

Rediscovering “Baptistown”: A Historical Geography Project on Local African American History

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AS HISTORIANS SEARCH for new ways to engage students in the college classroom, some have turned to local history as a means of making history meaningful by personalizing it.¹ Given the recent and ongoing debates about race and inclusion, history classes can turn to the study of local groups that have been marginalized in an effort to increase students’ cultural awareness. One such local history project took place in Evansville, Indiana from 2011 to 2013 through collaboration between the University of Southern Indiana and the Evansville African American Museum (EAAM). Funded by a federal grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), students in introductory African American history classes at the university, along with advanced local high school students, undertook a service-learning component of an introductory African American history course; their project was to identify businesses and services offered in “Baptistown,” the area historically occupied by the Evansville African American community in the 1930s and 1940s.² This period coincided with the opening of a federal housing project to provide quality low-cost housing and the expansion of employment opportunities in war industries, both of which led to a

revitalization of the community. Over the course of three semesters, students researched and constructed an interactive map of businesses, services, and churches of Baptistown, a map that has become a permanent part of the Museum's website.³

Rationale for the Historical Mapping Project

In 1901, well before the founding of the *Annales* school of history, which emphasized the importance of environment, climate, and geography in historical development, H. B. George declared that "history is not intelligible without geography."⁴ This is also a strategy that historians in recent years have incorporated into their teaching. Many of the published articles that describe pedagogical approaches to historical geography are intended for younger students.⁵ While teachers have utilized historical geography to familiarize students with diverse regions and time periods, only a small number of cases have focused on local history.⁶ Approaches range from analysis of the hidden assumptions reflected in historical maps to studying cultural geography through films or walking tours of historic areas.⁷ But the majority of these approaches were utilized in advanced undergraduate classes taught to students with previous university coursework in either geography or history.⁸ While there are pedagogical models for studying minority populations, few of these incorporate local historical geography.⁹

The African American community in Evansville, Indiana is a particularly appropriate focus for a service-learning local history class utilizing historical geography, because African Americans have been a significant part of community for most of the city's history. The 1850 census showed that there were 230 "free Colored" citizens—two percent of the population.¹⁰ This number grew rapidly, in part because the city lies on the northern bank of the Ohio River, across from the slave state of Kentucky. One route for escaping slaves went through Evansville and ran along the Wabash and Erie Canal.¹¹ Following the Civil War, many newly freed slaves settled in Evansville, and by 1900, African Americans made up nearly thirteen percent of the population, a majority of whom lived in an area just east of downtown called "Baptistown."¹²

The overall black population continued to grow in the early twentieth century, although this slowed somewhat following a

serious race riot in 1903. After a white police officer was shot and killed while attempting to arrest a young black man, a white mob attacked Baptistown businesses and homes.¹³ Newspapers across the country reported that thousands of blacks were fleeing the city.¹⁴ Ultimately, the governor called out the state militia to restore order.

While many of Evansville's black citizens returned to the city, and more continued to relocate there, between 1900 and 1910, the African American population grew by only thirteen percent; although this was a much smaller growth rate than comparable cities in Indiana, Evansville's African American population was second only to Indianapolis in the state.¹⁵ This population had been increasingly forced into Baptistown, as racial segregation increased in the city; between 1870 and 1890, the population of the neighborhood increased by 350 percent.¹⁶ Most people in Baptistown were renters, and a large number shared their small residences with other families or with boarders. Overcrowding was made worse by lack of city services. According to an official report from 1916, more than a third of residents were not connected to city sewers, and many relied on open cisterns for drinking water.¹⁷ The same report noted that recently completed street improvements had led to the destruction of more than fifty dilapidated houses in the neighborhood, yet about the same number still stood that were deemed unfit to live in.¹⁸ Yet residents had few options, in part because few good-paying jobs were available for African Americans; according to the 1900 census, most heads of black households were laborers.¹⁹ Even those with enough to rent or buy more expensive homes had limited options, since residents of white neighborhoods resisted their efforts to move into more prosperous areas.²⁰

Progressive reformers in Evansville realized that tearing down houses and paving and extending streets was not enough to alleviate the poverty of Baptistown's residents, yet in the early twentieth century, politicians in general were averse to spending government funds on housing and slum clearance, fearing that it would open the door to socialism.²¹ It would take the shock of the Depression, the collapse of the real estate market, and the ensuing housing crisis induced by wide-scale foreclosures to change this attitude.²²

As the impact of the financial collapse spread in the early 1930s and large numbers of whites lost their jobs and homes as a result of

the Depression, politicians suddenly became aware of the problems of poverty and poor housing.²³ Under the new administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, plans got underway to provide funding for low-cost housing projects across the nation. As early as 1933, Evansville city officials had raised the possibility of a larger-scale slum clearance project, and they moved quickly to apply for federal funding. After months of planning, negotiation, and on-site inspection, the funds were granted to construct Lincoln Gardens, a federally subsidized housing project for low-income residents.²⁴

