

AVONDALE: IT TAKES A VILLAGE

EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

Deqah: In the Summer of 1967, racial tensions in America were at a peak.

Vanessa: In July and August of that year, race riots broke out in cities across the U.S., from Newark, New Jersey, to Detroit, Michigan, to Portland, Oregon.

Deqah: But, while few may remember it, it was actually Avondale, the largest black neighborhood in Cincinnati at the time, that helped kick off this summer of violence.

Vanessa: It started when an African American man named Posteal Laskey Jr., was convicted of murdering a white woman.

Deqah: On June 11th, Laskey's cousin, Peter Frakes, decided to picket the arrest with a sign that read: "Cincinnati Guilty—Laskey Innocent!"

Vanessa: Frakes was promptly arrested for "blocking the sidewalk." Which seemed like a pretty preposterous and made-up charge to a lot of people. So Black leaders quickly gathered at the Lincoln Statue on the corner of Reading Road and Rockdale in Cincinnati to protest.

Deqah: The protest soon became a riot that lasted days. Over 1000 people attacked cars, buildings, stores. The Ohio National Guard was called in to patrol Avondale's streets with jeeps and machine guns.

END MUSIC

Vanessa: Over the span of two nights, two people were killed, and over 200 people were arrested. Property damage totalled \$3 million in losses, the equivalent of \$22 million in today's money.

Deqah: The coverage in the news was pretty bleak — in the media's eyes, Avondale was a place of violence and destruction.

Vanessa: Here's a clip from a 1967 documentary about the riots — it's dramatic, dystopian soundtrack and dire language captures how journalists covered this historic event at the time:

Archival Audio—Avondale Riots (1967) from Cincinnati Museum Center Archives:
"...it was the center of the black culture. You know, all of your, uh, your, uh, sororities and fraternities gave their dances out all of your private clubs gave their dances there through the week, mostly Wednesdays, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday night, you know? And, uh, that was the hub of everything."

"Many many words have been written on the causes of the riots that rocked not only Avondale but the nation in the 60s. Overcrowded living conditions. Landlords that don't reside in the community and only come into the neighborhood on rent collection days.

White controlled business in a predominantly black community. Insensitive institutions, disillusionment with programs sponsored by the federal governments, a lack of job opportunities for minority group members. And a feeling of frustration and despair that one experiences when he feels as if he is boxed in with no way out.”

Deqah: But on the ground, the community saw things differently.

[BEAT]

Vanessa: Today, Jan-Michelle Lemon Kearney is a Cincinnati city council woman. In 1967, she was a young girl. Even so she still remembers the riots and recalls that many in her neighborhood welcomed them.

Jan Michele: I know that there were some, some neighbors down the street who, who sat on their front porch and watched. And, I think the idea was like, the people out in the streets are fighting for us, you know, they're fighting for all of us. People had just been through a lot,

Deqah: Even though Cincinnati was technically a Northern city in a Northern state, for African Americans at this time, discrimination was a part of every day life.

Jan Michele: A friend of my mom, um, who was also a teacher with her. She talked about what it was like when she first came to Cincinnati. And she was from Rhode Island. So, you know, a lot of the stuff that happened here, she just was not used to, and she said, 'Oh, you know, I'd go into stores downtown. And you know, one store, black people couldn't try on hats and then you go across the street and you couldn't try on gloves.'

[BEAT]

Jan Michele: She was always good humored about it. She's like, it just got so confusing. I wouldn't try on anything. And of course, the lunch counters and sitting in restaurants, you couldn't do any of that, you know, movie theaters. You had to sit up in the balcony. I mean, one insulting crazy situation after another.

Vanessa: This was also a time when homeowners could literally turn away African American renters with no legal ramifications. It happened to Jan-Michelle's mother.

Jan Michele: They said, we don't rent to Negroes, um, was really hurtful to her and something, she never forgot. She always talked about it. And then, you know, there was a lot of red lining going on, people couldn't buy homes, they couldn't get loans. Some folks couldn't get jobs. So between, you know, housing discrimination and lack of economic opportunity. Um, you know, so when people saw the riots, um, people felt like, wow, here, here are these young people out here fighting for their community. It wasn't a negative thing. It was, it was positive.

