

Collection #
P 0307

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK MEMORIAL CONSTRUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS, 1931–1933

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 2 folders

COLLECTION
DATES: 16 October 1931–7 November 1933

PROVENANCE: W. R. Heath Construction Company, 1933

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: P 0273 George Rogers Clark Historic Park, Aerial Photographs, 23 July 1934.

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1933.0901

NOTES:

HISTORICAL/BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Construction of the George Rogers Clark Memorial in George Rogers Clark Historic Park, Vincennes, Indiana, began 1 September 1931. The Indiana George Rogers Clark Sesquicentennial Commission directed the project. The memorial was completed in spring 1933. President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated the structure, and the park, on 14 June 1936.

An act of the Indiana General Assembly 23 February 1927 established the Indiana George Rogers Clark Sesquicentennial Commission. The commission's mandate was to "acquire suitable land in Knox County to include the site of Fort Sackville, and to erect hereon...a structure or structures which will appropriately, adequately, fittingly, and permanently commemorate the historic expedition of George Rogers Clark culminating in the capture of Fort Sackville." Senator James E. Watson and Representative Will Wood introduced resolutions in the Sixty-Ninth Congress approving the commission and allowing for appropriation of federal funds for construction of the memorial.

Governor Ed Jackson appointed the following individuals to the commission: Ewing Emerson, William Fortune, Dr. James A. Woodburn, Lee Burns, Father Francis H. Gavisk, Mrs. Edward Jackson, Frank C. Ball, D. Frank Culbertson, Lew M. O'Bannon, Thomas Taggart, Anne Studebaker Carlisle, and Clem J. Richards. Lieutenant Governor F. Harold Van Ormen, Speaker of the House Harry J. Leslie, and Dr. Christopher Coleman were ex-officio members of the commission.

The Sesquicentennial Commission chose the design of New York architect Frederic Charles Hiron. His design was chosen partly on the basis of the "frontier staunchness" of its Doric Pillars, which stand "free from the central circular structure which projects into the air."

The W. R. Heath Construction Company of Greencastle built the memorial. Acceptance of the Heath Company's low bid of \$773,800 was controversial, as the proposal required the use of Stanstead granite, rather than Indiana limestone, for the exterior of the building. Limestone would only be used in the interior, for the pilasters, cornices, and ceilings. Some members of the commission, local officials, and businessmen favored bids that required extensive use of limestone, arguing that the purchase of Indiana limestone would benefit the local economy.

Frederic Charles Hiron, born in 1882 in Birmingham, England, came to the United States at the age of ten. He studied architecture in Boston, and at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Hiron's major designs include the Worcester (Massachusetts) War Memorial Auditorium, the Rockland County (New York) Courthouse, and the Beaux Arts Institute of Design building, New York. He died in New York in 1942.

The Walter R. Heath Construction Company of Greencastle built the George Rogers Clark Memorial. Notable buildings erected by the company include the Sullivan County Courthouse, and fraternity and sorority houses at De Pauw University.

Sources:

Bearss, Edwin C. *The George Rogers Clark Memorial: Historic Structure Report, Historical Data*. Washington: United States Department of the Interior. Office of History and Historic Architecture, Eastern Division, 1970. See pages 9 and 58.

Taylor, Robert, ed. *Indiana: A New Historical Guide*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1989.

Who Was Who In America, Vol. 1, 1897–1942. Chicago: A. N. Marquis Company, 1943.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains twenty-six black-and-white photographs showing the exterior construction progress of the George Rogers Clark Memorial in George Rogers Clark Historic Park, Vincennes, Indiana. The photographs are dated from 16 October 1931 to 7 November 1933. Construction scenes document workers and equipment in the laying of foundations, erecting the superstructure, and completing the roof. The final photograph shows the completed building surrounded by un-landscaped parkland.

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Construction, 16 October 1931–3 May 1932

Construction, 21 May 1932–7 November 1933

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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://157.91.92.2/>
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 0307).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.