The Move That Wouldn’t Die
Community, Property, and the Politics of Heritage in the National Football League

Dr. John Linantud
linantudj@uhd.edu
University of Houston Downtown

Presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, San Diego, California, USA
1-4 April 2012

Updated 4 April 2012
The Horseshoe

Household junk, or priceless treasure?
Corporate trademark, or community symbol?

Season Ticket Bumper Sticker, 1983
Timeline

1958 Greatest Game Ever: Baltimore Colts 23, New York Giants 17

1963 National Football League (NFL) creates NFL Properties

1963 Pro Football Hall of Fame opens

1965 NFL creates NFL Films


1984 Colts relocate from Baltimore to Indianapolis

1994 Federal court strikes down *Baltimore CFL Colts*

1996 Browns relocate to Baltimore as Ravens

1999 Expansion Browns return to Cleveland with old colors

2002 Former Baltimore Colts quarterback John Unitas dies

2012 Struggle over Baltimore Colts’ heritage remains fluid

* Baltimore, March 1984
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Indianapolis/Baltimore Colts</th>
<th>Baltimore Ravens/Colts</th>
<th>Indianapolis Colts Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro Football Hall of Fame</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Films on Hulu.com</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL.com</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravens Stadium</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravens Media Guide</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravens Homepage</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore Alumni</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravens Ring of Honor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore Sports Legends Museum</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colts Stadium</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colts Media Guide</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colts Homepage</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colts Alumni</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colts Ring of Honor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colts 2006 Super Bowl Ring</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Heritage Perspectives

Baltimore and the Nation
The Colts put Baltimore on the map. What happens after they leave?

Rewriting History
The Colts play in Indianapolis; the Colts have always played in Indianapolis.

Betrayed
ESPN: $8B revenue per year
NFL: $1B average market value per team (32 teams)
NFL merchandise: $3B per year
TV Rights: $3B per year

Identity

The Wire
Why the Conflict Endures

- Indianapolis
- Relocation Templates
- NFL Myth
- Baltimore

Alumni
Halls of Fame
Homecomings
Media Coverage
Records
Rings of Honor

Unitas Plaza, M&T Bank Stadium, Baltimore
Baltimore Championship Identity

• National Football League (NFL) Colts 1958
• NFL Colts 1959
• NFL Colts 1970
• United States Football League Stars 1985
• Canadian Football League Stallions 1995
• NFL Ravens 2000
Banned Logo 1994

Indianapolis Colts (Actor), Baltimore Colts (Actor) | Rated: NR | Format: DVD

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ (27 customer reviews) | Like (3)

List Price: $19.97

Price: $9.96 & eligible for FREE Super Saver Shipping on orders over $25. Details

You Save: $10.01 (50%)

In Stock.
Sold by newbury_comics and Fulfilled by Amazon. Gift-wrap available.
Baltimore Football Alumni – Keeping Our Past in the Present

Baltimore Football Alumni (BFA) is comprised of former Colts and Ravens players that have left an indelible stamp on our beloved city and sport. Dedicated to keeping their legacy alive, Baltimore Football Alumni is the place for longtime fans to take a stroll down memory lane, and newer fans to get acquainted with our rich football history.
Separate But Equal

Baltimore Colts Super Bowl V Ring

Indianapolis Colts Super Bowl XLI Ring

One Lombardi Trophy only
Stop Fighting and Learn to Love the Anti-Homecoming

NFL.com *Game Center*, “Winless Colts Return to Original Home” 7 December 2011

“People in Baltimore haven't forgotten about the Colts sneaking out of town in moving vans in a snowstorm. They will take considerable glee in beating the Colts any chance they get, especially with them flirting with 0-16. This won't be a passive environment, despite the record of the road team in this one.”

Colts at Ravens 2007
Indy Backlash

*Indianapolis Star*, “Former Baltimore Colt Raymond Berry to present Super Bowl XLVI trophy,” 29 December 2011

– Article comment link: “Do you have any problem with the league having a Baltimore Colt instead of someone with ties to Indiana (Tony Dungy, Rod Woodson, Bob Griese) present the trophy?”

Selected Reader Comments (sic)

– Raymond Berry has nothing to do with the Indianapolis Colts. Our history began in 1984. I couldn't care less about the Colts before they came to Indy. Quit trying to connect our city to their past. I'm sure the people of Baltimore don't appreciate it either.

– Baltimore had the courtesy to give the Cleveland Browns their legacy. Indy did not.

– Barry's selection as the presenter is another slap in the face of this franchise. This team is the Indianapolis Colts and not the Baltimore Colts. Why isn't Peyton presenting the trophy?

– Who???
A Way Forward

© Dr. John Linantud
Conclusion
Leave the Horseshoe, Take the Helmet

- Televised images, NFL Myth, and current events sustain the conflict
  - The Baltimore and Indianapolis Colts look the same on TV
  - Literature * NFL Films has created a Baltimore Colts brand that contradicts the Indy horseshoe
  - Relocation is a current issue
  - The conflict renews itself each NFL season

- NFL-Baltimore-Indianapolis struggle is fluid
- Maximal positions have failed
- Heritage does not control property, and vice versa
- The Peyton Manning era put the Indy Colts on the map
- Baltimore vs. Indy → separate but equal
Selected Bibliography

- Vince Bagli and Norman Macht, *Sundays at 2:00 with the Baltimore Colts* (Centreville, Maryland: Tidewater, 1995)
- William Gildea, *When the Colts Belonged to Baltimore: A Father and a Son, a Team and a Time* (Ticknor and Fields, 1994)
Other Selected References

- Baltimore Sports Legends Museum at Camden Yards, John Ziemann, Deputy Director (baberuthmuseum.com)
- Baltimoresun.com message boards
- Barry Levinson, *The Band that Wouldn’t Die*, ESPN 30 for 30, Episode 1, 2009
- Tony Lombardi, coltsheritage.com; ravens24x7.com/forum
- NFL Films (cinemanow, hulu, iTunes)
- NFL Network, *America’s Game, NFL Top Ten, NFL Top 100*
- Oliver Stone, *Any Given Sunday*, 1999