

**Collection #**  
**M 0556**

**GEORGE P. STEWART  
PAPERS, 1894–1924**

[Collection Information](#)

[Historical Background](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Box and Folder Listing](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by:  
Wilma L. Gibbs  
15 August 1991  
Updated 11 April 2004

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: 11 boxes (3.75 linear feet)

COLLECTION DATES: Inclusive 1894-1924; Bulk 1918-1924

PROVENANCE: Eunice Trotter, Indianapolis Recorder, 2901 Tacoma Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46218, 25 July 1990

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT: Held by Indiana Historical Society

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: Hortense Harlin, "The Indianapolis Recorder: A History of a Negro Weekly Newspaper" (masters thesis, 1951), SC 1886; Indianapolis Recorder photographic collection housed in Visual Collections

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1990.0469

NOTES:

## **HISTORICAL SKETCH**

George Pheldon Stewart, the son of William H. and Josephine Stewart was born March 13, 1874, in Vincennes, Indiana. As a young man he moved to Indianapolis. Collection materials indicate that he came to the city as early as 1894. He married Louisville native, Fannie Belle Caldwell in September 1898. Six children were born to this union: Joyce Caldwell, Marcus C., twins Fredonia Helen and Theodore Douglass (named after Theodore Roosevelt and Frederick Douglass), Henry Sweetland, and Clarence Porter.

Stewart co founded the Indianapolis Recorder with Will H. Porter. According to a 1920 Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce questionnaire for Industrial Survey, completed and signed by Stewart, the Indianapolis Recorder was established in 1897. The forerunner of the Recorder was an advertising sheet known as The Directory. Although it is estimated that The Directory started two years before the Recorder, it is unclear when Stewart and Porter forged their partnership. The earliest existing issue of the Recorder on microfilm dates to 1899, the year Will Porter sold his share of the newspaper to Stewart for \$300. Stewart remained editor and publisher of the Recorder until his death in 1924.

George Stewart was active in several business, political, and fraternal organizations. He joined Bethel AME Church soon after his arrival in Indianapolis. To promote the business and political progress of blacks, he joined and more often than not, took a leadership role in the Colored Republican Committee, Indiana Association of Colored Men, Indiana chapter of the National Negro Business League, and the Indiana Negro Welfare League. Fraternally, he was associated with the Waterford Lodge #13; F. & A.M. Marion Lodge #5, Knights of Pythias; Persian Temple #46; Nobles Mystic Shrine; and the Indianapolis Camp of the American Woodsman.

Throughout the Stewart era, the Recorder promoted general support of the Republican party. Its birth in 1897 coincided with the inauguration of William McKinley as president of the United States. Editorially, the paper at times showed disillusionment with the party and the policies of McKinley's first term in office but supported his re election during the 1900 campaign. It resisted and labeled alternatives to the support of the national party as inconsistent and impractical.

By the second decade of the 20th century, Stewart's Republican partisanship had attached itself to and given vent through two organizations, the Indiana Association of Colored Men and the Indiana Negro Welfare League. The Indiana Association of Colored Men, along with the Indianapolis Recorder actively supported the unsuccessful United States Senate campaign of Rushville resident, James A. Watson. The activities of the Association appear somewhat obscure. The letterhead on its stationery asserts: "To advance the interests of the Colored People of Indiana." The main activity of the Association was the annual sponsorship of the Lincoln-Douglass Memorial. George Stewart was an officer in the organization and his print shop supplied handbills and printed items. The Colored Republican Committee was headquartered at 541 1/2 Indiana Avenue. George Stewart served as chairman of the group, which endorsed Kentland native Warren T. McCray for governor of Indiana in 1920. In November of that year, Stewart issued a statewide call on behalf of the Indiana Negro Welfare League.

The letter, sent to various individuals around the state, noted concerns of the newly-formed organization. A

constitutional plan for representation in the state body and a budget were two items that Stewart suggested needed to be addressed. He also confirmed the engagement of William Pickens as speaker at a meeting the League was sponsoring the following month. Pickens, a Yale Phi Beta Kappa, was associate field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He, along with Governor-elect Warren T. McCray, was a principle speaker at the 21 December 1920 League meeting held at the Bethel AME Church.