Deqah: Even the destruction of Avondale's business district seemed like it could have had a positive impact on the community. At least at first.

Jan Michele: No one was particularly upset about that because the black folks in the neighborhood really didn't own those businesses and really felt that it was time for African-Americans to own some businesses and, and, and own that property.

Vanessa [interview]: Did that happen in the end?

Jan Michele: Nope, it sure didn't.

Vanessa [interview]: Okay. So what did happen.

Jan Michele: Urban blight,

ENTER THEME MUSIC

Jan Michele: Urban blight happened, lack of investment and urban blight just happened.

CREDITS

Deqah: Welcome to Urban Roots, the podcast that takes a deep dive into the little known stories from Urban history.

Vanessa: We're your hosts, I'm Vanessa Quirk

Deqah: And I'm Deqah Hussein-Wetzel. And welcome to the second episode of our Lost Voices of Cincinnati series. In this episode we are diving into the rich history of Avondale.

Vanessa: We're going to explain the factors that led this community to take to the streets. Including some of the racist real estate practices that left Black Avondale residents behind, and set Avondale up for decades of disinvestment and decline.

Deqah: What happened in Avondale happened in Black neighborhoods all over America — and we're still living with the ramifications today.

Vanessa: But Avondale is also a place where people love where they live, and who say it was an amazing place to grow up.

Deqah: In this episode, we're also going to honor that truth — and talk to some folks who are working every day to make their community as vibrant and tight-knit as it used to be.

Deqah: Jan Michele's Grandparents were part of the Great Migration of African American folks who made their way up North in search of opportunities during the early to mid 20th century.

Jan Michele: The Lemon family moved here from McDonough Georgia shortly after World War Two.

Vanessa: Her mom, a teacher, and her Dad, a doctor, soon followed her grandparents to Cincinnati. At first, Jan-Michelle's Dad settled in the West End, which in the early 1900s was Cincinnati's main black community.

Deqah: Over the next few years, he worked hard at building a network of customers for his burgeoning practice.

Vanessa: But then, as we talked about in our prelude episode, the West End was hit with an urban renewal double whammy

ENTER MUSIC*

Deqah: First, starting in the late-1930s and early 1940s, and then particularly in the 1950s, whole swathes of the West End were demolished due to a City-led urban development plans .

Vanessa: Then a few years later a highway was built right through the middle of the West End's neighborhood. Almost overnight, Dr. Lemon's network, and office, disappeared.

Jan Michele: My dad lost his property there, his doctor's office, which, he loved and, you know, communities got destroyed. He was always really upset about that.

[BEAT]

Vanessa: Her Dad had no choice but to pick up the pieces and soldier on.

Deqah: And they weren't the only ones. Over 25,000 African Americans who had lived in the West End were forced to disperse to other areas in Cincinnati at this time.

END MUSIC

Vanessa: But because Blacks could only find housing in existing black neighborhoods, or on the periphery of black neighborhoods, housing options were few and far between.

Deqah: Southern Avondale had a small African American community, one that had been there since the mid-19th century. So many former West End residents wound up moving there.

[BEAT]

Vanessa: When Black folks arrived in Avondale in the 1950s, the neighborhood was predominantly Jewish.

Deqah: Andria Carter, an Avondale resident and the board president of Invest in Neighborhoods, told us that, back when she was a kid, almost all the Black families she knew actually went to Jewish doctors. And the reason why, she said, was because Jewish folks were also discriminated against.

Andria: At that time Jewish doctors, um, were discriminated against and to get business and to stay in practice, they took care of black families. I happened to go to a practice with Jewish doctors. // Because you couldn't go to a white doctor, but you could go to a Jewish doctor. Jewish hospital was there because Jews were not treated by the general hospital. So they formed their own hospital.

Vanessa: Black folks didn't just go to Jewish doctors, they also patronized Jewish-owned businesses. Reading Road, Avondale's main street, was lined with Jewish stores.

