

Collection #  
P 0598

**CITIZENS GAS & COKE UTILITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, TRUSTEES AND MANAGEMENT  
PHOTOGRAPH, 1965**

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Processed by

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7 August 2017

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William Henry Smith Memorial Library  
Indiana Historical Society  
450 West Ohio Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

[www.indianahistory.org](http://www.indianahistory.org)

## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF  
COLLECTION: 1 photograph folder

COLLECTION  
DATES: 1965

PROVENANCE: D.J. Angus-Sciencetech Educational Foundation, Indianapolis,  
2008

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ACCESSION  
NUMBER: 2008.0333

NOTES:

## **HISTORICAL SKETCH**

Citizens Gas & Coke Utility was founded in 1887 as Consumer Gas Trust Company after natural gas was discovered in areas around Indianapolis between 1851 and 1886. The company was formed through citizens' interests to have a consumer-focused gas provider in Indianapolis. Local marble monument man Arthur McKain was said to be the main voice for this movement. In 1902, in a guide to Indianapolis, Max Hyman wrote, "[to McKain] more than to all others must the credit be given that Indianapolis now has natural gas at a price less than one-third of the cost of hard fuel."

In 1887, the company was set up with a board of trustees, who would then appoint directors. By 1906, however, natural gas was nearly gone from Indian's fields and so another trust, the Citizens Gas Company, was added to the group to produce artificial gas and sell off its byproducts to finance operations -- namely coke, tar and ammonia.

By 1930, through a series of mergers, attempts to raise gas prices, surrendering of the charter for purchase and the city exercising a clause in the company's bylaws (from the mergers) to take over the facilities (followed by legal action against the city), Indianapolis took over control of the Citizens Gas Company. The transfer to the city was not completed until 1935 due to financial hardships of the Great Depression. Once funds were secure, the transfer to Indianapolis was completed and the company renamed Citizens Gas & Coke Utility.

In 1947, there was a large strike for worker autonomy and collective bargaining rights. It lasted only several months, as the workers had no leverage -- the production was unaffected by their absence. The workers were not rehired. The company converted to a mix of natural and artificial gas in 1951 after pressure from the public to go back to 100% natural gas.

By an agreement with the Panhandle Eastern Pipe Line of Texas, Citizens has been providing natural gas fuel for its customers since 1951. In the 1990s, approximately 85% of Citizens' customers use natural gas for fuel. The company also continues to produce naturalized coke, originally used for heating, but now sold to foundries and blast furnaces. In 1956 the company moved from the Majestic Building to its new headquarters at the 2000 block of N. Meridian. The Milburn By-Products Coal Company's name was changed to the Citizens By-Products Coal Company in 1957 to allow for the storage of underground gas.

In January 1965, Victor C. Seiter was made General Manager. At the same time, the board of directors switched from a management role to an administrative role for the company. Their first order of business was extending their natural gas purchases. Unfortunately, in February 1965, the record for gas consumption in the U.S. was broken.

Albert O. Deluse ( 5 Jan. 1905 - 10 August 1981) was a councilman of the Sixth District in Indianapolis, confirmed for 1963, 1964 and 1967. He was secretary of the Board of Trustees in 1965.

Robert "Bob" E. Houk ( 11 Sept. 1920 - 28 Feb. 2010) graduated from DePauw University in 1942. He served as a Lieutenant in the Navy Reserves and was the commanding officer of the U.S.S. SC 1278, P.C.S. 1429 and P.C.S. 1424 -- patrol and escort vessels in the Caribbean, South Pacific and Philippines during WWII. He married Marion Pfitzner on 5 Dec. 1942. After the war he became a real estate broker for the F.C. Tucker Company. He served on the boards of Citizens Gas and Coke Utility, First Indiana Federal Savings Bank, and State Life Insurance Company, Indianapolis Community Hospital, The Children's Museum, Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library Foundation, DePauw University Alumni Association, Flanner House and Meridian Street United Methodist Church. He was also director and president of the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors for a time. He had two children: David C. Houk and Julie Houk-Goodrich.

