

FRENCH LICK SPRINGS HOTEL SCRAPBOOKS, 1926-1927

Collection #:
BV 3203-3208

Table of Contents

[Collection Information](#)
[Historical and Biographical Sketch](#)
[Scope and Content Note](#)
[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by
Chris Harter
8 January 1998

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 7 bound volumes

COLLECTION DATES: September 1926-July 1927

PROVENANCE: French Lick Springs Hotel (now French Lick Springs Resort), French Lick, Indiana, 47432, 1968

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: None

ACCESSION NUMBERS: 1968.0009

NOTES:

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In late nineteenth and early twentieth century America a trend occurred involving the establishment of hotels near mineral springs. The springs were believed to hold medicinal properties, and many of these new luxury resorts were patterned after the concept of a European spa. In the early 1830's Dr. Thomas C. Bowles purchased 1,500 acres of land surrounding the largest mineral springs near French Lick, Indiana (Orange Co.). His son, William A., built the first hotel on the land, and it soon became extremely popular. William eventually acquired the rights to the land in the 1850's. During his service in the Mexican War (which ended in controversy), Bowles leased the hotel to Dr. John Long, who later built a competing hotel in nearby West Baden.

Following the death of William Bowles in 1873, ownership of the hotel and property was in dispute for a decade. In 1883 a group of local citizens formed the French Lick Springs Hotel Company and purchased the property. After a fire at the hotel, it was sold to a group of men headed by Indianapolis mayor Thomas Taggart. Taggart expanded the property, added new buildings and a golf course, and used his political clout to get a portion of the Monon railroad to serve the French Lick valley. Later, when he became National Democratic Chairman, the hotel was a center for party activities. The Taggart family's ties to the hotel ended when Thomas, Jr. sold the hotel to a New York syndicate in 1946. The hotel operates today as the French Lick Springs Resort.

See card catalog under headings: French Lick Springs Hotel and French Lick Springs Hotel Company.

Thomas Taggart (1856-1929) was born in County Monaghan, Ireland, and emigrated with his family to the United States at the age of six, settling in Xenia, Ohio. He came to Indianapolis in 1877 to run the restaurant at the Union Station. He immediately became involved in Democratic politics, and worked his way up through the party ranks. Taggart was Democratic state chairman from 1892 to 1894. He then served three terms (1895-1901) as mayor of Indianapolis. In this position he worked for street paving and railroad track elevation, and especially for city parks, buying the land for several parks, including Riverside Park which was later renamed for him.

In 1900 Taggart lost control of the city Democratic organization to southside "Potato King" James Keach. Instead he moved to the party's national level, serving on the Democratic National Committee from 1900 to 1916, and as national chairman during the 1904 presidential campaign between Theodore Roosevelt and Judge Alton B. Parker. He was given credit for getting Indiana's Thomas R. Marshall second place on the 1912 national Democratic ticket with Woodrow Wilson. In 1916 Taggart was appointed U. S. Senator to fill a vacant seat, but he was defeated for reelection. Taggart was successful in many business ventures, the most ambitious of which was the resort hotel at French Lick Springs in southern Indiana.

See also: OMB 030, Thomas Taggart Scrapbook, 1904; and OMB 031, Thomas Taggart Scrapbook, 1929

Sources: Frederick, David. "Pluto Water Draws Frenchmen and FDR to Indiana" *Indiana Preservationist*. (March-April 1989) p. 5.

Haupt, Richard Walter. "History of French Lick Springs Hotel. passim.

Indiana Biographical Series, Vol. 4 pp. 251-270

Who Was Who in America, Vol. I

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of seven scrapbooks (September 1926-July 1927) containing newspaper clippings about events in French Lick, Indiana. The scrapbook covers read: "Thomas R. Shipp, Inc., Washington, D.C., for French Lick Springs Hotel, Thomas D. Taggart, President." Shipp, Inc. was probably a clipping service; the clippings are from papers across the United States. They mainly concern meetings or conventions that took place in French Lick, possibly at the hotel. Five of the scrapbooks contain clippings concerning an annual meeting between representatives of professional minor and major league baseball teams. Below is a list of the scrapbooks and the focus of their contents.

BV 3202 National Wholesale Druggists Association

BV 3203 Professional Baseball

BV 3204 Professional Baseball

BV 3205	Professional Baseball
BV 3206	Professional Baseball
BV 3207	Professional Baseball
BV 3208	Society of Automotive Engineers

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](#)
2. Click on the "Local Catalog" icon.
3. Search for the collection by its call number, using the letter or letters designation and **four** digits (e.g., M 0715, SC 2234).
4. When you find the collection, go to the "Holdings" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

END