Sandra: It was a Jewish community and, and the market, the teller, the dentist, I mean, everything you wanted was in Avondale

Vanessa: That's Sandra Jones Mitchell. She's Avondale's Community Council President. Sandra works with seniors, and so she's heard many stories about Avondale's glory days.

Deqah: Jan-Michele recalls similar stories from her grandparents.

ENTER MUSIC

Jan Michele: There were dry cleaners and restaurants and grocery stores and fruit stands and barber shops. Um, there was, um, an ice cream parlor on the corner. Um, there were bakeries up and down the street. I mean, it was just, you know, they always talked about like how great it was.

Vanessa: The elders -- those who left the crowded West End -- told Sandra that Avondale back then was like a suburban paradise.

Sandra: One lady. She said, I remember when I moved to Avondale, the trees used to sing and I'm like, what do you mean? She said they were so full and so thick. My aunt did domestic work in Avondale and she would talk about the trees and I couldn't wait to see these dangone trees. I was like, What is up with these trees?

Deqah: Jan Michelle has her own great memories of the neighborhood. For example, Stag's barbershop.

Jan Michele: So when I was growing up, this was the place where all the celebrities went. So Muhammad Ali would go there to get his haircut. James Brown would go there. And so sometimes you'd see people running down the street and they go, Oh, Mohammad Ali is at stags. You know, it was just really exciting.

Deqah: Apart from the occasional excitement of seeing Mohammad Ali, everyday life in Avondale was pretty slow-paced, but that didn't make it any less special.

Jan Michele: You know, we knew all our neighbors, um, had lots of friends in the neighborhood. You know, my grandparents had lots of friends in the neighborhood. People were very close, always looked out for one another. Um, there's a lot of bike riding that went on, you know, a lot of sitting outside in the summertime, um, you know, talking and, you know, playing jump rope and, you know, I mean, all the things that the kids do, My, when we were in elementary school, my dad held French classes, So he hired a professor from the University of Cincinnati who had come to our house And kids from our classes, I think about 20 of them would come over and we'd had French lessons.

Vanessa [interview]: That's great. That so many kids would come for that. That's awesome.

Jan Michele: Yeah. Free French classes at the Lemon house just have to get up early,

MUSIC FADE OUT

Vanessa: But as idyllic as Jan-Michele's childhood was, for others, the Avondale dream started to slip away — almost as soon as they got to the neighborhood.

[BEAT]

Vanessa: So what happened in Avondale? What kicked off the acute disinvestment that would plague the neighborhood for decades to come? The simple answer is White flight.

ENTER MUSIC

Vanessa: In the 50s and 60s, white people left Avondale, in droves.

Deqah: Between 1948 and 1958, the Jewish population dwindled from 6,500 to just 450. While the Black population soared.

Vanessa: That's why, when you walk around Avondale today and look closely at its churches, you'll notice that many of them used to be synagogues. Jewish congregations leaving the neighborhood sold their buildings to Black congregations entering it.

Deqah: Over time, the Jewish congregations, hospitals, everything - all moved out to the suburbs.

Vanessa: But to really understand why, and how, this flight occurred you have to understand the history of housing discrimination here in the U.S.. So to learn more, we called up Dr. Fritz Casey Leninger, a retired history professor from the University of Cincinnati.

MUSIC FADE OUT

Dr. Fritz: For the last, um, almost 40 years, I've been looking at, um, race and Cincinnati neighborhoods and housing policy // real estate practices, trying to figure out, um, the history of, of how Cincinnati, uh, became segregated in the ways, it is now,

Deqah: Fritz broke down the three most insidious factors that accelerated white flight in Avondale: the first is federal policy.

Vanessa: After World-War II, the U.S. government subsidized Federal Housing Administration mortgages and low-interest Veteran loans to encourage people to move to the suburbs. But until the federal government started to enforce the Fair Housing Act of 1968, White real estate agents and mortgage lenders almost universally and openly refused to serve Black customers hoping to buy suburban houses.

