

Unfair Housing in Louisville

A Legacy Project

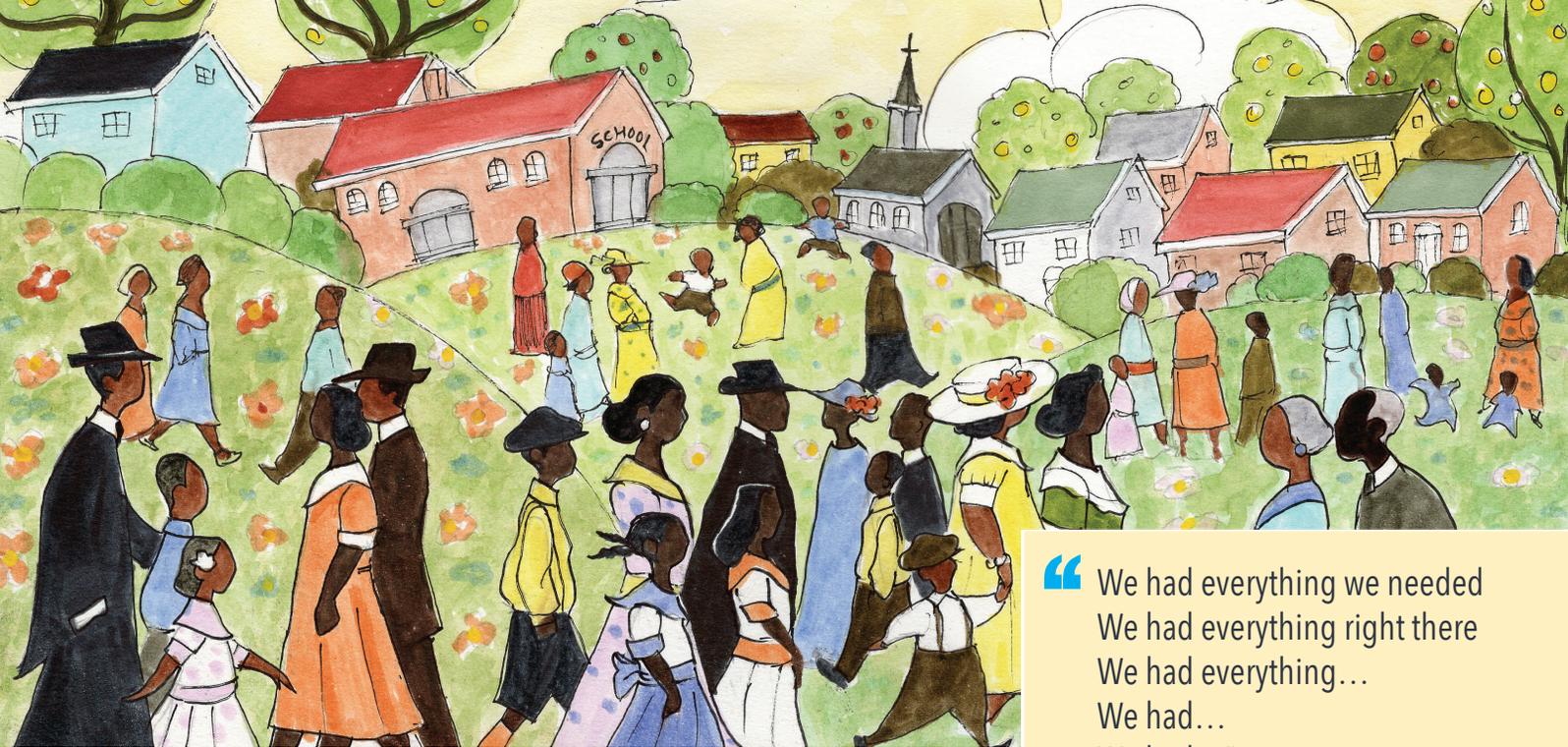
“PARKLAND”

“VIRGINIA AVENUE”

“WALNUT ST.”

“RUSSELL”

“LITTLE AFRICA”



“ We had everything we needed
We had everything right there
We had everything...
We had...
We had...”

Healthy, Wholesome Villages

Residents described West End neighborhoods in Louisville such as Parkland and Russell as “healthy, wholesome villages” before urban renewal and the 28th & Greenwood riot took place. They described neighborhoods that were safe and nurturing toward family life and school success. The downside of this period was the sense of danger tied to crossing racial boundaries.

“We had rocks thrown at our house once we moved in”

“Crossing through white neighborhoods was dangerous”

Urban Renewal, Open Housing, and the Break

Urban renewal was described by residents as a “purposeful design” that disrupted the prosperity dreams of Black families. Residents recalled numerous Black businesses along Walnut St. closing down as a result of urban renewal. This experience was interconnected with the open housing movement led by concerned residents, such as the Black Six, and headed by A.D. King (brother of Martin Luther King, Jr.) and Georgia Davis Powers. The mixed success of open housing combined with steady decline in West End neighborhoods sparked the departure of homeowners and a rise in renting households.

“Urban Renewal equals Black Folks removal”

“ECONOMIC DISRUPTION BY DESIGN...”



The Black Six was a group that protested against housing discrimination.

THE WADES AND THE SHIVELY EXPERIENCE

The Wade family was assisted by a white couple, Carl and Ann Braden, to buy a home in Shively, but they had their house bombed and were forced to move out. As a consequence, “they lost approximately \$100,000 in household wealth, given current differences between West End and Shively home values.”

**“THIS IS YOUR PLACE” WAS ENFORCED, THEREFORE,
THE FIGHT FOR OPEN HOUSING WAS INITIATED**

“RESISTANCE CREATES PRIDE.”

OWNERSHIP BY OUTSIDERS

A common thread across time periods is the ownership conundrum. In the ‘healthy, wholesome villages’ period the homes were owned by the Black families living there, but businesses were a different story. After the turmoil of urban renewal, the open housing protests and the 28th and Greenwood riot, businesses moved away. Soon after, a large number of homeowners either moved away or passed on, meaning that residents lacked both a commercial and residential stake in their neighborhoods. There continues to be tension between absentee landlords renting properties and homeowners in West End neighborhoods.

Consequences of 'the Break'



Residents saw the 1968 28th & Greenwood riot as a point of no return for West End neighborhoods, especially Parkland. Businesses that residents had relied on for years disappeared, forcing them to travel farther for groceries and other necessary household items. In recent times, residents described code and law enforcement inconsistencies that disadvantage Black homeowners and their neighborhoods while giving cover to absentee landlords and criminal elements.

“It used to be so beautiful
Everything disappeared...”

Call to Action

If you can relate to these experiences, we would love to hear from you. We need additional voices to give just due to the many souls who suffered through and continue to suffer from unfair housing practices. You can contact Tony Curtis at tony@metropolitanhousing.org to add your voice to this oral history project.

We send our warmest appreciation to all of the respondents who have shared their stories with us so far. Thank you for your generosity.

We also want to send a special shout-out to Michael Jones for leading the interview process.

“There was never a beginning and there's not going to be an end until everybody has justice.”