

Collection #
M 0943,
OM 0459

**ROBERT EARL
LEDGER, 1836–1934 (BULK 1836–1844)**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 half size document case, 1 oversized manuscript folder
COLLECTION DATES:	1836–1934 (bulk 1836–1844)
PROVENANCE:	R. Vernon Earle, Jr., Greenwood, IN, September 2006

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2006.0401

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In April 1837, Jacob Coil laid out the community of Broad Ripple in Washington Township, Marion County, Indiana. According to Sulgrove's *History of Indianapolis and Marion County*, Robert Earl established the first mercantile business in Broad Ripple. Earl was born sometime between 1796–99 in either New York or North Carolina. The 1850 census lists his occupation as farmer. Living with him in Broad Ripple at the time were: Mary (likely his wife), and children named William, James, Robert, Jasper, and Mary. The 1860 census lists William's occupation as merchant, and Sulgrove's *History* indicates he was Broad Ripple's third merchant.

Upon passage of the Mammoth Internal Improvements Act, construction of Indiana's Central Canal began. The portion of the canal containing water extended seven miles from Broad Ripple to Indianapolis, a much shorter distance than originally planned. Taking advantage of the Central Canal's proximity, Robert Earl built a flat-bottom canal boat named the *David Burr*, conveying citizens from Indianapolis to Broad Ripple and back. A July 1839 newspaper advertisement indicates the canal boat operated daily, charging a \$1 fare for the trip. Robert Earl's ledger in the collection includes payments received for boat passages up and down the canal.

Sources:

Information in the collection.

Sulgrove, Berry R. *History of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana*, 1884 (repr. 1974).

Nowland, John H.B. *Early Reminiscences of Indianapolis . . .*, 1870.

Dunn, Jacob Piatt. *Greater Indianapolis: The History . . .*, 1910.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of the ledger kept by Robert Earl, a merchant from Broad Ripple, Indiana. Most of the entries pertain to the period from 1836–1844, with one entry from 1874, and an inscription dated 12 May 1934 indicating “property of: Rev. C.R. Earle, Mulberry, Indiana.” Loose ledger pages have been removed and placed in Mylar sleeves for preservation purposes. Several loose pages from the 1850s indicate payments to William Earl, likely Robert Earl's son, who may have taken over the business.

The ledger provides prices and payment for the following: meals, lodging, hauling, labor, tobacco, whisky, sundries, plowing, boarding and feeding horses, mending bridles and stretchers, and boat passages. Earl apparently provided blacksmithing services like sharpening tools, and making spikes, nails, and horseshoes.

Loose items removed from the ledger include a ca. 1876 broadside advertising a meeting “for the purpose of discussing questions of vital importance to the people, and organizing an Independent Greenback Club.” In addition, a piece of 1931 correspondence removed from the ledger contains a request from the Methodist Episcopal Church of Romney, Indiana, to “Earle,” asking him to teach a class in January 1932.

Folder 5 contains a handwritten list of the names mentioned in Robert Earl’s ledger.

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Loose ledger pages, 1836–45

CONTAINER

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Loose ledger pages, 1836–71

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Independent Greenback Club advertisement removed from Robert Earl ledger, ca. 1876

OM 0459, Folder 1

Correspondence, 1931

Box 1, Folder 4

List of names in Robert Earl ledger, n.d.

Box 1, Folder 5

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, M 0943).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.