MAPLETON FALL CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD
Indianapolis, Indiana

timeline 1843 - 1995
1843 Methodist class begins meeting at log cabin of Delanson Slavson, in the community known as Sugar Grove.

1850 Sugar Grove community applies for post office which is granted under the name of Mapleton.

1855 In August, the twenty-eight member Methodist class formally organizes Sugar Grove Methodist Episcopal Church with a full-time minister. A frame building is constructed soon after at Illinois St. and Maple Rd. (now known as 38th St.).

1860 Indianapolis St. railway extends up Illinois St. to Crown Hill Cemetery.

1870 Mapleton serves as a streetcar stop, with the turnaround west of the intersection at Maple Rd. and Illinois St. Commercial development appears in the area, while farms and small family residences occupy the corridor between Crown Hill and Meridian St.

1871 Mapleton town plat is recorded in September.

1883 Mapleton School No. 43 is founded.

1884 Mapleton population is roughly 300. The settlement is providing a resting place for motorists between Broad Ripple and Indianapolis.

1890 As public transportation improves, developers subdivide the area now known as Meridian Park. Affluent city-dwellers established summer houses further north on Meridian St.

1891 State Fairgrounds move to a 214-acre tract of land at Fall Creek Pkwy. and 38th St.

1900 Fall Creek Parkway, the neighborhood's eastern boundary, created as a scenic boulevard. Affluent residents with automobiles have access to the city via bridges spanning Fall Creek at Illinois St., Central Ave., and Meridian St. The College Ave. bridge will be built in 1905, the 30th St. in 1906, and the Capitol Ave. in 1911.

Developers build parks at Fairview Ter. and Broad Ripple Ave. to attract weekend visitors through the area, successfully enticing many to buy homes there. Older residents of Mapleton view these recent residents as “a new type of people.”

As business and commercial interests move into the old family homes along Meridian St. south of 16th St., many upper-middle-class residents move north into the Mapleton-Fall Creek area, seeking escape from an encroaching city.

In June, Sugar Grove Methodist Church dedicates a new, larger, frame building at Illinois and 38th streets and renames itself Mapleton Methodist Episcopal Church.

1902 Mapleton annexed by city of Indianapolis.

1905 Indianapolis annexes Meridian St. north of 38th St. to Broad Ripple Ave.

1907 Protestant Episcopal Church congregation purchases a lot at 30th and Pennsylvania streets to serve the population north of Fall Creek Pkwy.

1910 Indianapolis Park Department establishes a 6.9 acre park at 30th St. and Fall Creek Pkwy.

1913 Charles W. Fairbanks, vice-president of the United States, builds a mansion at 30th and Meridian streets.

The Meridian St. corridor between Fall Creek Pkwy. and 38th St. becomes “the” place to live in the city as wealthy families locate there. By 1915, 78 large single-family dwellings line Meridian St. between Fall Creek Pkwy. and Maple Rd., as well as luxury apartment buildings such as the Buckingham and Hudson Arms.

Flooding badly damage the Meridian St. and Illinois St. bridges; they will be replaced in 1917.
Maple Rd. is widened and surfaced, further encouraging residential development along its length. Mapleton Methodist church, forced to move 100 yards back from the street, replaces the building on a new basement foundation.

1914 Indianapolis plumbing and sewage lines are extended to the neighborhood.

1915 IPS School No. 66 is built.
Tabernacle Presbyterian Church moves into a temporary frame chapel at 34th St. and Central Ave.
Governor’s residence is established at 101 W 27th St. in a Tudor Revival style house.
The parish of Church of the Advent (later known as Trinity Episcopal) is established in April; the congregation meets at 33rd and Meridian streets, the site of a former Baptist mission.
The Lutheran congregation that will become Our Redeemer Lutheran Church begins meeting at the Garrick Theater (30th and Illinois streets).

