

Collection #  
P 0647

**INDIANAPOLIS CITY HOSPITAL PHOTOGRAPHS,  
CA. EARLY 1920S**

Collection Information	1
Historical Sketch	2
Scope and Content Note	3
Contents	4

Processed by

Barbara Quigley  
8 March 2018

Revised 13 November 2024

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department  
William Henry Smith Memorial Library  
Indiana Historical Society  
450 West Ohio Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

[www.indianahistory.org](http://www.indianahistory.org)

\*

## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 folder of black-and-white photographs
COLLECTION DATES:	Ca. early 1920s
PROVENANCE:	Gift from Verle and Betty Maxwell of Martinsville, Indiana, 2003
RESTRICTIONS:	None
COPYRIGHT:	
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2003.0573X
NOTES:	

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

City Hospital in Indianapolis opened in 1859 at what is now 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Indiana Avenue. Its first purpose was to treat a smallpox epidemic and then it served as a military hospital during the Civil War, treating an estimated 13,000 sick and wounded soldiers. After the war, the hospital was turned back over to the city, which operated the facility as a 75-bed charity hospital.

In the 1880s, under the direction of William Niles Wishard, Sr., M.D., the hospital was expanded by the construction of three state-of-the-art three-story brick buildings and implementation of aseptic procedures. City Hospital also established the first nursing school in Indiana, with the founding of the Flower Mission Training School for Nurses in 1883. In 1887, the hospital's ambulances began transporting patients, starting what would become one of the largest hospital-based ambulance services in the country.

In 1909, the Indiana University School of Medicine opened, beginning a long teaching affiliation with the hospital. In 1914, two four-story isolation units were built, and Saint Margaret's Hospital Guild hired sixteen artists, including William Forsyth, T. C. Steele, and Wayman Adams, to paint murals throughout these units.

In the 1920s and 1930s, City Hospital was the only institution in Indianapolis to care for African Americans, including those who were able to pay. The photographs in this collection show that there were segregated wards for men and women as well as for "colored" and "white" patients. Charles W. Myers, M.D., who was superintendent from 1931 to 1951, was instrumental in appointing African Americans to the hospital staff.

In 1947, Dr. Myers changed the hospital's name to Indianapolis General Hospital, and in 1959 it was renamed Marion County General Hospital. The 1960s brought more expansion for the hospital; by the 1970s it had 726 beds. In 1975 the hospital was renamed again to Wishard Memorial Hospital. It became a functional component of the Indiana University School of Medicine. A new facility was constructed west of the original hospital and opened in December 2013 as the Sidney & Lois Eskenazi Hospital.

### Sources:

Catlin-Legutko, Cinnamon. *The Art of Healing: The Wishard Art Collection*. Indianapolis: published by the Indiana Historical Society Press in cooperation with the Wishard Memorial Foundation, Inc., 2004. General Collection: ND2635 .I6 C38 2004

Eskenazi Health. "History" <https://www.eskenazihealth.edu/about/history> Accessed 11 November 2024.

Indiana Historical Bureau. "Milestones in Nursing" <https://www.in.gov/history/state-historical-markers/find-a-marker/milestones-in-nursing/> Accessed 12 November 2024.

McDonell, Katherine Mandusic. "Wishard Memorial Hospital." In *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, edited by Bodenhamer, David J. and Robert G. Barrows. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994: 14321434. General Collection: F534 .I55 E4 1994

McDonell, Katherine Mandusic and Jessica Erin Fischer. "Sidney & Lois Eskenazi Hospital" <https://indyencyclopedia.org/sidney-lois-eskenazi-hospital/> (updated 2021). Accessed 11 November 2024.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection consists of twenty-one black-and-white photographs of City Hospital in Indianapolis, ca. early 1920s. There is one exterior scene; the rest of the photos show interiors of various parts of the hospital with unidentified staff and patients. Brief captions are handwritten at the bottom of all but one of the photographs. In one identified as "Supt. Pool's Office," the man shown seated at the desk has been determined to be Dr. Richard Ambrose Poole (1879–1938).

The photographs had been removed from an album that belonged to a member of the donors' family, possibly to Surrelda E. Maxwell Lake (1899–1965), who was a student nurse at City Hospital in the 1920s. She was an aunt to Verle Maxwell, donor of this collection.

