

*How to find Marktown: The best way is to start with the internet at [www.marktown.org](http://www.marktown.org) or by contacting Mr. Myers at [pmyers@eastchicago.com](mailto:pmyers@eastchicago.com). Tour maps are available at the Lake County Welcome Center at Kennedy Avenue and I80/94. If you are a bit more adventurous, Marktown is located 1/4 mile north of the Riley Road Exit of Cline Avenue. Group and individual tours are available if scheduled in advance.*

## MARKTOWN: An architectural diamond in the rough

Staff Report

*Industrial housing problems were quite simply a lack of proper and adequate housing for the skilled craftsmen and workers that would be needed not only to build the new steel mill but more importantly the workers and their families who would eventually man the mighty machinery of the steel industry.*

**N**orthwest Indiana has by far one of the most diverse histories of all of Indiana. Born of steel at the beginning of the last century, the cities of East Chicago and Gary would become the Mecca of industry and the buckle on the great Iron Belt of the Calumet Region. In 1913, Chicago industrialist and social reformer Clayton Mark purchased a tract of land on the south shore of Lake Michigan in what was then known as the North Harbor sector of East Chicago. The primary purpose was to build a fully integrated steel mill so that his steel starved Mark Manufacturing Company could have a prime place in the continuous butt weld pipe market, an industry made possible through Mr. Mark's innovations in the industry.

The problem at hand, as detailed in a 1916 report titled "Industrial Housing Problems" was quite simply a lack of proper and adequate housing for the skilled craftsmen and workers that would be needed not only to build the new steel mill but more importantly the workers and their families who would eventually man the mighty machinery of the steel industry. In the prior three years industries throughout the midwest and the nation had experienced a 400-1100% turnover of employees, all of which could be attributed primarily to a lack of quality and affordable housing.

Clayton Mark turned to Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw for the solution to the problem at hand. Mr. Shaw had built Cyrus Mark's Evanston home (father to Clayton) several years earlier and in 1913 was commissioned to design the Mark Estate in Lake Forest, Illinois. While the vast majority of the residential work by Mr. Shaw was for the makers and shakers of industry, Shaw too was of the social reformer mind set having served with Jane Adam's Hull House, the Infant Welfare Society, the Arts and Crafts movement in Chicago and most importantly the Municipal Museum of Chicago, whose purpose it was to find suitable housing solutions for the ever growing industries of the nation.

Mr. Shaw set to work to design a community that would meet the needs of a broad base of workers, most of which were

immigrating to the United States and the Midwest from eastern and western Europe. His plan was set in the English Garden City Model with quaint narrow streets lined with stucco Tudor Revival homes with open front porches looking out over the street so that residents could converse freely with neighbors passing by. The plan also called for a most unique design which eliminated alleys and provided for the dining room windows of one home to overlook the garden of the adjacent property on the next street.

The construction of the homes was begun as the United States entered into World War I. While 30 sections of homes were designed to serve approximately 8,000 workers and their families, only four of the sections were completed, and remarkably are totally intact today. The plan fell short of its goal due primarily to market condition immediately following the end of the war.

Paul Myers, the resident architectural historian and preservationist noted: "What is most unique about the Marktown Historic District is that all of the original 200