1920 St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church organizes with 200 families and locates at 42nd and Ruckle streets, serving much of the Mapleton-Fall Creek neighborhood.
Meridian St. is paved and designated US Highway 31, bringing increased traffic through the neighborhood to settlements now sprawling far north.
Area laymen receive approval from the bishop to organize a new Methodist congregation to serve the growing northern population.
The Third Christian Scientist Church is founded; the congregation meets in a temporary structure at 34th St. and Washington Blvd. until the stone sanctuary is finished.

1921 Mapleton Methodist Church and the new Methodist congregation merge and become North Methodist; the congregation purchases land at 38th and Meridian streets and begins plans for construction of a new sanctuary.
In October, IPS School No. 76 opens in a temporary structure at 30th St. and Fall Creek Pkwy.

1922 In June Our Redeemer Lutheran Church dedicates its building at Fairfield and Park avenues.

1923 Indianapolis Life Insurance Company purchases Fairbanks mansion, signaling the extension of business up Meridian St. and into the neighborhood. Affluent residents along Meridian St. begin to fear this growth. The Meridian Street Association proposes to preserve aesthetic values of the area.
The present sanctuary building of Tabernacle Presbyterian is dedicated.
IPS School No. 76 PTA organizes and subsequently provides aid to needy students and families in the area.

1925 Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation acquires what is now known as McCord Park at 3600 Watson Rd., as well as Watson Road Bird Preserve at Guilford Ave. and Watson Rd.

1927 Marott Hotel opens at Meridian St. and Fall Creek Pkwy.
Long-time residents hold the first meeting of the Old Mapleton Association in September. The reunion meets at North Methodist, beginning a tradition which continues through the 1970s.

Broadway Methodist Church ca. 1950

Broadway Methodist dedicates its new building at Fall Creek Pkwy. and Broadway St. in October. The gothic style building includes classrooms, social hall, and kitchen to serve a congregation of 1500.

1928 Shortridge High School moves to a new location at 34th and Meridian streets.
The International Typographical Union purchases the former VanCamp mansion, at 28th and Meridian streets, for its headquarters.

1929 In October, Tabernacle Presbyterian dedicates a new three-story educational, recreational, and chapel building.
The former Ruth home, 3024 N. Meridian St., becomes a branch library.
The Dorchester Apartments are built at 3720 N. Pennsylvania St.

1930 All previously undeveloped areas of the neighborhood are subdivided, and the Mapleton-Fall Creek neighborhood is now totally surrounded by other urban neighborhood developments.
Shortridge PTA sponsors scholarships for needy students; IPS School No. 76 sponsors annual Spring Field Day along Fall Creek Parkway. IPS School No. 60 hosts music appreciation classes for entire school system as well as adult education classes.
The shopping center built at 38th St. and College Ave. boasts a drugstore and grocery.

The total population is estimated at 25,376 with 88.84 percent European-American and 11.14 percent African-American.

By 1930, 27 luxury apartment buildings have been constructed between 30th and 38th streets.

1931 North Methodist completes a Gothic sanctuary and social building (which includes an assembly room, dining hall, and kitchen); the dedication includes week-long activities. The former church, a wooden structure next door, is used as a church school as late as 1950.

1934 The last interurban train through the area ceases service, and public transportation from the neighborhood to downtown is replaced by trackless trolleys (electric buses). Increasingly, residents rely on automobiles.

1940 The neighborhood total population is estimated to be 25,295. European-Americans account for 86.04 percent of the population, and African-American increased slightly to 13.95 percent.

With the outbreak of WWII, most neighborhood institutions, especially schools, create war service committees which supervise bond and war stamp sales, scrap drives, and other war relief efforts.

1942 Tabernacle Presbyterian purchases tract of land at 34th St. and Washington Blvd. adjacent to the church for a playground/recreation field. Government survey rates the church recreation program as one of 5 best of its kind in the nation.

1944 As part of war support, Shortridge students buy $1.3 million worth of war bonds, reportedly the highest amount raised by a high school nationally.

1945 The Governor's residence is relocated north of the neighborhood, to 4343 Meridian St.

Religious education classes begin in neighborhood schools.