Though Stewart was associated with several fraternal organizations, he was most active with the Knights of Pythias. He and Will Porter were active in the Order soon after the establishment of the black Pythians in Indiana. In 1911, he was chairman of the Supreme Lodge Entertainment Committee, which managed the Supreme Lodge Entertainment Corporation. Incorporated that year, the corporation's main objective was to provide entertainment for the Knights of Pythias 16th biennial session scheduled in August 1911. The corporation had a capital stock of \$5,000 divided into \$5 shares. The Union Amusement Company was an outgrowth of the corporation. Stewart served as treasurer of the company, which ran the Union Amusement Theatre, located at 326 Indiana Avenue. In his role as treasurer, Stewart worked closely with Ernest Tidrington, grand chancellor of the Indiana Knights of Pythias. Tidrington had ties to Evansville. In 1912 at the Anderson meeting Tidrington suspended Stewart and two other Pythians from the Indiana District. Amid attacks and counter allegations of misappropriation of funds Stewart and Tidrington were at odds for the next several years. Lodge meetings, correspondence, the judicial system, and the Recorder served as a battleground for the ongoing conflict. In June 1917 Tidrington wrote Stewart inviting him back into the Order.

A proclamation restoring Stewart's membership to status quo and entitling him to all rights and privileges of the Order was executed in October 1922. Stewart regained the Lodge's printing business and renewed his participation in the business dealings of the Knights of Pythias, especially as it related to Indianapolis. There is evidence that Stewart actively supported the Alpha Home for Aged Colored Women, the Indianapolis Community Chest, and the capital campaign for Second Baptist Church.

### **The Indianapolis Recorder during the George P. Stewart Era**

The Indianapolis Recorder first located its office at 122 W. New York Street. In 1900, it moved to 414 Indiana Avenue. From there it relocated to the Knights of Pythias building at 236-40 West Walnut St. By summer 1918 the newspaper was located at 518-20 Indiana Avenue, where it remained for over half a century. During the mid-70's, it moved to its current location at 2901 N. Tacoma.

The evolution of the Recorder for the period that Stewart was publisher/editor can be seen by examining copies of the newspaper for changes in physical appearance and content. The earliest available issues contained four pages. Each page had six columns, with the last column used as advertising space. Unlike its competitors, namely the Indianapolis Freeman and the Colored World, the Recorder included mostly local news. Much of the content revolved around ministers, churches, and religious news. During the early years national news with a limited amount of local news was contained on the first page. National news often took the form of an appeal. For example, one article in 1904 announced a "call for organization to teachers...This appeal is made to Negro teachers all over the country." Many of the articles that promoted and examined black progress were corralled in a column labeled "Race News." Church news was found on page two, and society activities were on page four. An outlet for information about local African-American communities in other cities was published in a section on page three entitled "From around Indiana."

At the turn of the century there were several articles with photographs about prominent individuals. Announcements about nationally known individuals visiting Indiana appeared especially newsworthy. From accounts in the Recorder, it is evident that Booker T. Washington was in Indianapolis on numerous occasions. He spoke to Flanner Guild on May 7, 1903. In 1904, the National Business League, of which he was president, held its annual meeting in Indianapolis. He spoke in 1906, and again in 1909 for the benefit of raising funds for the Senate YMCA. Along with Freeman publisher, George Knox; businesswoman Madam C. J. Walker; attorney F. B. Ransom; and Dr. Joseph Ward, et. al., he attended and was keynote speaker for the weeklong dedication ceremony for the YMCA, held in July 1913. It is also clear from the newspaper that Washington's ideological rival, W. E. B. DuBois visited Indianapolis during the early 1900s. His January 1906 arrival did not receive the media attention that Washington was privy to, and it is obvious that the announcement of his arrival was geared toward a more select audience. The feats of world champion bicyclist and Hoosier, Marshall "Major" Taylor, were rigorously reported, from his defeat of 30 riders in a 1901 race in France to a

collision he suffered during an international competition in Australia in 1904.

