Noblesville, Indiana Zones of Significance

Zones of Significance

Houses in New Frontier Zone - 1950s
Chamber of Commerce brochure - 1954

William A. Wainwright farm in Gentleman Farmers
"Noblesville Through a Camera" - 1896

Federal Hill landmark Riverview Hospital - 1950s
Hospital Foundation booklet

North side of Central Square - 1910s
Roberts Collection

1850s house in Pioneer Homestead
David Heighway

Leonard Wild Home in Johnstown - 1880s
Roberts Collection
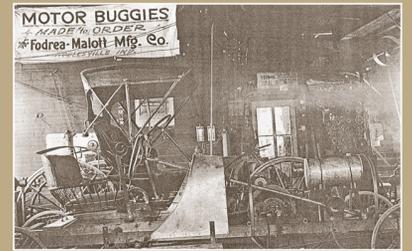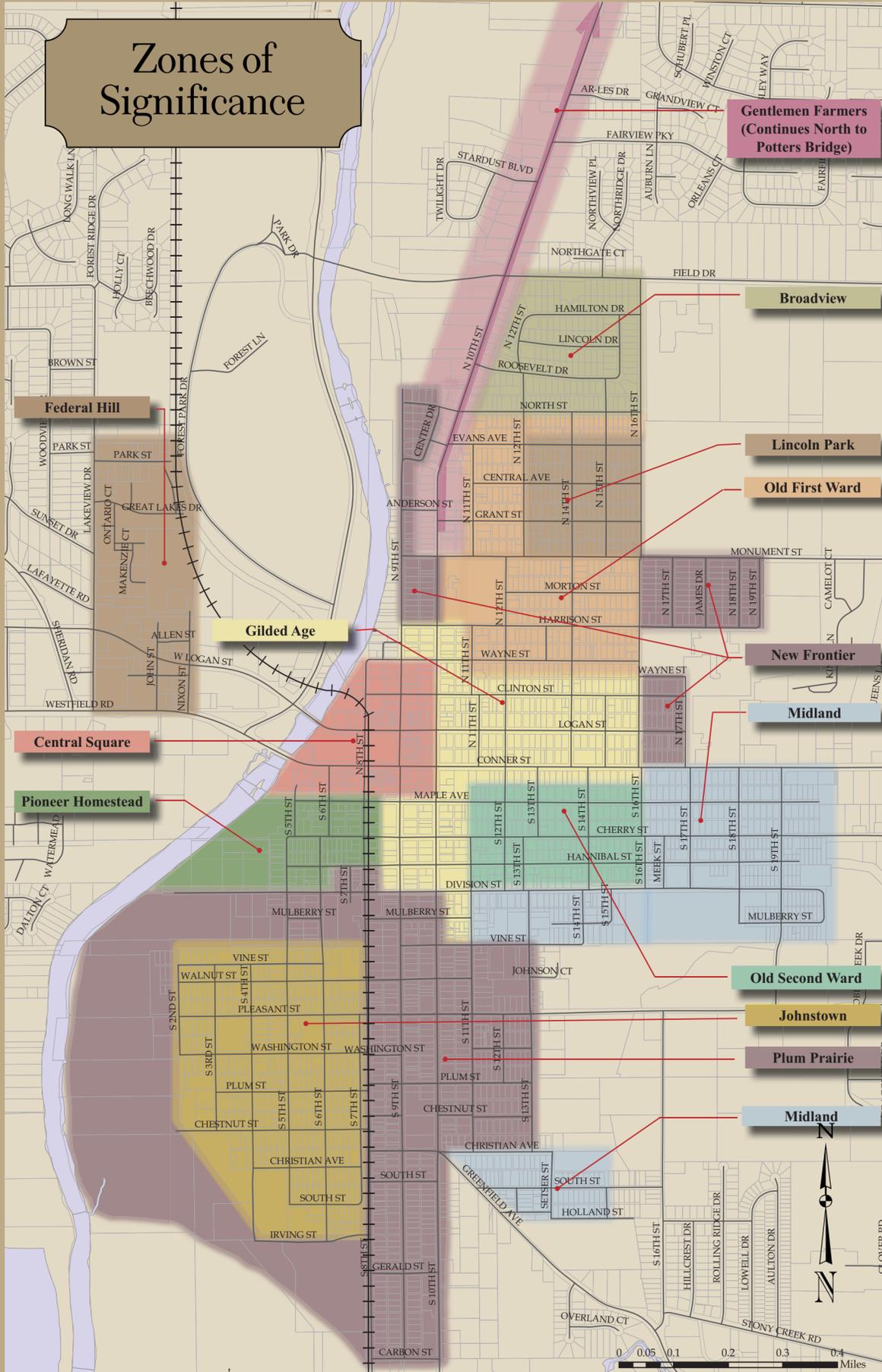
Fodrea-Malott auto shop in Lincoln Park - 1909
Horseless Carriage Gazette