1946 The Children's Museum locates in a mansion at 3010 N. Meridian St.

After WWII, white and affluent residents begin moving out of the neighborhood to the townships and suburbs.

1948 Tabernacle Presbyterian inaugurates an intramural athletics program—an expansion of previous varsity recreation program served by a paid director.

1949 State desegregation law is passed; Shortridge High School enrolls African-American students for first time.

1950 Total population for the neighborhood peaks at 25,584 and shows growth of 1.13 percent. The makeup of the area is 82.04 percent European-American and 17.82 percent African-American.

Businesses continue to filter into area along the neighborhood's edges—some converting older homes along Meridian St. and others building new facilities on 38th St.

Baby boom results in overly-crowded schools—IPS School No. 76 overflow classes meet at Broadway Methodist Church until 1963.

As people move to the suburbs, more residences become rental properties.

1951 North Methodist completes an education building in February, which includes classrooms and recreational facilities.

First Fall Festival, hosted by the Mapleton business association, attracts 10,000 participants; it includes rides, concessions, and prizes. Proceeds go to scholarships and school equipment.

1952 In December, the newly-renamed Advent Episcopal—now Trinity Episcopal—completes a new building in 13th century English Gothic architectural style.

Watson Road Park Association incorporates.

Tabernacle Presbyterian purchases additional property for the recreation field, demolishing former Sigma Kappa Sorority headquarters.

Mayor Alex Clark attends the Fall Festival to dedicate 35-car "off-street" parking lot.

1953 Broadway Methodist builds a new addition to include a youth center, chapel, and parlor. Membership has expanded from 1500 to 3200 in past five years.

African-Americans equal 15 percent of the student body at Shortridge.

1954 Shortridge radio station, WIAN, begins broadcasting in October. Initially it can only be heard within the few blocks surrounding the school.

1955 Purdue University Extension (later IUPUI) purchases former Standard Oil complex across from State Fairgrounds and begins offering science and technology courses.
1956  Memorial Clinic, precursor to Winona Memorial Hospital, opens the city's first private, for-profit hospital at 3202 N. Meridian St.

Broadway inaugurates the city's first dial-a-prayer program.

1957  A Newsweek and Time survey rate Shortridge as one of the top 36 high schools in the nation.

1959  Shortridge PTA holds a public meeting to discuss the "Shortridge problem," recommending that IPS redraw the school attendance boundaries so that white attendance does not drop below 50 percent.

The Children's Museum begins the junior docents program involving neighborhood children in the museum's activities.

1960  In the fall, Trinity Episcopal sponsors St. Richard's School. At first the private day school offers only a preschool, but eventually expands to 6th grade, with an enrollment of 150 students.

The total population of 25,055 shows a drop of 2.07 percent. The neighborhood is made up of 61.85 percent European-Americans and 37.99 percent African-Americans.

1961  Broadway Methodist community service program expands into Neighborhood Ministries, employing a full-time coordinator; broader programming includes a food pantry, thrift shop, and health services.

1962  Mapleton/Fall Creek Neighborhood Association is founded, encouraging integration and resistance to "white flight."

1964  Students form a Human Relations Council, and parents and alumni organize campaign to "Save Shortridge."

200 Shortridge students march to IPS school board meeting in September to support the school and integrated education.

The Children's Museum holds its first haunted house in October, with attendance at 26,000 guests.

1965  IPS Board votes to implement the "Shortridge Plan" making Shortridge an "academic" school with entrance requirements. It is implemented the following year with much disapproval—mostly from outside the immediate community.

Broadway Methodist completes another addition—education and administration buildings.

The former Van Camp mansion is destroyed and replaced by a Stouffer's Hotel.

1966  Having decided to stay in the neighborhood instead of moving to a northern suburban location, Our Redeemer Lutheran dedicates an education building.

Winona Memorial Hospital greatly expands its facilities at its new location at 3232 N. Meridian St.

