

Collection #
P 0333

BIG FOUR RAILROAD BRIDGE ACCIDENT, TERRE HAUTE PHOTOGRAPHS, 1900

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 folder
COLLECTION DATES:	23 February 1900, and 2 March 1900
PROVENANCE:	F. P. Elwert books, Rutland, Vermont

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: None

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1977.1109

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The west span of the Big Four Railroad Bridge over the Wabash River at Terre Haute, Indiana, collapsed at 2:35 p.m. on 23 February 1900. The structure crumbled under the combined pressure of ice, the weight of Big Four Locomotive 96, and forty-nine freight cars. The train was en route to Terre Haute from Mattoon, Illinois, loaded with baled cotton, lumber, grain, paper, stove ovens, and general merchandise. Employees of the local waterworks company reported to the *Terre Haute Gazette* that the bridge was swaying moments before the accident. Fireman Dan Ruddell of Indianapolis died in the wreck.

Sources:

“Big Four Train Went Through the Bridge,” *Terre Haute Gazette*, 23 February 1900, p.1–2.

Hehman, Donald T. Collection (M 598). Indiana Historical Society Library.

Terre Haute City Directory, 1901. Terre Haute, Indiana: Moore and Langen Printing Co., n. d.

“Thirty-Six Cars Went Down in Wreck,” *Terre Haute Gazette*, 24 February 1900, p. 1–2.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of three photographs of the Big Four (Cleveland, Chicago, Cincinnati, and St. Louis) Railroad Bridge over the Wabash River at Terre Haute, Indiana. The images document initial damage, and later repair of the west span of the bridge. One photograph dated 23 February shows the accident scene. Freight cars, lumber, and the engine’s boiler are visible in the river. Two photographs dated 2 March document a rapid reconstruction of the span, with people working on or inspecting the bridge deck and rails. William H. Bundy shot the photographs from the level of the icebound Wabash River.

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The “Big Four” Bridge reconstruction, 2 March 1900	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://157.91.92.2/>
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, P 0333).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.