First Ward School in Old First Ward - 1896
"Noblesville Through a Camera"
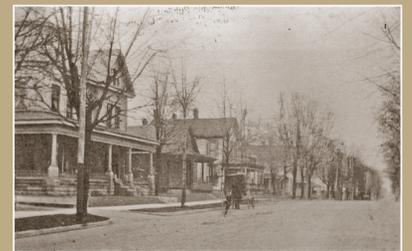
Conner Street in Gilded Age Zone - 1890s
Roberts Collection

Baseball team from Old Second Ward - 1908
Hamilton County Historical Society

Model Mill company truck in Plum Prairie - 1910s
Roberts Collection
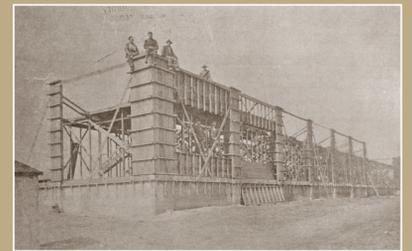
Burdick Tire plant construction in Midland - 1919
Roberts Collection

Map labels: Gentlemen Farmers (Continues North to Potters Bridge), Broadview, Lincoln Park, Old First Ward, New Frontier, Midland, Old Second Ward, Johnstown, Plum Prairie, Midland, Federal Hill, Gilded Age, Central Square, Pioneer Homestead

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CENTRAL SQUARE – center of the original plat, which was bordered by the river on the west, Harrison Street on the north, 12th Street on the east and Cherry Street on the south. None of these streets had names at that time. The area was planned by Conner and Polk to be the central business district and the first construction in town occurred here. The buildings now in the area were built largely in the 1860s-1890s. The area has been seriously altered in the last 30 years.

PIONEER HOMESTEAD – many of the town's founding fathers built their homes in this area. Several houses still exist that were probably constructed in the 1850s-1860s. The area includes Riverside Cemetery, the first town cemetery, which was originally platted to be a residential or business area.

FEDERAL HILL – first platted in the 1870s, sections of it went by the names of West Noblesville and Garversville. The area got its overall name from the house that originally sat on the site of today's Riverview Hospital.

PLUM PRAIRIE – named for the wild plum trees that grew in the bottom land. The land was originally a series of small farms that centered on Polk Street (8th St.), the main road into town. The area changed with the addition of the north-south railroad in 1851, the east-west railroad in 1877, and the discovery of gas in 1887. It became the industrial core of the town. Much of the construction is from the 1870s onward. This area encompasses most of the old 3rd Ward.

JOHNSTOWN – originally William Conner's farm, it was bought by Leonard Wild and subdivided around 1870. It was unsuccessful until the gas boom created a need for affordable worker housing near the factories. Most of the construction is from the 1890s. The nickname came from the frequent flooding that occurred. This was where the majority of the African American community was primarily located.

LINCOLN PARK – a distinct addition to the First Ward that was created in the 1890s. Most of the construction dates from the 1890s-1910s. In 1909, the Fodrea-Malott Automobile Company was run from a carriage house at 15th and Grant Streets.

OLD FIRST WARD – this was focused around the land for the first Hamilton County Fairgrounds, which became the site of the First Ward School and, later, North Elementary School. Like the old Second Ward, it consisted of middle-class/mixed housing that was built in the 1870s-1900s.

GILDED AGE – with the growth of the south-western industrial district, prosperous city residents began moving to this area. South 10th Street ended below Greenfield Avenue, so there was less traffic than on 8th Street. The primary growth occurred in the 1870s-1920s. Most of the more ornate homes in the town are in this area and were built during the gas boom. The high school was located on Conner Street in the 1890s.

OLD SECOND WARD – this is actually a subsection of the Second Ward and consisted of middle-class/mixed housing that was built in the 1870s-1900s. Many of the players for the town's early baseball teams, such as James "Scooper" Barnes and Clarence Wyant, lived in this area.

GENTLEMEN FARMERS – the large homes in this area were built in the 1880s-1890s as country homes for successful local businessmen. The farms, while prosperous, were usually not the primary source of income for the family. One of the largest natural gas wells in central Indiana was drilled here in 1887. It was nicknamed the "Wainwright Wonder."

MIDLAND – Burdick Tire moved its factory next to the Midland Railroad in 1919. The tire factory went through several owners and was finally bought by Firestone in 1936. Housing for the workers started to be built in the 1920s, when the Hare and Southeastern Additions were platted. The 1930's Noblesville Airport was near this area, on the site of the present county fairgrounds.

