

Collection #
P 0536

HARLEY MOTE COLLECTION OF FLOOD PHOTOGRAPHS, 1913

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 18 postcards (17 are real photo postcards) and 15 photographs

COLLECTION DATES: March–May, 1913

PROVENANCE: Gift from Helen L. Zornes of Indianapolis, June 2008

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2008.0180

NOTES: For more flood photographs, see: Indiana Flood Photographs, 1904–1959 (P 0475); Lambert M. Christie Postcard Album, 1913 (P 0326); Jay Small Postcard Collection (P 0391); Stereograph Collection (P 0402); Indiana Postcard Collection (P 0408); and Louis and Elma Gillaspay Hoyt Photographs, 1913 (P 0453)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Harrold Harley Mote, who appears to have gone by his middle name, was born 12 June 1890 (some sources say 5 August 1890) in Garfield, Montgomery County, Indiana. He was the son of Orin and Ada Vance Mote, who married in Montgomery County in 1889. The 1913 city directory lists Harley as living on Westmoreland Avenue in Indianapolis and working as a druggist at Mote & Kneale at 3401 West Michigan Street. He married Ada Anna Gray on 28 January 1917 in Indianapolis. He served in the military in a medical capacity from March 1918 to September 1919. He died 18 December 1959 and was buried in Washington Park Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Denise A. DeWerpe (b. July 1893) and Louise DeWerpe (b. ca. 1904) were two of the daughters of Belgian immigrants August (b. 1862) and Alice (b. 1866) DeWerpe. August and Alice married and immigrated to the United States around 1892. At the time of the 1900 census the family lived in Richland, Grant County, Indiana. By 1910 the family had moved to Cicero in Hamilton County, but had moved again to New Castle in Henry County by 1913.

It is not known how Harley Mote and Denise DeWerpe knew each other.

Sources:

Indiana Find a Grave Index, 1800–2012 (www.findagrave.com). Accessed 14 May 2014.

Indiana Select Marriages, 1780–1992 (<http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/>). Accessed 14 May 2014.

U.S. Census, 1900, 1910 (<http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/>). Accessed 14 May 2014.

U.S. City Directories, 1821–1989 (<http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/>). Accessed 14 May 2014.

U.S. Headstone Applications for Military Veterans, 1925–1963 (<http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/>). Accessed 14 May 2014.

U.S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918 (<http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/>). Accessed 14 May 2014.

U.S. World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942 (<http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/>). Accessed 14 May 2014.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The worst flood in Indiana's history occurred in March 1913. The flood affected much of the Midwest and Ohio River Valley, especially Ohio and the central two-thirds of Indiana. Over a five-day period beginning on Easter Sunday, 23 March, rainfall totaled six inches in Indianapolis and up to twelve inches in areas north of the city. Previous rains had saturated the ground, causing the excess water to flow to rivers and creeks. In Indianapolis, levees failed, sending water rushing through the city, especially in the western part where some areas were under thirty feet of water. Statewide the flood killed about 200 people and left about 200,000 homeless.

Source:

Collection Guide for Indiana Flood Photographs (P 0475).

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of 18 postcards (17 of which are real photo postcards) and 15 small photographs of Indianapolis during the flood of March 1913. All 33 images are black-and-white.

Series 1, Postcards: The 18 postcards were all sent by Harley Mote from Indianapolis between 12 April and 8 May 1913. Seventeen of them were mailed to Denise DeWerpe in New Castle, Indiana; one was sent to her younger sister Louise at the same address. His messages include mentions of the weather, his outings, seeing a house float down the river, and the store where he works. He inquires about Denise's injured hand and arrangements of an upcoming visit from Denise and Martha (one of Denise's sisters). In his note to Louise he mentions her little brother, Allen. The postcards depict extensive flooding and damage of residential and industrial areas, a broken levee, railroad tracks, and streetcars, horses, and men canoeing in flooded streets.

