



**CUSTOM EXTERIOR & INTERIOR SIGNS**

STALEY SIGNS, INC.  
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**DESIGN, MANUFACTURE, INSTALL & SERVICE**

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## HISTORY OF STALEY SIGNS, INC.

In 1908, Frank Durward Staley and Cecil D. Crabb founded Staley & Crabb when they were just barely out of their teens, with the purpose of making and selling hand painted signs to the growing city of Indianapolis from a storefront at 8 ½ E. Washington St.

They soon were selling show cards to motion picture theatres, most of which could be delivered on foot or by bicycle.

Within a short time they were painting two and three story tall signs on the walls of downtown buildings, "Mail Pouch Tobacco" signs on the sides of barns, and advertising boards along railroads and streets around town.

In 1918, they took on a partner, Floris Thomas, who had a sign company located at 346 S. Pennsylvania St. They joined forces in the building that Thomas had been leasing. The company was now Staley, Crabb, and Thomas, Inc.

Thomas resigned in 1920 and the name reverts to Staley and Crabb.

In 1927 the business builds a new office and shop at 515 Liberty St., just north of Lockerbie Square. Liberty St. later becomes Park Ave.

By this time, electrical light bulb signs are becoming popular. Staley and Crabb became a local leader in manufacturing and installing theatre marquees with illuminated bulbs mounted within the lettering. The Indiana Theatre and Circle Theatre were among many that they made and installed in town.

By the 1930's, F.D. (Nip) Staley, Jr. becomes the youngest master electrician in town and directs his attention to neon and electrical signs. Staley and Crabb is the first locally owned sign company to manufacture and install neon signs to businesses.

In 1938, Cecil Crabb resigns and sells his interest to the Staleys. The company incorporates under the name of Staley Signs, Inc. by 1947.

During World War 2, they formed a company, Staley and Son Industries, to machine war time parts such as tank treads. Many of the employees, including Mrs. Staley, Jr. worked nights in this capacity. The sign company was restricted to maintaining signs during the day.

After the war, Staley Signs, went into full production of neon and elaborate signs identifying many local banks, department stores, theaters, and many businesses.

Staley, Sr. invented and patented an imitation of a neon sign utilizing a molded glass sign face with light bulbs and reflectors in a metal cabinet. He formed a subsidiary company by the name of "Lum-On" which only lasted a few years.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's the company made neon "Walk/Wait" signs for the City.

In 1963, F. Douglas Staley, third generation, started working as a helper and worked in various aspects of the business including painting, wiring, service, and installation. He continued to work into management with his father until 1983, when his father retired and they signed a purchase agreement.

Over the years Staley Signs provided signage for banks such as "AFNB", Merchants Bank, and Indiana National Bank. They made and installed the 10' tall letter on the top façade of the INB Building in 1970. L.S. Ayres, Blocks, L. Strauss were among their department store customers, along with many insurance companies.

In 1997, Doug Staley, Jr., fourth generation Staley, graduated from IU and joined the company on a full time basis learning all phases of the business, including sales and management, in addition to service and installation which he had experienced during the summers while in high school.

Currently, the third and fourth generation Staleys, manage the business together with a continued emphasis on high quality workmanship, customer service, and ethics in manufacturing, installing, and servicing neon, electrical, fabricated metal, and electronic message signs to Central Indiana.