Dr. Fritz: real estate agents and mortgage lenders, uh, made sure that black people were not able to, to buy, um, or get mortgages in these new suburbs, but white people did. It was often cheaper for a young white family to buy a brand new house in Lily white suburbs, and than to buy an older house, uh, anywhere in the city.

Deqah: The second big factor to keep in mind? Redlining.

Dr. Fritz: in the first part of the 20th century, uh, banks, mortgage companies, real estate agents, Uh, government entities, basically mapped out, um, every city in the country, uh, on the basis of race, and, basically designated black neighborhoods or racially mixed in neighborhoods as unsafe investments. Um, so that's where the term redlining comes from with these // uh, black areas were outlined in red, and it was something that had happened informally within the real estate and banking industry. Uh, and then the federal government co- basically, codified it in the 1930s.

Deqah: Even years after redlining technically ended, it was still completely legal and very common to . make specific geographic areas unattainable to Blacks.

Dr. Fritz: And if you look at the real estate classifieds in the Cincinnati post and the Cincinnati Enquirer up through the mid 1960s. They were pretty explicit about, um, the race of the people who, uh, would be acceptable to, to buy or rent. One ad might say restricted, uh, which was code for whites only. Another ad might say all buyers, which was code for we'll sell to black people and white people would look at it and go, Nope, not gonna buy there.

Vanessa: In other words, Blacks were in a situation real estate agents could take advantage of and profit from.

Dr. Fritz: Real estate agents realized that, um, They had, essentially a captive audience, uh, blacks couldn't buy anywhere else in the city.

Deqah: And that brings us to the third factor: Blockbusting.

Dr. Fritz: They would go to white homeowners knocking on their doors, calling them repeatedly, warning them that if they didn't sell right now, they were going to lose their investment and the real estate agent would be happy to help them out. If that didn't work. A white person might buy the property for the investor and then they'd move a low income black family into that property and pay that black family to parade around the streets. And then the real estate agents would go back in and say, look, look, what's happening. You, you know, you've got to get out, I'll buy your property from you, would buy at a low price, and then either sell at a higher much higher price to an African-American family, or turn it into rental property, u might break it down into a multi-family house, but there were blocks that flipped from white to black in less than a year. And, whites a little bit further away from these blocks, looked at that and were terrified that their block would be next. And so, in many cases, whites just went looking for real estate agents who would, who would help them sell their property. So, the blockbusting was,, was often self perpetuating.

Vanessa [interview]: Just to make sure I understood something you said, you said that real estate agents would, would literally set up a black family in a predominantly white block to scare off folks?

Dr. Fritz: To scare off the white folks

Vanessa [interview]: That's an incredibly elaborate move, incentivized by profit, I guess.

Dr. Fritz: I mean, but you know, the black family is desperate for good housing. And maybe they're getting paid by the real estate agent to walk around the neighborhood. And both white real estate agents and black real estate agents did this. And there was a fine line between, especially for black real estate agents between, being assertive about trying to find property for their black clients and outright blockbusting. When I interviewed real estate agents years ago, who had operated in Avondale, there were, black real estate agents saying that they were assertive. They had a client base that desperately needed housing and they went in search of, white property owners who were willing to sell. So, at one end, it's really clear that blockbusting was unethical and extremely effective. And at the other end, representing your, your black client who needs a place to live.

Deqah: Whether it was due to blockbusting, or trying to find Black folks a place to live, real estate agents accelerated the shift in Avondale from White to Black.

[BEAT]

Vanessa: Around this time, the division between Avondale and North Avondale became stark. North Avondale had bigger, newer, more expensive homes. It attracted middle class Black professionals like doctors and lawyers. Avondale was more working class, and almost entirely Black. By the 1960s, disinvestment was already becoming noticeable.

Deqah: North Avondale did not want that to happen to their community. And so The North Avondale Neighborhood Association (NANA for short) was formed. This interracial group worked to convince White neighbors NOT to panic sell. And they became actively involved in preserving the middle class characteristics of the neighborhood.

Vanessa: For example, they fought a rezoning that would have allowed single family homes to be subdivided into multi-family homes. And they reported illegal conversions too.

