass frontier, and around it arose working-class suburbs. The spatial relationship between the suburbs and Indianapolis indicates that the separation of urban residents into homegeneous economic zones was not a simple linear one. Woodruff Place, the most exclusive of the three suburbs, was closest to downtown Indianapolis, not the most distant. However, the annexation of the suburbs to the city corresponded to the economic standing of the suburbanites: Brightwood had the briefest independent history, followed by Irvington and then by Woodruff Place.[56]

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[55] Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, *A History of Urban America* (New York, 1967), 154-59, and Sam B. Warner, Jr., *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962) seem to overemphasize the centrality of the trolley to suburban growth and ignore the role of industry.

[56] Jackson, "Metropolitan Government," 454-55, makes the point about social class and consolidation. Brightwood was added to Indianapolis in 1897; Irvington joined the city in 1902; Woodruff Place was added in 1962.