Although the Lincoln Gardens project was small compared to some of the other federal housing projects funded by the Roosevelt administration, it was still a major undertaking; it required the purchase of all the property on approximately four square blocks, razing the existing buildings, and temporarily relocating the residents. Construction began in June 1937, and when the first residents moved in during the following summer, Lincoln Gardens became only the second federal housing project to open.²⁵ While some other housing projects displaced minority communities to provide housing for low-income white residents, Lincoln Gardens remained at the heart of a vibrant African American community.²⁶

The gala opening took place on July 1, 1938, and was an important moment for Baptistown.²⁷ *The Evansville Argus*, founded a month earlier as the city's only African American newspaper, reported on the event, and according to the project's housing manager, the 191 new units would "elevate the social and economic status of the community."²⁸ It would also serve as a community center, with meeting rooms and classes for adults; Lincoln High School, opened in 1928 as the city's only black high school, was located directly across the street from the project. During the war, Lincoln Gardens would also be the site for what served as an unofficial USO for black soldiers.

With the area's only African American high school and newspaper, and the newly opened quality housing for low-income families, Baptistown was revitalized and became the hub of black society in segregated southwestern Indiana in the late 1930s and 1940s. The local community witnessed the increase in the number of black-owned businesses, professionals, and service providers.²⁹ The "Rediscovering Baptistown" project sought to recapture some of the essence of this vibrant community in the period from 1938 to 1945.

Course Structure and Format

The research project took place over three semesters in sections of an entry-level African American history survey that had two overarching goals; first, to develop within the students a fundamental understanding of the expanse of African American history, and second, to provide them with an opportunity to put what they learned to use by undertaking original research to create a product that would be used by the EAAM. A critical goal of the IMLS grant was to connect juniors and seniors in high school and freshmen and sophomores in college with the local black community and its history. As part of the matching funds under the grant, the EAAM paid for tuition and books for up to five highly qualified juniors or seniors from local high schools per semester. The inclusion of high school students determined when the class was scheduled. In order to allow more high school student participation, the course was taught during the Summer 2012 and Summer 2013 terms, and when the class was offered during the regular academic year in Spring 2013, it met in the late afternoon. The summer classes met every weekday for six weeks, with Fridays devoted to class research on the project. The Spring 2013 course met twice a week over the regular fifteen-week session.

While the Baptistown project was only part of the coursework, the other assignments and materials provided important context and analytical tools for students as they completed their coursework.³⁰ The course assignments roughly fell into two categories, with only minor variations occurring between spring and summer courses (see **Figure 1**).³¹

In order to maximize class time, the professor assigned the students weekly online quizzes covering lectures and reading assignments; the multiple choice and essay components stressed critical thinking and drawing connections between diverse sources. The Baptistown project would require the students to use analytical reasoning skills and engage in meaningful and productive group interaction; as a result, in-class meetings focused on active student participation that combined lecture and discussion of primary sources. The students also engaged in a variety of in-class activities, including writing activities and document analysis.

These activities were designed to help students understand the situation in Evansville within the larger national context, thereby

Assignment/Assessment	Point Value	Percentage of Grade
Weekly Quizzes	300	30
Participation	300	30
Project Research	200	20
Project Presentation	50	5
Project Paper	100	10
H-Net Activity	50	5
Total	1000	100

Figure 1: Assignments in History 130: African American History

preparing them to understand the research project. A debate that stressed the philosophical differences between Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois on how to elevate the African American community was particularly successful in achieving these goals. Students were randomly assigned to argue in favor of Washington or Du Bois, and at the end of the debate, students voted by secret ballot to choose which plan they found most viable.³²

Another course component designed to broaden students' understanding of the complexity of African American history was the requirement that they sign up on H-Net, specifically for H-Indiana or H-Afro-Am. During the course of the semester, each student gave one or two oral presentations (depending on the semester) on a recent discussion in one of the two forums. They provided information on the discussants, explained the different points in the discussion, and then added their own contribution. Later, groups of students would craft a question on their research, and after vetting by the instructor, each group submitted it to one of these H-Net groups and received feedback.³³ This activity fulfilled the dual purpose of connecting students with the wider historical community while serving as an important precursor to utilizing that community in the map project.

All the other graded assignments in the course were components of the service-learning project. Students gathered their research material into portfolios, which would then be shared with each subsequent class, with the final map being created during the third class. Thus, it was essential that each group within each class create,

document, and pass on to the next class all information that they had learned. The contents of the portfolio were clearly specified, and students utilized uniform reporting methods.

To conduct their research, groups of students were assigned specific areas of Baptistown. Using newspapers and city directories, students gathered information about businesses, churches, and other amenities using standardized forms in order to facilitate the transfer of information between classes and, eventually, to the museum. At the end of the class, the students provided a condensed summary sheet by generating a table with basic information about each amenity that they had discovered in their research. Each group also turned in a map of their section of Baptistown with businesses, churches, and other amenities enumerated on the map. Finally, the groups also submitted a comprehensive bibliography of all the sources used in the completion of the project.