By 1916 (the last year for which microfilm copies are available, prior to Stewart's death), the Recorder continued to develop as a community newspaper. There was a marked increase in advertising, especially from white businesses. A typical newspaper that year had eight pages. Race pride was promoted with numerous stories on the achievements and accomplishments of African-Americans locally and nationally. The importance of education was a theme throughout several issues, notably the education of women. Wedding announcements were confined to a *Woman's World* column located on the social page. Vital statistics and a classified advertising section were also prominent features. The 1916 election year touted many political advertisements and political stories, including reports of the activities of the Colored Republican Committee, of which George Stewart served as chairman.

After George Stewart's death in August 1924, Fannie Caldwell Stewart, his widow, became owner and publisher of the Recorder; his son Marcus C. Stewart became managing editor; and his daughter, Joyce Thompson continued in her role as business manager--a position that her son George Thompson acquired in later years. Eunice Trotter's purchase of the Indianapolis Recorder in 1988 marked the first time in the paper's ninety-one-year history that the George Stewart family did not own controlling interest. Current owner and businessman, William Mays, assumed control of the Recorder in September 1990.

- Sources:
1. Materials in the collection
  2. Indianapolis Recorder (Issues from 1899-1916)
  3. Telephone Interview with Fredonia Stewart Temple, daughter of George P. and Fannie Caldwell Stewart, conducted by Wilma L. Gibbs, 29 May 1991.
  4. Hortense Harlin, "The Indianapolis Recorder: A History of a Negro Weekly Newspaper" (masters thesis, 1951), Indiana Historical Society, SC 1886

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The George P. Stewart collection (1894-1924) comprises 11 boxes of manuscript materials divided into two parts.

The first part of the records (boxes 1 and 2) contain personal papers pertaining to Stewart. **Box 1** includes general correspondence from his arrival in Indianapolis in 1894; speeches; legal papers; program flyers; newspaper clippings; and information about property. It also contains Stewart's political correspondence. Correspondence to United States senator Harry S. New and Indiana governor Warren McCray are contained in separate folders. Information about Stewart's organizational affiliations including several folders related to the Knights of Pythias are contained in **Box 2**.

Records related to the Indianapolis Recorder are contained in Boxes 3-11. The correspondence files of the newspaper are housed in boxes 3-5. These files span from 1900-1924, with the bulk of the correspondence encompassing 1918-1924. Legal documents, surveys and statistics, and a 1920 questionnaire pertaining to the Recorder and signed by George Stewart are some of the miscellaneous materials contained in **Box 5**. Financial records, mostly receipts from the Recorder's numerous suppliers make up the bulk of **Boxes 6-11**. A review of the receipts provide a view of the business workings of the Recorder. Cash flow--how bills were generally paid; the amount of local utilities; local and out-of-town business dealings; machinery and supplies used; and the method of transporting the newspaper can be gauged from these receipts. Many of the receipts are related to the upkeep of the building and its utilities (telephone, Central Union Telephone Company and gas, Citizens Gas), as well as the operation of the Indianapolis Recorder (business machines distributors, Addressograph Co., Burroughs Adding Machines, and Goes Lithographing Co.; paper suppliers, C. P. Lesh Co., Whitaker Paper Co. and Crescent Paper Co.; and transportation agents of the newspaper, Bleck Railroad Company and the United States Postal Service).

In addition to its membership in the Associated Negro Press (a black wire service provided by Claude Barnett), receipts indicate that the Recorder subscribed to several white periodicals including the Indianapolis News and the Saturday Evening Post. Receipts from the Atkins Flower Shop, John Jones & Sons, and the H. L. Sanders Company

demonstrate the cooperation between the Recorder and some local black businesses.