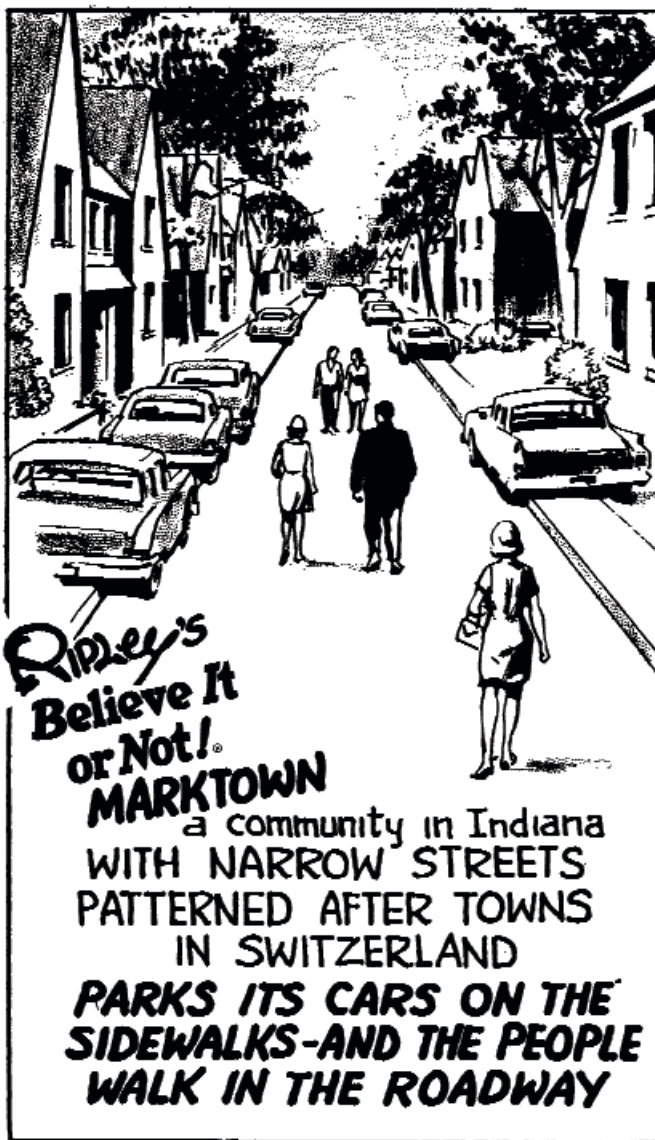
buildings are still standing and are fully restorable. In 1974 when the City of East Chicago placed Marktown on the National Register of Historic Places they not only stopped Cline Avenue from going down what is now Dickey Road and razing approximately one-third of the community, they also began an extensive infrastructure improvement plan that continues to this day.

In 1983 Federal funds were provided to improve and upgrade the 13.5 acre Marktown Parks, giving this tiny enclave of homes more city park per home than any other area of the Calumet Region.

In 1990 plans were set in motion to fully restore and renovate the cast concrete street, sidewalks and lighting to the tune of approximately \$3,000,000.

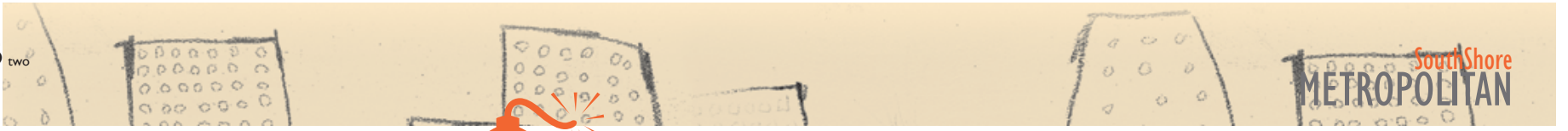
Again in 1999 approximately \$250,000 was invested in the upgrading of the sewage pump station which is critical in keeping the basements dry. Today we are in the process of bidding a 15,000 square foot \$3,000,000 community center which will serve the residents of Marktown both young and old."

So, what is next for this English Garden City Community amidst the mills? For this, we again turn to Mr. Myers. "The city of East Chicago has brought us a long, long way. But unfortunately we are only half way to changing our status from a National Historic District to that of National Historic LAND-MARK. We are currently working on a comprehensive plan to not only bring each of the approximately 240 residential properties up to the current building code requirements, but more importantly to do so within the Department of



10-16-1967





## THE DIASPORA AWARD

**Y**ou have heard of the *Golden Fleece Award* created 20 years ago by former US Senator William Proxmire to focus on waste in the United States Government. And then there is the *Golden Leash Award*, which focuses on members of the United States Congress who do egregious favors for their “cash constituents.”

