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## A GUIDE TO THE GRANVILLE C. THOMPSON PHOTOGRAPHS OF BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN INDIANA

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Compiled By: Sammie Morris, Archivist

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## **Descriptive Summary**

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Creator:</b>            | Thompson, Granville C., 1898-1989  |
| <b>Title:</b>              | The Granville C. Thompson Photographs  |
| <b>Dates:</b>              | 1921-1943  |
| <b>Abstract:</b>           | Photographic prints and negatives of bridge construction projects in Indiana.                        |
| <b>Quantity:</b>           | 1 cubic ft. (3 manuscript boxes; 398 photographs, 219 negatives)                                     |
| <b>Repository:</b>         | Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries  |
| <b>Location:</b>           | Aisle 1, Special Collections Stacks  |
| <b>Acquisition:</b>        | Gift of Robert C. Thompson, son of Granville C. Thompson, 2004                                       |
| <b>Preferred Citation:</b> | The Granville C. Thompson Photographs, Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries |
| <b>Processed by:</b>       | Sammie Morris, December 2004   |

## **Restrictions**

|                |                                  |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Access:</b> | Collection is open for research. |
|----------------|----------------------------------|

## Biographical Sketch

Granville Curtis Thompson was born in West Bend, Kentucky on January 29, 1898. His parents were married in Batholomew County in 1892 near what is now Hope, Indiana. Thompson's father was a local preacher in the community. Thompson had one older sibling, Edith, born in 1893. The family moved to West Bend in 1896. They later relocated to Kingsville, Kentucky in 1900. Thompson's younger brother, Hubert, was born there in 1900. In 1902, the family moved again to Manchester, Indiana. Thompson's younger sister, Lois, was born there in 1902. The family continued to move around for the following years, to Battersville (1905), Henryville (1908), Francisco (1911), and Graysville (1913). Thompson's other brother, Leete, was born in Graysville in 1915.

Thompson graduated from high school in Graysville in 1917, and then followed his sister Edith to Indiana State Normal School in Terre Haute that same year. He became a teacher in Plainville in 1917. From 1917 to 1918, Thompson and his brother Hubert drove trucks out of Baltimore for a contractor who was building a muster and chlorine gas plant at the Army Arsenal at Edgewood, Maryland. In October 1918, Thompson entered the Army in Pullman, Washington, working guard duty. By December his Army service was over and in 1919 he began teaching again, in Lewis County in Washington.

By the end of 1919, Thompson had returned to Indiana and enrolled at Purdue. However, due to monetary concerns he left Purdue in 1921 to return to teaching, at Oaktown High School. He later returned to Purdue, graduating with a BSME from the School of Mechanical Engineering in 1925. While at Purdue, Thompson was a member of Kappa Delta Rho, Kappa Phi Sigma, A.S.M.E., the Purdue Union, the Y.M.C.A., the P.A.A., and the Glee Club. Thompson worked as a draftsman for the Indiana State Highway Commission out of Hazelton and Seymour during the summers while he was attending Purdue. After graduation, he began to work for the Commission on a full-time basis, starting in July 1925. Thompson frequently photographed the various bridge and highway construction projects he was involved with, taking photographs for his own enjoyment and to document his work. He left the Highway Commission in 1944 to accept a position with American Zinc Products in Greencastle, Indiana. Thompson continued to work for the company until he retired in 1963.

Thompson was always happiest working outdoors, and he actively continued his civil engineering work as Greencastle city engineer for several years and also was self-employed as a registered land surveyor. When he reached the age of 87 he finally began to cut back on his workload. On December 18, 1989, Thompson died at the age of 91.

### *Sources:*

*"Brief Bio of Granville Curtis Thompson" by his son, Robert Thompson, 2004.*

*1925 Purdue Debris, pg. 292 [includes photograph]*

*1934 Purdue Alumni Directory*

## **Scope and Content Note:**

The collection (1 cubic ft; 3 manuscript boxes) was donated by Robert C. Thompson, son of Granville C. Thompson, in October 2004. Both men graduated from the school of mechanical engineering at Purdue.

