



WHAT HAPPENED TO LINCOLN HEIGHTS?

The Destruction of a Black Suburb



Did Engineers Help Fuel Systemic Racism?

in 1947, this village, called Lincoln Heights, was the first primarily black self-governing community north of the Mason-Dixon line. (Today, the city has one of the highest concentrations of African American residents in the state of Ohio—according to the Census, 95.5 percent.)

A Thriving Metropolis

- Lincoln Heights thrived for a while, producing poet Nikki Giovanni, songwriters the Isley Brothers (who wrote “Twist and Shout”). Hundreds of residents worked at the nearby Wright Aeronautical Plant, manufacturing the B-29 bomber, and at a chemical plant a few blocks away, putting away money to improve their homes and secure their places in the black middle class. So successful was Lincoln Heights in its early days that New York’s governor, Thomas E. Dewey, invited prominent officials to New York City for a ticker-tape parade to honor the village as one of the only self-governing African American communities in the nation





What Happened?

But today, Lincoln Heights is struggling. Its median household income of \$25,568 is less than half that of Blue Ash, a nearby majority-white suburb. About 16 percent of residents are unemployed, and one-third of families earn below the poverty level. They have no fire or police force.

The Color of Law

- Lincoln Heights first tried to incorporate in 1939. But the County, working with engineers redrew county lines, and allowed the almost uninhabited Woodlawn, a white town to incorporate. Shortly after they redrew the site of where the Wright Aeronautical plant sat, so that it ended up in the unincorporated Evendale (Where today's GE Plant sits).
- The Courts rejected the lawsuit that the citizens of Lincoln Heights filed.



**Be brave
enough to
start a
conversation
that matters.**

YOUR CHALLENGE

- Understanding how our roles played into every single American city becoming segregated along racial lines. And understanding that it is the deliberate product of “systemic and forceful racism”

