

Collection #
SC 3463

**HOOSIER DOME TOUR GUIDE
MATERIALS, 1982–1990**

Collection Information	1
Historical Sketch	2
Scope and Content Note	4
Contents	5

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 4 manuscript folders, 2 artifacts

COLLECTION DATES: ca. 1982–1990

PROVENANCE: Roberta (Brigitt) Caito, October 2016

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Rebuilding Indianapolis: The Sports Initiative Oral Histories Project M1025

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2016.0315

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Indiana Convention Center opened in 1972. After several years in operation, the center started losing bookings to cities with newer and larger facilities. Indianapolis leaders knew they needed to expand the center to remain competitive in the tourism market, which was one of several strategies used by city officials to revitalize downtown Indianapolis in the late twentieth century.

Growing Indianapolis' presence in the sports market was another revitalization strategy used during this time. Calls to build a sports stadium that could attract a major league sports team were made as early as 1969, but advocates struggled for several years to finance it. Declining bookings at the Indiana Convention Center would eventually provide a solution—the stadium's construction would be combined with the convention center's expansion.

The operator of these buildings would be the Capital Improvement Board. Funding, meanwhile, would come from a combination of private grants (\$25 million from Lilly Endowment and \$5 million from Krannert Charitable Trust) and a \$47.2 million municipal bond that would be repaid by a controversial 1% food and beverage tax in Marion County. From start to finish, this project would cost \$82 million (in 1984 dollars).

The original Indiana Convention Center had thirty-eight meeting rooms, three exhibition halls, and the 500 Ballroom. After the expansion, seventeen new meeting rooms, two new exhibition halls, and the new White River Ballroom were added to the space.¹ The convention center's biggest feature, however, was the adjoining stadium known as the Hoosier Dome (renamed the RCA Dome in 1994).

Groundbreaking on the Hoosier Dome occurred 27 May 1982. The air-supported dome roof was inflated the following year on 19 August 1983. Manufactured by Birdair Structure, the roof weighed 514,505 pounds, had a height of 193 feet and was made of Teflon-coated fiberglass on the outside and canvas on the inside.

Public tours of the stadium began in 1983. Most of the early tour guides came from the Indianapolis Children's Bureau Auxiliary, an organization who used proceeds from the tour to support the bureau. The Hoosier Dome Tour Program would continue for several years after the stadium's official opening.

The Hoosier Dome's grand opening was 3 May 1984. This event occurred shortly after the official announcement of the relocation of the Colts' National Football League (NFL) team from Baltimore to Indianapolis. On the dome's official dedication day, 11 August 1984, a sellout crowd watched the Indianapolis Colts defeat the New York Giants in an NFL preseason game.

Outside of Colts' games, the Hoosier Dome hosted a plethora of events. Many of these events focused on sports, including competitions held by the National Football League,

¹ Another major expansion of the Indiana Convention Center was completed in September 1993. The \$43 million, two-story expansion increased meeting and exhibition spaces, created a new lobby and registration area, and introduced the new 36,000 square-foot Sagamore Ballroom. This project also added skywalks between the Convention Center and the Indianapolis Westin and Hyatt Regency hotels.

National Basketball Association (NBA), National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), International Olympic Committee (IOC), and Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA). The dome also served as a venue for numerous musical events, which included everything from local band contests to concerts by famous musicians.

On 20 September 2005, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for Lucas Oil Stadium, the new home of the Indianapolis Colts. After this stadium opened to the public, the roof of the RCA Dome was deflated on 24 September 2008. The rest of the building was imploded three months later. This empty space was then used for another Indiana Convention Center expansion. Once completed, the convention center was connected to Lucas Oil Stadium.

Sources:

Materials in collection.

"About." Indiana Convention Center & Lucas Oil Stadium. Accessed July 26, 2018.

<http://www.icclos.com/about.aspx>

"Hoosier Dome." In *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, edited by David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrow, 707–08. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994.

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"Indiana Convention Center." Wikipedia. Accessed July 26, 2018.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indiana_Convention_Center

"Lucas Oil Stadium." Wikipedia. Accessed July 26, 2018.

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"RCA Dome." Wikipedia. Accessed July 26, 2018.

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains materials about the Hoosier Dome & Indiana Convention Center, including brochures with facts and stats on the complex as well as an *Indianapolis Monthly* cover story about the project from April 1984. There are also several items from the Hoosier Dome Tour Program, including procedures, routes, scripts, and pin-back buttons for tour guides. Lastly, there is a folder of records from the Indiana Major League Baseball Committee. This group (unsuccessfully) used the Hoosier Dome to attract a major league baseball team to Indianapolis in the 1980s.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Brochures and *Indianapolis Monthly* Cover Story on Hoosier Dome & Indiana Convention Center, April 1984, n.d.

Hoosier Dome Tour Guide Procedures, Routes, and Scripts (1 of 2), 1984–86

Hoosier Dome Tour Guide Procedures, Routes, and Scripts (2 of 2), 1986–90, n.d.

Hoosier Dome Tour Guide Pin-back Button [Small]

Hoosier Dome Tour Guide Pin-back Button [Large]

Indiana Major League Baseball Committee Records, 1982–86, n.d.

CONTAINER

Folder 1 of 4

Folder 2 of 4

Folder 3 of 4

Artifact: 2016.0315

Artifact: 2016.0315

Folder 4 of 4