Deqah: NANA was pretty successful. Even as Avondale became more run-down, North Avondale remained wealthy and, frankly, more exclusive.

Vanessa: Even today, zoning rules remain in place that make it difficult to create multi-family housing **in North** Avondale, housing that would potentially make the neighborhood more affordable and accessible.

Deqah: But Working class Avondale residents didn't have the resources to enforce such laws. And because of that, Avondale residents, homeowners and renters alike, were more likely to experience discriminatory housing practices that left them vulnerable.

ENTER MUSIC

Dr. Fritz: Landlords didn't have to really care for their properties because the demand was so high. You know, if someone didn't like the condition of the property, and moved out, they could fill that space immediately because there were no other places that blacks could rent and few other places that blacks could buy.

[BEAT]

Dr. Fritz: You know, you have homeowners not able to keep up their property because they paid, an excessive price for their property and are paying uh high interest rates on their mortgages. And, red lining meant that,, it was almost impossible to get a home improvement loan. [SO] a combination of landlords, uh, refusing to care for their property and homeowners being unable to, because they were caught between a rock and a hard place.

Vanessa: Over the years, Avondale residents' homes crumbled. Yards became overgrown. Trash started piling up.

Deqah: And Black residents' situations only got worse. By 1967, Black Cincinnatians had unemployment rates of 50%. School Drop-out rates were around 20%. And police brutality was constant.

Vanessa: All of these factors came to a head in the summer of 67, when the riots erupted in Avondale.

[BEAT]

Deqah: Here's a Black Avondale resident talking to a film crew after the riots of 67 describing how her neighborhood had so drastically changed

Archival Audio—Avondale Riots (1967) from Cincinnati Museum Center Archives:

"When I moved out here 17 years ago, the 6th of December, it was a nice place to live and everything was beautiful out here. It's been torn up and it looks bad. They need to clean it up."

"When we come out here this was the nicest place you most ever seen. It's not nothing now."

MUSIC FADE OUT

[BEAT]

Deqah: Sandra Jones Mitchell, the woman whose aunt so loved the neighborhood trees, moved to Avondale when she was a teenager in the 1970s. That's when her father decided to pick up their family and find some more space they could call their own.

Sandra: And I remember asking him, how did you pick Avondale, of all the communities in Cincinnati, why here? And I think it was because he was able to purchase the home at a reasonable price and it was a two family, and we were able to really stretch out. And we had a yard, we were able to get a dog.

Sandra: And, you know, most African-Americans feel like that today. Home ownership, unfortunately, it's like a dream now, but it was one of the things that motivated a lot of folks in our community.

Sandra: When I think about his reason in a way it makes sense, but at the same token, I just don't think he knew just what he was getting us into. Hah

Vanessa: When Sandra was growing up in Avondale, the neighborhood had still not recovered from the riots.

Sandra: And when I moved to Avondale at age 14, it scared me to death. There was a residual from the riots that was still lingering and the atmosphere and the buildings and the attitude.

Sandra: There was no stores, there was a, a few bars. And Charlie's had a store up the street at Hutchins and Redding road. But other than that, there was nothing there Kroger's was moving out, and it was just a mess.

Deqah: As neighborhood stores and homes suffered, land became cheap — and ripe for the taking.

Vanessa: It started with the hospitals. As they expanded in Avondale, people were displaced from their homes.

Deqah: It's something I asked Councillor Lemon Kearney about in our interview:

Deqah [interview]: Did you ever feel though, like throughout your life in Avondale that the hospitals kind of started to encroach on in the neighborhood.

Jan Michele: Well, it's not about feeling like that. They did encroach on the neighborhood. I mean, that's pretty factual. They did encroach, they bought up a lot of houses

Jan Michele: You know, people got displaced. I mean, that's the ugly side of it.