Of course who can forget the “*Flying Fickle Finger of Fate*” award created by the 1970s television comedy series, “Laugh-In,” which gave awards to the “dumbest news item of the week.” Now, Northwest Indiana has its own award, **The Diaspora Award**, which is to call attention to those who would divide the area and stifle its growth. The noun *Diaspora* was coined in 1881 and has its roots in the etymology of the Greek language dispersion, (from diaspeirein to scatter, from dia- + speirein to sow).

The Miriam-Webster Dictionary defines the word as a : the settling of scattered colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile b : the area outside Palestine settled by Jews c : the Jews living outside Palestine or modern Israel 2 a : the breaking up and scattering of a people : the black Diaspora to northern cities b : people settled far from their ancestral homelands.

For our purpose, the *SouthShore Metropolitan* is drawing from second definition; subset “a” - “the breaking up and scattering of a people” to create the Diaspora Award.

This award will be offered routinely to the person or organization who has contributed to the scattering of people in northwest Indiana, and to the division of hopes and dreams that could have made the area an even better place to live, work, play and worship.

## THE DIASPORA AWARD nomination **4** The Devil.

### “The devil made me do it...!”

Katie Hall, veteran Gary Community School Corporation teacher could be instructing senior students in government while sporting an electronic monitoring device.

Hall, who is a convicted felon and former Gary City Clerk, has asked the city taxpayers to give her \$0 million for cutting her office’s budget and making her break the law.

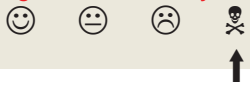
In the meantime, a simple theme for her government classes may be “The devil made me do it.”

Students could learn that the government is responsible for the actions of every felon.

For instance, if the tax burden is too high, rob a store. If you don’t like road construction, slash tires. If a politician offends you , \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank).

What fun you could have and nothing is your fault because you learned in Mrs. Hall’s government class that “the devil made me do it!”

- snatching defeat from the jaws of victory -



MARKTOWN continued

Interior Guidelines for Historic Preservation. If done properly we can not only increase the property values, but actually freeze or lower the property tax in the process.

One of the factors that makes this community so restorable is the fact that it is of solid masonry construction. The buildings in this neighborhood must be considered renewable assets as opposed to disposable housing. The fact that we are only twenty minutes from downtown Chicago is also an asset in the redevelopment of the neighborhood.”

The plan, when completed will not only address what needs to be improved upon from a housing standpoint, but will also address the restoration and renovation of the three original commercial properties and the development of a Steel Museum in the immediate area.

While the plans are ambitious they are long overdue and with the availability of gaming funds and their restriction to be used for brick and mortar projects such as this, they are quite doable.



From the 1974 National Register Nomination:

“We all learn from the past. One way to do this is through books, but a better way is to learn from real objects and places that come down to us relatively intact from another time. Marktown presents a living lesson in history and culture from the pioneer growth period of the Calumet Region. This region, which is America’s industrial heartland, is quite young compared to other great regions of the country. Sometimes in such areas the concern for history is lost. But here there is the opportunity to preserve as a living and useful landmark of genuine architectural and cultural significance for the Calumet Region, the state and the country. The Marktown area is an important cultural resource which should be preserved and as necessary, restored to accurately present the intentions of the original design.”



About Mr. Myers: Paul is the fifth of six generations of his family to have lived in the Marktown Historic District, the first generation of which is believed to have located there between 1918-1920. He serves as the Executive Director of the Howard Van Doren Shaw Society and the President of the Marktown Preservation Society. While his educational background is extensive, he prefers to leave his resume in his desk. He has been instrumental in promoting the neighborhood both from within and without and can often be seen either conducting tours of the community or maintaining properties in the district. It should also be noted that he is a nationally recognized artist working in the area of Japanese Calligraphy known as Shodō and is quite accomplished in the area of custom and hand book binding. A true Renaissance Man for the 21st Century.

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