

Collection #  
M 0271

**WILLIAM GEORGE SULLIVAN  
PAPERS, 1935-1957**

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Processed by  
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15 May 1991  
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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

**VOLUME OF COLLECTION:** 1 manuscript box, 1 photograph folder

**COLLECTION DATES:** 1935-1957

**PROVENANCE:** William George Sullivan, Indianapolis IN, 1955, 1959 (3 donations); Charles Latham Jr., Indianapolis IN, 8 February 1993

**RESTRICTIONS:** None

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**ALTERNATE FORMATS:**

**RELATED HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 0000.0107, 1955.0010, 1959.0902, 1993.0232

**NOTES:** Republican pamphlet, 1935, transferred to Printed Collections

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William George Sullivan (1884-1959) was born in Indianapolis, the son of George R. and Annie Russell Sullivan. He graduated from Yale University in [1907]. He held largely honorific offices in two Indianapolis businesses: the Sullivan Geiger Company, a family-founded firm of which he was secretary-treasurer; and American States Insurance Company, of which he was vice president at the time of his death.

Sullivan's interests were mainly literary and historical. His house at 1545 N. Meridian Street, and later his apartment at the Blacherne (402 N. Meridian St.), were jammed with books, magazines, and newspapers. He regularly read manuscripts for Bobbs-Merrill Co., and was much interested in the early history of Indianapolis, especially its theaters. He wrote a history of English's Opera House, which was published by Indiana Historical Society the year after his death. In the mid-1950s he was working on an article about Indiana playwright Joseph Arthur.

Sullivan had a number of lifelong friends, some from his college days, with whom he corresponded. Philip L. Goodwin (1885-1958) was a nationally known architect. A graduate of Yale in 1907, he studied architecture at Columbia and in Paris. From 1921 to 1954 he maintained his own practice, and designed several large private homes as well as the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Yale University Art Gallery. He was co-author of *French Provincial Architecture* (1925), and author of *Rooftrees* (1933) and *Brazil Builds* (1943).

Another Yale classmate was Irving S. Olds (1887-1963). After graduating from Harvard Law School in 1910, he spent a year as secretary to Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. He served for a number of years in the law firm of White and Case, then joined U. S. Steel Corporation, of which he was board chairman from 1940 to 1952. He was a trustee of many organizations, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Morgan Library, Metropolitan Opera Association, and Cooper Union.

Among Sullivan's close Indianapolis friends was Theodore B. Griffith (1889-1971) ("Ted"). Born in Indianapolis, he graduated from Williams College in 1910. He was president of L. S. Ayres and Co. from 1940 to 1958, and was responsible for opening the Ayres store in Glendale. He was a founder and longtime officer of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and the Ensemble Music Society.

George B. George ("Double") was born in Indianapolis but moved to New York City, where he had a number of jobs, some connected with the theater.

Garvin M. Brown (1885-1966) and his wife Nina Gilbert ("Mouse") were also close friends. Brown, a graduate of Shortridge High School and of Princeton University (1908), was president of Indianapolis Stove Co., and then executive secretary of Indiana Manufacturers Association. A talented amateur actor, he was an avid student of the Civil War.

Sources: Materials in collection  
Personal knowledge of processor  
*Indiana Biographical Series*, vol. 54 p. 88, vol. 66 p. 13  
*Who Was Who in America*, vols. 3 and 4  
Latham, *Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, The Founders*, (booklet), 1990

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection, filling one manuscript box, consists of correspondence, a paper, research notes, and clippings. It is arranged chronologically.

Folders 1-3 contain correspondence, mainly from the years 1935-1936 and 1956-1957. This consists mainly of letters to Sullivan from the correspondents named above, along with a few typed drafts of Sullivan's replies. Much of the later correspondence is about Sullivan's research on an obscure Indiana playwright, Joseph Arthur.

In Folder 4 is the carbon typescript of a paper read by Sullivan before the Indianapolis Literary Club in 1948, "The Passing Throng." (His book about English's Opera House was first read before the Literary Club.)

Folder 5 contains some of Sullivan's research notes, many pertaining to Joseph Arthur. Some of these notes are in two small notebooks.

Folders 6-8 contain clippings. Most are of a column by Kate Milner Rabb called "A Hoosier Listening Post," and date from the 1930s. In Folder 8 are some clippings being either sent or returned by Sullivan's nearby neighbor, Mrs. Bertram Adams. Some columns by Anton Scherrer are included.

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Correspondence -- 1956-1957

Literary Club paper-- "The Passing Throng"

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Clippings -- Kate Milner Rabb

Clippings -- Mrs. Bertram Adam

Photographs – Portrait of Sullivan, ca. 1920

### CONTAINER

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Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Box 1, Folder 4

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