The final assignment was an oral presentation and paper that replaced the final exam. The research groups prepared oral presentations in which they accurately explained the boundaries of the area within Baptistown they were assigned to research, identified interesting information they had uncovered, and discussed their sources and research methodology. The students often chose to highlight information about Baptistown businesses that starkly contrasted with their own experience, such as the fresh pig feet available at the Canal Market for five cents,³⁴ or perhaps the repair services offered by ABC Radio Service.³⁵ Each student also wrote an individual paper that utilized Darrel Bigham's *We Ask Only a Fair Trial* (1987) to identify which factors could have brought about the changes in their assigned geographic area between 1950 and the present.

Project Methodology and Implementation

From the beginning, this project was intended to span several semesters, with each subsequent group of students building on research that their peers had already conducted. This was a general education class, which meant that the students came from a broad range of majors.³⁶ As a result, when the project began, it was conceived in a very basic way that developed quickly in response to the type and amount of data students gathered.

The project focused on the era spanning 1938-1945 for both historical and methodological reasons. When Lincoln Gardens opened in 1938, it was hailed as the “pride of the city.”³⁷ It had physically changed the neighborhood and provided affordable decent housing for nearly 200 families. That same year, a new weekly newspaper, *The Evansville Argus*, began to serve the African American community. The commencement of World War II brought about massive changes to both white and black Evansville, for Evansville’s manufacturing sector grew rapidly during the war. This would ultimately bring about massive post-war changes in the growth and development of the city.³⁸ The project hoped to capture the area before this drastic change in order to understand and analyze Baptistown during the war era.

Narrowing the focus to this relatively short period of time also made sense methodologically. Not only did this narrow time frame make it more likely that the students could complete the goals of the project, the key primary source that the students used for the project was the black newspaper of the time, *The Evansville Argus*, edited by Julius Holder and published from 1938-1943. Because the newspaper was located within Baptistown itself, it was positioned to provide a great deal of detailed information about the community.³⁹ Keyword-searchable digitized copies of the *Argus* are available through the digital collections in the University of Southern Indiana’s Rice Library, allowing the students easy access to this resource. They also used the Bennett and Company Evansville City Directories.⁴⁰ While these are not digitized, they were readily available at the Rice Library and in other local repositories.⁴¹ These directories provided particularly valuable information demonstrating the diversity and fluidity of Baptistown. They provide critical historical information about Evansville’s business sector, including the names of Evansville’s businesses, proprietors, and addresses, amongst other data. These annual publications allowed students to trace the changes in the Baptistown business community by identifying new and relocated businesses, as well as those that were no longer listed.

Using these two sources in tandem proved valuable to the students. Newspaper ads allowed them to identify businesses that opened and then went out of business or moved during a single year, something that would not be identified in the directory. But the directories offered more specific information than some advertisements, such as those that directed customers to a general locality rather than a

physical address. Students began by combing *The Evansville Argus* archives from the beginning of the paper in 1938, targeting the newspaper advertisements since these conveyed the type information the students sought: the business owner’s name, the phone number, the services the business provided, and—most beneficial for the project—the physical address of the business. Once the groups had identified the name, address, and proprietor of a specific business, they then looked for additional information in the annual Bennett and Company Evansville City Directory. Using the name of the proprietor, the name of the business or the street address, students could skim through the directories to see the growth, development, mutation, and demise of these businesses. Students quickly learned that cross-checking yielded valuable results, and that the *Argus* and city directories provided complementary information. For example, in January 1939, the Lincoln Eat Shop, which advertised itself as “Evansville’s newest and most ideal pleasure spot,” directed potential customers to its location at “Lincoln and Elliot streets.”⁴² This would have put it virtually on the doorstep of Lincoln Gardens, then under construction. However, there is nothing in the ad to indicate which of the four corners of the intersection the business occupied—or, indeed, if it was on the corner at all.

Students had to be very thorough in this undertaking, as much of the Baptistown business district tended to be transient. It was not uncommon in the eight-year period between the opening of Lincoln Gardens and the end of World War II for one location to have three or four different businesses. Somewhat less common but still existent were businesses that moved to several locations. As the students combed the Directories, they would note these changes and gather the information necessary to understand Baptistown’s business district.

In order to generate uniform data sets that would be useful to future students and the EAAM, the students needed a common instrument for data processing and collection. This information also needed to be stored in an easily accessible database. This was done using Microsoft Access. This enabled the students to put all the information that they discovered into a single database that could ultimately be given to the Museum’s curator. As can be seen in **Figure 2**, the form contained several different fields. Each individual business was listed by address and an identification number; the latter would allow the curator to incorporate all the data into a larger

Address	<input type="text"/>	ID #	<input type="text"/>
Type of Building	<input type="text"/>	Dates of Operation	<input type="text"/>
Name of Business	<input type="text"/>		
Business Owner(s)	<input type="text"/>		
Business Information			
<input type="text"/>			
Source(s)	<input type="text"/>		

Figure 2: Baptistown Project Data Collection Form

database and then create a cataloging system where a marker could be assigned for each entry. These fields were followed by “Type of Building,” which could be made into a drop-down box. This is preferable to a blank field since it facilitates categorization. For our project, examples of different categories included, restaurants, liquor stores, groceries, and professional offices. The building type is followed by fields for the dates of operation, the business name, and the names of the owners. Two larger fields allowed the students to supply additional information about each business and indicate the sources of their information.⁴³

During research conducted by the first class, two of the three groups turned out to have highly commercial areas, while the third group’s area turned out to be primarily residential. This last group identified six religious buildings (churches, parsonages, and rectories), a hospital, and a car dealership, while the other two groups found more than thirty target entities in their assigned neighborhoods.

