

Collection #
P 0638

**INDIANA HOTELS PHOTOGRAPHS AND GRAPHICS
CA. 1902–1950S**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	One half-size photograph box, 1 OVA photograph box, 1 half-size OVB photograph box, 1 Flat File folder
COLLECTION DATES:	Ca. 1902–1950s
PROVENANCE:	Multiple
RESTRICTIONS:	None
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ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	
ACCESSION NUMBERS:	0000.1225v0020, 0000.1225v0071, 1990.0595, 1992.0071, 1998.0367, 1999.0493v0002, 2000.0060, 2007.0037, 2012.0053, 2012.0186
NOTES:	<i>See also:</i> Claypool Hotel Photographs (P 0018); Jay Small Postcard Collection (P 0391); Indiana Postcard Collection (P 0408); General Picture Collection (P 0411)

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Establishments offering hospitality to travelers have been a feature of the earliest civilizations, back to Biblical times. A hotel known as the Nisiyama Onsen Keiunkan, in Yamanashi, Japan, was founded in the year 705 and has been operated by many generations of the same family for more than 1300 years. The first building in the United States that was constructed specifically as a hotel was the five-story City Hotel in New York City, which was erected in 1794.

The French Lick township of Orange County, Indiana, was known for its salt deposits and mineral springs. However, the saline content was insufficient to support large-scale salt mining, and the land was deemed inadequate for agriculture. Two early landowners decided to develop hotels there: the French Lick Springs Hotel and the West Baden Springs Hotel.

Dr. William A. Bowles built the first hotel in the French Lick area in 1845, which would later be known as the French Lick Springs Hotel. The hotel was expanded in the following decades and became a popular mineral springs health resort. The main hotel building was destroyed by fire in 1897 and was rebuilt on a grander scale. By 1905, Thomas Taggart -- former mayor of Indianapolis, U.S. senator, and national chairman of the Democratic party -- had become the sole owner of the hotel. He made many improvements and also convinced the Monon Railroad to lay track to the hotel's grounds and run daily passenger service between the hotel and Chicago. The hotel offered mineral spring baths, horseback riding, tennis, swimming, bowling, billiards, a gym, fine dining, and dancing to music from its own orchestra.

In the 1850s, Dr. John A. Lane built the West Baden Springs Hotel nearby. Lee W. Sinclair gained a controlling interest in the hotel in 1888. The hotel burned to the ground in 1901, but Sinclair rebuilt it the following year. The new round structure was opulent, with an atrium that was 200 feet across and 100 feet tall and topped off with the world's largest dome. It was billed as the Eighth Wonder of the World. The hotel and its grounds included golf courses, an opera house, barber, and mineral spas purported to have curative properties.

In the heyday of the resort hotels at French Lick and West Baden, the rich and famous came as guests or gave performances. Visitors included movie stars, musicians, politicians, and other wealthy socialites.

The Cottage Hotel at 219 N. Franklin Street in Ladoga was built in 1890–1891 for William Henry McIntire in the Queen Anne style by William Strickler & Son. Later McIntire's son, William Pearlie McIntire, became the proprietor.

The Hotel Washington opened at 32 E. Washington Street in Indianapolis on 28 December 1912. The seventeen-story, 300-room beaux-arts hotel was designed by Robert Frost Daggett. The building was converted to apartments in 1965, and was bought by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra in 1997 for its offices.

The Hotel Severin opened in 1913 as the Grand Hotel of Indianapolis. It was strategically built across from Union Station in an era when 25,000 passengers would pass through the station on 120 trains daily. The hotel was built by Henry Severin, Jr., with help from Indianapolis Motor Speedway founders Carl G. Fisher and James A. Allison. It is now known as the Omni Severin Hotel.

The Fowler Hotel at 407 Ferry Street in Lafayette was built in the neo-classical style in 1915 by Cecil Fowler. It was converted into senior citizen apartments in 1975–76.

The Lyndora Hotel opened on Columbia Avenue, facing Maywood Park, in Hammond, on 1 August 1918 with 170 rooms.

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection is composed of photographs and graphics of hotels in Indiana. Included are a large color illustration, an advertisement, and a souvenir folder. The collection is arranged into the following series:

Series 1: Exteriors -- This series includes photographs and graphics illustrating the exteriors of hotels [ca. 1902–1957].

Series 2: Interiors -- This series contains photographs taken inside hotels, including a portrait of Lee W. Sinclair standing in the atrium of the West Baden Springs Hotel [ca. 1910–1950s].

Series 3: French Lick Springs Hotel Renovation, ca. 1911–1912 -- This series is composed of five mounted photographs by The Elrod Photo Co. of French Lick, showing the old lobby, plasterers, and other people.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Exteriors

CONTENTS

French Lick Springs Hotel: black-and-white photograph [ca. 1950s] of a painting [ca. early 1900s] of the front of the hotel, showing people on horses and a horse-drawn carriage. The painting was owned by the Taggart family.

West Baden Springs Hotel: large color illustration of the hotel and grounds shows people engaged in recreation, cows, horses. Captions: The Carlsbad of America / Natures [sic] Greatest Health Resort / New West Baden Springs Hotel / Most Unique Hotel in the World / ... The World's Eighth Wonder / On the Monon Route / Absolutely Fire Proof. [ca. 1902]

Fowler Hotel (Lafayette): mounted cutout of a black-and-white photograph of an architectural drawing showing two sides of the hotel and adjacent buildings [ca. 1915].

Lyndora Hotel (Hammond): mounted photograph shows front of hotel with AAA sign attached to lamp post by curb (photo by Postal Engraving Co. of Chicago). [ca. 1920]

Hotel Severin (Indianapolis): gathering of twenty-five men of the Federal Savings Insurance Company on the roof of the hotel (photo by Liberty Studio, Indianapolis, 1918).

Hotel Severin (Indianapolis): page 21 from unidentified magazine with full-page advertisement for the hotel at Illinois and Georgia streets, listing 400 spacious rooms, radio and television, air conditioning, etc.; Harold R. Kohler (manager) and William A. Atkins (president). [1957]

CONTAINER

OVA Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 1

Flat File 4-m

OVA Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 2

OVB Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 1

OVB Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 2

Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 1

Series 2: Interiors

CONTENTS

West Baden Springs Hotel: mounted photograph is a portrait of Lee W. Sinclair standing in the atrium of the hotel with a large dog lying at his feet. Sinclair's signature is on the mat below the photograph [ca. 1910].

Cottage Hotel (Ladoga): mounted photograph of people in dining room. Written on mat below photograph: Cottage Hotel Dining Room / Opposite Post Office. [ca. 1915]

Hotel Washington (Indianapolis): black-and-white photograph set in a souvenir folder from the Sapphire Room, "Indianapolis' only hotel supper club" shows unidentified people at tables. "Photo by Pat." [ca. 1950s]

CONTAINER

OVA Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 3

OVA Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 4

Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 2

Series 3: French Lick Springs Hotel Renovation, ca. 1911–1912

CONTENTS

Lobby.

Three workers in overalls standing in the hotel.

Plasterers: group portrait of thirty-two men gathered in the hotel, 28 July 1911.

Sixteen workers gathered in the old lobby, 19 February 1912.

Nine men gathered in the old lobby: some in overalls, others in suits, 28 February 1912.

CONTAINER

Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 3

Photographs, Box 1,
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