

Collection #
P 0405

**ABE MARTIN KIN HUBBARD POSTCARDS
CA. 1905–CA. 1913, N.D.**

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Processed by

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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION:

One box

COLLECTION
DATES:

Ca. 1905–ca. 1913, n.d.

PROVENANCE:

Some postcards were a gift from the Alexander M. Bracken Library, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, in September 1986; others unknown.

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: M 0569: Russo, Dorothy R. (Dorothy Ritter). Papers II, 1970–1980.

ACCESSION NUMBER: 0000.0116, 0000.0516, 1986.0770

NOTES: The Indiana Historical Society library holds several books by or about Frank McKinney “Kin” Hubbard, including his Abe Martin series.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Frank McKinney “Kin” Hubbard (1 Sept. 1868–26 Dec. 1930) was a journalist, humorist, and the creator of the Abe Martin character. Born in Bellefontaine, Ohio, he was the son of Thomas and Sarah Jane (Miller) Hubbard. Thomas was the publisher of the Bellefontaine *Examiner*, a newspaper that had been in the Hubbard family since before the Civil War. Sarah’s father, Captain John B. Miller, toured the Midwest with a wagon theatrical stock company. Kin Hubbard drew from both his father’s and grandfather’s careers. He learned the printing trade in his father’s office, and perhaps was influenced by his grandfather when he produced blackface minstrel shows in his youth.

In 1891 he left Ohio to work for the *Indianapolis News* as a police reporter and artist. He was entirely self-taught as a sketch artist. He stayed at the *News* for several years, earning praise for his writing and drawing in the reporting of fires and police cases. He returned to Ohio, working under his father who had become postmaster at the Bellefontaine post office, and later working for newspapers in Cincinnati and Mansfield, Ohio. In 1901 he returned to the *Indianapolis News*, where he remained the rest of his life.

It was in 1904 that the character Abe Martin was born. While traveling around Indiana on a campaign train, Hubbard had made several sketches of rustic characters, and on 16 November 1904, one was printed in the *News* with a quip written by the artist. The editor encouraged Hubbard to make a series of these cartoons. Hubbard created the character Abe Martin to be the spokesperson of his quips, and the series debuted on 31 December 1904. The series soon became syndicated, and collections of Abe Martin’s sayings were published in a series of books, beginning with *Abe Martin, Brown County, Indiana* in 1906, and ending with *Abe Martin’s Town Pump* in 1929. His work was praised by Will Rogers, who said, “No man in our generation was within a mile of him.”

Hubbard married Josephine Jackson of Indianapolis on 12 October 1905. They had two children, Thomas and Virginia. He toured around the world in 1924, but then declined lecture, radio, and theater offers, preferring to stay home with his family and garden. He died of a heart attack at the age of sixty-two.

Sources:
Contemporary Authors Online, Gale, 2003. Reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich.: The Gale Group. 2003 (<http://www.galenet.com/servlet/BioRC>). Accessed 17 June 2003.
“Frank McKinney Hubbard.” *Dictionary of American Biography* Base Set. American Council of Learned Societies, 1928–1936. Reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich.: The Gale Group. 2003

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of forty postcards pertaining to the character Abe Martin and his creator, Kin Hubbard, arranged into three series in one small box.

Series 1, Abe Martin Cartoons – Printed: This series contains thirty-six printed Abe Martin cartoons by Kin Hubbard, including some duplicates.

Series 2, Abe Martin Cartoons – Originals: This series consists of two postcards that appear to be original ink drawings of Abe Martin fishing, and include handwritten notes. One of these was written from the “Abe Martin Farm” in Centerton, Indiana, on 20 June 1907. The other was sent on 10 September 1906 from Trinidad, Colorado, and includes the message, “You and Abe had better come to Colo. Fishing is better here.”

Series 3, Abe Martin Portrayer and Kin Hubbard’s Home: This series includes two postcards of halftone photographs. One, sent in 1913, is of a man dressed as the Abe Martin character standing outside a store, and contains the caption: “Abe Martin Brown Co., G. C. David, Nashville, Ind.” The other is of Kin Hubbard’s home in Irvington, Indiana.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Abe Martin Cartoons – Printed

CONTENTS

CONTAINER

One Abe Martin cartoon printed as an *Indianapolis News* souvenir postcard, sent in 1905.

Box 1

Seven Abe Martin cartoons printed in black and red ink, copyrighted in 1907 by J.W. Parker.

Box 1

Nine Abe Martin cartoons printed in black and red ink, published by Import Post Card Co., Indianapolis and Leipzig, copyright “applied for 1907.”

Box 1

Two Burdena Cigar Factory (Indianapolis) postcards advertising the Abe Martin cigar (one is postmarked 1907).

Box 1

Ten Abe Martin cartoons printed in black, red, and yellow ink, nine of which were published by Hoover-Watson Printing Co. (Indianapolis) (one does not include publisher name), postmarks are from 1911–13 (some are unreadable).

Box 1

One Abe Martin cartoon “drawn for and published by the Correspondence Committee of the Rainbow Regiment Cheer Association, Indianapolis, Ind.,” postmark appears to be 1918, caption by drawing says, “Abe Martin actions speak louder’n flags.”

Box 1

Six Abe Martin cartoons produced by Midwest Color

Box 1

Cards (Plainfield, Ind.) and distributed by Nashville House (Nashville, Ind.), n.d.

Series 2: Abe Martin Cartoons – Originals

CONTENTS

Two postcards that appear to be original ink drawings of the Abe Martin character fishing: one is postmarked from Trinidad, Colo., 10 Sept. 1906, and contains a handwritten message above the drawing, “You and Abe had better come to Colo. Fishing is better here.” The other is postmarked from Centerton, Ind., 20 June 1907, with a message written from “Abe Martin Farm.”

CONTAINER

Box 1

Series 3: Abe Martin Portrayer and Kin Hubbard’s Home

CONTENTS

One postcard with a black-and-white halftone photograph of a man dressed as the Abe Martin character, standing outside a store, with caption “Abe Martin Brown Co., G. C. David, Nashville, Ind.,” postmarked in 1913.

One color postcard with a halftone photograph of Kin Hubbard’s residence in Irvington, Ind., n.d.

CONTAINER

Box 1

Box 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 0405).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.