Jan Michele: You know, we want development, but we don't want people getting displaced. And so that's the part that's missing. And that's an issue in Avondale. It's an issue in the West End. It's an issue in Evanston. It's all over the city in lots of black neighborhoods. I mean, when you look at Over the Rhine, you know, the southern part of it, in 2010, it was like 70 something percent Black. Four years later, by 2014, it was 75% white. So what happened? The black population was pushed out. You know I talked to some residents and they said, you know, we've lived here for 40 years and we're afraid we're about to lose our home. And they have good reason to be afraid

Deqah: Andria Carter, the North Avondale resident who used to frequent Jewish doctors as a kid, has seen it, too. Not just the hospitals, but the Cincinnati Zoo too.

Andria: UC hospital has expanded and grown...children's hospital has just grown by leaps and bounds...their growth has been massive And then also the zoo has grown. So because of those businesses, chunks of Avondale have gone away.

Andria: Growth is good. Expansion is good, but you lose those homes. You lose those memories, you lose that connection of what brought people to Avondale in the first place

Vanessa: As homes and community anchors disappeared, and the institutions grew, you'd think that, at the very least, this economic development would have translated into more opportunity for folks in the neighborhood or to get good jobs. And for some, it did. But the majority of people

hired to work at the hospital and the zoo, and most of the visitors, actually came from outside the neighborhood.

Deqah: As more and more people started commuting to Avondale. The highway became more and more congested .

Vanessa: And so a plan to ease this congestion was formed....

HIGHWAY SOUNDS

"Jobs, Safety, Opportunity. That's what the 1-71 Martin Luther King Interchange is expected to deliver. "

"UR_MLK Interchange_2" The focus is the uptown area: UC, the hospitals, Coreyville, Walnut Hill, and especially Avondale. We are building in a neighborhood that has a 40% unemployment rate. We're talking about a potential 700 million dollars of opportunity. "

Deqah: The MLK interchange, a new exit off I-71, opened up near the hospitals and medical office buildings around Burnett Avenue in 2017.

ENTER MUSIC

Vanessa: Sandra Jones Mitchell had seen it coming, but even as an engaged advocate, she and her community had little opportunity to weigh in on the plan

Sandra: So when they brought that to the Avondale community council, all I could do is just. Shake my head and said, it's here. Y'all. And we didn't act on it quick enough. Um, we should have been a part of that.

Sandra: Now, if you go stand on that corner, you will count about 60 to 70,000 cars coming through there a day. Avondale has about..I'd say about 160,000 cars coming through Avondale a day. So that's a lot of people, that's a lot of traffic. And so it's no secret that the children in Avondale's asthma is higher than just about any community. The exhaust alone is killing the kids.

Deqah: Sandra's not wrong. The most traveled portions of I-71 run along the eastern boundary of the neighborhood, causing serious, long lasting, environmental impacts.

Vanessa: It's why, when it comes to new development in Avondale, Sandra wants to make sure that history doesn't repeat itself. That, from now on, nothing happens in this neighborhood without the community having a say.

MUSIC FADE OUT

Deqah: I asked Sandra if she could show me around Avondale. So she told me to meet her on a Wednesday -- at the corner of Rockdale and Reading Road. When I arrived, I saw a big, parked truck

Sandra: The healthy harvest mobile market is here every Wednesday. They have been here for the last five years, but now we have an opportunity to have fresh produce here in Avondale.

Deqah: The market's not just about access to fresh produce, it's also a place where Sandra can build community. I could see it in every single interaction she had with every single person walking by. Whether it was just introducing herself...

Sandra: What's your name? Hi Tyrone.

Sandra: I remember that song, how that song go?

Community Member: Erykah badu, "Call Tyrone"

Sandra: My name is Sandra.

Deqah: Or getting people to sign up for free swimming classes.

Sandra: They got free swim lessons at Hirsch center. If you want to learn how to swim.

Deqah: Or convincing people to start volunteering.

Sandra: So on August the Fourth, we also going to have read on the green, what we need some volunteers to have read to the kids. Oh. There's a lot going on. It can't happen without you.

Deqah: Sandra's so good, she even recruited me.

Deqah [interview]: I know I am not an Avondale resident, but I would love to come and volunteer to read for the kids.

Vanessa: Sandra is clearly a force to be reckoned with. And along with the other folks on the Avondale community council she's been working hard to improve the relationships with the institutions in Avondale, so that her community members can partake in the economic growth that they create.

