

Collection #  
P 0018  
OM 0440

## CLAYPOOL HOTEL PHOTOGRAPHS, CA. 1890–1966

[Collection Information](#)

[Historical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

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### COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	Visual Materials: 1 box of photographs, 1 box of OVA size photographs, 1 box of OVB size photographs, 1 folder color photographs Manuscript Materials: 1 oversize folder
COLLECTION	Ca. 1890–1966

**DATES:**

**PROVENANCE:** Claypool Hotel 1968; Henry County Historical Society 2002;  
Raymond Featherstone 2002

**RESTRICTIONS:** None

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**ALTERNATE FORMATS:**

**RELATED HOLDINGS:** Rotary Club of Indianapolis (M0760)

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 1968.0047, 2002.0021, 2002.0572

**NOTES:**

**HISTORICAL SKETCH**

The history of the Claypool Hotel begins in pre-Civil War days. Hervey Bates, Indianapolis banker and businessman, saw opportunity for providing housing accommodations for transients en route west. In 1852 workers broke ground on the northwest corner of Washington and Illinois streets and the four-storied Bates House, decorated in Victorian style, was completed in 1853 at a cost of \$75,000.00. Its cost of \$2.00/room/day, including meals, proved attractive to travelers, including President-elect Abraham Lincoln. He overnighted on 11 February 1861 when he was en route to Washington, D.C. for his First Inaugural. In a speech from the Washington Street balcony of the hotel he called for the preservation of the Union. The following day Hoosier Governor Oliver P. Morton hosted the President at breakfast at the hotel.

In time the Bates House languished and the hotel was razed in 1901. After much planning and up-front support, a new hotel, the brain child of Henry W. Lawrence manager of Bates House, emerged on the same site. The 495-room, 8-story Claypool, was built at a cost of \$1,250,000.00. Named in honor of Edward Fay Claypool, a wealthy Connersville businessman, the new hostelry could boast of more bathtubs than any other hotel in the country and a telephone in every guest room. Its lobby was reported to be the largest hotel lobby in the country. It also advertised a theatre, assembly hall, ballroom balcony overlooking the lobby, a roof garden, private Renaissance dining rooms, and Atrium Café patterned after the Roman City Herculaneum. Dishes were washed by “the art of electricity,” refrigerators were cooled without ice, and a separate milk house chilled dairy products at ideal temperatures. The Riley Room, whose frescoes quoted from poems of Indiana’s most famous poet, delighted guests. In short, it had “every luxury known” to commercial hospitality. So successful was the hotel in attracting local and interstate travelers that in 1912 the hotel added 105 rooms, bringing the total to 600 rooms, including ten private dining and meeting rooms, and a beautiful Italian Renaissance lobby. Adding air conditioning after World War II placed the hotel in an elite category, making it the first completely air conditioned hotel in the U.S. north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

Like Bates House, the new Claypool attracted not only the famous and fashionable but also the movers and shakers of the labor and political world as well as ordinary Americans. Because of its proximity to the Indiana State Capitol, the hotel became a popular place for legislators. It housed both the Democratic and Republican parties state headquarters, provided housing for the Indianapolis Rotary Club, and on the ninth floor sheltered radio station WIRE.

Henry W. Lawrence, former manager of Bates House and majority owner, manager and president of the Claypool, was active in the Indiana Hotel Keepers Association in the early twentieth century, serving on the Board of Directors, chairing the Finance Committee, and periodically hosting the state meetings at the Claypool.

Mrs. Lawrence, Henry's wife, as overseer of housekeeping helped the hotel to succeed with high standards of care. Her delight with Oriental rugs was matched only by her hatred of dust and grime. Following her husband's death (1926), Mrs. Lawrence assumed the responsibilities of proprietor for nearly a dozen years before she died in 1937. Upon her passing, the bulk of her estate including the Claypool Hotel, was left to a Catholic boys school in her hometown of Ogdensburg, NY. In 1943 the hotel became a part of the Affiliated National Hotels Company, of Galveston, Texas.

Frank M. Andrews, architect of the Claypool. Born in Des Moines, Iowa, on 28 January 1867, studied civil engineering at Iowa State University and later took a B.A. degree in architecture from Cornell University in 1888. He practiced his profession first in Chicago, and later in New York City. Andrews designed several state capitols and commercial buildings. He died August 31, 1948. Despite the public's acclaim of the Claypool as a model of what hotels could and should be like, Andrews was not listed in the second edition (1962) of the *American Architects Directory* as either a former or deceased member, nor apparently did the American Institute of Architects think the hotel was an outstanding example of significant architecture, for rarely did it mention the building.

David M. Parry was a late nineteenth century industrialist and part owner of the Claypool. His horse-drawn buggies were shipped throughout the U.S. and many countries abroad. A Republican by conviction, he took an active role in politics and in the National Association of Manufacturers (formed in 1895), dressed impeccably and was sparing in words, except when denouncing labor unions.

Also prominent in the Claypool's history, should be noted: Edward F. Claypool, wealthy businessman from Connersville, whose generosity made possible the building and operation of the Claypool. Financially involved in the defunct Bates House, he subscribed to the building of the Claypool and donated the land for the hotel. In post-Civil War days he was heavily invested in public utilities and later became president of Indianapolis' First National Bank.

