

**Collection #
M 1377**

**RIDLEY AND HOLLIMAN FAMILY
COLLECTION, 1900–2015**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	Manuscript Materials: 1 half-sized manuscript box Visual Materials: 2 photograph folders, 1 cold storage color photograph folder
COLLECTION DATES:	1900–2015
PROVENANCE:	Thomas H. Ridley, 2016
RESTRICTIONS:	Items listed as being in cold storage need at least four hours to acclimate, so patrons are advised to call ahead of their visit if they wish to view those items to allow for thawing time.
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ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	Crispus Attucks High School Collection M 1094; <i>300 in 3</i> Photographs P0547
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2016.0193
NOTES:	

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Thomas Howard Ridley Jr. was born 19 December 1922 to Thomas Howard Ridley Sr. and Evelyn Ridley (née Hazelwood) in Indianapolis, Indiana. He had three older siblings: Lawrence, Mildred, and Martin. The Ridley family lived at 735 Center Street, which was located a few blocks away from Indiana Avenue.

Thomas' educational experience was largely segregated. He attended IPS Schools 4, 87, and 42, which were all-black at the time.¹ At School 4, Tom met his future wife Louise in kindergarten class.

Mary Louise Holliman was born 31 March 1924 to Benjamin and Fannie Holliman (née Black) in Indianapolis. Her father Benjamin worked as a jazz musician who performed at several clubs on Indiana Avenue. Some notable artists he played with include Reginald "Reggie" DuValle, leader of the Walker Theatre's original orchestra, Noble Sissle, and Hoagy Carmichael. The Holliman family, which also included Louise's older sister Nancy, lived at 510 North Blackford Street.

In addition to both attending School 4, Louise and Tom also went to Crispus Attucks High School together. Louise graduated in 1940, while Thomas' graduation was delayed as a result of WWII. Once Tom completed his service in the U.S. military, which included his participation at Utah Beach on D-Day, he returned to Attucks and received his diploma in 1947.

On 18 June 1948, Thomas and Louise wed. The couple had two daughters, Diane and Katherine, and moved to a home on Ralston Avenue. Tom supported his family first as an auto mechanic and later as a U.S. Postal Service clerk. After 32 years with USPS, he retired as a supervisor. Louise, meanwhile, spent over 30 years as an IPS teacher. A portion of her career was also spent directing the Title IV program for the Indiana Department of Education.

After spending several decades away from Indiana Avenue, Tom and Louise learned about the revitalization efforts occurring in Ransom Place. Excited about the opportunity to live near their old neighborhood, the couple decided to purchase a home at 901 Paca Street in the mid-1990s.² The two remained at this address until Louise's declining health necessitated her move to a nursing home. Louise died 11 November 2010.

Since his wife's death, Thomas has spent much of his time sharing the history of Indiana Avenue with the public. He has served as lead docent at the Madam Walker Theatre Center for several years. With the organization's help, Tom self-published a 2012 book

¹ School 4 (also known as Mary E. Cable) was located at West Michigan Street and North Blackford Avenue. School 87 (also known as George Washington Carver) was built at 24th and Paris Avenue in 1928. A larger building was later constructed at 2411 Indianapolis Avenue. School 42 (also known as Elder W. Diggs) is located near W. 25th Street.

² Louise's sister Nancy bought a home next to them at 903 Paca Street.

entitled *From the Avenue-A Memoir: Life Experiences and Indiana Avenue History Told from the Perspective of One Who Was There*.

Thomas has also worked with students and faculty at IUPUI, the downtown university that expanded its campus in the late twentieth century by demolishing Indiana Avenue homes and businesses. He recently worked with the School of Liberal Arts, School of Engineering and Technology, and University Library on an exhibit entitled "Welcome to the Neighborhood! Recognizing those who were here before." Opened in May 2018, the exhibit chronicles the history of Blackford Street and the larger Indiana Avenue district.

Sources:

Materials in Collection.

"At age 93, memories of Walker Theatre, Indiana Avenue and more." *Hoosier History Live!* February 6, 2016. <http://hoosierhistorylive.org/mail/2016-02-06.html>

"Exhibit showcases thriving neighborhood that gave way for the construction of IUPUI." *News at IUPUI*, May 10, 2018. <https://news.iu.edu/stories/2018/05/iupui/releases/10-welcome-to-the-neighborhood.html>

"Mary L. Ridley [Obituary]." *Indianapolis Star* (Indianapolis, IN), November 18, 2010. <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/indystar/obituary.aspx?page=lifestory&pid=151636856>

"Spotlight: Recognizing Our Neighborhood's History." *IUPUI Community Report*, 2017. <https://communityreport.iupui.edu/spotlights/history.html>

Ancestry. "1930 United State Federal Census." Accessed 25 May 2018.

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McEntire, Keshia. "Living legacy: Thomas Ridley's history is as remarkable as the stories he shares." *Recorder* (Indianapolis, IN), February 15, 2017. http://www.indianapolisrecorder.com/news/article_5ab78fc0-f3c1-11e6-8f6f-1b4aaa5c331f.html

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Shuck, Johari. "An Early History of Indianapolis School 87." *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 26, no. 4 (Fall 2014): 24-31. <https://www.myips.org/cms/lib/IN01906626/Centricity/Domain/939/DOC020415-02042015092727.pdf>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains articles, correspondence, and photos related to the Ridley and Holliman families. The majority of these items are connected to Indiana Avenue, including materials about Crispus Attucks High School, the Walker Theatre, and Ransom Place neighborhood.

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Articles about Junius "Rainey" Bibbs' [Former Attucks Teacher] Induction into Indiana State University's Athletic Hall of Fame, circa 1998 ³	Box 1, Folder 8
WWI Military Photo of Edward Gaillard [Future Shop Teacher at Attucks], 1910s	Photographs, Folder 2 of 2
Indiana Avenue: Hortense Moving Picture Theatre Notice, Walker Building 80th Anniversary Program, and 1925–1950 Map of 400–500 Block of Indiana Avenue, 1921, 2007, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 9
Handwritten Notes Found Inside <i>A Pictorial History of Jazz: People and Places from New Orleans to Modern Jazz</i> , n.d. ⁴	Box 1, Folder 10

³ Junius Bibbs worked at Crispus Attucks High School from 1947–1970. He served as a teacher, athletic coach, and director of intramural sports.

⁴ The M 1377 copy of *A Pictorial History of Jazz* was deaccessioned by Indiana Historical Society because an existing copy is already available in the library. See call number ML3561.J3K4 1955.