

Collection #  
P0149

## NATIONAL SURGICAL INSTITUTE PHOTOGRAPHS, CA. 1892

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### COLLECTION INFORMATION

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| VOLUME OF<br>COLLECTION: | 1 folder containing 15 photographs     |
| COLLECTION<br>DATES:     | Ca. 1892                               |
| PROVENANCE:              | Aubrey Diller, Bloomington, Ind., 1978 |

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Herman List Collection (P0017)  
*National Surgical Institute Indianapolis* : The Institute, 1876.  
General Collection: R149.N3 1876.  
*National Surgical Institute*: Clipping File: Reference Room Collection.

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1978.0511

NOTES: The photographs came from the donor's Aunt Fannie C. Diller (d. 1955) who was a patient at the Surgical Institute at the time of the fire.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

Launched by Dr. Horace R. Allen in 1858 in Indianapolis the National Surgical Institute became an internationally famed clinic/hospital for congenital deformities. Born the second of seven children in Nelsonville, Ohio, Allen graduated from Ohio University. He enrolled at Western Reserve University in Cleveland to study medicine. Following graduation he spent a short time in Charleston, Illinois, before coming to Indianapolis. Here he established (1858) the first clinic/hospital of its kind in the country.

He served with an Illinois regiment in the Civil War and distinguished himself as a surgeon. Wounded in action and subsequently discharged (1863) he returned to the Hoosier capital where he bought a hotel—two four-story buildings—on the northeast corner of Illinois and Georgia streets, and launched the National Surgical Institute. The buildings accommodated reception areas, offices, a treatment room, pharmacy, a surgical theatre, child care, and a machine shop where two dozen or more men milled and assembled instruments and appliances that Dr. Allen either designed or improved upon.

The Institute paid special attention to treating limb, hip and facial deformities. The facility later accepted patients suffering from tumors, sinus and nervous problems, stuttering, feminine disorders, and more. In time the N.S.I. expanded, establishing satellite services in Atlanta, Philadelphia and San Francisco. At the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition (World's Fair 1876) the Institute's display of Allen's patented surgical and mechanical appliances took high honors.

A devastating fire occurred at the Institute on 21 January 1892 in which 19 people were killed and several other patients were injured. Allen rebuilt his Institute at the corner of Ohio and Capitol streets. Because of financial stress he entrusted the operation of the Institute to his family and colleagues, left town (1895), and settled in Chicago where he established yet another institute. In 1898, the Institute which had treated more than 50,000 patients went into receivership and the building was occupied by the Medical College of Indiana. The building later became the Imperial Hotel and the site is now a parking lot.

Allen died in Chicago of diabetes on 13 February 1900. He and his wife (nee Harriet E. Shepherd) were the parents of

four children.

Sources:

*A Biographical History of Eminent and Self-Made Men of the State of Indiana: with many portrait-illustrations on steel, engraved expressly for this work.* Cincinnati: Western Biographical Publishing Co., 1880. Reference Room Collection: F525 .B67 1880

Kemper, G. W. H. *A Medical History of the State of Indiana.* Chicago, Ill. : American Medical Association Press, 1911. Reference Room Collection: R217.K5 1911.

Russo, Dorothy R. *One hundred Years of Indiana Medicine, 1849-1949: published in connection with the centennial of the Indiana State Medical Association.* [Indianapolis: s.n.], 1949. General Collection: R217.R8 1949.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection is made up of one folder containing 15 black-and-white photographs. The images show views of the interior and exterior of the National Surgical Institute before and after the fire of 1892, employees or patients, and Dr. Allen's residence. There are notes written on the verso of most of the photographs. These have been transcribed in the Contents section of the collection guide. The processor's descriptions of each image are in square brackets.

## CONTENTS

### CONTENTS

Dr. H. R. Allen's residence, [679 N. Delaware Street] Indianapolis, Ind.

N.S.I. three buildings [exterior view of National Surgical Institute buildings]

Old Maids Hall [exterior of Institute's small building]

Weddell House [exterior of Surgical Institute Annex]

View in main treatment room [room with equipment and attendant]

Georgia Street Building [exterior view of building after the fire]

Bird's eye view of part of city Indianapolis, Ind. [elevated view of burned-out ruins of Institute]

Dr. Allen's private office after the fire

View of dining room in ruins

Ruins of Georgia St. building

### CONTAINER

Photographs:  
Folder 1

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The room Mrs. Dr. Burtman[?] was in the night of fire and where our little child was burned [woman standing in ruins of a room]

Photographs:  
Folder 1

The N.S.I "Giddy Gang" "Breck," "Tid," "Soupe," "Zookir," "Snick," "Bodgr" [six young women]

Photographs:  
Folder 1

The Four Treatment Boys, Chester, William, Robert, & Jerry [four African-American men]

Photographs:  
Folder 1

[five young women sitting in a large basket]  
[one young man wearing a suit and derby hat]

Photographs:  
Folder 1

## 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, P0149).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.