Victor C. Seiter (22 April 1903 - 12 Feb. 1992) was the General Manager of Citizens Gas & Coke Company from 1965 to 1973. He married Margaret C. Vyverberg on 22 Oct. 1932. They had one son, named Victor Carl Seiter, Jr..

Fred E. Shick (9 August 1905 - Sept. 1972) was President of the Lawyers Association of Indianapolis in 1939. He was on the board for the Citizens Gas & Coke Company in 1965. He was married to Elizabeth Jeanne Wilson. He was enlisted in the Army from 1942 to 1946.

Perry W. Lesh ( March 1896 - 8 July 1987) was educated at DePauw University. In July 1917 he enlisted at Fort Benjamin Harrison as a member of Battery A, 150th Field Artillery, 42nd Division and served in France during World War I attaining the rank of corporal. Lesh saw action at the St. Mihiel offensive, September-October 1918. Lesh was discharged in 1919. Upon returning to Indianapolis, he began working at the C. P. Lesh Paper Company and became the company's chairman in 1939. Lesh was also a founding member of The Service Club of Indianapolis, an organization founded in 1920 by veterans of the First World War. Lesh married Mary Hoke in 1921. They had two sons: Charles Perry Lesh and Frederick Hoke Lesh. He was on the board of Citizens Gas & Coke Utility in 1965.

Robert D. Pruitt ( 30 July 1938 - 14 Sept. 1994) married Linda K. Patterson on 15 Sept. 1956. He was Executive Vice president of Citizens Gas & Coke Utility (Vice President starting in 1981). He was on the board in 1965.

Carl D. Kantner (11 August 1912 - 11 May 2004) married Elizabeth Ann Hettmansperger on 28 Jan. 1938. They had two boys, Carl Fred Kantner on 21 May 1944 and Steven J. Kantner on 24 Oct. 1949, and one girl, Suanne S. Kantner in April 1946. Elizabeth passed in May 1965. Kantner remarried on 28 Jan. 1967 to Lela M. Smith. Kantner graduated from Ball State University for undergraduate studies and Indiana State University for graduate studies. He was president of the American Coke, Coal and Chemical Institute, Indianapolis Personnel Association and Marion County Tuberculosis Association. He was on the board of Citizens Gas & Coke Utility for 30 years, retiring as the Vice President of Product and By-Product Sales in 1980. He and his second wife moved to Florida upon his retirement, and returned to Indiana in 2002. They passed away in the same week in 2004.

Cloyd T. Thompson (18 Jan. 1921 - 30 Sept. 2014) married Lelia Cora Seybold on 13 June 1941. They had two daughters, Diane and Karen, and one son, Jerry. Thompson served in

the army during WWII. He retired as Senior Vice President from Citizens Gas & Coke Utility in 1984.

J. Albert Smith (8 March 1911 - 17 Oct. 1977) married Nellie Eleanor Bender on 24 April 1973. He was a member of the board of trustees for Citizens Gas & Coke Utility.

Fermor S. Cannon (4 August 1888 - 11 Dec. 1973) married Mary Lucetta Goss in 1913. He graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in architecture in 1911. He practiced his craft with Herbert and Bass in Indianapolis soon after graduation, before launching his own firm. He retired from the architecture field in 1954. He was on the board for Citizens Gas & Coke Utility in 1965.

William J. Stout (14 Dec. 1914 - 30 August 2000) adopted two children: David at age 5 in 1955 and Karen at age 2 in 1957. He was on the board for Citizens Gas & Coke Utility in 1965.