## CONTENTS

### CONTENTS

**Nurses' Home:** photograph of architectural drawing of exterior.

**Office Workers and Clients:** five women, two men, and a child on one man's lap in an office setting.

**"Children's Contagious Ward"** -- four women and one man in a ward with beds and chairs and several children, including both girls and boys and black and white.

**"Surgery"** -- nine men in a raised area watch five men and three women as surgery is being performed.

**"Interns"** -- sixteen men dressed in white and one man in a dark suit surround a large dark vehicle (probably used as an ambulance) with a driver inside. Three of the men are sitting on the roof of the vehicle.

**"Babies Ward"** -- a room with several baby-sized beds. A man in white is standing between two beds with babies in them; a woman stands at the back of the room; another woman is weighing an African American baby. Murals by William Forsyth can be seen on the walls in the background.

**Bandaging Class:** twenty-seven women and one man in a room; some of the women are wrapping bandages around other women's arms, heads, etc. A landscape painting can be seen on a wall in the background on the left.

**"Diet Kitchen"** -- three white women and one black woman are standing, preparing food. Two other women are seated at a desk in the background.

**"Colored Women's Ward"** -- a room with at least two dozen beds. Two white women dressed as nurses stand by beds; black women are seated in chairs or lying in beds. Paintings of women are on the walls in the background and other paintings are on the walls by the beds.

### CONTAINER

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

<b>"White Men's Medical Ward"</b> -- a room with about two dozen beds. Two white women dressed as nurses stand by beds; men are seated or lying in beds. One patient appears to have a male visitor. Paintings on the walls appear to be landscapes.	Photographs, Folder 1 of 1
<b>"Nurses' Dining Room"</b> -- twenty-six women seated around four tables for a meal. Most are wearing white caps and nurse uniforms, but a few are not.	Photographs, Folder 1 of 1
<b>"Babies Contagious Ward"</b> -- babies and toddlers are seen in four beds, with a nurse standing by each. A doctor is using a stethoscope on one of the patients.	Photographs, Folder 1 of 1
<b>"Laboratory"</b> -- a man and two women are seated at a table in the center of the room, with the women looking through microscopes. In the background is a man seated performing a task with his mouth at a tube while another man stands behind him. A cabinet of bottles is against the back wall. Equipment, drawers, and sinks are also seen in the room.	Photographs, Folder 1 of 1
<b>"White Women's Surgical Ward"</b> -- a room with at least two dozen beds. Two nurses are standing by beds; one is consulting with a doctor. Patients are seated or lying in beds; some appear to have visitors. Paintings on the walls in the background appear to be landscapes.	Photographs, Folder 1 of 1
<b>"Drug Room"</b> -- a man in a white coat is standing and appears to be pouring something from a bottle. The room has shelves full of bottles and other supplies, a desk, and tables.	Photographs, Folder 1 of 1
<b>"Supt. Pool's Office"</b> -- the office of superintendent Dr. Richard A. Poole. [Dr. Poole] is seated at a desk consulting with a woman who is also seated and appears to be writing. The calendar on the wall is turned to the page for November 1921.	Photographs, Folder 1 of 1
<b>"Nurses Infirmary"</b> -- a room with a few beds, two rocking chairs, and a table with plants on it. Two women are lying in beds, with a nurse or nurse's aide tending to each.	Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

**"Children's Ward"** -- a room with about two dozen beds. Children are in chairs or beds, with two nurses in attendance. Painted portraits of children by Wayman Adams are on the walls by the beds.

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

**"Admitting Room"** -- a nurse stands by as a doctor listens with a stethoscope to a black male patient who is lying on a bed. There is a "No Smoking" sign on a wall and a towel hangs by a sink. A window is open. The room does not appear to be very clean or in the best condition.

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

**"Main Office"** -- three white women working in an office; one appears to be a switchboard operator. A black man is standing and holding a package.

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

**"Tonsil Room"** -- four women are gathered around the surgeon as he appears to be operating on a young patient on an operating table. Shelves hold linens and a cabinet holds bottles. The room does not appear to be in the best condition.

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1