1967  North Methodist church establishes a legal clinic.

Due to overcrowding, IPS School No. 76 boundaries are redrawn. Children will be sent to Schools No. 110, No. 56, and No. 60.

In April, Mapleton-Fall Creek Neighborhood Improvement Program inaugurates and the city executes the Concentrated Code Enforcement Program, a plan to bring infrastructure and housing in the area up to building and health codes. Program continues until 1970 and is the first in city to be implemented.

1968  Lilly Endowment Inc. sponsors a park at 29th and Talbott streets.

City officials report the Code Enforcement Program approved 57 home improvement grants or loans and several capital improvements projects in the first year.

From March through August city officials conduct a neighborhood study for a long-range improvement plan.

Broadway Methodist church opens a medical clinic under Marion County Health and Hospital Corp. auspices, and offers a variety of services including well-baby care and health education.

Two percent of the neighborhood residents live in apartment buildings: the Buckingham, Admiral, Commodore, and Balmoral.

1969  Three-year pilot neighborhood improvement program is implemented by city planners.

Trinity Episcopal dedicates a new addition in March.

1970  Total population is estimated at 23,043 showing a continued decline for the neighborhood. European-Americans make up 20.53 percent of the population while African-Americans represent 79.27 percent.

Problems with men loitering on corners reported along College Ave. between 34th St. and Fairfield Ave.

IPS Board votes to return Shortridge to a comprehensive high school status. African-Americans comprise 89 percent of student body.

Mid-North Church Council organizes with 3 members: North United Methodist, Our Redeemer Lutheran, and Tabernacle Presbyterian.

1971  MFCNA is incorporated.

Mid-North Council begins sponsoring "Family School of Christian Living," a series of educational programs that will last for several years.

Butler Tarkington Community Center is created to provide neighborhood youth programs, including services to young people from Mapleton-Fall Creek.

1972  Mapleton-Fall Creek Parent/Child Center opens in March.

In the Fall, Lilly Endowment Inc. moves its offices to 2801 N. Meridian St.

Broadway begins a year-long celebration of its 100th anniversary.

IPS School No. 48 is converted into an open concept school, named Louis B. Russell Jr. School.

The Polis Center / Mapleton-Fall Creek Timeline
1973 Broadway Methodist joins Mid-North Church Council. Indy Parks acquires Talbott Park from Eli Lilly (1 acre).

1974 The city evaluation of Concentrated Code Enforcement Program finds building deterioration continuing in almost half of the affected structures.

1975 MFCNA reorganizes under the slogan, “Unity in Diversity.” Association sponsors first youth neighborhood summer clean-up using city funds. Hogan Black Sr. oversees the paid youth workers who do odd jobs, assisting the poor and elderly with home maintenance and landscaping.

1976 Unification Church, located at 402-04 E. 38th St., and becomes the five-state regional headquarters.

1978 Shortridge School of Performing Arts opens as a magnet high school option program.

Mid-North Church Council and MFCNA sponsor a year-long series of town meetings involving business people and residents to discuss neighborhood problems.

MFCNA revives the neighborhood fall festival and parade including floats sponsored by area block clubs, local organizations, and city government.

1979 MFCNA sponsors first annual clean block club contest.

1980 Maple Road Development Association receives $41,000 grant for storefront renovation around 38th and Illinois streets. Neighborhood leaders provide input and are to administer the grant themselves, marking a new hands-off policy for the city.

Mid-North Church Council and city government cosponsor a paint-up, fix-up project.

Marriott Hotel is restored into luxury apartments.

The neighborhood total population is estimated to be 19,097 which represents decline of 17.12 percent. The ethnic makeup at this time is 11.19 percent European-American and 88.28 percent African-American.

McDonald’s opens a restaurant at 38th and Illinois streets; as the first national chain in area exemplifying the trend to replace owner-operated shops.

1981 Mapleton-Fall Creek Gazette begins publication as a neighborhood newsletter and eventually expands into a newspaper.

Trinity Episcopal joins Mid-North Church Council.

IPS Board votes in February to close Shortridge High School at the end of the school year, despite protests.

