

Collection #
P 0602

INDIANAPOLIS SIGNBOARD PHOTOGRAPHS, CA. 1930S–1960S

[Collection Information](#)

[Historical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 photograph box

COLLECTION
DATES: 1930's–1960's

PROVENANCE: William B. Lewis, Indianapolis, IN; 2 January 1979

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE
FORMATS:

RELATED
HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION
NUMBER: 1979.0107

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Tomlinson Hall: Indianapolis citizen Stephen D. Tomlinson left it in his will that his estate should be turned into public buildings for the city after his wife also passed. It read " He passed on November 14, 1870. His wife made a contract in 1871 by which the city would take ownership of the property and she would receive \$7,000 per year until her death. Tomlinson Hall was then constructed in 1885–86. The approximate cost of the building, with running water and heating, was \$137,500. On January 30, 1958, a four-alarm fire engulfed the building. Despite public dissent, the building was razed on July 8, 1958 as it could not be saved. It was not reconstructed.

Sunset Terrace: With the end of prohibition in the United States, several night clubs and taverns sprang up along Indiana Avenue after 1933. The Sunset Terrace was one of the many properties within the area owned by brothers Denver and Sea Ferguson. The 1950s were part of a golden era of jazz for the city. Several nationally known artists called Indianapolis home during this time period, including Wes Montgomery, the Hampton Sisters, and J.J. Johnson. Many noted venues throughout the city featured both local and national performers. Indiana Avenue, in particular, was a hub for jazz activity with clubs such as Sunset Terrace, George's Bar and the Cotton Club.

Murat Theatre: Now known as the Old National Centre, the Murat Theatre was built in 1909–1910. According to *Broadway In Indianapolis*, "Upon its completion the Murat Temple was one of the nation's largest Masonic Shrines and the world's only Shrine temple with a French-originating name." The Old National Centre is located along Massachusetts Avenue, one of Indianapolis' art and culture hubs.

Victory Field (original): The Indianapolis Indians got their start at Perry Stadium, named after owner Norman Perry's deceased brother James. Perry sold the field to Indianapolis entrepreneur Frank McKinney and player/manager Owen "Donie" Bush in 1941. With growing patriotism with the entrance into WWII, Indianapolis citizens voted for the name to be changed to Victory Field, after the new owners created a renaming contest. In 1943, Victory Field also became home to the Indianapolis Clowns, an official Negro League team. Despite baseball's integration in the 1950's (full integration occurred in 1959), the Clowns continued to play into the 1960's. Hank Aaron made his debut for the Clowns in 1951, at 18 years old. In 1967, Indianapolis bought the field and it was renamed Bush Stadium after Donie Bush. The field was also host to minor league football in the 1960's. It remained Bush stadium until 1992 when Major League Baseball said the stadium did not meet league standards for AAA. The cost to refurbish was too high, so the city built the new Victory Field in White River State Park. Bush stadium still partially stands and is also host to Stadium Lofts apartments.

Sources:

Brown, Tiffany Benedict. "Favorite Friday of the Forgotten...Tomlinson Hall." Historic Indianapolis | All Things Indianapolis History. December 19, 2016.

<<http://historicindianapolis.com/favorite-friday-of-the-forgottentomlinson-hall/>>.

Wilmot, Kathryn. Flanner House Records. Indiana Historical Society. Archives. M513 Box 1 Folder 9 002.

"Murat Theatre at Old National Centre — Indianapolis, IN." Broadway In Indianapolis.

<<http://indianapolis.broadway.com/venues/theaters/murat-theatre-old-national-centre/>>.

Elena Rippel, Abby Curtin, "Bush Stadium," Discover Indiana.

<<http://indyhist.iupui.edu/items/show/52>>.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of photographs of signboards attached to a truck, used for advertising various events and locations. Featured signboards include Sunset Terrace/ Sky Club, Tomlinson Hall, Victory Field, and the Indianapolis Clowns. Most of the advertisements are for music, especially band/orchestra and R&B or jazz, or for sporting events, including boxing, football, basketball and baseball.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Miscellaneous 3.5" x 5" photographs

Miscellaneous event photographs

Grand openings photographs

Religious sign photographs

Louis Jordan ad photographs

Murat Theatre sign photographs

Sunset Terrace event photographs

Tomlinson Hall event photographs

Sports: Boxing ad photographs

Sports: Basketball ad photographs

Sports: Football ad photographs

Sports: Baseball/Negro League ad photographs

Miscellaneous 8" x 10" photographs

CONTAINER

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 1

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 2

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 3

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 4

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 5

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 6

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 7

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 8

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 9

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 10

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 11

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 12

Photographs
Box 1, Folder 13