# AMERICAN RED CROSS, INDIANAPOLIS AREA CHAPTER RECORDS, 1916–1978

**Collection Information** 

**Historical Sketch** 

**Scope and Content Note** 

**Series Contents** 

**Cataloging Information** 

Processed by

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF **Manuscript Materials**: 1 document case, 19 reels of

COLLECTION: microfilm

**Visual Materials**: 1 box of photographs, 1 OVA box of

photographs, 1 OVB photograph, 1 photo album

**COLLECTION** 

DATES:

1916-1978

PROVENANCE: Indianapolis area chapter of the American National Red Cross,

441 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Indianapolis, Ind. 46204, 11 September

1980

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

**ACCESSION** 

1990.0100X

NUMBER:

NOTES: There may be periodic additions to this collection.

### HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Indianapolis Area Chapter of the American Red Cross was formed on July 19, 1916 with William Fortune as president, Rev. Francis H. Gavisk as vice-president, John H. Holliday as treasurer, and Guernsey Van Riper as secretary. This largely volunteer agency is concerned primarily with assisting the victims of disasters. The initial membership was 3,024 with each person paying \$1.00 to join. The chapter's first service was providing food, clothing, medicines, and volunteer help to victims of a series of tornadoes that struck Indiana in 1917. The Red Cross provided similar assistance when a tornado hit Indianapolis in 1927. When the Ohio River flooded parts of southern Indiana in January, 1937, the Indianapolis chapter provided shelter for over 1,000 victims from Jeffersonville, Lawrenceburg, and Aurora at the Indiana State Fairgrounds as well as furnishing food, clothing, nursing care, and transportation.

Another well known service of the Red Cross is assistance to the military during times of armed conflict. During World War I the Indianapolis chapter added over 15,000 volunteers and expanded its current activities and added new programs. In addition to sewing and knitting millions of surgical dressings, the organization supplied services to the men that increased morale such as those provided by the Civilian Relief program which kept servicemen in touch with their families and assisted those in need. A major contribution of the Indianapolis chapter was the Lilly Base Hospital (Base Hospital 32) which was located in Contrexéville, France, and was staffed largely by Indiana doctors and Red Cross nurses. The hospital treated 9,698 patients from French battlefields. World War II saw the Indianapolis chapter with an even greater participatory role. Among the provided services were communications between soldiers and their families, transportation of wounded from airfields to hospitals, coordinating blood drives, and the caring for the wounded at Billings and Wakeman hospitals in central Indiana. The Indianapolis chapter performed similar operations during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.

The Red Cross also supplies the public with first aid, home nursing, and nutrition information and education. The best known of these functions are the first aid, life saving, and swimming classes. With the dawn of the atomic age, the Red Cross assumed civil defense education in the event of a nuclear strike.

The Indianapolis chapter is one of approximately 8,000 chapters chartered by the American National Red Cross and is controlled by a local board of directors. Although each chapter is subject to the direction of a national board of governors as created by Congress, a large degree of individual autonomy is retained. The only mandatory chapter requirements are in the areas of financing, assistance to the armed forces, and relief to disaster victims. The organization was a former member of the United Fund and is currently a member of the United Way. In the 1960s the Indianapolis chapter extended its boundaries to include all of Marion, Hancock, Morgan, and Hendricks counties in central Indiana.

### **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The largest part of the Indianapolis Chapter of the American National Red Cross consists of 11 scrapbooks of the organization's minutes, July, 1916–June, 1951, and 47 scrapbooks of news clippings and other printed material relating to the chapter's activities, services, and general information, 1918-1957. These portions of the records have been microfilmed because of their unstable condition. The minutes contain information about the organization's activities, finances, campaign progress, building operation and maintenance, appropriate actions to take in response to disasters and other crisis, election of officers, various committee reports and minutes such as the Camp and Hospital, Home Service, Blood Donor Program, and Civilian Defense. The minutes also include those of the executive committee reports and meeting minutes and agendas for the general meetings. The largest portion of the scrapbooks are from the World War II years, 1941–1945, and contain clippings from mostly Indianapolis newspapers regarding the Red Cross' contribution to the war effort. Information includes blood drives, financial assistance campaigns, and morale boosting activities for servicemen, and nursing. Other items of a non war nature include classes offered, disaster information and responses, and member's contributions to the community.

The records also include correspondence, publications, annual reports and organizational information, 1918–1978. Most of these items are of a general nature and reflect the organization's contributions both locally and nationally. There are also awards given for service to the Indianapolis chapter, Community Fund agreements, and information about William Fortune and his contributions to the local organization. There also are copies of the national organization's publication DISASTER from 1947–1950.