Richard B. "Dick" DeMars (6 Sept 1918 - 21 July 2003) was married to Joy W Geupel. He graduated from Purdue University with a degree in mechanical engineering in 1940. He started working at General Motors. DeMars served in the Army Corps of Engineers from 1942 to 1944, including at Okinawa. After the war he worked at L.S. Ayres and Co., before moving to Carl M. Geupel Construction Co., Inc. in 1951 where he became Vice President in 1962 and President in 1965. He continued as President and Chairman for the successor company, Geupel DeMars, Inc. He oversaw the construction of the Circle Centre Mall, Indianapolis Zoo, Children's Museum, Arts Garden, Methodist Hospital, Community Hospital, Omni North Hotel, Embassy Suites Hotel, National City Plaza, Soldiers and Sailors Monument renovation, Indiana Historical Society, numerous projects for Eli Lilly and Indianapolis Airport, and historical renovations of Circle Theatre and Indiana Roof Ballroom. He was Director and Executive Committee member of the Associated General Contractors of America and was Board Chairman for the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce (twice), Indiana Chamber of Commerce (twice) - the only person to have ever been Chairman of both of these organizations - Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee, Corporate Community Council, United Way of Central Indiana, Indianapolis Economic Club, Community Hospital Trustees, and Central Indiana Boy Scouts of America. He was a board member of the Christian Theological Seminary, Indiana Academy, Hanover College (Board Chairman for seven years.), Citizen's Gas & Coke Utility, Indianapolis Life Insurance Co., Hoosier Motor Club, Arthur Jordan Foundation, President Benjamin Harrison Foundation, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and the Indianapolis Economic Development Corporation. He was also Chairman of the President's Council at Purdue University. He received the Sagamore of the Wabash award four times (four different governors), the highest award for an Indiana civilian. He was married two other times, having one child with his second wife, Susie, and four children with his third wife, Sally.

Gregg Ransburg (27 June 1909 - 26 Dec. 1997) was married to Marjory Ransburg. He was on the board of trustees at Citizens Gas & Coke Utility.

William J. Sullivan (8 July 1919 - 6 Nov. 2014) was married to Charlotte Williams in 1942 in Glen Ellyn, IL. He graduated from Illinois College in 1941. He served in the Air Force in North Africa, Italy, Sardinia and Corsica. After his time in the army he became an actuary at the State Life Insurance Company in Indianapolis. He retired from there in 1985 as CEO. He married again in 1991 to Jacquie Matney Clark, expanding his family to 88

children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren. He was awarded a Sagamore of the Wabash by Gov. Robert D. Orr. Sullivan was on the board of directors for Citizens Gas & Coke Utility.

Richard A. Steele (8 Jan. 1927 - 11 Jan 2013) graduated from Manuel High School in Indianapolis and entered the Navy as an electronics technician. He was discharged in 1946 and attended Butler University. After graduation he signed on with the finance team at Citizens Gas & Coke Utility. He was recalled to the Navy's Supply Corps for two years, before returning to Citizens Gas, where he would work his way to President and CEO, serving in that capacity for 13 years until his retirement. He spent his entire working life at Citizens Gas & Coke Utility. He also served as chairman for The American Red Cross (Indianapolis), Indianapolis Community Hospital and the President Harrison Home. He was also a board member of the Indianapolis Life Insurance Company, Lilly Industrial Coatings, Indiana National Bank, Mayflower Corporation and Fairbanks Broadcasting. He was awarded Sagamore of the Wabash by Governor Otis Bowen in 1980. He and his wife, Jean, had two sons, Richard Jr. and William, and one daughter, Carol.

Clifford J. Hart (?-?) was on the board of Citizens Gas & Coke Utility in 1965.

Donald J. Angus (17 June 1887 - Oct. 1966) was a self-made engineer-inventor. Angus made a significant impact on science education in Indiana for generations. D.J. was born to parents John and May Angus in Wisconsin in 1887, followed by his brother Francis two years later. The young boys, lifelong companions, were exposed to hard work and engineering at a young age through their father who owned a farm and later worked for a tool company. A hands-on learner, D.J. left school at 16 to pursue a career and landed his first full-time job as a machine repairman. Although he never completed high school, he did attend, as an occasional student, engineering classes of his choice at the University of Wisconsin and Michigan State University. After gaining invaluable work experience as an electrician and mechanic in Wisconsin and Michigan, D.J. moved to Indiana in 1910 to work on a new steam hydroelectric plant near Bedford, where he met engineer and professor John W. Esterline. One of his early major projects was design and installation of hydraulic plant and distributing system for the district at Williams, Lawrence County, Ind. (1909-1912). The entire Bedford Stone District of Indiana, one of the largest industrial electrifications in the United States, was managed by Angus for some time after the completion of the project. He became progressively expert on electrical measuring and recording devices, and was selected during World War I to design a totalizing meter for the Mississippi River Company plant at Keokuk, Iowa. After a brief stint exploring the U.S. via motorcycle, D.J. returned to Indiana and created, in 1910, a business partnership with Esterline which resulted in the Esterline-Angus Instrument Company, an Indianapolis-based manufacturer of graphic recording meters. During his lifetime he was granted 47 patents on electrical and mechanical devices. Shortly after moving to Indianapolis, D.J. joined with other engineers, architects, and scientists to form the Sciencetech Club of Indianapolis in 1918. The members met on a regular basis to exchange information and ideas on science and technology in relation to current events. D.J. was also active in the Radio Club of Indianapolis, where he met young student Robert B. "R.B." Annis in 1922. D.J. became a lifelong mentor and friend to Annis, even encouraging him to return to high school after he had dropped out. Through their club associations D.J. and R.B. explored the U.S. through many camping trips and boating excursions aboard the *Angus*, the yacht D.J.

