

Collection #
SC2937

INDIANAPOLIS VEHICLE LICENSES, 1907

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 Folder

COLLECTION
DATES: 1907

PROVENANCE:

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ACCESSION
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NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

By the turn of the 20th century, Indianapolis was part of an immense transportation network. Railroad lines, the growth of the automobile industry, and the emergence of interurban trains allowed Hoosiers to travel to cities near and far. Although automobiles became a popular mode of transportation in cities in the early 1900s, some Indianapolis residents continued to utilize less modern forms of movement, such as horse-drawn wagons and bicycles.

The 1890s were recognized as the “heyday” of the bicycle in Indianapolis, as it allowed people to travel independently over greater distances. During that decade, “Bicycle stores and repair shops filled lower Pennsylvania Street,” and several Indianapolis bicycle manufacturers did “a million-dollar business” (*Indianapolis, The Story of a City*, 141). Native Hoosier and 1899 world one-mile sprint bicycle champion, Marshall “Major” Taylor, worked for Hays and Willits, one of these shops performing tricks during the early 1890s. Popular use of bicycles continued into the 20th century.

The use of horse-drawn wagons reached its peak in the early to mid 19th century; however there is evidence that utility businesses such as Indianapolis Light and Heat and Bell Telephone Company continued to use this mode of transportation for business purposes through the early 1900s.

Licenses to “own, control, or drive” vehicles such as bicycles and one-horse wagons were issued as early as 1907, long before the first automobile driver licenses were issued in Indiana in 1929.

Sources:

Materials in the collection.

“Back When” (photograph). *Indianapolis Star*, February 25, 1973.

Collection Guide. P0329, “Indianapolis Light and Heat Company photographs, 1905.” Indiana Historical Society.

The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis, David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows, eds. Indiana University Press, 1994

Leary, Edward A. *Indianapolis, The Story of A City*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1971.

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. “Year of First State Driver License Law and First Driver Examination,” accessed October 31, 2012 <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/summary95/dl230.pdf>.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains two vehicle licenses issued in 1907 to John Thalman by the Indianapolis Office of City Controller. One license authorizes him to “own, control, or drive” a one-horse wagon, and the other to “own, control, or drive” a bicycle.

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CONTENTS

Two vehicle licenses, 1907.

CONTAINER

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, SC 2937).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.