



Background Notes

Written Notes for Pupils:

Background to District Six

District Six in the 1960s was a place where all kinds of people lived: a place of different religions and races; rich in its diversity; rich in its nineteenth century architecture, a place where music was important and culture and tradition were revered. That it was impoverished and dilapidated, that there was crime and overcrowding, cannot be denied. But what is important, is that it was a place where people had a sense of themselves as a community. The place had a spirit that made it special; a spirit that is missing in the sprawling townships and suburban developments of today.

In 1966 the District was declared a white group area by the apartheid government and people who were not white were forced to leave their homes. Shortly afterwards the bulldozing and destruction began and continued for thirteen years until the area was razed. Only a few churches and mosques remain.

<https://www.we.com.na/news/district-six-the-musical>

Richard Rive

Richard Rive was born on 1 March 1931 in Cape Town and grew up in District Six. Rive attended high school in Cape Town and acquired a BA degree from the University of Cape Town, an MA degree from Columbia University in the United States, and a Doctorate from Oxford University.

Rive was a firm believer in anti-racism and decided to stay in his country in the hope of influencing its development there. His novels that were published were *Emergency* (1964) set against the Sharpeville massacre, *Buckingham Palace District Six* published in 1986 and an autobiography *Writing Black* in 1981. Rive's last novel, *Emergency Continued*, was completed two weeks before his death. He was stabbed to death at his home in Cape Town in 1989, aged 58.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Rive