

Collection #
P0181

**INDIANAPOLIS MAENNERCHOR
PHOTOGRAPHS, CA. 1890–1906, N.D.**

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Processed by

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Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 photo album PAC
1 OVC photograph box
1 folder color photographs

COLLECTION DATES: 1900–1906, n.d.

PROVENANCE: John C. Rugenstein 1963; Anton Scherrer estate 1972; Kenneth C. Duncan 1988; Andrew Halter 2011

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: *The Maennerchor cook book:*
General Collection TX715 .M34 1906
Clipping File: Buildings--Indiana—Indianapolis:
Reference Room Collection
Festschrift zur Feier des vierzigjährigen
Stiftungsfestes...Pamphlet F Collection: ML28.I6 E54 1894
Festschrift zur Feier des goldenen Jubiläums...
General Collection: ML28.I6 F4 1904:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1963.0073; 1972.0409; 1988.0040; 2011.0153

NOTES: This is an artificial collection with additions expected

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Indianapolis Maennerchor was established in June 1854 by a group of young German men who enjoyed singing songs from their homeland. During the following years the group grew and developed into a noted amateur music society that influenced musical culture in Indianapolis for over a century.

The group's first public concert was held on May 28, 1855. The following year they performed at the National Saengerfest (song festival) in Cincinnati and hosted the first Indiana chorus festival in 1858. In September of 1867 the Indianapolis Maennerchor hosted the National Saengerfest of the North American Saengerbund where nearly 800 delegates from 41 societies visited the city. Beginning in the 1870s the Maennerchor enjoyed a successful era that peaked with the 25th anniversary of the society in 1880. Continuing into the 1890s saw the performance of operettas by the Maennerchor members. There were also May Festivals and masked balls that were highlights of the social season.

The Maennerchor outgrew their rented quarters on east Washington Street and in March 1907 moved to the specially built Maennerchor Hall at the northwest corner of Michigan and Illinois Streets. The dedication of the Hall was attended by local notables Charles Fairbanks, Vice President of the United States; Charles Bookwalter, mayor of Indianapolis; and James Whitcomb Riley. In 1908 the National Saengerfest of the North American Saengerbund was held there and brought 75,000 visitors to the city, establishing Indianapolis as a national center for German culture in America.

After the death of their benefactor John P. Frenzel in 1933, the organization suffered economically during the Great Depression. The group formed an association with the Athenaeum in 1936 and was able to continue performing. Maennerchor Hall was rented out and eventually purchased by Indiana University in 1946 to house the I.U. Law School. In the 1970s the Maennerchor group attempted to return to their Maennerchor Hall but the building was demolished by American States Insurance during negotiations.

Currently located in the Athenaeum building, the Indianapolis Maennerchor remains active and performs several musical events throughout the year.

Sources:

Bodenhamer, David, J., et al. *The encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, Bloomington : Indiana University Press, c1994. General Collection: F534.I55 E4 1994

Indianapolis Maennerchor Records, 1866-1990, Mss 040, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives, IUPUI University Library, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis. <http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/special/collections/german-american/mss040?show=images>

The Indianapolis Maennerchor website: <http://www.maennerchor.org/>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection is an artificial collection comprised of one album, two composite photographs, and six color copy photographs.

The album contains 7 photographs with inscriptions in German and is dated 1902. It was owned by Frau Adolph Scherrer, wife of the noted Indiana architect and is inscribed to her on the front page in an *Italic* script. All of the labels for the photographs in the album also appear to be hand written in *Italic* script. Each label is listed in the contents section of the collection guide. The building identified in the album as Maennerchor Hall is the Old City Hall on east Washington Street. The Maennerchor group rented and remodeled it in 1897. The group rehearsed and performed there until their new building was constructed in 1907.

The composite photographs are oversized. The composite dated 1900 lists each member's name and was photographed by Pouder Photo. The other composite is not dated and none of the members are identified. However it appears to be an earlier image as the men's style of clothing and beards appear to be from the ca. 1890 period. That photograph was produced by photographers C.H. Wittig, with W.J. & J.A. Schroy, located at 16 ½ East Washington Street, in Indianapolis.

The color photos are modern copies of older images showing various interiors and one exterior of the official Maennerchor Hall located at the northwest corner of Michigan and Illinois Streets.

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Indianapolis Maennerchor. [cover title]
“*Frau Adolph Scherrer gewidmet von den Aktiven des
Männerchor, 1902*” [title page]
[composite group photograph with names, 1900]
Maennerchor Halle [exterior]
Conzert-u. Ballsaal [interior]
Probe-Lokal [interior]
Damensalon [interior]
Kneipzimmer. Am langen Tisch [interior]
Die Gemütliche Ecke [interior]

Indianapolis Maennerchor
[composite photograph with names, 1900]

Indianapolis Maennerchor
[composite photograph, no names or date, ca. 1890]

Maennerchor Hall [exterior]
Kneipe, Library, Main Foyer, Dining Hall, Concert
Hall [interiors]

CONTAINER

Photo Album:
PAC

OVC Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 1

OVC Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 2

Color Photographs:
Folder 1

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, P0181).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.