In the 1960s the once elegant Claypool began showing her age, but what to do about the "Old Lady" no one had a ready answer. The solution came in a fire in June 1967, despite earlier assurances that the building was "absolutely fireproof." The Claypool met its end with a devastating inferno in the pre-dawn hours on 23 June 1967. Investigation revealed that it was arson, started in a fourth floor utility room. All guests were safely evacuated, but the hotel never again opened its doors to guests. It was finally torn down (1969) and was replaced by the Claypool Court, a shopping and office mall.

#### Sources:

Bodenhamer, David J. and Robert G. Barrows. *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. Reference Room Collection: F534.I55 1994

*Claypool Sketch Book*. Indianapolis: Claypool Hotel, 1939.  
General Collection: F534.I55 C52 1939.

Dunn, Jacob Piatt. *Greater Indianapolis...*, Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1910.  
General Collection: F534.I55 D8 1910

Hyman, Max R., *The Journal Handbook of Indianapolis*, Indianapolis: Indianapolis Journal Newspaper Co., 1902.  
Reference Room Collection: F534.I55 J6 1902.

*Indianapolis Star*, 8 Sept. 1968, Sec. 5, p. 22; 7 Nov. 1971, Sec. B, p. 9; 4 Dec. 1977, Sec. 5, p. 1f.

L.S. Ayres and Company Records

Schrader, Christian, *Indianapolis Remembered...* Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1987. General Collection: F534.I55 S37 1987.

*Indiana: A New Historical Guide*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1989. Reference Room Collection: F527 .I538 1989.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains a variety of photographs of both interior and exterior views of the Claypool Hotel and its predecessor the Bates House. The images include views of suites and meeting rooms, and retouched photographs of the facade and interiors. There are group portraits of hotel employees and some banquet groups. A few street views of downtown Indianapolis with the Claypool in sight are also here. The photographs are arranged alphabetically by subject, then chronological. The banquet photographs have captions and these were transcribed and are in quotation marks. The manuscript materials are stored in one oversize folder and contain various printed materials; certificates, citations, proclamations, and signs that were either given to or made for the Claypool hotel.

## CONTENTS

### CONTENTS

Assembly Hall, 8<sup>th</sup> floor

Atrium Cafe

Atrium Room, large fountain in center of room set with tables and chairs

Balcony Piazza

Banquet Group:

“Mothers’ Congress Banquet, Claypool Hotel, Indianapolis, Feb’y 20, 1915” [caption written on verso]

Banquet Group:

“Indiana Recruiting Service Banquet at Claypool Hotel Given by Knights of Columbus, Indpls-Ind. Nov. 30-1919”  
WWI soldiers

Banquet Group:

“Alpha Chi Omego Annual State Luncheon Eastern Province Convention Riley Room Claypool Hotel Indianapolis Ind. Feb. 26, ‘21”  
Women’s group

Banquet Group:

“Banquet Indiana Christian Missionary Association, Riley Room, Claypool Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana. #1250 Kirkpatrick Photo 1927 12/6/27”  
Men’s group in Riley Room

### CONTAINER

OVA Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 1

OVA Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 2

Photographs:  
Box 1, Folder 1

OVA Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 3

OVB Photographs:  
Box 1, Folder 5

OVA Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 4

OVA Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 4

OVB Photographs:  
Box 1, Folder 1

Banquet Group:	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 4
“Indiana Democratic Editorial Ass’n. Claypool Hotel-Indianapolis April 13, 1940” Group in Riley Room	
Banquet Group:	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 6
“ <i>Indianapolis Star</i> Breakfast June 25, 1944” Large group in Riley Room	
Banquets, displays of food and centerpieces	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2
Bates House, 2 story wood frame building	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 5
Bates House, exterior views: 2 story wood frame building n.d., and new stone structure, ca. 1890	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3
Chateau Room	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 6
Claypool Hotel, ca. 1910, 1920	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 4
Claypool Hotel, exterior views, ca. 1910, ca. 1920	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 7
Claypool Hotel, detail of entrance, exterior views, ca. 1920	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 8
Claypool Hotel, exterior views, ca. 1920	OVB Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2
Claypool Hotel employees ca. 1910–1953	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 5
Claypool Hotel, entrance with signs, 1966	OVB Photographs: Box 1, Folder 4
Claypool Hotel, photograph illustrations of interiors and Monument Circle, ca. 1920	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 9
Club Room	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 10
Empire Room	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 11
Firestone Winners Circle, banquet displays of food and tables, 1961	Color Photographs: Folder 1
Florentine Room	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 12

Hallway	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 13
International Association of Convention Bureaus annual board of directors meeting, ca. 1940	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 7
Kitchen	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 14
Lobby with writing desks	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 15
Main Lobby	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 16
Mezzanine overlooking main lobby	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 17
Mezzanine Parlor	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 18
Moorish Room	OVB Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3
Moorish Room	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 19
Palm Room, 8 <sup>th</sup> Floor Assembly Room	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 20
Parlor B	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 21
Printing Presses	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 22
Riley Room	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 23
Tavern, Coffee Shop	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 24
Manuscript Materials: Certificates, Citations, Governor's Proclamation, signs, 1940–1962	OM 0440, Folder 1

## CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.

3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, P0018).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.