American Red Cross, Indianapolis Area Chapter Records, (largely meeting minutes) and scrapbooks, 1916–1951 are on microfilm.

Eleven bound volumes of the national organization's publications, the RED CROSS COURIER from 1922–1929 and 1937–1949 and RED CROSS MAGAZINE from 1951, were transferred to Printed Collections.

The visual materials consist mostly of portraits of William Fortune and other Red Cross leaders and events, and WWI and WWII era activities. Many of the images were numbered and described during the preliminary inventory. These numbers are listed at the beginning of their descriptions in the collection guide.

## **SERIES CONTENTS**

# Series 1: Correspondence, Papers, and Publications, 1918–1978

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Correspondence, 1918–1978	Box 1, Folder 1
Master Duplicator Stencils, Finance Committee Report, 1952	Box 1, Folder 2
Historical Information, 1940s–1960s	Box 1, Folder 3
Annual Report, 1966	Box 1, Folder 4
Community Fund Agreements, 1923–1933	Box 1, Folder 5
Organizational Information, 1955–1968	Box 1, Folder 6
News clippings, 1927–1967	Box 1, Folder 7
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William Fortune, 1926–1942	Box 1, Folder 10
Manuals and Organizational Publications, 1918–1961	Box 1, Folder 11
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## Series 2: Microfilm Listing, 1916–1952

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Minutes, Nov., 1927–Dec., 1937	F 1092
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Scrapbook, Newspaper Clippings, 1951–1952	F 1108

## Series 3: Visual Materials, ca. 1918–1956

**CONTENTS CONTAINER** 

**V27**: William Fortune portrait, 1928

V10: William Fortune with President Coolidge and

others on White House lawn, ca. 1925

**V5**: From left to right, Miss Agnes Cruse, Chapter Sec.; Msgr. Francis H. Gavisk, Vice Chairman; Mrs.

Hugh McGibeny [?], Director Vol. Service; William Fortune, Chapter Chairman; William H. Book, Vice

Chairman; Mrs. Wolf [?] Russman [?], Fund Raising

& Production & member Ex. Com.; Eugene C.

Foster, Director Home Service; Rabbi Morris M.

Feuerlicht, Ex. Com., ca. 1930

**V19a**: William Fortune with four unidentified men outside building, ca. 1940

**V22**: Photo of Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce Appreciation certificate presented to William

Fortune, January 26, 1940

**V17**: William Fortune with four unidentified men on veranda, ca. 1940

**V18**: William Fortune with four unidentified men on veranda, same group as V17, ca. 1940

**V19** William Fortune with large group outside building, ca. 1940

**V21**: Red Cross display, "W.P.A. Exhibition Indpls. Ind. War Memorial Feb. 15-16-39. R.E. Burger

Instructor"

Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1

Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2

Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3 V8: Three women at desk reading citation accompanying the Lukas Harold Award (the desk flag) given to the motor corps of the Indianapolis Red Cross for outstanding service; copy of news clipping on back identifies women as 1 to r: Marjorie Cowan, Shirley Murphy, chairman of the motor corps, and Helaine Borinstein, ca. 1942; on back: "8988 Am. Red Cross, 1126 N. Meridian"

V4: Six women with Allison Division nametags; on back," Am. Red Cross M.C. 4418", and names 1 to r, Jesse Findley, Margaret Deloplane, Marie Reynolds, Jan Beatty, Dorothy Pearson Smith, Kitty Shumaker, ca. 1942

**V20**: Large group of women in red cross uniforms posing around a jeep; printed on front "Red Cross Motor Corp., Oct. 19, 1942, Ft. Benj. Harrison, Ind., 1850 Post Photo Shop"

V14: Large group of women in red cross uniform in formal pose with three enlisted men in front; printed on front "American Red Cross Motor Corp, Ft. Harrison, Ind., 1495 Post Photo Shop"; [Front: "Motor Corps Drill Team, 8-42"] ca. 1942
V15: Men and women in jeep, [Front: "Training at Fort Harrison"], "Photo by Signal Corps, U. S. Army"; Back: "8488 Am. Red Cross, 1126 N. Meridian; HQ, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, Post Photographic Laboratory, Signal Corps, July 22, 1944; Officers and enlisted men of the Fifth Service Command Motor Pool are shown giving instruction to Red Cross Motor Corps women on the handling of government vehicles."

