Collection #
M 1225
OM 0607
BV 5112-5139

AMERICAN RED CROSS, INDIANAPOLIS CHAPTER 1919–1965

Collection Information

Historical Sketch

Scope and Content Note

Series Contents

Processed by

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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
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Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	2 manuscript boxes, 28 bound volumes, 1 oversized image, 1 box of photographs, 2 color photograph folders, 7 artifacts
COLLECTION DATES:	1919–1965
PROVENANCE:	Indianapolis Public Library, September 1990
RESTRICTIONS:	None
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ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	American Red Cross, Indianapolis Area Chapter Records, 1916–1978: M0551, F1090–1108
ACCESSION NUMBER:	1990.0215
NOTES:	

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Indianapolis Chapter of the American Red Cross formed on July 19, 1916 with William Fortune as president, Rev. Francis H. Gavisk as vice-president, John H. Holliday as treasurer, and Guernsey Van Riper as secretary. For the past 100 years, this agency has focused on three main areas of assistance: disaster relief, health services, and military support. In terms of relief, chapter volunteers have responded to natural and manmade disasters throughout the state's history by providing food, clothing, medicines, nursing care, and transportation. Health services, meanwhile, have included supplying the public with first aid, home nursing, swimming classes, nutrition information, and civil defense education. Finally, the organization has provided various types of military support: sewing and knitting millions of surgical dressings, coordinating blood drives, providing communication between soldiers and their families, and caring for the wounded on the battlefield as well as at several central Indiana hospitals, like Billings and Wakeman. Such assistance has been offered by the agency during every major conflict since World War I.

The Indianapolis Chapter of the American Red Cross also provided assistance to Indianapolis Service Men's Centers Inc., an organization that provided a "home away from home" for uniformed individuals from WWII into the 1960s.[1] The city's first club opened on Wabash Street on May 22, 1941. Led by director Dorothy F. Buschmann, it included numerous amenities for service men to enjoy including a game room, library, writing room, pantry shelf, and weekly dances. Subsequent branches with similar amenities were opened and/or incorporated during next two years to keep up with GI demand: Union Station Canteen on December 22, 1941, Illinois Street Center on July 8, 1942, Senate Avenue Center (for black service men) on July 24, 1942, and The Robert Park Center in the spring of 1943.

Each location was staffed mostly by volunteers from the community. Probably the largest group were the "Cadettes," single women between 18 and 30 who were selected by the organization to spend time with service men at the clubs and during dances. Members of the Indianapolis Chapter of the American Red Cross also volunteered at the centers, specifically in First Aid Rooms and by preparing weekly "Sunday Nite Suppers." In the end, these efforts by the Red Cross and Service Men's Centers played an important role in helping GI morale both before and after combat.

Sources:

M0551 Collection Guide

http://www.in.gov/library/2478.htm

Information in collection

[1] Service Men Clubs in Indianapolis originally operated from 1941–1947. They were reactivated in 1950 after the start of the Korean War.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of two series. Series one covers the Indianapolis Chapter of the American Red Cross and includes several scrapbooks of newspaper clippings from 1919 to 1951, eleven volumes of *The Red Cross Courier*, the official publication of the American National Red Cross, from 1930 to 1940, one color newspaper advertisement from 1932, and one artifact. Series two covers Indianapolis Service Men's Centers Inc. (SMC). This section contains reports, memos, correspondences, newspaper clippings, newsletters, greeting cards, photos, and artifacts related to the organization and its services.

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Two Recordio-Grams	Artifact 1990. 0215

Recordio-Gram (1 of 2) Artifact 1990.0215

Recordio-Gram (2 of 2) Artifact 1990.0215