

# INDIANAPOLIS STREET RAILWAYS COLLECTION, 1899-1943

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Collection #  
OMB 20  
BV 3038-3049

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Processed by  
Charles Latham  
22 May 1995

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## USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 oversize box, 4 folio folders, 12 bound volumes

COLLECTION DATES: 1899-1943

PROVENANCE: Jerome J. Jackson, Jr., Indianapolis, IN, 28 April 1995

RESTRICTIONS: None

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

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: M 232 Indianapolis Railroad Collection, 1891-1939; M 427 Indianapolis Transit System, 1955-1974

ACCESSION NUMBER: 95.0470

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

Streetcars pulled by mules, with cars owned by three successive companies, provided public transportation in Indianapolis from 1864 to 1894. The Citizens Street Railroad Company, founded by Chicago investors, bought the system in 1888 and converted it to electricity in 1890-1894. It then had financial troubles.

Hugh J. McGowan, who had started in the business as a mulecar driver in Kansas City, founded the Indianapolis Street Railway Company, which bought the system in 1899, allowed interurbans (newly developed under McGowan) to use its tracks in 1900, and bought control of the traction line to Broad Ripple in 1902. McGowan also founded the Indianapolis Traction and Terminal Company, which leased the Indianapolis system in 1903 and in the following year built a nine-track terminal on Market Street between Illinois Street and Capitol Avenue.

After McGowan's death in 1911, his companies had problems. In 1919 his two companies merged as Indianapolis Street Railway Company; after 1920 this was owned by the Terre Haute, Indianapolis & Eastern Railroad. The company began operating buses in 1923, and in 1927 bought the rival Peoples Motor Coach Company. In 1930 both the street railway and its parent railroad went into receivership. Reorganized as Indianapolis Railways, the system renovated some of its tracks, and developed the use of the trackless trolley. Ultimately the competition of the automobile proved too much. The last streetcar operated on the Broad Ripple line in 1953, and the last trackless trolley in 1957.

Sources: Article on Streetcars in *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. p. 1305-1306  
James Farmer in *Indianapolis Star Magazine*, p. 10-2-1939

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### **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection, filling one oversize manuscript box, four folio folders, and twelve bound volumes, contains company records, an inventory, and city ordinances, 1899-1943. It is arranged chronologically.

In the oversize box are monthly reports of the Indianapolis Traction and Terminal Company. The series is complete from 1906 to 1924 (omitting 1920-1921), with single December sheets for 1926 and 1928. This series is continued in BV 3048 (Indianapolis Street Railway Co., April 1924 to December 1929).

In the folio folders are a 1939 map of the Indianapolis transit system, and a complete record of streetcar tracks abandoned in January 1943.

The bound volumes contain records of various transit companies which came and went during the period, including the Broad Ripple Traction Company, Indianapolis Street Railway Company, People's Motor Coach Company, Indianapolis Car Equipment Company, and Suburban Bus Company. Also included are a volume of city ordinances about street railways up to 1908 (BV 3039), and an inventory of the physical properties of the two street railway companies in 1919 (BV 3041).

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### **FOLDER LIST**

- 1: Indianapolis Traction & Terminal Co. monthly reports-- 1906, 1907
- 2: Indianapolis Traction & Terminal Co. monthly reports -- 1908, 1909
- 3: Indianapolis Traction & Terminal Co. monthly reports -- 1910, 1911
- 4: Indianapolis Traction & Terminal Co. monthly reports -- 1912, 1913
- 5: Indianapolis Traction & Terminal Co. monthly reports -- 1914, 1915

- 6: Indianapolis Traction & Terminal Co. monthly reports -- 1916, 1917
- 7: Indianapolis Traction & Terminal Co. monthly reports -- 1918, 1919
- 8: Indianapolis Traction & Terminal Co. monthly reports -- 1923, 1924, 1926, 1928
- 9: (ffF15) Indianapolis transit map 1939 "Tracks Abandoned-- Jan. 1943"
- BV 3038 Broad Ripple Traction Co. 1899-1932
- BV 3039 Indianapolis Street Railway Ordinances 1908
- BV 3040 Report on Indianapolis Traction & Terminal Co. 1910 (2 volumes)
- BV 3041 Inventory of Physical Properties of Indianapolis Street Railway Co. and Indianapolis Traction & Terminal Co. 1919
- BV 3042 Indianapolis Street Railway Co. records -- 1919-1920
- BV 3043 Indianapolis Street Railway Co. records -- 1920-1922
- BV 3044 Indianapolis Street Railway Co. records -- 1922-1924
- BV 3045 Indianapolis Street Railway Co. records -- 1924-1926
- BV 3046 Indianapolis Car Equipment Co. 1919-1930
- BV 3047 Indianapolis Street Rway Co. monthly reports 1924-1929
- BV 3048 Suburban Bus Co. 1931-1942
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## CATALOGUING INFORMATION

MAIN ENTRY: Indianapolis Street Railways Collection, 1899-1943

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Indianapolis Street Railway Company

Indianapolis Traction and Terminal Co.

Broad Ripple Traction Co.

McGowan, Hugh J.

Transportation--Indiana--Indianapolis

Local transit--Indiana--Indianapolis

Street-railroads--Indiana--Indianapolis

Street-railroads--Law and legislation--Indiana--Indianapolis

Street-railroads--Indiana--Indianapolis--Track

Bus lines--Indiana--Indianapolis

Transportation--Law and legislation--Indiana--Indianapolis

END