

Collection #  
P 0392

## INDIANA INTERURBAN AND INDIANAPOLIS STREETCAR PHOTOGRAPHS, CA. 1912–CA. 1926

[Collection Information](#)

[Historical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

Pamela Tranfield

June 1999

Revised 20 September 2002

Revised 15 May 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: 6 folders of photographs

COLLECTION  
DATES: Ca. 1912–ca. 1926

PROVENANCE: William P. Flynn, Indianapolis, August 1975

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Cincinnati Car Corporation (P 0376)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1975.0205

NOTES:

## **HISTORICAL SKETCH**

The first electric streetcar railway in Indiana, the Lafayette Street Railway, opened in South Bend on 30 August 1888. By 1895 streetcar systems operated in Indianapolis, Richmond, Kokomo, Vincennes, Fort Wayne, Anderson, Muncie, Elwood, Terre Haute, Columbus, Logansport, and Evansville. Streetcars operated in Indiana cities until 1953.

The Indianapolis, Greenwood, and Franklin Railroad was the first interurban line to serve Indianapolis. The service opened in January 1900 and originated at Greenwood. By 1910 twelve companies operated direct routes between Indianapolis and major cities within a 120-mile radius of the state capital. These companies remained strong until the 1930s when financial problems resulting from the stock market crash of 1929 closed a number of operations.

The rising popularity of the automobile and the passage of the Public Utility Holding Act in 1935 were deathblows to the interurban railway systems. The Public Utility Holding Act required holding companies to restrict their operations to a single, integrated system. Power companies and railway companies could not be owned by the same holding company. Electric railways no longer had access to integrated and thus inexpensive sources of power. The last interurban line in the state, the Indiana Railroad (Indianapolis to Fort Wayne) closed in 1941.

### ***Terre Haute, Indianapolis and Eastern Traction Company***

Randal Morgan, W. Kelsey Schoepf, and Hugh J. McGowan formed the Terre Haute, Indianapolis and Eastern Traction Company (THI&E) on 1 March 1907. The Indianapolis and Western Railway, the Indianapolis and Eastern Railway, the Richmond Street and Interurban Railway, and the Indianapolis Coal Traction Company were predecessor companies. On 25 March 1907 the THI&E acquired the Terre Haute Traction and Light Company and in 1912 purchased the Indianapolis, Crawfordsville and Danville Electric Railway. The company also controlled the Indianapolis Street Railway. Profits from the street railway and the power company assured the survival of the THI&E through the 1920s but the company went into receivership on 2 April 1930.

### ***Union Traction Company of Indiana***

Charles L. Henry of Anderson, Indiana, organized the Indiana Union Traction Company ca. 1897. W. Kelsey Schoepf, and Hugh J. McGowan controlled the company starting in 1902. In 1912 Union Traction leased the line between Indianapolis and New Castle (formerly the Indianapolis, New Castle and Toledo Railway) and operated the New Castle and Eastern Traction Company. The company began construction of a line north from New Castle to Muncie in 1913, and leased the Muncie and Portland Traction Company beginning in 1916.

By the 1920s the Union Traction Company of Indiana was operating 410 miles of interurban line across the state, and approximately 44 miles of street railway track in Anderson, Marion, Muncie, and Elwood. Passenger traffic began to

decline after 1917 and the company went bankrupt in 1925. Receiver Arthur Brady operated the company until 1930. Midland United purchased the Union Traction Company on 2 July 1930. The Danville, Martinsville, Lafayette, and Crawfordsville lines were abandoned on 31 October 1930. The Sullivan and Clinton lines ceased operations in spring 1931. The United Midland Corporation purchased the company at auction on 23 June 1931 and incorporated the remaining portions of the line into the Indiana Railroad system.

### ***Indianapolis & Cincinnati Traction Company***

Charles L. Henry founded the Indianapolis & Cincinnati Traction Company ca. 1902. A line from Indianapolis to Shelbyville was completed in 1907. The line went into receivership in 1906, but continued to operate until 1929. That year Henry reorganized the company as the Indianapolis and Southeastern Railroad Company, which operated until 1932.