Both of these groups determined that there were more businesses there that they could have cataloged, but were unable to do so in the shortened summer session.

To prevent duplication of effort in the class taught the following spring, while still ensuring the documentation of businesses in these highly congested areas, the new groups were assigned expanded areas, but were also given the information that the previous groups had already discovered in that area. In this way, students in the second and third classes could complete information on previously located areas and then expand into new areas.

The data produced by the students’ research surpassed expectations and caused a dramatic alteration in the final development of the map. The original plan was to have the students plot the different businesses on one large 44” x 38” foam-core map. However, given the larger-than-expected data set, this was no longer feasible—the first class had identified approximately seventy businesses. Furthermore, these businesses, and those identified by subsequent classes, were in a very compact area along four major roads. In creating the hard copy map, the largest size that we could generate without compromising the integrity of the map was 37½” x 36”. This meant that even with using the smallest markers possible, we would not be able to identify every business on this physical map as planned. Limiting the number of businesses on the map would have defeated the purpose of the project, and even with such limitation, the planned color-coding by type of business and a key with the business names would have made the map too busy and decreased its value as a learning tool in the museum.

Brittney Westbrook, EAAM museum curator, suggested the possibility of doing a virtual project, or at least a virtual component of the project. Implementing this strategy of creating both a physical and virtual map opened a plethora of new opportunities. Instead of trying to load the physical map with all the information, it became a “snapshot” of Baptistown that highlighted some of the major businesses of the era. The students in the final class created informational blurbs about certain businesses in their designated areas. These were placed around the map with strings to indicate the exact location of these spots on the map.

The bulk of the information unearthed in the project, however, found its home in the online interactive map, which is now linked

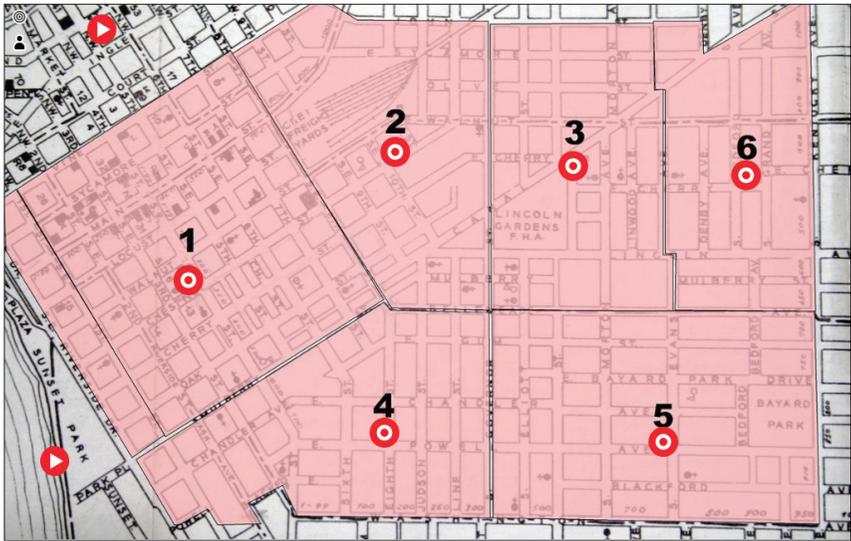


Figure 3: Baptistown Online Interactive Map

to the website of the African American Museum.⁴⁴ It was created using a website titled ThingLink, which allows the user to create an account and then upload images to that account. Using ThingLink, we uploaded the map of Baptistown and divided it into six different sectors (Figure 3). By clicking on an individual sector, the user can open an enlarged image of that section of the map, which has again been divided into subsections that have additional buttons embedded in them (Figure 4). Clicking on those provides a final magnification that allowed the students working on the project to go through and enumerate virtually every business that fell within the parameters of their area by embedding an icon.

The students in the final class added icons to the corresponding map subsections to enumerate all the businesses discovered by the students over the three semesters, creating a comprehensive interactive online map of Baptistown that is now available on the Evansville African American Museum website. When a visitor hovers over an icon, an informational blurb pops up about the business that was there. Each blurb provides uniform information drawn from the forms that the students completed, indicating the business name, address, owner's name, and years at that location (Figures 5 and 6).



