

**Collection #  
M0634**

**DORA ATKINS BLACKBURN  
PAPERS, 1926–1978**

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Processed by

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: .5 manuscript box; 2 photograph folders; 1 oversize photo folder

COLLECTION DATES: 1910-1978

PROVENANCE: Dora Atkins Blackburn, 25 E. 40<sup>th</sup> Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46208

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1990.0778

NOTES:

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Dora Atkins Blackburn (1903–2001), the daughter of Dr. Calvin R. and Dora Graham Atkins, was born in Anderson, Indiana. She was educated at local schools in Indianapolis and graduated from Butler University in 1926. After the death of their parents in 1923, she and her sister Murray Atkins took over Atkins Flower Shop. Dora was a college freshman and Murray was a local school teacher. Their mother had operated the flower shop as a home business in Indianapolis since 1921.

Dora Blackburn was married to Cecil Powell; later she married Cleo Blackburn. She had four stepchildren from these two unions.

She operated the Atkins Flower Shop in Indianapolis for fifty-six years. In 1926, she moved the shop to 209 West 21<sup>st</sup> Street. In 1949, the shop moved to 2049 North Capitol Avenue.

Blackburn was a member of North United Methodist Church, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, Booklovers, Indianapolis Links, and Northeasterners. She served on the boards of the Alpha Home, Flanner House, and the Indianapolis Art League.

Source: Materials in the collection.

*Indianapolis Recorder* newspaper digital collection:  
<http://ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections/IRecorder>

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains material that pertains to Dora Atkins Blackburn, her family, and her business. The contents relate to the Blackburn genealogy; Blackburn's mother, Dora Graham Atkins; and her father, Calvin R. Atkins. A 1937 letter from Arthur T. Long, a California resident (who knew Blackburn when she was a child), makes reference to an article about Blackburn that appeared in *Opportunity*, the news magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Blackburn owned Atkins Flower Shop in Indianapolis for over fifty years. The collection contains photographs and news clippings about the business. There is also a guest list from the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the business. Mayor William H. Hudnut proclaimed November 20, 1977 Dora Atkins Blackburn day in Indianapolis. A copy of the proclamation is in folder 7.

There are several photographs of Blackburn in the collection. Dora Atkins Blackburn attended local schools in Indianapolis. As a second grader, she learned to crochet at School #26. There is a 1910 photograph of Blackburn with three classmates crocheting at school. There are photographs of the Atkins Flower Shop including exterior and interior images of its buildings, a delivery truck, employees, and flower arrangements.

Two items of note in the collection relate to Calvin R. Atkins, Dora Blackburn's father who was a surgeon. In folder 11, there is a copy of the first annual report (1910) of Lincoln Hospital. Lincoln Hospital was established by black physicians to serve African Americans in Indianapolis at a time of rigid segregation and critical health care concerns. Dr. Atkins was an officer of the hospital's board. In a speech (ca. 1938) about Flanner House (folder 12), Dr. L. Aldridge Lewis pays homage to Calvin R. Atkins.

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Atkins Family Biographical Information

Dora Atkins Blackburn, 1926–1971

Dora Atkins with classmates, Sophronia Dyer, Aline \_\_\_\_\_, Herbert Nelson at IPS, #26 in 1910

School Scenes, ca. 1916

Dora Graham Atkins

Calvin R. Atkins clippings, nd., 1923

Correspondence, 1937

Atkins Flower Shop, ca. 1926–1950s

Atkins Flower Shop clippings, 1926-1971

Atkins Flower Shop guest list for Open House, 1971 (50<sup>th</sup> anniversary)

Mayor's Proclamation for Dora A. Blackburn Day, 1977

Lincoln Hospital Annual Report, 1910

Flanner House Speech by Dr. L. Aldridge Lewis

### CONTAINER

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Photographs  
Folder 1

Photographs  
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## 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://opac.indianahistory.org/>
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, M0634).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.