NEW FRONTIER & BROADVIEW MANOR – these houses were built in the 1940s-1950s post-World War II construction boom. Broadview Manor Addition had been created by 1947. It was in this time period that Noblesville was undergoing its first real growth in population since 1900.

Wild Opera House: Constructed 1895, demolished 1959

There have been discussions about historic preservation in Noblesville since the 1870s. However, most of the successful preservation projects have occurred since the creation of the Hamilton County Historical Society in the 1960s and the Noblesville Preservation Alliance in the 1980s. The city presently has eight buildings and four historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Zones of Significance were created as a way of establishing what resources were available for historic preservation. They are meant to be a tool for education and have no legal meaning with regard to historic districts. The Zones were established according to the general age and style of the buildings within them. Most follow a natural pattern of community growth.

It is hoped that city residents will view the Zones as a starting point for creating historic districts of their own. If the homeowners want to keep the historic tone of their neighborhood, the Zones will help them identify what time period the buildings should generally reflect. In the end, the goal of this project is to encourage more involvement in historic preservation.

Craig house: Constructed 1893, moved and preserved 1988

The Noblesville Historic Preservation Commission was established in 2004 by an act of the Noblesville City Common Council. It is concerned with elements of development, redevelopment, rehabilitation, and historic preservation that affect visual quality in a historic district including landscapes and streetscapes of historic importance. The Commission conducts surveys and community education programs to encourage the adoption of historic districts. When a group of property owners establish a historic preservation district and agree on guidelines, the Commission presents their petition to the City Common Council and, upon approval by the Council, enforces the guidelines and encourages the retaining of the historic tone of the neighborhood.

The purpose of establishing historic districts is to safeguard the heritage of the city and county by preserving areas, which reflect elements of its cultural, social, spiritual, economic, political, engineering, archeological, and architectural history. By preserving these areas, it is an attempt to improve property values, to strengthen the local economy, and foster civic beauty and community pride.

When William Conner and Josiah Polk platted the town of Noblesville in 1823, they probably had little idea that it would grow in the way it has. Areas that were planned for business became housing, (and even cemeteries). Farms that were then beyond the city limits became a part of downtown. Factories brought prosperity into the community, but also forced demographic shifts. New roads and bridges altered the flow of traffic, turning quiet neighborhoods into major thoroughfares.

Looking at Noblesville today, a person can often see how these changes flowed back and forth. With some knowledge about the historic eras and building styles, patterns become apparent. Federal and Greek Revival buildings are in the oldest sections of town – particularly along 8th Street, which was the main road in town for Noblesville's first century. Queen Anne and Italianate style homes grandly line streets like Conner and Logan, where they were built by citizens made wealthy by the discovery of natural gas in 1887. The "outskirts" of the central city have the newer homes – built for factory workers at the turn of the century or as a part of the post-World War II housing boom.

As population and social activity has increased through the years, the city has grown outward from its central core. Despite a drop during the first half of the 20th century, the city population in 2000 had grown to be almost equal to the population of the entire county in 1900. This growth, and the socio-economic changes that it brought, have created a map of Noblesville that is as clear as anything drawn by a surveyor.