## **BOX AND FOLDER LISTING**

### **BOX 1: Personal Correspondence FOLDER CONTENTS**

- 1 General Correspondence, 3/1894-2/1919
- 2 General Correspondence, 11/1920-10/1921
- 3 General Correspondence, 1922-1924
- 4 Contracts and Licenses
- 5 Lawsuits
- 6 Bethel A.M.E. Church
- 7 Churches
- 8 Speeches (Stewart)
- 9 Speeches (Unidentified)
- 10 Programs
- 11 Property
- 12 Clippings
- 13 Political Correspondence, 4/1920-4/1921
- 14 Political Correspondence, 2/1922-5/1924, n.d.
- 15 Political Correspondence- bills
- 16 Political Correspondence- political groups
- 17 Political Correspondence- resolutions
- 18 Political Correspondence- Warren McCray
- 19 Political Correspondence- Harry S. New
- 20 Political Correspondence- Ernest G. Tidrington

### **BOX 2: Clubs and Organizations; Financial Affairs FOLDER CONTENTS**

- 1 Colored Republican Headquarters
- 2 Indiana Negro Welfare League

- 3 Knights of Pythias- Correspondence 2/1913-3/1915
- 4 Knights of Pythias- Correspondence 1915
- 5 Knights of Pythias- Correspondence 1917-1925
- 6 Knights of Pythias- Proclamations and Reports 1901-1912
- 7 Knights of Pythias- Proclamations and Reports 1915-1923, n.d.
- 8 Knights of Pythias- Programs, Certificates, Speeches
- 9 Knights of Pythias- Supreme Lodge Entertainment Association
- 10 Knights of Pythias- Union Amusement Co.
- 11 Knights of Pythias- Union Theatre Co. Receipts
- 12 Masons 1904-4/1923
- 13 Masons 5/1923-2/1924, n.d.
- 14 National Association for the Advancement of  
Colored People
- 15 Negro Business League
- 16 Organizations and Clubs
- 17 Bank Books
- 18 Insurance
- 19 Personal Receipts
- 20 Personal Receipts
- 21 Personal Receipts- Citizen's Gas Co.
- 22 Personal Receipts- Indpls. Heat and Light Co.
- 23 Personal Receipts- Holland Furnace Co.
- 24 Personal Receipts- Welch, Samuel

**BOX 3: The Directory; Indianapolis Recorder Correspondence  
FOLDER CONTENTS**

- 1 The Directory, Aug. 2, 1896
- 2 General Correspondence, 2/1912-7/1918
- 3 General Correspondence, 6/1919-12/1919
- 4 General Correspondence, 1/1920-3/1920

