

Collection #  
M 1438  
OM 0718

**INDIANAPOLIS CITY IMPROVEMENT  
RECORDS, 1860–1961**

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	One half-sized manuscript box, four oversized manuscript folders, one flat file
COLLECTION DATES:	Ca. 1860–1944
PROVENANCE:	Wanda Willis, Indianapolis, Indiana
RESTRICTIONS:	None
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ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	Indianapolis Department of Public Works Collection, 1845-1958 (M1470)  Joseph E. Bell Papers, 1914–1918 (M0711)
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2000.0636
NOTES:	

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

In the decades following the Civil War, Indianapolis experienced a population boom. Between 1860 and 1880, city population quadrupled. In response, city leaders worked to improve their quality of life. Utilities required extensive expansion as new subdivisions and outlying towns swelled with new arrivals.

The City Charter of 1891 created the first Board of Public Works, consisting of three members, each appointed by the mayor. The Department of Public Works was and still is one of the most important city departments, partly because of the wide variety of responsibilities within its purview. Among its responsibilities were the platting of new streets, the improvement and maintenance of streets, and the granting of rights to build and maintain street railways, telegraph and telephone poles/lines, and underground pipes for gas, water, sewage, and steam. The Department of Public Works also had the power to purchase, own, and operate public utilities.

Sources:

Brand Monroe, Elizabeth. "Built Environment" *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*.

Materials in the collection.

M1470 Collection Guide.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains various records of improvement resolutions and ordinances that were undertaken to improve the city of Indianapolis and outlying towns. In most cases this improvement applied to the physical built environment. This includes original city documents as well as material in support of and petitions against resolutions that were introduced. However, also included are written oaths against vice (drunkenness, prostitution) from the Reconstruction Era. Several of the oaths appear to have been requested by Indianapolis Mayor Daniel Macauley and are signed by him. There is also one letter from 1898 requesting that a prisoner at the Marion County Work House be relocated to City Hospital due to La Grippe (the flu). This collection also contains papers concerning "the Town of Woodruff Place," like treasurer's reports, ordinances, and other ephemera.

Plat maps kept in OM folders include the Garfield Park area (1895), Metzger's Park Place addition (1889), and a profile of North Meridian Street north of the Circle for sewer purposes. Also in the OM folders there are multiple bonds for the Haughville Schoolhouse, West Indianapolis, Broad Ripple and Brightwood.

Plat maps in the flat file are for sodding on Christian Ave. (n.d.), sidewalks on New York Street downtown (1897), grading on Broadway (1896), piling between Fall Creek and First Street (1895), and piling along Pleasant Run near Spruce Street (1896).

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