1870's – 1900's
Old Second Ward
MAPLE AVE
S 6TH ST

Zones of Significance

NOBLESVILLE · INDIANA

NOBLESVILLE TIMELINE

1802	Arrival of William Conner in area
1818	Treaty of St. Mary's – Delaware Indians leave
	First settlers – Horseshoe Prairie
1820	State capitol chosen at meeting in Conner's house
1823	State legislature petitioned to become county, approved
	Noblesville platted
	First regular mail delivery
	First major flood
	First brick house – William Conner's
1824	Noblesville becomes county seat
	First courthouse constructed
1826	Central Canal approved, part of Internal Improvement Act
	Roads surveyed as part of internal improvements
	Settlers begin arriving and buying land
1830	First census – 1,757 people in county
	Second courthouse constructed
	First burial in Riverside Cemetery
1836	First newspaper in the county, called The Newspaper, published
1837	Third courthouse constructed
	Massive financial depression hits United States
	Banks fail, Indiana goes bankrupt, canal and road projects fail
1840	Census: 9,855 people in county
1850	Census: 664 in Noblesville city limits (12,684 county)
1850	Cholera epidemic in Noblesville
1851	Incorporation as town
	First railroad in county completed to Noblesville
	Nancy Elliot, first African American born in Noblesville
1852	First agricultural fair
1860	Census: 1,115 people in city (17,310 county)
1861	Civil War begins
	John Evans takes handcar to Indianapolis to volunteer
1862	AME Church established in Noblesville
1864	Attempted pro-confederate rally ends in riot
1865	War ends – 277 known dead from county
1868	First baseball team organized
	Noblesville Civil War monument dedicated
1870	Census: 1,435 in city (20,882 county)
1870	Josiah Durfee builds new shop and begins constructing bridges in county
1871	Hook and ladder company formed in Noblesville
1872	Local African Americans hold huge political rally on Courthouse Square
1876	Sheriff's residence and jail constructed
1877	Railroad from Anderson (Midland) reaches Noblesville
1879	Fourth and present courthouse constructed
1880	Census: 2,221 in city (24,801 county)
1880	John Hoard elected Constable
	1st African American law enforcement officer in Noblesville
1883	Newspaper goes on crusade against houses of ill repute
1886	Midland Railroad completed to western county border
1887	Noblesville incorporates into city, elects mayor
	Natural gas found in Hamilton County, part of statewide boom
	"Wainwright Wonder" was possibly largest well in Indiana
1890	Census: 3,054 in city (26,213 county)
1891	Electric company organized in Noblesville
	Mayor James Worth Smith paves Noblesville with brick
	American Strawboard Company begun in Noblesville
	People begin moving into "Johnstown"
1892	Marmon family creates Model Mill in Noblesville
1893	Noblesville Foundry & Machine Co. started (casting plant)
	Craig house constructed on Conner Street
1895	Wild Opera House constructed
1898	William McKinley speaks in Noblesville, Spanish-American War
1899	Home Telephone Company started
1900	Census: 4,792 in city (29,914 county)
	Gas supplies begin to fail
1902	Teddy Roosevelt speaks in Noblesville
1903	Interurban begins running
1908	Failed hydroelectric dam project north of Noblesville
	Baseball player put on trial for playing baseball on Sunday
1909	Harrell Hospital built in Noblesville
	Fodrea-Malott Co. builds Beetle Flyer – only auto built in HC
1910	Census: 5,073 in city (27,026 county)
1913	Massive flood over entire state, severe in Hamilton County
	Noblesville builds Carnegie Library
	William E. Longley of Noblesville appointed first state Fire Marshal
	Much of Sheridan and Carmel destroyed in fires
1917	World War I
1918	War ends – 31 known dead from county
1919	Burdick Tire and Rubber Co. starts factory in Noblesville
1920	Census: 4,758 in city (24,222 county)
1920	Franklin Roosevelt visits Noblesville as VP candidate
1922	Successful hydroelectric plant built at Riverwood
	Midland Railroad ceases passenger services
1923	Hamilton County centennial celebration
	Ku Klux Klan rally in Noblesville
1925	Trial of D. C. Stephenson – found guilty, end of Klan in Indiana
1927	Forest Park created
1930	Census: 4,811 in city (23,444 county)
1932	Bonus Marchers camp at Forest Park
	Nickel Plate railroad ceases passenger service
1936	Lucky Teter does stunt show on Courthouse Square
	Firestone takes over Burdick Tire plant
1937	Severe flood
	Rural electric brought to county
1938	Interurban ceases running
1940	Census: 5,575 in city (24,614 county)
1941	America enters WW II
	Firestone makes tank treads for war effort
1945	War ends - 87 known dead from county
1948	Harry Truman gives speech in Noblesville during whistle-stop tour
1950	Census 6,567 in city (28,491 county)
1950	New coal-fired power plant built at Riverwood
	Korean War begins
1953	Korean War ends – 10 known dead from county
1956	Morse Reservoir completed
1957	Highway 37 bypass (present 37) finished
1959	Wild Opera House torn down by Noblesville Parking Commission
1960	Census: 7,664 in city (40,132 county)
1962	Highway 69 nearing completion
1963	Creation of Hamilton County Historical Society
1964	School consolidation
1968	1st African American elected to city council, Murphy White
1970	Census: 7,548 in city (54,532 county)
1970s	Morse Reservoir opened for housing
1973	Vietnam War ends – 17 known dead from county
1979	Old jail acquired by Historical Society for museum
1980	Census: 12,253 in city (82,027 county)
1987	Noblesville Preservation Alliance formed
1988	Craig house moved
1990	Census: 17,655 in city (108,936 county)
1993	Courthouse renovated
2000	Census: 28,590 in city (182,740 county)
2004	Noblesville Historic Preservation Commission created
2005	Special census: 39,350 in city
2006	City Hall renovated and expanded
	Named top 10 cities to Live and Raise Your Family in US
2007	Ranked by Business Week top 25 most affordable suburbs in US
2008	Named Indiana Community of the Year by Indiana Chamber of Commerce.
	Named Preserve America community by First Lady Laura Bush
	Hamilton County named Best Place to Raise a Family in US, by Forbes magazine.
	Hamilton County named 25th fastest growing county in US, Census Bureau

Southwestern Noblesville "Johnstown" 1902