

Collection #
P 0528

INDIANAPOLIS ENGRAVING CO. PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM, 1930

[Collection Information](#)

[Historical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

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6 December 2013

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Indiana Historical Society
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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 album with 28 photographs

COLLECTION
DATES: 1930

PROVENANCE: Gift from John Mullins of Indianapolis, August 1998

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE
FORMATS:

RELATED
HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION
NUMBER: 1998.1081

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

In 1930, at the time the photographs in this album were taken, the Indianapolis Engraving Co. was located on the sixth floor of the Wulsin Building at 222 E. Ohio Street, with Ernest C. Ropkey as president, Charles C. Goodrich as vice president, and Ernest A. Morris as secretary and treasurer. The company advertised the following services: photo engraving in one or more colors, designing and illustrating, and commercial photography.

The company was established as the Indianapolis Engraving and Electrotyping Company in 1897 at 36–36 1/2 E. Washington Street. The 1898 Indianapolis city directory listed the company's president as Henry C. Chandler, with Edward Mason as its vice president and treasurer, and Albert W. Marshall as secretary. An advertisement in the directory lists Marshall as manager, Chandler as engraver, and Mason as illustrator. Services included illustrating, drawing, designing, half-tones, wood engraving, etching, and electrotyping. The company's motto was: Perfect Printing Plates with Promptness.

At the same time, Marshall was also serving as treasurer of the Indianapolis Electrotype Foundry at 17–25 W. Georgia Street. The Indianapolis Electrotype Foundry and Printers' Warehouse had been established in 1875 and incorporated in 1888. Charles B. Wanamaker was president and Albert W. Marshall was secretary-treasurer. Services offered included wood and photo engraving, zinc etching, and wax engraving. Products included leads and slugs, printing inks, and pattern letters.

It appears that there was an affiliation between the foundry and the Indianapolis Engraving and Electrotyping Company, given Marshall's involvement with both. Also, in its first two years of business, the company was so successful that it needed to move to a larger space and made its new quarters at 25 W. Georgia Street -- the location of the foundry -- and the two businesses shared a telephone number. By 1913 the company was listed at 333–349 E. Market Street while the foundry was at 343 E. Market.

By 1899, the city directory listed Edward Mason as president and treasurer of the Indianapolis Engraving and Electrotyping Company. By 1901 Marshall is listed as president of the foundry and secretary-treasurer of the company. It appears that he remained as foundry president through 1924.

Around 1915 the company moved to the fifth floor of the Wulsin Building at 222 E. Ohio Street, and by 1924 had shortened its name to the Indianapolis Engraving Co., dropping "Electrotyping" from its name. Around 1928–29 the company moved into the sixth floor of the Wulsin Building.

Ernest C. Ropkey (1871–1966) was working as an engraver by 1890, hand carving letters in apple wood for \$12 a week. He worked for the Indiana Illustrating Co. and then the Stafford Engraving Co. until about 1905, according to the Indianapolis city directories. An 1898 edition of *The Process Photogram* states that Edward Mason, who was in Indianapolis to illustrate *The Conquest of the Northwest* for William English, established with Ropkey the Ropkey Mason Engraving Co. on 1 June 1896, with Ropkey as president and Mason as secretary-treasurer. The 1906 city directory lists the Ropkey-Ballard Engraving Co. with a cross-reference to "See Indianapolis Engraving and Electrotyping

Co." and lists Ropkey as secretary of the latter. By 1912 Ropkey is listed as president of the company.

The company was called INDECO by 1960 and later changed its name to Ropkey Graphics. By 1991, a fourth generation of Ropkeys was working for the company on million-dollar machines, bringing in more than \$8 million in annual business. The company filed for bankruptcy on 3 September 2002 and was sold in 2003.

Sources:

Dobie, Frederick G. "Ropkey Graphics: A Family Enterprise for 100 Years." In *Indianapolis Business Journal*, 7 January 1991 (<http://business.highbeam.com/5280/article-1G1-10613170/ropkey-graphics-family-enterprise-100-years>). Accessed 4 December 2013.

