

Collection #
SC 3649

**AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE WORK CAMP
RECORDS, 1942-1945**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

**VOLUME OF
COLLECTION:** 1 folder

**COLLECTION
DATES:** 1942-1945

PROVENANCE: Marion G. Harcourt, 2020

RESTRICTIONS: None

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**REPRODUCTION
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**ALTERNATE
FORMATS:**

**RELATED
HOLDINGS:** Indianapolis Independent Friends Meeting Records, 1939-1950
(SC2543); Flanner House Records, ca. 1906-1979 (M0513);
Chester E. Bundy Papers (M0032)

**ACCESSION
NUMBER:** 2020.0163

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) was created as a service arm of the Society of Friends (Quakers) during World War I. It offered a way for conscientious objectors to serve those affected by the war without joining the military or taking lives. Today, it continues its mission to “promote a world free of violence, inequality, and oppression.”

Since 1898, Flanner House provided social services to Indianapolis’s large African American population; many residents having migrated from southern states. Racial prejudice and discriminatory practices resulted in a lack of economic opportunity for African Americans in Indianapolis. In response to this, Flanner House stressed practical, self-reliant solutions to problems of unemployment, poor housing, and lack of health care. Upon its incorporation in 1903, the organization’s constitution emphasized “training and moral improvement” as well as the “promotion of social, spiritual, moral and physical welfare” of African Americans.

In 1942, two Earlham College alumni, Edwin and Marian Sanders, organized a work camp at Flanner House in Indianapolis under sponsorship of the AFSC. The goals of the camp, as reported by the *Indianapolis Times*, were to assist in Flanner House programming, create friendliness and interracial goodwill, and to learn about the social problems in the area. While many of the volunteers were Quakers from Indiana, individuals from multiple states and faiths attended the camp. Over six months, about sixty individuals had contributed to the group’s efforts. While in Indianapolis, some camp volunteers stayed in a house at 1138 Fayette Street. One of the group’s major projects was to help reclaim bricks and clear rubble at an old U.S. Encaustic Tile Works building at 16th and Missouri Streets in Indianapolis. The building had been leased to Flanner House and its location was to be the site of a new Flanner House building. The group also helped with the Flanner House gardens and cleaned houses.

Sources:

afsc.org

Collection Guide for Flanner House Records, M0513

Materials in the collection

“Pastors, Teachers, and Pupils Join in Friends’ Work,” *Indianapolis Times*, 25 July 1942

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists chiefly of photocopies of a work log kept by the volunteers during their camp in 1942. The first entry of 1 April 1942 describes conditions of the house on Fayette Street and the efforts to make it livable for the campers. The following daily entries describe the projects undertaken by the volunteers, detailing who did what and the challenges they faced. The group also held meetings in which they discussed the importance of the work they were doing and assessed outcomes. Details from these meetings are also included in the log. Some entries are typed, and others are handwritten by different hands. Some entries were cut off by the copier, either at the top or bottom, rendering them incomplete. The last dated entry is dated 4 October 1942. By that time most campers had gone.

Also included in the collection is a photocopied contact list for the campers, which was updated periodically, and approximately ten photocopied letters written by the campers in 1944 and 1945. They are addressed to Joe R. Brown, a volunteer from Connecticut. The letters give general updates in the lives of the campers since leaving the camp.

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CONTENTS

Work Camp log, 1942

Contact list and letters

CONTAINER

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