

Collection #  
M 1080

## INDIANAPOLIS AIRPORT AUTHORITY MATERIALS, 1928-2012

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Processed by

Maire Gurevitz  
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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: 15 boxes manuscripts, 3 boxes photographs, 3 boxes color photographs, 2 boxes OVA photographs, 2 boxes OVB photographs, 2 boxes slides, 1 folder OVA graphics, 1 folder OVB graphics, 1 flat file

COLLECTION DATES: 1928-2012

PROVENANCE: Indianapolis Airport Authority; Indianapolis, IN

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: *A History of the Indianapolis Municipal Airport*, HE9797.5.I62 I55 1956; *Indianapolis Municipal Airport*, HE9797.5.I62 I55 1931; Aircraft Photographs, P0070

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2003.0360; 2013.0410; 2014.0014

NOTES:

## **HISTORICAL SKETCH**

The Indianapolis Airport Authority owns and oversees operations at the Indianapolis International Airport as well as the Downtown Heliport, Eagle Creek Airpark, Hendricks County Airport, Indianapolis Regional Airport, and Metropolitan Airport. The Airport Authority was established as a municipal corporation by the Indiana General Assembly in 1962.

The Indianapolis International Airport was first known as the Indianapolis Municipal Airport, and was owned and operated by the City of Indianapolis and the Board of Airport Commissioners. The city formed an Airport Committee in 1928 to vet a variety of locations for a large airport that would be able to grow with the city and with increasing popularity of air travel. The 400 acre portion of farmland chosen for the airport site was six and nine tenths miles southwest of Monument Circle. Construction began in 1929 and the airport officially opened in September 1931.

In 1944, the airport was renamed the Weir Cook Airport in honor of Col. H. Weir Cook, Indiana's first ace in World War I. Shortly after the name change, the structure of the airport also needed a change in order to accommodate an increased number of airlines serving Indianapolis and the increase in passengers, which had grown to 190,000 in 1946. In June 1954, construction began on a hangar, office building and a new, larger terminal building, which opened in 1956. The 1956 terminal was expanded and renovated in 1968.

The 1960s and 1970s were also a time of great expansion at the airport, as the airport almost doubled in size and saw one million passengers through its gates in 1970. Other improvements were made as the airport continued to expand, such as a new runway system to accommodate larger aircraft, an air traffic control tower designed by I.M. Pei, an International Arrivals building, and a new Administration building. Controversy between the Airport Authority and some citizens and airport users erupted in 1976 when the decision was made to change the official name of the airport from Weir Cook to Indianapolis International.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the number of passenger carriers went from 6 to 22, and cargo operations also increased significantly because the airport received designation as a Foreign Trade Zone. In addition, the Airport Authority was able to win a lot of new business from locally based American Trans Air, which built a hangar, maintenance center, and relocated corporate headquarters to the airport. U.S. Air and United Airlines also purchased space for maintenance centers, and the U.S. Postal Service established an Express Mail Hub facility.

Most recently, needs for greater passenger and cargo service have only continued to increase, and the airport has continued to expand to keep up with the need. In 2005, the ground was broken for an entirely new terminal, parking facilities and support facilities. The new Indianapolis International Airport and the H. Weir Cook Terminal officially opened in November 2008.

Sources:

Materials in the collection.

Indianapolis International Airport. "Airport History." Accessed April 26, 2014.

<http://www.indianapolisairport.com/files/contribute/01.20.09MajorMilestones.pdf>

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The Indianapolis Airport Authority collection has been divided into five separate series by type of material. Items within each series are organized chronologically.

The manuscripts series comes first and contains items related to the development and expansion of the Indianapolis International Airport. Such items include correspondence generated by airport administrators, publicity items, flight schedules, annual financial reports, and newspaper clippings. A few items unrelated to the airport specifically but speak to aviation in Indiana are a scrapbook detailing a 1929 Air Show in Indianapolis, an Air Corps newsletter from 1930, and two U.S. Army Pilot's books that belonged to Captain D.A. Pfaff.

The next series contains scrapbooks of newspaper clippings. Most of the clippings deal specifically with the airport, but there is also coverage about different airlines, federal regulations of airlines and airports, and major accidents involving airplanes. The scrapbooks were kept every year from 1957 to 1994, with the exception of 1964-65, 1968 and 1977.

The next three series are made up of photographs and slides. A significant portion of the visual materials are aerial views of the Indianapolis International Airport and other smaller area airports such as Eagle Creek and the Metropolitan Airport. These aerial views begin in the 1930s before the airport officially opened and extend through the 1990s. There are also many photographs documenting the construction of new buildings and terminals on airport property over the years, as well as publicity photographs celebrating the various new features like gift shops and parking structures. Also of interest in the visuals are snapshots from visits by celebrity pilots of the 1930s and 40s, including Charles Lindbergh, and of different aircraft and airlines that have used the runway. The slides in the collection are arranged only chronologically and are not identified thematically unlike the photographs and color photographs.

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## 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, M 1080).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.