5 General Correspondence, 4/1920-11/1922

6 General Correspondence, 5/1923-7/1924, nd

7 Advertisements, 3/1900-9/1923

8 Advertisements, 9/1923-12/1923

9 Advertisements, 1924

10 Advertisements, n.d.

11 Advertisements, n.d.

12 Advertisements, n.d.

13 Advertisements, n.d.

**BOX 4: Indianapolis Recorder Correspondence; Miscellaneous  
FOLDER CONTENTS**

1 Advertising, 1911-1918

2 Advertising, 1/1919-10/1919

3 Advertising, 11/1919-12/1919

4 Advertising, 1/1920-3/1920

5 Advertising, 4/1920-10/1923

6 Bills

7 Business Cards

8 Christmas Greetings

9 Editorials

10 Sales Agents, 11/1919

11 Sales Agents, 12/1919

12 Sales Agents, 1/1920

13 Sales Agents, 2/1920

14 Sales Agents, 3/3/1920-3/8/1920

15 Sales Agents, 3/9/1920-3/27/1920

16 Sales Agents, 4/1920-6/1920

17 Sales Agents, 1923, n.d.

**BOX 5: Indianapolis Recorder Correspondence; Miscellaneous  
FOLDER CONTENTS**

1 Press Releases 1921-24, n.d.

2 Subscriptions

3 Suppliers 1/1916-10/1922

4 Suppliers 1/1923-10/1923

5 Suppliers 12/1923-8/1924

6 Associated Negro Press

7 Biographical Notes

8 Content, 1919-1924, n.d.

9 Contracts, Licenses, Leases

10 Forms

11 Handbills

12 Notes

13 Questionnaires

14 Survey and Statistics

15 Writings

16 Writings

**BOX 6: Receipts, A-Gua  
FOLDER CONTENTS**

1 Acme Coal Co.

2 Active Coal Co.

3 Addressograph Co.

4 Alexander, Wm.

5 American Express Co.

6 American Linen Supply Co.

7 American Paper Stock Co., Inc.

8 American Railway Express Co.

9 Atlas Coal Co.

10 Atlas Welding Co.

11 Atrins Flower Shop

12 Auto Electric Shop  
13 Balke and Krauss Co.  
14 Barnhart Bros. and Spindler  
15 Belt's Used Car Garage  
16 Binford, William B.  
17 Bleck Railroad  
18 Brady Electric  
19 Branch Store  
20 J.G. Brock Store  
21 Burroughs Adding Machine Company  
22 Canning, J.J. and Co.  
23 Carpenter Paper Co.  
24 Carr Motor Service  
25 Castor Bros.  
26 Central Coal Co.  
27 Central Union Telephone  
28 The Chicago Tribune  
29 Citizen's Gas Co.  
30 Clark Typewriter Supply  
31 Continental Warehouse Co.  
32 Crane Co.  
33 Crescent Paper Co.  
34 Curtis Publishing Co.  
35 Domestic Coal Co.  
36 Douglas, John  
37 Duckwall Belting sand Hose Co.  
38 Dunn, John T.  
39 Eagle Machine Co., Inc.

- 40 The Eclipse Folding Machine Co.
- 41 Electric Dealers Association
- 42 Electric Shop
- 43 Eureka Sales Co.
- 44 The Fashion Place
- 45 Federal Sign System (electric)
- 46 Ferguson National Printing Co.
- 47 Fire Prevention Inspector's Survey
- 48 Fleury, L.A., Jr.
- 49 Flowers, T.L.
- 50 Franklin Printing
- 51 Fulton Office Furniture Co.
- 52 G.P. Putnam
- 53 General Oil Works Co.
- 54 Goes Lithographing Co.
- 55 Goodyear Rubber and Tire Co.
- 56 Guarantee Light Co.
- 57 Guarantee Tire and Rubber Co.

**BOX 7: Receipts, Haa-Law  
FOLDER CONTENTS**

- 1 Haag Bros.
- 2 Hall and Hill
- 3 Hamilton, Harris, and Co.
- 4 J.L. Hampson Coal Co.
- 5 Harmon and Hall
- 6 Hatfield Electric Co.
- 7 C.C. House
- 8 The House of Crane
- 9 C.D. Hoyt Machine Co.

10 Hurst and Co.  
11 In. Auto Sales and Tire Co.  
12 In. Bell Telephone  
13 In. Electrotype Co.  
14 In. National Bank  
15 The Indiana News Co.  
16 In. Paper Co.  
17 In. Printer Supply Co.  
18 In. Smelting and Refining Co.  
19 In. Tire and Battery  
20 Indpls. Belting and Supply Co.  
21 Indpls. Book and Stationary Co.  
22 Indpls. Electrotype Foundry  
23 Indpls. Heat and Light Co.  
24 Indpls. Life Insurance Co.  
25 Indpls. Lithographic Co.  
26 The Indpls. Recorder  
27 The Indpls. Star  
28 Indpls. Stereotype Co.  
29 Indpls Telephone Co.  
30 Jameson and Reed  
31 Johnson, A. J.  
32 Johnson Coal Co.  
33 John Jones and Sons  
34 Jones Whitaker Sales Co.-In. Paper Co.  
35 Judd Typewriter Exchange  
36 The A.B. Keepport Co.  
37 Kipp Bros.  
38 Emerson B. Knight, Inc.