Series 2, Photographs: The photos all have notes written on the back by Harley Mote. These notes are all dated on the 26th or 27th of March 1913 except for one that is not dated. The photos show flooding in residential and industrial areas, trees in water, and railroad tracks. One photo seems out of place, showing trees in snow.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Postcards – Indianapolis Flood, March 1913

| CONTENTS | CONTAINER |
|---|-----------------------|
| River Avenue, West Indianapolis. | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| Brilliant Theatre, [1201 Nordyke Ave.?] West Indianapolis, ruined by flood. | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| Break in levee on White River (A. Ludwig photo). | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| Buildings carried from (?) Railroad to Kentucky Avenue (photo by B.B. Montgomery & Co.). | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| In the path of the flood [shows upturned building]. | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| Foundry of Nordyke & Marmon wrecked by flood (photo by B.B. Montgomery & Co.). | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| Ruins of house carried by flood from 1640 W. Walnut St. to Michigan Ave. (photo by B.B. Montgomery & Co.). Message on back by Harley Mote: “Here’s a house carried up to W. Mich. St. car line. I saw it as it floated down the River.” | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| Pearl Street, West Indianapolis. | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| Houses moved from their foundations by flood, Kentucky Avenue. | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| White River from Washington Street, 25 March. | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| Ruins of West Washington Street Bridge. Shows Uneeda Biscuit sign on building. | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| Claypool Hotel, Indianapolis. “My! How our neighbors exaggerate. It was reported in Chicago that the flood was in the 3 rd floor of the Claypool Hotel. This is how it might have looked had such been true. But none of the guests got their feet wet.” | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| Riverside Park, 25 March. Mechanically produced postcard ©H.H. Coburn Co. | Photographs, Folder 1 |

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| Water Company in distance from North. [There appears to be some snow on the ground.] (Photo by Howard) | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| House surrounded by water. (Photo by Howard) | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| West New York Street, 25 March. Shows men in canoes paddling down the street. | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| Oliver Avenue, West Indianapolis, 27 March. (Photo by Ludwig) | Photographs, Folder 1 |
| Streetcars caught in flood. Harley Mote's message on back: "This picture was taken just as my mother & I were being ferried across." | Photographs, Folder 1 |

Series 2: Photographs – Indianapolis Flood, March 1913

| CONTENTS | CONTAINER |
|--|-----------------------|
| "Looking Southwest toward [West Indianapolis?]," n.d. | Photographs, Folder 2 |
| "Looking North from elevated tracks toward where W. [Washington] Bridge was washed away," 26 March. | Photographs, Folder 2 |
| "School No. 16 where 300 people took refuge. They had no food or heat for three days," 26 March. | Photographs, Folder 2 |
| "Looking East from Belmont toward part of N. Indpls," 26 March [shows trees in snow]. | Photographs, Folder 2 |
| "Part of Northeast part of W.I. [West Indianapolis?]," 26 March. | Photographs, Folder 2 |
| "I walked through water to get this. Just after I left the yard caved in. Blain Ave. looking north," 26 March. | Photographs, Folder 2 |
| "This was taken just half a square north of where your cousin lives," 26 March. | Photographs, Folder 2 |
| [Tree in water, West Indianapolis], 26 March. | Photographs, Folder 2 |
| [Tree in water, West Indianapolis], 26 March. | Photographs, Folder 2 |

“Only way to get to town from W.I. [West Indianapolis?] & Haughville during flood. Big Four & C.H. & D. elevated tracks,” 27 March. [Shows person walking along the railroad tracks.]

Photographs, Folder 2

“Looking toward Mich. [Michigan] St. from Bank Ave. Thurs. March 27, 13. I was ferried along where you see those scattered houses.”

Photographs, Folder 2

“Looking toward main part of Indpls. From Haughville. Here is where I was nearly caught by the River. The bank caved in just as I was leaving,” 27 March.

Photographs, Folder 2

“W. Mich. St. Bridge. The only bridge in Indpls over White River which was not condemned,” 27 March.

Photographs, Folder 2

“Street car barns under 9 ft. of water,” 27 March.

Photographs, Folder 2

“Water covering W. Wash. St. [Washington Street] circus grounds,” 27 March.

Photographs, Folder 2

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, P 0536).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.