V7: Three women in truck, men in back ground; [Front: "Flood, 1943", Back: 4418 A.R.C. Motor Corp. 1126 N. Meridian]

V6: Two women, one in car and one standing by car marked "Indianapolis Chapter American Red Cross"; [Front: "1946 models"]; Back: "Am. Red Cross M. Corp. 4418" ca. 1945

Photographs: Box 1, Folder 4 V16: Large group posing along the side of bus; [Front:" Navy Convoy Ky to Chicago, 5–44"; Back: "4419 A.R.C. Motor Corp., 1126 N. Meridian"] V12: Sixteen women standing in front of American Red Cross truck during winter at Guedelhoefer Wagon Co. [Front: "Convoy to New York, 11-45"]; Back: "Am. Red Cross M.C.-4419"
V13: Six women in white uniforms and two in dark uniforms standing by station wagon marked "Blood Donor Service"; [Front: "Richmond, 4-5-45"; Back: "4418, A.R.C. Motor Corp, 1126 N. Meridian"]

Photographs: Box 1, Folder 4

V9: Three women and three men in front of War Memorial plaques; Back:[left to right] "Miss Jessie Klingman-Home Service; Wallace O. Lee-Member of Board and Exec. Com.; James A. Stuart-Member of Board and Ex. Com and Home Service Advisory Committee; Agnes Cruse-Chapter Secretary; Mrs. Rose Russman[?]-Member, Board of Directors and Executive Committee; E. H.[?] K. McComb"

Photographs: Box 1, Folder 5

**V 25**. Photograph of William Fortune by Harris & Ewing, Washington, D.C. [Back: "William Fortune Chairman Indpls Chpt 1916–1942"; "3, 1918"]

OVA Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1

V 23. Photograph of five men standing on steps outside building has handwritten note, "To my good friend William Fortune with personal regards, Cary T. Grayson, April, 1935." Two of the men are William Fortune and Cary T. Grayson

OVA Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2

V 24. Photograph by Blackstone Studios, Inc., New York. Has handwritten note "To William Fortune, my good friend of many years, advisor in my Indiana days and since, I send warmest greetings and good wishes, James L. Fieser, 4-21-38." [Back: "8551 Er Mrs. Cruse Red Cross 9<sup>th</sup> floor Chamber of Com"; "Mr. Fieser with RC for 23 years resigned in Aug. 1945 and was appointed to Council staff of Nat'l Safety Council."]

OVA Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3

Photograph of Francis A. Gavisk

OVA Photographs: Box 1, Folder 4

Composite photograph by Studio of Wm. H. Block Co. of members of the American Red Cross Motor Corps, 1941–1949, Indianapolis, Indiana, Marjorie Cowan, Chairman. OVA Photographs: Box 1, Folder 5

One photograph, portrait of unidentified man

OVA Photographs: Box 1, Folder 6

**V 26**. Photograph of unidentified woman

OVA Photographs: Box 1, Folder 7

Photograph of military troops marching past "Living Red Cross" formed by four hundred women massed in the form of a red cross in a field of white canvas; ;photo by Bretzman, OVA Photographs: Box 1, Folder 8

"Foch Day Parade", November 4, 1921

"Living Red Cross" formed by women in dark dress in form of a cross surrounded by women in white uniforms; on back, "Counaway[?] Denny, 2101 N. Capitol Ave., Indpls., Ind., ca. 1920.

OVA Photographs: Box 1, Folder 9

Composite photograph of American Red Cross Motor Corps, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1941–1956, Mrs. C. I. Greenlee, Chairman; on back, "Bill Ehrich Photographs, 115 East 34<sup>th</sup> St., - WA. 3-1252, Indianapolis 5, Ind."

OVB Photographs: Folder 1

Indianapolis Chapter, American Red Cross photo album:

Photo Album Storage: PAB

photos show various divisions at work during World War II. These divisions include; Blood Donor Service, Nurses Aides, Home Nursing, Canteen Corps, Gray Ladies, Camp and Hospital Council, Home Service Department, Arts and Skills Corps, Production Corps, Motor Corps, Staff Assistance Corps, Prisoner of War Consultant, Dietitian Aides and Junior Red Cross. Many of the photos deal with blood drives, helping patients in military hospitals, serving refreshments to troops and hospital patients and trainings nurses' aides. Other photos show first aid, water safety, disaster relief, nurse recruitment, nutrition, personnel recruitment, war fund drives, and radio work.

## **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: <a href="http://opac.indianahistory.org/">http://opac.indianahistory.org/</a>
- 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, M0551).
- 5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.