had built in 1939. These trips often included D.J.'s younger brother Francis, who had settled in Grand Haven, Michigan with his wife and sons. D.J., with no children of his own, had a strong influence on his nephews John and Charles (Chuck), who later continued their family's interest in scientific innovation. Before and during World War II, the Esterline-Angus Instrument Company was able to fulfill a need for military instruments that would help in defense and battle. Particularly helpful was the Esterline-Angus recorder and magnetometer which could locate submarines around the U.S. coasts. As new computer technology began to affect all major industries, D.J. Angus and his executives decided to sell Esterline-Angus in 1960 and leave future owners to forge the path for computerizing graphic instruments. He was on the board for Citizens Gas & Coke Utility in 1965. D.J. retired with the sale of the company and passed away in 1966, leaving much of his legacy with Grand Valley State University near his Spring Lake, Michigan home. His family papers, cherished photographs, and the Angus were among his gifts to the university. His hope was that these contributions would be of use for years to come. To pay tribute to their dear friend and mentor, members of the Sciencetech Club formed the D.J. Angus-Sciencetech Educational Foundation in 1967. Chuck Angus was very involved in establishing and funding this organization. Among other projects, the foundation provided for the upkeep of the Angus and what would become Grand Valley State's Annis Water Resources Institute. D.J.'s nephew Chuck followed in his Uncle D.J.'s footsteps and carried on his family's interest in science and education. Through hard work, modest living and dedication, D.J. Angus was able to achieve great success in his field while also influencing future generations of young scientists through his mentoring activities and his legacy. Numerous educational opportunities for students have been provided through the support of D.J. Angus-Sciencetech Educational Foundation and the R.B. Annis Educational Foundation. D.J. Angus' influence can still be seen today in Indianapolis and beyond in organizations such as the Indiana Historical Society, Annis Water Resources Institute, and The Children's Museum.

George S. Diener (?-?) was on the board of Citizens Gas & Coke Utility in 1964 and 1965. He married Nancy Hurt on 30 June 1940. They had two daughters, Susan and Ruth, and one son, Bill.

Robert D. Morgan (1 Oct. 1916 - 21 Sept. 1997) was on the board for Citizens Gas & Coke Utility in 1965.

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"Richard A. Steele Obituary." Indianapolis Star. 15 Jan. 2013.

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Nancy H. Diener collection, Genealogy Division, Indiana State Library.

Item in Collection.



## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection contains one photograph of the Board of Directors, Board of Trustees and Operating Management for Citizens Gas & Coke Utility on December 14, 1965. The photo was framed by the Community Glass Service Co. as indicated by a stamp on a photocopy of the backing of the frame. A label with the names of those in the photo was also glued to the backing and can be seen in the photocopy. It reads "Front row, seated: Albert O. Deluse, Robert E. Houk, Victor C. Seiter, Fred E. Shick" and "Rear row, standing: Perry W. Lesh, Robert D. Pruitt, Carl D. Kantner, Cloyd T. Thompson, J. Albert Smith, Fermor S. Cannon, William J. Stout, Richard B. DeMars, Gregg Ransburg, William J. Sullivan, Richard A. Steele, Clifford J. Hart, Donald J. Angus, George S. Diener, Robert D. Morgan."

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