In April, an eight-block area around 38th and Illinois streets is declared the first urban renewal area in city. The city assists in rehab efforts to prevent further decay, but is later challenged by some area property owners and stalled by court proceedings.

School No. 76 is closed in June and sold to business interests. With IPS desegregation decision, all students south of 34th St. are mandatorily bused to township schools.

Butler Tarkin Community Center is renamed the Martin Luther King Jr. Multi-Service Center with an expanded mission to serve the entire north-central area. The facility relocates to 38th and Meridian streets.

1982 Lilly Endowment Inc. funds study of Catholic urban ministry including the Mapleton-Fall Creek area.

First annual North Meridian Street Fair occurs.

Institute of Cultural Affairs organizes “Mid-North Indianapolis Symposium II” in September, with 100 city, business, neighborhood, and religious leaders in attendance; recommendations include housing, elderly, education, employment, crime, and health initiatives.

North Methodist inaugurates Shepherd Center, a program for neighborhood seniors.

Residents fight a proposed supermarket expansion to be constructed just north of 38th and Illinois streets.

1983 MFCNA sponsors an all-volunteer medical clinic on Saturday mornings.

Three neighborhood organizations (Mapleton-Fall Creek, Meridian-Kessler, and Watson Road) form the Corridor Coalition to revitalize the commercial area around 38th St. and College Ave.

In August, the City rescinds its urban renewal designation for 38th and Illinois streets, saying the neighborhood can help itself better, but promising not to totally abandon the area.

In December, city planners adopt a new development plan for Mapleton-Fall Creek sub-area—an update of 1969 plan. The report notes potentially historic areas and makes proposals for expanded recreational space and improvement of commercial areas.

Ivy Tech moves to Fall Creek Pkwy and Meridian St. In 1990 it is expanded to include a new technology building at the same site.
1984 Mid-North Church Council sponsors Home Help program, providing home help and medical care for seniors. It is discontinued in 1986 since area hospitals are providing the service.

Maple Road and College Corridor groups unite in March to conduct resident survey of business/shopping.

Trinity Episcopal Church funds study conducted by James Keating of neighborhood housing rehabilitation program.

Residents protest renewal of liquor licenses for two liquor stores claiming the stores hamper efforts to renovate area.

Shortridge re-opens as a middle school with several unique language programs.

1985 College Corridor Coalition successfully attracts new businesses to 38th St. intersection.

Mapleton-Fall Creek Development Corporation (MFCDC) is established by the member churches of the Mid-North Council and the MFCNA with all institutions appointing two board members each.

Mid-North Church Council starts a small scale “Adopt-a-Block” program and a Job Start program.

1986 First MFCDC home rehab completed at 3315 N. Park Ave. in partnership with Community Interfaith Housing Corporation. A second home is finished in 1988 with all work done by volunteers.

St. Joan of Arc Catholic church joins Mid-North Church Council.

MFCNA pays for 2 off-duty police officers to patrol the neighborhood on foot during the summer.

Neighborhood youth rally and festival is held in June at nearby St. Joan of Arc Catholic School.

American Fletcher bank branch opens at College Ave. and 38th St.

1987 First annual Meridian Park Home Tour held in June.

Fairfield Optimist Club formed in December; pledges to work with neighborhood youth.

1988 A.C.T.I.O.N. (Adolescent Care Team In Our Neighborhood) opens at 925 E. 38th St.

The Children’s Museum expands its programs for excelling and at-risk students, focusing on area youth.

Marion County Health Department opens a clinic on West 38th St., providing medical and social services for adolescents.

Accelerated Neighborhood Pilot Revitalization Project inaugurated in March. MFCNA hires Institute of Cultural Affairs (a non-profit research and training group located in the neighborhood) to oversee the project—over next two years 6 paid staff members run a community youth art program, conduct community surveys, rehab a home, conduct training and seminars, and implement a community garden. Community leaders hold a series of neighborhood forums where top issues discussed are youth needs, health, public safety, housing, economic development, and area pride.