Figure 4: Section 2 of Baptistown Online Interactive Map

Challenges

Helping the students become comfortable with the work was key to the project’s success. Most student participants had not previously attempted a project of this complexity, and some initially worried about finding time to do the research or having the appropriate level of research ability. As a result, an early class discussion reassured the students that the amount of work and required skills would be comparable to that in other introductory classes. This discussion also highlighted the importance of experiential learning, the ways in which the creation of a tangible historical product benefitted the community, and the transferable research skills the students would develop as a result of the project. Student concerns were also addressed by Brittney Westbrook, the EAAM curator, who came to the class and

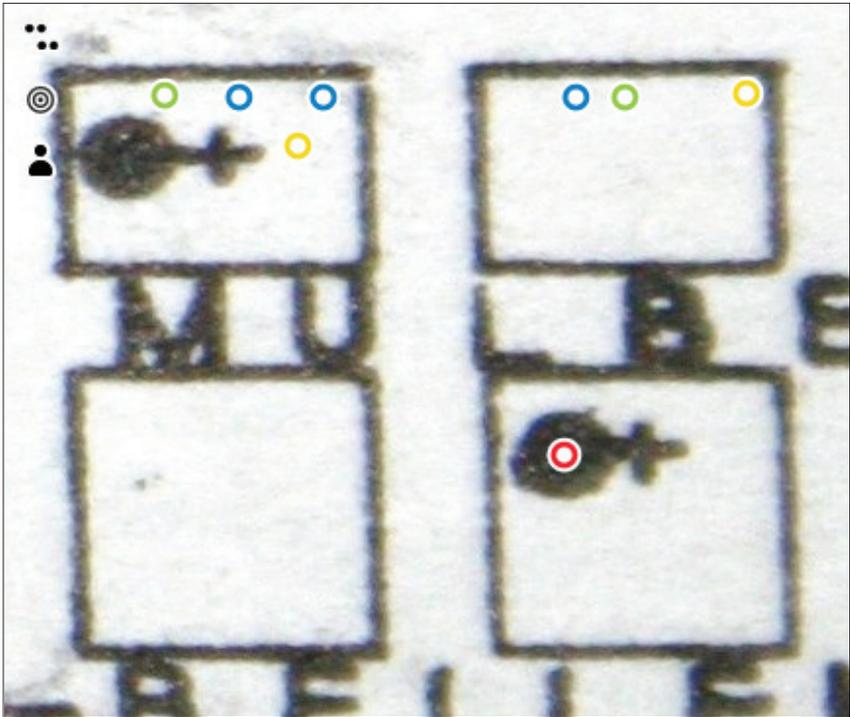


Figure 5: Subsection 2j of Baptistown Interactive Map

talked with the students about the mission of the Museum and her vision for the map exhibit. She clarified the kind of information that would be useful to the EAAM and gave suggestions about how to effectively convey that information. Ms. Westbrook also suggested that each group create some sort of educational tract that would help museum goers understand the map exhibit, such as a brochure, a fact sheet, or even a small lesson with little games to be enjoyed by younger children. Students developed several different tracts filled with information and games; these were submitted in their student portfolios and are currently available on the EAAM website.⁴⁵

Student concerns were more easily assuaged in the summer classes. Despite the shortened sessions during the summer, those classes were more focused on the overall project and, since the class met every day, students were able to ask the instructor questions almost in the moment. While students were fully engaged in research during the longer class in the spring, several groups omitted certain elements

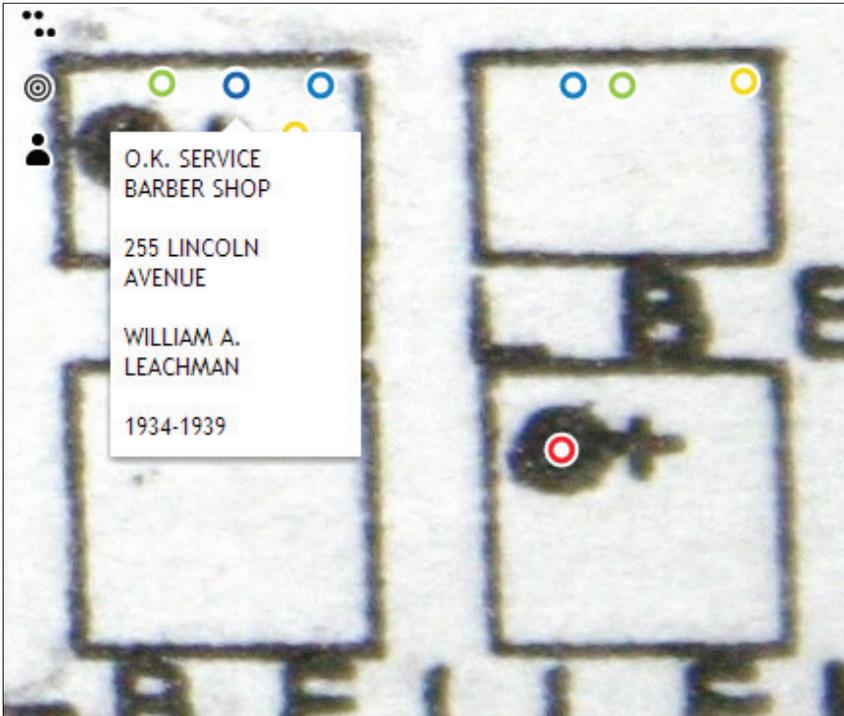


Figure 6: Subsection 2j of Baptistown Interactive Map with Business Highlighted

of the project, despite reminders posted on the class Blackboard site. For example, one group researched businesses in the area, but turned in neither a map with the locations enumerated, nor the completed note forms for the businesses that they discussed. Another group was assigned a segment of the map known to contain the border section of Baptistown, but did not verify the racial demographics of the businesses located there. Students had been told at the start of the semester that one ancillary goal of the project was to verify the informal borders of Baptistown. This would mean that some groups might be assigned border areas to see if the currently accepted borders accurately portrayed the dimensions of Baptistown. This group decided to forego the step of verifying if certain businesses catered to or were owned by black people; instead, this group enumerated every single business found in their area as indicated by the City Directories. This massive amount of work may prove useful in understanding the economics of Evansville prior to World

