

Collection #
P 0238

**FREDERICK RUSKAUP COLLECTION,
1892, CA. 1890S**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 photograph folder; 1 manuscript folder
COLLECTION DATES:	1892; ca. 1890s photographs reproduced ca. 1986
PROVENANCE:	Received from the Cottage Home Neighborhood Association in September 1986. CHNA had received the items from Helen Bigelow Ruskaup of Wisconsin; the Indiana Historical Society made copies of the photos for this collection.
RESTRICTIONS:	None
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ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	
ACCESSION NUMBER:	1986.0689
NOTES:	

BIOGRAPHICAL / HISTORICAL SKETCH

In 1875, German immigrant Frederick Ruskaup established a grocery store at what is now 715 Dorman Street in the Cottage Home neighborhood in Indianapolis. The store featured a meat market, bakery, and delivery service. Ten years later he doubled the size of the building with an L-shaped addition, including a tavern that operated until Prohibition. Ruskaup's family lived in the second story of the building until 1892 when they moved into their new brick house next door, at what is now 711 Dorman Street. The asymmetrical Queen Anne-style house was designed by architects Vonnegut and Bohn. By the time of his death in 1901, Ruskaup had built and acquired more than a dozen rental houses, including five Vonnegut and Bohn double-frame houses (duplexes) across the street on Dorman. From 1875 through the late 1950s, three generations of Ruskaups operated the grocery.

Frederick Ruskaup was born in Hannover, Germany, in 1843 or 1844. He immigrated to the United States in 1869 or 1870, and on 19 November 1874 he married Maria Lüdemann in Indianapolis. Maria (1845-1929) was also an immigrant from Hannover, having arrived in New York on 11 September 1869. Of their seven children, only two survived to adulthood: William Henry (1879-1956) and Leda (Farmer) (1886-1961).

After Frederick's death on 3 June 1901, William, assisted by his mother, took over operation of the grocery. William and his wife, Alma (Clements), had three sons – Frederick, Paul, and William Jr. – who grew up working in the business. Henry H. Luedemann (1876–1968), a relative of Maria, operated the tavern and pool hall in the south half of the building until Prohibition. Then he converted that space into Luedemann's Confectionery, selling candy, ice cream, and soda.

By the time of the 1910 census, the Queen Anne home next to the grocery was occupied by Maria, Leda, and William and Alma and their sons. After Alma died, William had another son, James Edward, in 1943, with his second wife, Helen (Bigelow), and they lived in the home at the time of the 1950 census.

Many of the residents of the Cottage Home neighborhood during this time were German. A significant number of Irish and a smaller group of African American families also lived in the area. In 1957, the Ruskaup home was sold to Martha Ratcliffe and her four daughters – Ruth, Carolyn, Elizabeth, and Martha – an African American family. The Ratcliffes lived in and maintained the house until it was sold again in the 1980s. The Ruskaup-Ratcliffe House and the grocery store were included in the National Register of Historic Places' Cottage Home District in 1990.

Sources:

Ancestrylibrary.com (Accessed 18 August 2026):

- Find a Grave
- Indiana, U.S., Birth Certificates, 1907–1944
- Indiana, U.S., Select Marriages Index, 1748–1993
- New York, U.S., Arriving Passenger and Crew Lists, 1820–1957
- United States Federal Census, 1880–1950
- U.S., City Directories, 1822–1995
- U.S., Passport Applications, 1795–1905

Cottage Home Neighborhood [Our History – Cottage Home Neighborhood Indianapolis](#)
Accessed 18 August 2026.

“Death of Frederick Ruskaup.” *The Indianapolis News*, 5 June 1901, p. 11.

Historic and Conservation Districts & Protected Properties in Marion County. “Protected Property: Ruskaup-Ratcliffe House and Store” [indy.gov: Historic and Conservation Districts & Protected Properties in Marion County](#) Accessed 18 August 2026.

Hostetler, Joan. “Indianapolis Then and Now: The Ruskaup Grocery and Tavern / The Inventorialist, 715–717 Dorman Street.” [Indianapolis Then and Now: The Ruskaup Grocery and Tavern / The Inventorialist, 715-717 Dorman Street | Historic Indianapolis | All Things Indianapolis History](#) Accessed 18 August 2026.

“Ruskaup House right at home in Cottage Home.” *Indiana Preservationist*, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, No. 6, November–December 1989. General Collection: NA 107. I6 I5

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of three copy photographs and one three-page manuscript pertaining to buildings owned by Frederick Ruskaup on Dorman Street in the Cottage Home neighborhood of Indianapolis. The photographs (originals taken ca. 1890s; reproductions made ca. 1986) show the Ruskaup Grocery and Tavern at 715 Dorman and the Ruskaup family home, designed by architects Vonnegut and Bohn, at 711 Dorman. The manuscript details expenses incurred in building the Queen Anne–style residence and five double-frame houses on Dorman Street commissioned by Ruskaup, submitted by Vonnegut and Bohn, Architects, in 1892.

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Statement of Expenses incurred in building a brick residence and five double-frame houses for Mr. Fred Ruskaup on Dorman Street in Indianapolis, submitted by Vonnegut and Bohn, Architects, 8 February 1892 (3 typed pages).

Reproductions of photograph of F. Ruskaup Grocery and Tavern [at 715 Dorman Street] with people standing on the steps in front and the horse-drawn delivery wagon to the side. "Sample Room" for the tavern is seen on the right side of the building. The man standing on the steps to the right is likely Frederick Ruskaup [ca. 1890s]. (2 copies: one 8x10, one 4x5)

Reproduction of photograph of the Ruskaup family's Queen Anne home [at 711 Dorman Street] in the snow [ca. 1890s] (4x5 print)

CONTAINER

Manuscript Folder 1 of 1

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1