

**Collection #  
M 1524  
OM 0776**

**RUDOLF E. STRENS  
COLLECTION, 1846-1963**

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|------------------------|---|
| Collection Information | 1 |
| Biographical Sketch    | 2 |
| Scope and Content Note | 3 |
| Contents               | 4 |

Processed by

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November 2023

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

**VOLUME OF COLLECTION:** 1 manuscript box, 1 oversize item, 8 folders photographs, 7 folders acetate negatives, 1 artifact

**COLLECTION DATES:** 1846-1961 (bulk: 1873-1930)

**PROVENANCE:** Harry Thompson, 1998

**RESTRICTIONS:** None

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**ALTERNATE FORMATS:**

**RELATED HOLDINGS:** Hugh J Baker Co. Collection, P0009

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 1998.0194

**NOTES:**

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Rudolf Edgar Strenss was born in Frankfurt am Main Germany on 5 January 1890. Around 1905, he immigrated to the US with his parents, Heinrich (Henry) and Marie Strenss, and they settled in Indianapolis. At the age of 18 in 1908, he married Grace P. Houghland of Greencastle, who was ten years his senior. The following year, Rudolf's father was killed after a streetcar knocked him from his wagon at Nineteenth and Alabama Streets.

In 1911, Rudolf and Grace welcomed their only child, daughter Vera. Around this time Rudolf became involved in real estate. In 1914 he is listed in the Indianapolis city directory as Vice President of the Sun Realty Co. In subsequent years he is listed as self-employed. With his native country mired in a war with allies of the US, Rudolf declared his intent to become naturalized as a citizen in 1916. However, he did not petition for naturalization until 1933.

For a few years in the early 1920s, Rudolf attempted to break into automobile sales, but quickly returned to his real estate business. By 1928 he was the secretary/treasurer of Consolidated Builders, Inc., builders of apartment buildings in Indianapolis.

Rudolf Strenss died of a heart attack at the age of 53 in 1943. Grace lived until 1958. Their daughter Vera married Ward Hansell in 1942.

Sources:

Material in the collection

US Federal Census and other records, [ancestrylibrary.com](http://ancestrylibrary.com)

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The bulk of the collection consists of family and business papers of Rudolf E. Strenss. A few items associated with and likely associated with Grace Houghland Strenss are also present. Much of the Strenss family material is in German. A group of acetate negatives show buildings probably associated with Consolidated Builders or Rudolf's other real estate ventures.

A handwritten record of the Badger family of Greencastle is included, and it appears to have been written mainly by Oliver P. Badger, a Putnam County pioneer and religious leader. Grace Houghland Strenss' mother Margaret "Maggie" (Kleinbub) Houghland was briefly married to Oliver's son David E. Badger. Other Greencastle residents, likely acquaintances of Grace's, appear in photographs in the collection.

## CONTENTS

### CONTENTS

James Holland (Tippecanoe Co.) and David Hogline (Putnam Co.) real estate indenture, 1846

Heinrich Strenss military pass (German), 1873

Strenss family documents (many in German), 1876-1906

Strenss family documents (many in German), 1907-1933, 1941, n.d.

Unidentified family group, circa 1890

Unidentified men and boy on horseback (Strenss? German handwriting on verso), n.d.

Strenss family register (German), circa 1910

Rudolf and Grace Strenss real estate indentures, 1914-1932

Other real estate indentures, 1914-1935

Houghland family real estate indentures, 1875, 1913

Rudolf Strenss correspondence and documents, 1913-1931, 1944, n.d.

Pan-American Motors, 1920-1922

Artifact: Dixie Flyer automobile registration plate, circa 1920

Ellis Silvius Gearing contracts and solicitation letter, 1924-1926

Property exchange documents, 1636 Broadway St., 1711 College Ave., 1916-1929

Abstract of Title, Lot 347, Jackson Park, Indianapolis, 1927

Rudolf Strenss account and address books, 1910-1931

### CONTAINER

OM 0776

Folder 1 of 1

Box 1, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Photographs:  
Folder 1 of 8

Photographs:  
Folder 2 of 8

Box 1, Folder 4

Box 1, Folder 5

Box 1, Folder 6

Box 1, Folder 7

Box 1, Folder 8

Box 1, Folder 9

Box 1, Folder 10

Box 1, Folder 11

Box 1, Folder 12

Box 1, Folder 13

Box 1, Folder 14

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Consolidated Builders, 1928-1929                                     | Box 1, Folder 15                      |
| Consolidated Builders clippings, 1928, n.d.                          | Box 1, Folder 16                      |
| Consolidated Builders stock book, 1928                               | Box 1, Folder 17                      |
| Pawnee Realty Co. stock book, 1929                                   | Box 1, Folder 18                      |
| Indianapolis apartment buildings (1 of 3), n.d.                      | 4 x 5 Acetate negatives<br>Envelope 1 |
| Indianapolis apartment buildings (2 of 3), n.d.                      | 4 x 5 Acetate negatives<br>Envelope 2 |
| Indianapolis apartment buildings (3 of 3), n.d.                      | 4 x 5 Acetate negatives<br>Envelope 3 |
| Single family houses and duplexes, n.d.                              | 4 x 5 Acetate negatives<br>Envelope 4 |
| Outbuildings/Agricultural buildings, n.d.                            | 4 x 5 Acetate negatives<br>Envelope 5 |
| Undeveloped lots, n.d.   | 4 x 5 Acetate negatives<br>Envelope 6 |
| Four unidentified men (blurry), circa 1925                           | 5 x 7 Acetate negatives<br>Envelope 1 |
| Rudolf and Grace Strenss insurance policies, 1912-1935               | Box 1, Folder 19                      |
| Purdue University Agricultural Extension poultry leaflets, 1923-1929 | Box 1, Folder 20                      |
| Strenss Christmas etc. cards, 1924-1930, n.d.                        | Box 1, Folder 21                      |
| D.C. Powner to Grace and Vera Strenss, 28 Jan. 1933                  | Box 1, Folder 22                      |
| Vera Strenss and Ward Hansell papers, 1941-1963                      | Box 1, Folder 23                      |
| Badger family record written by Oliver P. Badger, circa 1890         | Box 1, Folder 24                      |
| “The Kleinbub flat” real photo postcard, circa 1910                  | Photographs:<br>Folder 3 of 8         |
| Funeral Notice, John H. Piercy, Greencastle, 1897                    | Box 1, Folder 25                      |

Joseph Piercy, circa 1895

Photographs:  
Folder 4 of 8

Wilbur Ross Gibbons, 1903

Photographs:  
Folder 5 of 8

Unidentified toddler, circa 1924

Photographs:  
Folder 6 of 8

“Bobby Glass, 2 yrs. Old, 1924”

Photographs:  
Folder 7 of 8

“Helen Stickel, age 17 [Emmerich Manual High School], July 1925”

Photographs:  
Folder 8 of 8

*Indianapolis Star* Quilt Contest entries list, 1933

Box 1, Folder 26