Hyman, Max R. *The Journal Handbook of Indianapolis: An Outline History*. Indianapolis: Indianapolis Journal Newspaper Co., 1902: p. 247. Reference Room Collection: [F534.I55 J6 1902](#)

Indianapolis Business Directory: Embracing a Classified List of all Trades, Professions and Pursuits in the City of Indianapolis and Vicinity for the Years 1897-8. New York: Bards & Co., 1897. General Collection: [F534.I55 A18 1897](#)

R.L. Polk & Co.'s Indianapolis City Directory (1890–1930) (<http://search.ancestrylibrary.com>). Accessed 4 December 2013.

Schoettle, Anthony. "Printing Industry Mainstays Run Dry: Ropkey Files Chapter 11." In *Indianapolis Business Journal*, 16 September 2002 (<http://business.highbeam.com/5280/article-1G1-91964098/printing-industry-mainstays-run-dry-ropkey-files-chapter>). Accessed 4 December 2013.

Schoettle, Anthony. "Ropkey Graphics Sold." In *Indianapolis Business Journal*, 5 May 2003 (<http://business.highbeam.com/5280/article-1P3-333136621/ropkey-graphics-sold>). Accessed 4 December 2013.

Ward, H. Snowden and Catherine Weed Ward, eds. *The Process Photogram*, Vol. V. London: Dawbarn & Ward, 1898: p. 14 (<http://books.google.com/books?id=bFoXAAAAyAAJ&pg=PA14&lpg=PA14&dq=Ropkey+engraving&source=bl&ots=eieotJhQEl&sig=guK9pCCiY5KF3Gf40aytOQ-sK58&hl=en&sa=X&ei=o4eKUuK8DYGk2gWp7YFQ&ved=0CEQQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=Ropkey%20engraving&f=false>). Accessed 4 December 2013.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of one photograph album holding 28 black-and-white photographs of the Indianapolis Engraving Company in 1930. The photographs show the Wulsin Building at 222 E. Ohio Street in downtown Indianapolis, and unidentified workers in various departments of the company.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Page 1: Exterior of the Wulsin Building at 222 E. Ohio Street, Indianapolis.

Page 2: Man seated at desk speaking into a dictaphone. Desk calendar shows August 14.

Page 3: Man seated at desk.

Page 4: Woman and man with an illustration. Wall calendar shows 1930.

Page 5: Woman seated at desk in what appears to be a reception/waiting area. Seated man appears to be waiting. Illustrations and photographs on the walls.

Page 6: Ten men and two women in large office with several desks. One man is speaking into a dictaphone.

Page 7: Different view showing that the scenes on pages 5 and 6 are in the same large room. Five men and four women are seated at desks.

Page 8: One woman and two men seated at a table looking at books with photos in them. Bookcases in the background.

Page 9: Man working at drawing board. Others at desks. Framed advertisement for Van Camp's pork and beans on wall with other illustrations.

Page 10: Large room with eleven men and two women working at drawing boards. Two men seen standing in another room in the background.

Page 11: Two women seated at desks in a room with file cabinets. One woman is working with illustrated advertisements. Desk calendar shows August 25.

CONTAINER

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Page 12: Two women and one man seen from the back working at drawing boards. Another man is standing and working with a paintbrush on a large advertisement for Royal anti-hog-cholera serum, which is next to another large advertisement for Sioux Brand anti-hog cholera serum.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 13: Three men working in a room where photographs are washed.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 14: Two men working in photo studio.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 15: Three men working in what appears to be a packaging room. Wall calendars show August 1930.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 16: Five men working in a room with printing equipment. Wall calendar shows August 1930.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 17: Four men in a workroom. One appears to have an engraving plate under a fume hood.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 18: Several men working with engraving tools.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 19: Two men with an illustration.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 20: Six men working [possibly setting type] with equipment in a workroom.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 21: Three men doing different tasks (washing, ink rolling[?], touching up) in a workroom.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 22: Men working in a similar setting as that shown on page 18.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 23: Three men in a workroom where plates are drying on a rack. Wall calendar shows August 1930.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 24: Two men in a workroom. One appears to be dipping a plate for etching. Wall calendars show August 1930.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 25: Man using a vacuum easel.	Album Storage, PAA
Page 26: Five men using Kinzler focus finders [possibly to make enlargements].	Album Storage, PAA
Page 27: Two men using photographic equipment.	Album Storage, PAA

Page 28: Man in supply storage room. Supplies on shelves include paper, envelopes, sheets of copper and zinc, and light bulbs.

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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, P 0528).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.