MFCDC drafts a 5-year plan to include neighborhood clean-ups, senior home repair and winter weatherization programs, home improvement loan fund, rehab and resale of abandoned homes and rental properties, removal of dilapidated homes, and in-fill construction of new homes. The plan is implemented the following year.

1989 Amid much dissention MFCNA board votes in December to discontinue Accelerated Neighborhood Project work because of rising debts and personality clashes.

MFCDC hires executive director and staff, with offices housed in Our Redeemer Lutheran Church. In addition to government monies, area churches raised $42,000 for the budget; Tabernacle Presbyterian and Trinity Episcopal Churches donate $30,000 for a challenge grant, and North Methodist donates $26,000 for the Richard Blankenbaker Memorial Loan Fund (a subsidy and low interest revolving loan program); Lilly Endowment Inc. grants $110,000 to fund a 20-week apprenticeship program in skilled trades.

MFCDC sponsors first annual Energy Forum, a winterization program for low-income households.

1990 Tabernacle Presbyterian Church starts tutoring program for neighborhood junior and senior high school

Using city funds, MFCDC sponsors the “Handyman Program,” a teen wage-earning, 16-week apprenticeship program that makes repairs to neighborhood homes, and also inaugurates first annual awards dinner.

The Meridian Park area is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Fall Creek Pkwy. between 46th and 21st streets is designated as part of the urban enterprise zone.

Mid-North Church Council and Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana sponsor “Sacred Spaces Tour” in September focusing on Gothic architecture and church social service programs.

Lilly Endowment Inc. supports expansion of the “Adopt-a-Block” program.

Census reports home ownership drops from over 50 percent in 1980 to approximately 32 percent by 1990.

With a continuing decline in growth of 15.34 percent, the total population is estimated at 16,167. European-Americans account for 10.80 percent of the population, and 88.23 percent are African-American.

1991 St. Richard’s School and Trinity Episcopal Church sponsor first annual Medieval Mayfair.
MFCNA moves its offices to Allison Center in October.

1994 IUPUI moves its last program from 38th St. campus.

MFCNA sponsors a pre-school academy for neighborhood children between four and five years-old, meeting Saturday mornings at IPS School No. 48.

The “Silver Liberators,” a seniors group active in the neighborhood for many years, which meets at the MLK center, holds banquet/reunion in June.

First phase of Tarkington Park renovation is completed. The work is mostly done through private donations coordinated by a “friends of the park” group.

MFCDC completes rehabilitation of two more homes in the neighborhood.

Phillips Temple CME joins Mid-North Church Council becoming the sixth member.

Tabernacle Presbyterian launches a legal aid and medical clinic at the Allison Center, 418 E, 34th St.

1996 Henry Cisneros, U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, recognizes the efforts of the Mid-North Church Council in a nationally published essay Higher Ground: Faith Communities and Community Building.

A coalition of religious and community organizations institutes Operation Jericho, consisting of 7 neighborhood parades to celebrate positive aspects of community life.

1997 Operation Jericho establishes a series of weekend summer festivals located on an empty lot at 30th St. and Central, featuring farmer’s markets, arts and crafts, and entertainment.

The MFCNA and six urban neighborhoods sign a memorandum of understanding to cooperate in crime prevention and community development efforts.

1998 Weed and Seed program, intended to “weed” out crime and “seed” community assets extended into Mapleton-Fall Creek.

Residents fight the renewal of “500” liquor license.

MFCNA Comprehensive Youth Group presents “Shatter Faith” in March at Shortridge Middle School; “No Crime Tolerated” rally is held at Antioch Missionary Baptist.

Organized by MFCNA, weekly marches on suspected crack houses begin in April.

1993 Indiana Black Expo purchases headquarters building in the 3100 block of Meridian St.

New Walgreens drugstore opens at 38th St. and College Ave.

MFCDC implements Reclamation I project to assist renters in becoming homeowners; Phillips Temple CME votes to join MFCDC.