39 Kuhn's Market

40 Landwerlen Leather Co.

41 Lawska, Thomas F.

**BOX 8: Receipts, Les-Lin  
FOLDER CONTENTS**

1 C.P. Lesh Paper Co.

2 C.P. Lesh Paper Co.

3 C.P. Lesh Paper Co.

4 C.P. Lesh Paper Co.

5 C.P. Lesh Paper Co.

6 C.P. Lesh Paper Co.

7 C.P. Lesh Paper Co.

8 Lewis, Henry W.

9 Henry Lewis Coal Co.

10 Lilly Hardware Co.

11 The Linograph Co.

12 The Linograph Co.

**BOX 9: Receipts, Lon-Pur  
FOLDER CONTENTS**

1 Long Electric Co.

2 Mammoth Printing Co.

3 Many and Mayer

4 O. Martin

5 Geo. J. Mayer Co.

6 McCullough, J.

7 Meier Electric and Machine Co.

8 Mergenthaler Lindtype Co.

9 Messenger, W.H.

10 Michigan Lumber Co.

- 11 Miller, Letcher
- 12 Mohom, W.H.
- 13 Monon Route
- 14 Morgan's Hardware Store
- 15 C.T. Naukervis Co.
- 16 National Furniture Co.
- 17 National of Hartford
- 18 The National Refining Co.
- 19 Nelson Doubleday
- 20 New Telephone Co.
- 21 New Wrecking Co.
- 22 Nissen Transfer and Storage Co.
- 23 North American Accident Insurance Co.
- 24 The Oliver Typewriter Co.
- 25 Oval and Roster
- 26 Page Coal and Ice Co.
- 27 Harry B. Patience and Bros.
- 28 Patterson Engraving Co.
- 29 Patton, J.C.
- 30 C.E. Pauley and Co.
- 31 C.E. Pauley and Co.
- 32 C.E. Pauley and Co.
- 33 Payne, J.T.
- 34 The Picket Coal Co.
- 35 R.L. Polk and Co.
- 36 Porte Publishing Co.
- 37 Powers Printing Plate Co.
- 38 The Prest-O-Lite Co., Inc.
- 39 Presto Welding Co., Inc.

40 Providence Washington Insurance Co.

41 Pullins, Newton

42 Puryear and Porter

**BOX 10: Receipts, Que-Uni  
FOLDER CONTENTS**

1 Quest Manufacturing Co.

2 Real Estate and Fire Insurance

3 Rex Health and Accident Insurance Co.

4 Richardson, Charles M.

5 Rival Ink, Co.

6 Rosenweig, Apolph

7 Roy Peak Fish Market

8 Samuel Bingham's Son Manufacturing Co.

9 Sanborn Electric Co.

10 Sanders Co.

11 Sanders, H.L.

12 Sentinel Printing Co.

13 Shaffer- Brennan Advertising Co.

14 Shank, Lew (auctioneer)

15 Shipman-Ward Manufacturing Co.

16 Shroyer, Tom

17 Sinclair Refining Co.

18 C.E. Smith and Co.

19 The Milton H. Smith Co.

20 Southern Advertising Agency

21 Stafford Engraving Co.

22 Standard Oil Co.

23 Star Publishing Co.

24 Stone Chevrolet Co.

- 25 Syracuse Smelting Works
- 26 Michael Tauber and Co.
- 27 Terre Haute, Indpls., and Eastern Traction Co.
- 28 Thomas, Alexander
- 29 Trade Press Publishing Co.
- 30 Trade Press Publishing Co.
- 31 M.W. Turner and Son
- 32 U.S. Photo Engraving Service
- 33 U.S. Photo Engraving Service
- 34 U.S. Postal Service
- 35 U.S. Postal Service
- 36 U.S. Postal Service
- 37 U.S. Postal Service
- 38 Underwood's News Photo Service
- 39 United American Metals Corp'n

**BOX 11: Receipts, Van-Zif; Unidentified  
FOLDER CONTENTS**

- 1 VanCamp Iron and Hardware Co.
- 2 Vaser Machine Co.
- 3 Vinton Coal Co.
- 4 Vonnegut Hardware Co.
- 5 Walnut St. Coal Co.
- 6 H.P. Wasson and Co.
- 7 Western Electric Co.
- 8 Western Newspaper Union
- 9 Western Newspaper Union
- 10 Whitaker Paper Co.
- 11 Whitaker Paper Co.
- 12 The Whitehead and Hoag Co.

13 X-L Welding Co.

14 W.B. Ziff Co.

15 Receipts in another person's name

16 Unidentified

## **CATALOGING INFORMATION**

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://157.91.92.2/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0556).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.