War II, but was functionally useless for our project because, without further research, there was no way to specifically associate the data with Baptistown other than proximity.

Part of the disengagement of the students during the spring semester may be attributed to the structure of the course. While students submitted final reports and made class presentations at the end of the semester, they made no interim progress reports on which they might have received instructor feedback. In hindsight, this problem could have been overcome through the utilization of more frequent assessment using distance learning methods and technology. For example, the course could include a requirement for weekly blogs or online journals in which the students discuss their findings or pose questions for the rest of the class (or the instructor). Students could receive instructor feedback as well as learn from what their peers were doing. Early in the semester, students could also submit sample forms of the business information that they were creating as a low-stakes assignment that would function as a progress report and allow for instructor feedback. In order to keep the class and the project fresh in their minds, these assignments could be due on a day other than those on which the class met.

Conclusion

One overarching goal of the class was to help students become excited about local history, and the reaction of one of the students on the last day of class suggests that this goal was met. She excitedly declared that she never knew that historical research could be so fun and exciting. This student posited that doing history was in some ways like trying to be a detective and solve a puzzle by looking for historical clues. By engaging the students' interest with hands-on learning that had a final project that would be exhibited to and used by the community, this project drove home several important lessons. First, it demonstrated that primary source research can be successful in entry-level courses when proper guidance is given and parameters are set for the students. Second, it shows the importance of using local history to teach about broader topics in American history surveys. Students were more excited by this project because of their proximity to and knowledge about the places that we were working with on the map.

While the IMLS grant was the catalyst for the creation of this project, the course itself was not funded by the grant. The local focus allowed the class to utilize a variety of easily accessible primary sources, many of which were already located on campus. Existing technology facilitated the collection and presentation of the data, and allowed it to be stored by the Evansville African American Museum for future use and research. This was an example of a successful local history undergraduate research project that could be repeated in other university classes or even in advanced high school history classes.

Notes

1. E. J. Bourgeois II, “A Model History Course: History Practicum—Researching, Writing, and Publishing Local History,” *The History Teacher* 32, no. 3 (May 1999): 381-394, describes a local history practicum taught at Southwest Texas State University; “Teaching Indiana History: A Roundtable,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 107, no. 3 (September 2011): 250-261, is the transcript of an online discussion between history faculty members from various institutions in the state; A. Glenn Crothers, “‘Bringing History to Life;’ Oral History, Community Research, and Multiple Levels of Learning,” *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (March 2002): 1446-1451, describes an oral history project at Indiana University Southeast. A survey of its subscribers by the *Indiana Magazine of History* in 2003 also showed a strong interest in local and regional history. Linda Lou Rippy, Charlotte Sellers, and Joseph L. Skvarenina, “Doing Local History in Indiana: A Conversation with Linda Lou Rippy, Charlotte Sellers, and Joseph L. Skvarenina,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 103, no. 4 (December 2007): 411.
2. The name of the district has been spelled “Baptisttown” and “Baptistown” in the sources. This essay will use the latter spelling.
3. See the map at Evansville African American Museum, “Baptisttown Community Research and Online Exhibits,” <<https://evansvilleaamuseum.wordpress.com/baptisttown-community-research-and-online-exhibits/baptisttown-community-research/>>.
4. H. B. George, *The Relations of Geography and History* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1901), quoted in Alan R. H. Baker, *History and Geography: Bridging the Divide* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2003), xi.
5. See Rodney F. Allen, “Memorial Geography: Reflections upon a Useful Strategy for Teaching Middle School Geography Students,” *Journal Of The Middle States Council for the Social Studies* 13 (1991-1992): 10-18; Russel L. Gerlach, “Our Cultural Roots: A Classroom Exercise In Historical Geography,” *Journal of*

Geography 75, no. 2 (February 1976): 82-89; Jane J. White and Sari J. Bennett, "Frankincense and Myrrh: Solving a Mystery with Historical Geography," *Social Education* 52, no. 7 (November-December 1988): 520-526, 533.

6. See Robert M. Ward and Chica McCabe, "Plat Maps as a History and Geography Teaching Tool," *The History Teacher* 33, no. 2 (February 2000): 153-173; Allen, "Memorial Geography"; and Gerlach, "Our Cultural Roots."

