

Collection #  
M 1483

**INDIANA RELIGIOUS HISTORY ASSOCIATION  
COLLECTION, 1976-2003**

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Processed by

Paul Brockman  
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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: 16 manuscript boxes; 1 folder photographs

COLLECTION DATES: 1976-2003

PROVENANCE: Indiana Religious History Association, Bruce L. Johnson, August, 2004; Sister Mary Kenneth Scheessle, May, 2007; John Baughman, May, 2019; James Divita, July, 2019

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Indiana Religious History Association Project, 1987 "Documenting Freedom of Worship" (M 0577); White and Ferrill, *Where God's People Meet: A Guide to Significant Religious Places in Indiana*. **BR555.I6 W55 1996**

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2004.0455X; 2007.0126; 2019.0143; 2019.0244

NOTES:

## **HISTORICAL SKETCH**

The Indiana Religious History Association was founded in 1976 under the leadership of Grover L. Hartman. It was a non-denominational group intended "to provide an opportunity for persons working in or interested in religious history to meet periodically, to compare programs, to share new ideas, and to initiate programs and activities furthering the cause of religious history in Indiana." It charged modest dues and its membership of about one hundred, and its board, included the major religious groups in Indiana as well as several smaller ones.

Some of its meetings were held in conjunction with meetings of Indiana Historical Society. Others are held separately, and some include tours of houses of worship around the state. In 1986 the Association noted that 13 July 1987 marked the two-hundredth anniversary of the Northwest Ordinance with its article guaranteeing freedom of worship. It conceived the idea of "Documenting Freedom of Worship" by recording religious services held over the state during one week (the one chosen was 20-26 September 1987). The basic idea of the project was to document the different ways in which the religious freedom guaranteed by the Ordinance was actually being used two hundred years later. Working with Indiana Historical Society, the Association obtained a grant of \$17,120 from the Lilly Endowment. The project was announced through the media, direct mailing, denominational networks, the Indiana Council of Churches, ministerial associations, and county historians. Over four hundred religious organizations actually participated. Edwin L. Becker, retired professor at Christian Theological Seminary, served as project director. The organization is now defunct.

Sources:

Information in Collection

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection contains the papers of several individuals who were prominent in the operation and organization of Indiana Religious Historical Association, and, as a result, there is some overlapping in a few instances. Among the compilers of the material are Pastor Rudy Rehmer of West Lafayette, Bruce L. Johnson of Indianapolis, Sister Mary Kenneth Scheesle of Ferdinand, John Baughman of Greencastle, and James Divita of Indianapolis. Included are board and meeting minutes, newsletters, correspondence, programs involving church histories and the collecting of materials, and tours to religious sites in various parts of the state. There is also a significant amount of material on the history of individual Lutheran Congregations in Indiana collected by Pastor Rehmer.

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