

Collection #  
P 0805

**OPAL H. LANGE PHOTOGRAPHS  
OF THE WORLD WAR MEMORIAL CONSTRUCTION  
CA. 1927, 1987**

Collection Information	1
Historical / Biographical Sketch	2
Scope and Content Note	3
Contents	3

Processed by

Barbara Quigley  
20 July 2020

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department  
William Henry Smith Memorial Library  
Indiana Historical Society  
450 West Ohio Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

[www.indianahistory.org](http://www.indianahistory.org)

## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

**VOLUME OF COLLECTION:** 1 folder of photographs; 1 page of correspondence (in photographs folder); 1 folder of 2 nitrate negatives stored in a 4x5 negative box in Cold Storage

**COLLECTION DATES:** Ca. 1927, 1987

**PROVENANCE:** Gift from Judith J. Sullivan of Indianapolis, 2015

**RESTRICTIONS:** Any materials listed as being in Cold Storage must be requested at least 4 hours in advance.

**COPYRIGHT:**

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

**ALTERNATE FORMATS:**

**RELATED HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 2015.0093

**NOTES:**

## HISTORICAL / BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In January 1920, a Citizens Planning Committee designated two city blocks (Vermont to North streets between Meridian and Pennsylvania) for the construction of a memorial to veterans of World War I. Preliminary work on the Indiana World War Memorial Plaza began in early 1921. Two years later the War Memorial Board selected Frank B. Walker and Harry E. Weeks of Cleveland, Ohio, to serve as architects of the plaza.

In early 1926, work began on the World War Memorial. The buildings on the site, including the Bobbs-Merrill Building, the Indiana School for the Blind, Elks Club, Haugh Hotel, and Cambridge Apartment Building were to be demolished or moved. Two churches – the Second Presbyterian and First Baptist – remained on each side of the memorial until they were demolished in 1960.

Actual construction of the memorial began in early 1927, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July General John J. Pershing laid the cornerstone “consecrating the edifice as a patriotic shrine.” Work continued steadily on the memorial until 1928 when a delay in the appropriation of state funds slowed the completion of the interior. In September 1931, the Thomas A. Moynahan Company of Indianapolis gained the contract to complete the interior of the memorial. In 1936 the federal Public Works Administration completed additional work. By April 1949, deterioration of the still incomplete memorial was reported, including leaks, cracked plaster, peeling paint, and eroding limestone.

The memorial was finally completed in 1965 as the most imposing Neoclassical structure in Indianapolis and the focal point of the World War Memorial Plaza. Although originally dedicated to the veterans of World War I, it now also honors Indiana veterans who have served in any conflict since then.

The photographs in this collection were taken by Opal Hartman from the fourth floor or the roof of the Bobbs-Merrill Building. Opal’s first job after high school was with the Bobbs-Merrill publishing company. She worked as an assistant office manager, and later as a proofreader and copy editor. Opal (1905–1989) married Walter Lange on 3 July 1932.

### Sources:

Ancestry <ancestrylibrary.com>. Accessed 16 July 2020:

Indiana Death Certificates, 1899–2011

Marion County, Indiana, Marriage Index, 1925–2012

United States Federal Census, 1930, 1940

Lange, Opal Hartman. Letter to *The Indianapolis News*, August 1987 (in collection).

Rollins, Suzanne T. “Indiana World War Memorial Plaza.” In *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, edited by Bodenhamer, David J. and Robert G. Barrows. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994: 762-63. General Collection: F534 .I55 E4 1994

Sullivan, Judith J. Personal correspondence, 26 March 2015.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of three small black-and-white photographs and two negatives from ca. 1927 of the World War Memorial in Indianapolis in its early stages of construction, and a photocopy of a 1987 letter describing the photographs. The photographer and author of the letter was Opal Hartman Lange. The photographs show the pouring of the concrete for the foundation of the memorial as well as parts of surrounding buildings such as the First Baptist Church at Meridian and Vermont streets, the Second Presbyterian Church at Vermont and Pennsylvania streets, and the Indiana School for the Blind in the distance. The photographs were taken from the fourth floor or roof of the Bobbs-Merrill Building where Opal worked.

## CONTENTS

### CONTENTS

Three black-and-white photographs (approximately 2 ½ x 3 ½ inches) showing early stages of construction of the World War Memorial in Indianapolis.

Photocopy of letter written by Opal Hartman Lange (1987) offering the photographs and negatives to *The Indianapolis News*, with a description of the photographs.

Two nitrate negatives (approximately 2 ½ x 3 ½ inches): one is the negative of one of the photographs in the collection; the other is also of the World War Memorial construction but does not correspond to the photographs in the collection.

### CONTAINER

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

Photographs, Folder 1 of 1

Cold Storage, 4x5 Nitrate  
Negatives, Folder 1 of 1