

Collection #
P 0690

**CHRISTMAS AND INDIANAPOLIS 500 PARADES
SLIDES, CA. 1966–1970S**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

**VOLUME OF
COLLECTION:** 1 slide bin

**COLLECTION
DATES:** ca. 1966–1970s

PROVENANCE: James K. Stevens, Clarendon Hills, IL

RESTRICTIONS: Color slides in cold storage need at least 4 hours to acclimate, so patrons should call ahead if they wish to view materials that are in cold storage.

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**ALTERNATE
FORMATS:**

**RELATED
HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION
NUMBER:** 2016.0017

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Indianapolis Christmas parade began in 1940, after William H. Block sponsored the parade in the hopes of drawing in downtown shoppers to the store. The parade only lasted a couple of years, but was resurrected by the Downtown Merchants Association and Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce in 1959. This, again, was in an effort to lure customers who had been drawn away from the area by suburban sprawl back to the downtown area to shop. No parade was held in 1963 following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Despite its success, the parade discontinued after 1966.

Events for the “500 Festival” began in 1957 when four local businessmen organized a parade and square dance gala to celebrate the upcoming Indianapolis 500 race. Over the years, the festival grew to consist of other events such as marathons and outdoor festival activities. The parade continues to occur annually on Memorial Day weekend. Some parts of the parade include high school bands from the Indianapolis area, marching units and clowns from the Murat Temple, the Indianapolis Police Department Motorcycle Drill Team, numerous floats, and over thirty pace cars.

Sources:

Mitchell, Dawn, “Retro Indy: Christmas parade ushered in holiday season,” *Indy Star*, December 11, 2016, accessed 28 June, 2018.

500 Festival website, accessed 28 June, 2018.

<https://www.500festival.com/about-us/history-of-500festival/>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains eighteen color slides of Indianapolis 500/Memorial Day and Christmas parades in downtown Indianapolis.

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