### ***Indiana Service Corporation***

Incorporated 15 January 1920, the Indiana Service Corporation operated interurban lines across Indiana. These lines included the Fort Wayne and Northern Indiana Traction Company, the Fort Wayne, Van Wert, and Lima Traction Company, and the Marion & Bluffton Traction Company. After 1930 the company operated as the Indiana Railroad system. Assets of the Indiana Railroad system were liquidated in 1941.

### ***Public Service Company of Indiana***

The Interstate Public Service Company line ran from Louisville, Kentucky, to Indianapolis on track that paralleled the Pennsylvania Railroad. The Indianapolis, Greenfield and Franklin Railroad (IGFR) began construction on the line south of Indianapolis in 1895. In 1903 the IGFR became the Indianapolis, Columbus, and Southern Traction Company and by 1906 pushed construction south to Seymour, Indiana.

Samuel Insull began construction of the Louisville and Southern Indiana Traction Company line to Indianapolis from Louisville in 1903. Insull's Louisville and Northern Railway Lighting Company controlled the line starting in 1905. Insull acquired the Indianapolis, Columbus and Southern Traction Company in 1912 and organized the Interstate Public Service Company that same year.

The Interstate Public Service Company also operated street railways in Jefferson, New Albany, and Columbus, Indiana. The company was reorganized in 1931 as the Public Service Company of Indiana and was operated by the Indiana Railroad.

### ***Marion & Bluffton Traction Company***

The Marion & Bluffton Traction Company was organized in 1914 following the bankruptcy of the Marion, Bluffton and Eastern Traction Company. The line ran from Marion, Indiana, to points in Ohio and was absorbed by the Indiana Service Corporation in 1926.

### **Sources:**

Bodenhamer, David J., and Robert G. Barrows. *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. General Collection: F534.I55 E4.

Brady, George K. *Fort Wayne and Wabash Valley Trolleys*. Chicago: Central Electric Railfan's Association, 1983. General Collection: TF725.F7B73 1983.

Hilton, George W., and John F. Due. *The Electric Interurban Railways in America*. California: Stanford University Press, 1960. General Collection: HE4451.H55 1960.

Marlette, Jerry. *Electric Railroads of Indiana*. Indianapolis: Hoosier Heritage Press, 1980. General Collection: HE5425.I6M3 1980.

Middleton, William D. *The Interurban Era*. Milwaukee: Kalmbach, 1961. General Collection: HE4471.M48 1961.

Sulzer, Elmer G. *Ghost Railroads of Indiana*. Indianapolis: Vane E. Jones, 1970. General Collection: TF24.I6S8 1970.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains twenty-five black-and-white photographs of interurban cars and streetcars on railroad lines and in stations across Indiana. Scenes in the photographs date from ca. 1912 to ca. 1926 but the actual photographs may have been made after ca. 1950. An unknown individual identified the photographs according to content of the image, and the date and place of the scene.

## CONTENTS

### CONTENTS

Beech Grove Traction Co.; Indiana Railroad;  
Indianapolis and Cincinnati Traction Co., ca. 1915–  
ca. 1926

Indianapolis & Louisville Traction Co. ;  
Indianapolis, Columbus and Southern Traction Co.;  
Lebanon–Thorntown Traction Co., ca. 1916–ca.  
1918

Indianapolis and Northwestern Railway; Interstate  
Public Service Co.; Marion, Bluffton, and Eastern  
Traction Co., ca. 1915–ca. 1918.

Terre Haute, Indianapolis, and Eastern Traction Co.,  
ca. 1918

Union Traction Co., ca. 1915–ca. 1918

Indianapolis Street Railways, ca. 1912–ca. 1926

### CONTAINER

Photographs,  
Folder 1

Photographs,  
Folder 2

Photographs,  
Folder 3

Photographs,  
Folder 4

Photographs,  
Folder 5

Photographs,  
Folder 6

## 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://opac.indianahistory.org/>
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, P 0392).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.