7. For projects that analyzed historical maps, see W. Dirk Raat, "Innovative Ways to Look at New World Historical Geography," *The History Teacher* 37, no. 3 (May 2004): 281-306; and Ward and McCabe, "Plat Maps as a History and Geography Teaching Tool." Courses that focused on studies of cultural and historical geography using film include Katie Algeo, "Teaching Cultural Geography with *Bend it Like Beckham*," *Journal of Geography* 106, no. 3 (October 2007): 133-143 and Chris Lukinbeal, "Teaching Historical Geographies of American Film Production," *Journal of Geography* 101, no. 6 (November 2002): 250-260. Innes M. Keighren describes an approach that combines a walking tour with archival research in "Teaching Historical Geography in the Field," *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 37, no. 4 (2013): 567-577.

8. For approaches aimed at advanced undergraduates, see Lukinbeal, "Teaching Historical Geographies of American Film Production"; Keighren, "Teaching Historical Geography in the Field"; Miles Ogborn, "Teaching Qualitative Historical Geography," *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 16, no. 2 (1992): 145-150; Ian Cook, "'Nothing Can Ever Be the Case of 'Us' and 'Them' Again': Exploring the Politics of Difference through Border Pedagogy and Student Journal Writing," *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 24, no. 1 (March 2000): 13-27.

9. See Yonghee Suh, KaaVonia Hinton, James Marken, and Guang-Le Lee, "Are We Comfortable Teaching This? Using Banned Books as a Vehicle for Teaching about World War II-Era Japan & Korea," *Multicultural Education* 19, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 24-30; Christopher C. Martell, "Race and Histories: Examining Culturally Relevant Teaching in the U.S. History Classroom," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 41, no. 1 (2013): 65-88; Gary Stiler and Lisa Allen, "Making Connections with the Past: (Un)Masking African American History at a Neighborhood Community Center," *Multicultural Education* 13, no. 4 (Summer 2006): 24-28. As with the current paper, Stiler and Allen worked in Evansville, Indiana.

10. Darrel E. Bigham, *We Ask Only a Fair Trial: a History of the Black Community of Evansville, Indiana* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 3-5.

11. Wilbur H. Siebert, "Light on the Underground Railroad," *The American Historical Review* 1, no. 3 (April 1896): 458. A contemporary account of the Underground Railroad in Southwestern Indiana emphasizes the importance of Evansville as a landing point for escaping slaves, and makes particular mention of the assistance offered by Willard Carpenter, a prominent Evansville businessman and philanthropist. William Monroe Cockrum, *History of the Underground Railroad as it was Conducted by the Anti-Slavery League* (Oakland City, IN: J. W. Cockrum Printing Company, 1915), 129-130.

12. Darrel E. Bigham, "Work, Residence, and the Emergence of the Black Ghetto in Evansville, Indiana, 1865-1900," *Indiana Magazine of History* 76, no. 4 (December 1980): 287.

13. Dallas W. Sprinkles, *The History of Evansville Blacks* (Evansville, IN: Mid-America Enterprises, 1974), 33-34.

14. "Military Rule in Evansville: Four Hundred Armed State Soldiers Rushed There to End Race Riots," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8 July 1903, 3. On July 9, the *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, an African American newspaper published in Milwaukee, described the situation in Evansville as "anarchy" as "mobs of whites armed with the loot of gun shops" roamed the town "seeking the lives of every Negro and bent on blowing up all the dwellings in the colored quarter."

15. Jack S. Blocker, Jr., "Black Migration to Muncie, 1860-1930," *Indiana Magazine of History* 92, no. 4 (December 1996): 317-318.

16. Robert G. Barrows, "New Deal Public Housing in the Ohio Valley: The Creation of Lincoln Gardens in Evansville, Indiana," *Ohio Valley History* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 54.

17. "Report of the Housing Subcommittee to the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce, July 30, 1916," cited in Sprinkles, *The History of Evansville Blacks*, 4.

18. Ibid.

19. According to Bigham, three out of four men who headed households were listed as "unskilled laborers," while half of the remainder were unemployed. Darrel E. Bigham, "The Black Family in Evansville and Vanderburgh County, Indiana: A 1900 Postscript," *Indiana Magazine of History* 78, no. 2 (June 1982): 158.

20. Bigham, *We Ask Only a Fair Trial*, 112-113.

21. Larry Keating and Carol A. Flores, "Sixty and Out: Techwood Homes Transformed by Enemies and Friends," *Journal of Urban History* 26, no. 3 (March 2000): 276.

22. Bert E. Swanson, "Public Efforts to Redevelop American Cities," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 25, no. 3 (July 1966): 250.

23. Even when the government began using the argument of eminent domain to seize and raze slum properties in order to build federally funded housing projects, legal scholars argued that it was justified because "Disease, moral degeneracy, and crime, products of the slum environment, jeopardize the health and welfare of entire communities and entail the expenditure of public funds far in excess of tax revenues from the blighted areas." From "Validity of State Condemnation for Low-Cost Housing," *The Yale Law Journal* 45, no. 8 (June 1936): 1519-1520.

24. Barrows, "The Creation of Lincoln Gardens in Evansville," 56.

25. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt visited the construction site in November 1937. Pat Sides, "History Lesson: Eleanor Roosevelt Visits the City in 1937, including Grave of James Bethel Gresham," *Evansville Courier-Press*, 7 November 2013.