Sandra Jones: The Avondale community council, the Avondale development corporation and the Avondale business association. We are considered one, we are a team. And so we make sure that we partner with all the institutions in this area. So when they want to do something, they have to call one of us to make sure that we not only agree, but we want to be a part of it. And so. I am a believer that nothing should happen in Avondale without us. And we need to be

at the table and we need to be able to help folks decide what we want. We never say what we want. And so I can be a voice, I'm going to be a voice because not only do I have property here, I have family here. I lived here. It's our community. And I'm going to stand on that.

Deqah: It's because of this community participation, that Sandra is so hopeful for the future.

ENTER MUSIC

Hopeful that, at long last, Avondale is ready to recover from the decades of disinvestment that have plagued this community since the riots.

Sandra Jones: The streets that we're standing on right now at one time was ripped through the riots of Cincinnati. So this is like a rebirth. A lot of the things that we're looking at now are very new. The Avondale business center, going to have a, um, a grocery store. They're going to have the urban league justice center there. And you also going to have got a laundry mat. We have not had a laundry back in this community in probably 20 years. I can tell you it's open 24 hours a day and it's busy.

Sandra: We'll bring some of those businesses back may not be the exact businesses, but it's going to be something that people can be proud of.

Sandra: We got affordable housing coming down here.

Sandra: Reading road and Blair. Got new housing going down here in Alaska. It's just...it's endless...it's so many cool things.

Vanessa: In fact, Sandra's term as Community Council president is coming to an end soon, and so she envisions herself being part of the change in Avondale that she's hoping to see.

Sandra: I'm gonna grow my business. I have a nonprofit organization here in Avondale called serving older adults to change. In time. We are celebrating 29 years and I'm going to grow that business. I would like to have that lot right there so I can build my own center. We'll have a swimming pool where you can walk down in. Nope. No higher than five feet, because I don't want folks to drown, but just to be able to give back

ENTER MUSIC

Deqah: And Sandra knows she won't be the only one giving back.

[BEAT]

Sandra Jones: It's going to take a village to make Avondale grow.

[BEAT]

Sandra Jones: And the only way to plant seeds, you gotta keep watering them. So they will grow. And that's the way I feel about Avondale, if we keep watering and planting seeds, it will grow, there are people that care about Avondale. And those are the folks I try to talk to, that have dreams and visions, but willing to put some action behind it.

ENDING CREDITS

Deqah: Thank you for listening to Urban Roots. We're hosted by me, Deqah Hussein-Wetzel and Vanessa Quirk.

Vanessa: We're edited by Connor Lynch. Our theme music is by Adaam James Levin-Areddy. Story editing by Max Miller.

Deqah: Mix by Andrew Callaway

Deqah: A big thank you to the folks who made this episode possible: Councilwoman Jan-Michele Lemon-Kearney, Andria Carter, Sandra Jones Mitchell, and Dr. Fritz Casey-Leninger.

Vanessa: So you know we have an IG! Where Deqah documents some of Cincinnati's historical buildings, including some of the buildings we talked about in this show, so if that's your jam, you should follow us on instagram at UrbanRootsCulture.

Deqah: If you'd like to know more about the topics we discussed today, then check out our website, urbanrootspodcast.com, where you can find blogposts that provide links and resources so you can dive deeper into the history that we've talked about.

Vanessa: The Lost Voices of Cincinnati series was made possible by a Truth & Reconciliation grant from ArtsWave. We'd also like to thank Invest in Neighborhoods for their support. They're an not-for-profit that works with Cincinnati community councils to create inclusive, diverse, safe, fun and vibrant neighborhoods.

Deqah: To find out more about Invest in Neighborhoods and learn how you can get involved with your community councils visit [invest in neighborhoods dot org](http://investinneighborhoods.org).

Vanessa: If you like Urban Roots, and would like to see more episodes from us, then please consider donating to our Fundly page, which you can find in our episode notes. Deqah, want to hit the good people with our tagline?

Deqah: Urban Roots - looking back so we can move forward.