

Collection #
P 0339

**CHARLES E. SHEARER
COLLECTION, CA. 1901–CA. 1953**

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Indiana Historical Society
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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 7 visual folders, 1 manuscript folder

COLLECTION
DATES: Ca. 1901–1953

PROVENANCE: Nancy Osterlander, Indianapolis, Indiana. 1992

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: None

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1992.0515X

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Charles E. Shearer, born ca. 1882, was the son of William Shearer of Irvington, Indiana. Shearer graduated from Shortridge High School in 1899 and Purdue University in 1905. While at Purdue, Shearer made photographs for the university yearbook, *The Debris*. Shearer moved to Memphis, Tennessee, in 1907 to work for the Memphis Bridge Company as a civil engineer. He founded a consulting engineering company in Memphis in 1910. Shearer perished in the sinking of the steamer *Hunt* on the Mississippi River, sixteen miles south of Memphis, on 8 May 1925. His wife, Annette Ostrander Shearer, and the couple's two children survived the sinking, which occurred during an outing sponsored by the Midsouth Association of Engineers.

Annette Ostrander Shearer, born ca. 1884, was the daughter of James Ostrander and Emma Winter Keller. The family moved to Indianapolis from New York in 1887 and lived at a number of addresses before settling at 684 Middle Drive, Woodruff Place. Annette attended Shortridge High School, graduating in 1901. She taught at Shortridge High School in 1910 and married Charles E. Shearer ca. 1912.

Sources:

Items in the collection.

"Indianapolis Persons Figure in River Tragedy, Former Resident Being Among Those Drowned," *Indianapolis News*, 9 May 1925, p. 4.

"Many Democrats Greet Their Chief," *Lafayette Journal and Courier*, 19 November 1907, p. 1.

"More Than Score Dead in Memphis River Tragedy," *Indianapolis News*, 9 May 1925, p.1.

Purdue University. *Purdue Debris*. Vol. 17. Lafayette, [1905?].

R. L. Polk and Co.'s Lafayette Directory, 1903-1904. Indianapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1903.

R. L. Polk and Co.'s Memphis Directory, 1905. Indianapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1905.

R. L. Polk and Co.'s Memphis Directory, 1925. Memphis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1925.

Shortridge High School Collection (M 0482), Indiana Historical Society Library.

Shortridge High School. *Annual*. Indianapolis: 1910.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains photographs, postcards, and manuscript material made or acquired by Charles E. Shearer and Annette Ostrander primarily between ca. 1901 and ca. 1908.

Series 1 contains seven folders of photographs and postcards. The Indianapolis photographs in folder 1 show a team portrait of the 1907 Junior Basketball Team at Shortridge High School and a photograph of the Indiana Gravel Company headquarters. Charles E. Shearer may have made the photograph on the occasion of the company's founding, ca. 1904. The owner of this company, Jesse Shearer, was Charles' uncle. The business was located on the east side of the White River, near Walnut Street.

Folder 2 contains two scenes in Lafayette. There is an image of William Jennings Bryan speaking to a large crowd of men, women and children at what appears to be the Tippecanoe Courthouse. Bryan spoke in Lafayette 18 November 1907. A postcard in the collection indicates that Shearer visited Indiana at that time and may have made the photograph during that same visit. The other Lafayette image is a street scene ca. 1901–1905. A large crowd of almost exclusively men is gathered on the northeast corner of Main and Third streets.

Folder 3 contains photographs made at Purdue University, West Lafayette. These include photographs of Charles E. Shearer and a group of young men celebrating in Shearer's boardinghouse room, ca. 1901–05. Shearer is identified in one of these three photographs. The young men in the photographs strike comic poses, while Shearer appears somber by comparison. Two photographs show Shearer's room decorated with Christmas cards, framed photographs, and a poster titled "The Two Orphans." One photograph, possibly an exterior of Shearer's boardinghouse, is titled "Die Hermat" on the verso. A photograph of the 1905 Purdue track team, likely made by Shearer, shows three unidentified runners at their blocks. This image appears on page 212 of the 1905 Purdue student yearbook, *The Debris*.

Folder 4 contains two images of students in art classes. One image may be a classroom at Shortridge High School. A sign with the number "07" is visible in the image, and may refer to the senior class of 1907. The other photograph shows young women working at easels in a painting class.

Folders 5, 6, and 7 contain postcards. In folder 5 are six postcards with correspondence to Charles E. Shearer from friends and Annette Ostrander. Two postcards published by the Scofield-Pierson Co., 146 North Pennsylvania Street, include the verse "Just Be Glad," by James Whitcomb Riley. The cards, advertised as "Riley Roses," appear to be a set of two published in 1907. Folder 6 includes views of Indianapolis, and folder 7 has scenes in Wabash, Greensburg, Tippecanoe, and Elkhart counties.

Series 2 contains manuscript material of a memoir of the Ostrander family written by Annette Ostrander Shearer in 1953. The memoir describes her childhood and her father's struggles as a businessman in Indianapolis and traveling salesman.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Photographs and postcards

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
[Indianapolis photographs]	Folder 1
[Scenes at Lafayette, Indiana]	Folder 2
[At Purdue]	Folder 3
[Art classes]	Folder 4
[Personal postcards]	Folder 5
[Postcards: scenes of Indianapolis]	Folder 6
[Postcards: scenes of Greensburg, Lafayette, and Wabash, Indiana]	Folder 7

Series 2: Manuscript materials

CONTENTS

Ostrander Memoir, "Far into the Past"

CONTAINER

Manuscript Collections,
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 0339).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.