26. Barrows, "The Creation of Lincoln Gardens in Evansville," 52.

27. The Evansville African American Museum opened in 2007 and is housed in the last remaining building of the project.

28. "Lincoln Gardens in Gala Opening," *The Evansville Argus*, 2 July 1938, 1, <<https://newspapers.library.in.gov/cgi-bin/indiana?a=d&d=EA19380702>>.

29. Even as the first families were moving in to Lincoln Gardens, nearby businesses were courting the patronage of the new residents; for examples, see the advertisements in the city's African American newspaper, *The Evansville Argus*, for July 2, 1938, the day after the gala opening of the project, <<https://newspapers.library.in.gov/cgi-bin/indiana?a=d&d=EA19380702>>.

30. This course used the following texts: Quintard Taylor, *From Timbuktu to Katrina: Sources in African-American History*, 2 vols. (Boston, MA: Thompson Wadsworth, 2007); Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (New York: Dover, 1995), W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dover, 1994). Students also had access to Darrel Bigham, *We Ask Only a Fair Trial: A History of the Black Community of Evansville, Indiana* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001).

31. In the spring of 2013, the professor replaced the weekly quizzes with three tests that had the same essential components as the quizzes. Other than that, the course assessments remained the same.

32. One student in the Spring 2013 course started the class as a severe critic of Booker T. Washington. She was assigned to defend Washington's point of view in the debate and, after having read *Up from Slavery* and participating in the debate, she confessed that she now supported Washington's viewpoint.

33. In order not to inundate either H-Afro-Am or H-Indiana with the same question from all groups in the class, half the class worked on crafting the question for one discussion forum while the other half worked on the other. Perhaps not surprisingly, the spring class had more success in getting replies from the listserv than the two summer classes.

34. Advertisement for Canal Market in *The Evansville Argus*, 2 February 1940, 2, <<https://newspapers.library.in.gov/cgi-bin/indiana?a=d&d=EA19400202>>.

35. Advertisement for ABC Radio Service in *The Evansville Argus*, 7 February 1942, 4, <<https://newspapers.library.in.gov/cgi-bin/indiana?a=d&d=EA19420207>>.

36. In addition to the high school students, students came from fourteen different majors across campus, ranging from Health Services to Elementary Education to Theatre. Because this course was not required in the major, only two History majors participated in the project.

37. "New Lincoln Gardens, Pride of City, Now 100 Percent Occupied," *The Evansville Argus*, 3 December 1938, 1, <<https://newspapers.library.in.gov/cgi-bin/indiana?a=d&d=EA19381203>>.

38. Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Lana Ruegamer (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 103.

39. Initially, the *Argus* business office opened in the western part of Baptistown at 708 Mulberry, roughly four blocks from Lincoln Gardens, but within months, it had moved to 667 S. Elliot, only two blocks from the housing project.

40. Residential and business directories of Evansville had been published since the 1850s, but the ones published by Bennett and Company of St. Louis first appeared in the 1880s and continued to be published annually into the 1960s.

41. Students also could access copies at the Willard Library, Indiana’s oldest public library with strong local history resources; the Evansville Public Library’s Indiana Collection at the Central Library; and the Vanderburgh County Assessor’s Office.

42. Advertisement for Lincoln Eat Shop in *The Evansville Argus*, 28 January 1939, 2, <<https://newspapers.library.in.gov/cgi-bin/indiana?a=d&d=EA19390128>>.

43. In hindsight, there are several ways that this form can be improved. The “Name of Business” and “Business Owner(s)” fields really need to be the first two fields. Having the “Address” field first became very confusing because so many addresses housed multiple businesses over the time frame of the project. This meant that many forms started with identical address information, making it difficult to limit duplicates over the life of the project. Having put these two fields to the front, it would make more sense to change the “Type of Building” field to a “Type of Business” field, further clarifying that the focus is not on the building at the address, but the types of businesses housed in the buildings.

44. See the map at Evansville African American Museum, “Baptisttown Community Research and Online Exhibits,” <<https://evansvilleaamuseum.wordpress.com/baptisttown-community-research-and-online-exhibits/baptisttown-community-research/>>.

45. Examples of what the students came up with may be found at the EAAM website. See <<https://evansvilleaamuseum.wordpress.com/baptisttown-community-research-and-online-exhibits/baptisttown-community-research/>>.

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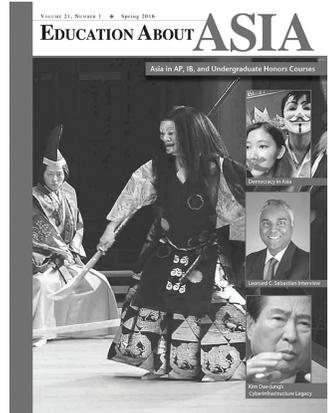


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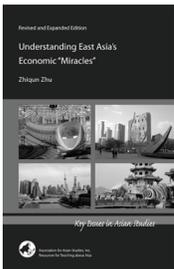
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