

Collection #  
M 0973

## THE PORTFOLIO CLUB RECORDS CA.1890-2005

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Processed by

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### COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	3 manuscript boxes, 1 folder of photographs, and 1 oversized manuscript.
COLLECTION DATES:	ca.1890–2005
PROVENANCE:	The Portfolio Club in care of Steve Barnett, 62 N. Layman Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46219, 17 October 2006

RESTRICTIONS:	None
COPYRIGHT:	Held by the Indiana Historical Society
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	None
RELATED HOLDINGS:	William Forsyth Papers (M0691), Indianapolis Propylaeum Papers (M0691), <i>Impressions: being a paper read by Mary E. Steele before the Portfolio Club on the evening of the sixteenth of March MDCCXCIII</i> (Pamphlet F Collection-DD901.M9S7 1893), Camp Steele alphabet (Pamphlet Collection-PS3535.04125C37 1952), Club paper, 1973 (SC 2663), <i>Portfolio</i> (F534.I55 P66), Memoir, ca. 1956 (SC 2208), <i>Portfolio centennial</i> (F534.I55 P67 1990)
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2006.0454
NOTES:	None

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

A group of Indianapolis' most influential artists established the Portfolio Club in 1890, after Mary "Libbie" Steele, T.C. Steele's wife, expressed a desire to form a club composed of men and women who practiced various arts and had gathered informally for a number of years. According to the Portfolio's constitution, "The object of the Club shall be the study of the various branches of art; and membership shall be recruited as far as possible from persons interested in the arts. Not only shall the study of these arts be encouraged, but it shall be a purpose of this organization to bring the various art interests of the community together, and promote a spirit of art interest and art appreciation." The members of the Portfolio believed in enjoying and sharing art for art's sake. It has also been suggested that the Portfolio purposed to popularize the ideas of William Morris, the leader of the British Arts and Crafts Movement. Prospective members submitted a written application which required three members' signatures. Members were then selected by secret ballot. The Portfolio elected four officers: president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Some noteworthy members of the Portfolio included T.C. Steele, Otto Stark, William Forsyth, Booth Tarkington, Eliza Gordon Browning, Agnes Fletcher, and James Whitcomb Riley.

Meetings were held every other Thursday during June through September. Members designed the club's programs, and every one is unique. The evenings included a musical selection, followed by a paper, and then a discussion. For years, The Portfolio held an annual bowling contest at the Das Deutsche Haus (the Athenaeum). Other regularly scheduled events included a Christmas party and a summer picnic. The Portfolio members also wrote and performed plays and planned stunt nights. Today, the Portfolio meets once a month, October through May. Supper and a program dealing with some aspect of the arts comprise the gatherings.

The Portfolio's headquarters were first located in Circle Hall on the northwest corner of Market Street and Monument Circle. Later, the members moved the Metropolitan School of Music at New York and Illinois Streets and remained there until around 1906. They also held meetings at one point in Tudor Hall before relocating to the Propylaeum. When the Propylaeum moved to 1410 North Delaware Street, the Portfolio conducted its meetings in its own rooms in the basement until 1992. Then meetings were moved to the ballroom of the Schnull-Rauch House, 3050 North Meridian Street. In October 2001, the Portfolio moved to the Indianapolis Art Center, 820 East 67<sup>th</sup> Street.

Sources:

Materials from the collection.

The William Forsyth Papers, Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society.

Bodenhamer, David J. and Robert G. Barrows. *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection, filling three manuscript boxes and one flat file, span the years 1890–2005. It is arranged by subject into three series: Constitutions, Programs and Yearbooks, and Photographs.

**Series I (Box 1, Folders 1 and 2) Constitutions:** Material includes two of the club’s constitutions, one from 1890 and one from 1892.

**Series II (Box 1, Folder 3-Box 3) Programs and Yearbooks:** Programs from 1890–2005 list the meetings’ activities, active, honorary, and deceased members. The 1898–99 program is contained in OM 0474, FF 20-1, and its pattern is located in Box 1, Folder 8. The 1915–16 program was issued in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the club and one hundredth anniversary of the state of Indiana. In addition to each meeting’s events, it includes a record for each day of an important historical event in either the club’s history or the state’s. The Portfolio Centennial publication contains an address by Morris Ross which was read during the first meeting and photographs and illustrations of the various headquarters of the club.

**Series III (Box 3, Folder 22):** This series includes photographs (ca. 1890s) of club members and of T.C. Steele’s art school.

## SERIES CONTENTS

### Series 1: Constitutions

#### CONTENTS

*Constitution, Officers, Committees, Members, Scheme of Exercises*, 1890–91

#### CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

*Constitution, Officers, Committees, Members and Programs*, 1892–93

Box 1, Folder 2

*The Portfolio Constitution*, 1912

Box 1, Folder 16

### Series 2: Programs and Yearbooks

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*The Portfolio*, 1893–94

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<i>The Portfolio</i> , 1898–99	OM 0474, FF 20-1
<i>The Portfolio</i> , 1900–01	Box 1, Folder 9
<i>The Portfolio Program</i> , 1903–04	Box 1, Folder 10
<i>The Portfolio</i> , 1905–06 (2 copies)	Box 1, Folder 11
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### **Series 3: Photographs**

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Members of the Portfolio Club

#### CONTAINER

Visual Collections: M0973,  
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, M 0973).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.