

Collection #  
M 0427  
OM 0321

## INDIANAPOLIS TRANSIT SYSTEM RECORDS, 1955-1975

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1985  
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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

**VOLUME OF COLLECTION:** 6 manuscript boxes, 3 oversize manuscript folders, 1 photograph folder

**COLLECTION DATES:** 1955-1975

**PROVENANCE:** Gift of the Milwaukee County Historical Society, 910 North Third St., Milwaukee, WI 53203, April 1985

**RESTRICTIONS:** None

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**ALTERNATE FORMATS:**

**RELATED HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 1985.0421

**NOTES:**

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Indianapolis Transportation System provided public transportation in Indianapolis from 1955 to 1974. The company evolved from the Indianapolis Street Railway Company of the late 1800s, and the reorganized Indianapolis Railways, Incorporated of the 1930s. Governor James P. Goodrich owned and operated the system until his death on August 15, 1940. His son, Pierre Goodrich, later headed the firm.

In November 1955, controlling stock in the Indianapolis Transit System was purchased by a five member group who later organized under the name Midland Transportation Corporation. The Corporation included Frederick (Fritz) J. Johnson, president of the Milwaukee and Suburban Transportation Corporation and former president of the Louisville Transit Company; Edward P. Madigan and J. Roy Browning, Chicago attorneys; William C. Coleman, vice president of the Milwaukee Transit Company and president of the Mid-Empire Corporation; and Arthur T. Kuesel, owner of the Milwaukee Coal Company.

Through the controlling stock purchase of the Indianapolis Transit System, the five member group also gained additional properties, operated two subsidiary companies and later bought another public transportation system. Ownership of the transit system entitled the Midland Corporation to four additional properties; the Terminal Building, Grandel's Parking Lot Company and two small buildings in the one hundred block of North Illinois. The two subsidiary companies included the Mid-Indiana Corporation, which acted as the purchasing agent for the company, and Terminal Properties Incorporated, which handled the rental space in the Terminal Building. In 1957, the corporation purchased controlling stock in the Louisville Transit System in Louisville, Kentucky, for \$2,850,000.

During the corporation's ownership of Indianapolis Transit System, several changes were made with the hopes of increasing ridership and profits. The owners eliminated obsolete streetcars and streetcar lines and replaced them with motor buses, increased fares, and decreased bus route services. Even with these changes, however, the bus service continued to be plagued by declining ridership and financial difficulties.

By 1971, the owners began seeking buyers for the ailing transit system. In May 1973, the stockholders voted to go out of business. By November 1974, the city of Indianapolis through the Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation began negotiations and officially purchased the Indianapolis Transit System in January 1975.

Sources: Information in collection; *The Indianapolis News*; *The Indianapolis Star* and *The Indianapolis Times*.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Indianapolis Transit System manuscript collection comes from one of the Midland Corporation members and was donated by the Milwaukee County Historical Society in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The collection consists of board of directors minutes (1955-1974), annual shareholders minutes (1956-1971), correspondence, various financial reports, newspaper clippings and miscellaneous material.

Board of directors minutes are contained in boxes 1-2. The minutes are fairly complete up to 1969 while missing several months of records after that date. Box 2 also houses the annual shareholders minutes for 1956-1971. The minutes include information on previous meetings, operating expense reports, annual reports, buying and selling properties and stocks, and election of officers.

General correspondence, dated 1955-1975, is contained in boxes 2-4. Much of the 1955 material deals with the initial stage of locating partners and support for the acquisition of the transit system. Correspondence in box 4 consists of information pertaining to stocks and bonds (1956), trackless trolleys (1957-1959), and subsidiary companies, Mid Indiana Corporation (1956-1961) and Terminal Properties Incorporated (1955-1956)

Financial reports for the transit system fill boxes 4-5. These reports are made up of yearly financial and statistical reports and summaries for 1956-1973, monthly financial and statistical reports for 1974, comparative weekly and monthly statistics for 1971-1974, annual comparative weekly statistics for 1956-1974, claims information (1955-1965), annual reports (1955-1973) as well as financial and operating statements for Indianapolis Railways Incorporated (November, 1955-January, 1956) and miscellaneous financial records. Box 5 also contains newspaper clippings from January, 1973-July, 1974.

Box 6 holds thirteen folders of miscellaneous material, dated 1954-1973, which include petitions of Indianapolis Transit System, operator rules and conduct manual, secured loan agreement with American Fletcher National Bank, U. S. Quarterly Return of Ownership Certificates and Income Tax, pension plan and agreements, Labor agreements and negotiations, sellers and buyers agreement, preliminary transit system investigation, by-laws and various memoranda.

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Minutes, Board of Directors, 1955-1967

#### CONTAINER

Box 1, Folders 1-12

### **BOX 2**

#### CONTENTS

Minutes, Board of Directors, 1968-1974

#### CONTAINER

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Minutes, Annual Shareholders Meetings, 1956-1971

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### **BOX 3**

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Correspondence Trackless Trolleys, July, 1957-August, 1959

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Correspondence Mid Indiana Corporation, 1956-1961

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Statistical Reports and Financial Summaries, 1956-  
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Financial And Operating Statements  
For Indianapolis Railways Incorporated, November,  
1955-January, 1956

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### CONTAINER

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Visual Collection:  
Photographs, Folder 1