Thompson's photographs document Indiana highway bridge construction projects dating from 1921-1943. Approximately 41 bridge construction projects are covered, at around 33 location sites in Indiana. The collection includes approximately 398 photographic prints and 219 negatives. Many of the original structures in the photographs no longer exist.

The photographs were primarily taken by Thompson using a Kodak IA folding camera, on 116 film. (The camera was later donated to the Kodak Museum by Robert Thompson). A small number of the photographs were taken by J. B. Manson, M. M. Porter [H. H. Porter?], or "Mr. Wooley," of the U.S. Bureau of Roads. Most of the images are 2 ½" X 4 ½" in size. Not every print has a negative, and not every negative has a print.

Most of the images are identified by location and/or project or contract number. There may be state records of the contracts or projects that will provide further identification for each image. The project numbers tend to begin with the number of the state road or highway included in the project.

The images arrived arranged by project or construction number for each location. This order has been retained, and the groups of images have been ordered alphabetically by city or location for ease of access. Following each location and date are the number of prints and negatives in parentheses for each city. Project and/or contract numbers, when known, have been included in brackets.

The collection arrived with a binder that contained sample scanned and printed images of some of the photos. The binder also included two CDs of scanned images. The photographs were scanned by Robert C. Thompson at 300 ppi using Paint Shop Pro software.

## Inventory

### Photographic Prints and Negatives, Arranged by Location, 1921-1943; n.d.

#### Box 1: Cities A-M

Albion, Indiana, n.d. (3 prints, 0 negatives)  
Road #11, South of Albion

Chesterton, Indiana, n.d. (10 prints, 5 negatives)  
Wabash Overhead, State Road 49 [49-A-865]

Clinton, Indiana, 1937 (6 prints, 3 negatives)  
Old Underpass, C & EI at Clinton, Road 63 [63-D-2057; 63-D-91A; Contr. 2276]  
Wabash River at Clinton, Wabash River Bridge

Columbia City, Indiana, n.d. (2 prints, 0 negatives)

Corydon, Indiana, 1924 (1 print)  
[SA 16C 342]

Cunot, Indiana, 1939-1940 (18 prints, 13 negatives)  
Doe Creek, Road 42, Near Cunot [42-D-3102; Contr. 1755]

Cunot, [Cloverdale?] Indiana, 1939-1941 (25 prints, 16 negatives)  
Mill Creek Bridge, State Road 42 [42 F 3172; Contr. 1979; Contr. 1972?; Contr. 1755  
repairs]

Delphi, Indiana, 1935 (31 prints, 27 negatives)  
Wabash River Bridge, State Road 39 [39-K-1603]

Dunes Highway, E. J. & E. Overhead, U.S. 6, Indiana, 1934 (10 prints, 5 negatives)  
[6-A-2005; Contr. 811]

Gary, Indiana, 1926 (5 prints, 3 negatives)  
Dunes Relief, Burne's Ditch on Dunes Highway

Gary, Indiana, 1932 (3 prints, 1 negative)  
Overpass, East Gary, Dunes Relief [20A 1010]

Gary, Indiana, 1933 (4 prints, 4 negatives)  
Turkey Creek Rebuild, South of Gary [55-B-12-B]

Hazelton, Indiana, 1921; 1923 (32 prints, 0 negatives)  
White River, U.S. 41 [F.A. 29-1]

Hazelton, Indiana, 1923 (2 prints, 0 negatives) [**Oversized Photos**]  
Hazelton Bridge Dedication, December 12, 1923  
Built by Stein Construction Company [**Oversized Panoramic Print**]  
People on the Hazelton Bridge, December 12, 1923 [**Oversized Panoramic Print**]

Hobart, Indiana, 1928 (5 prints, 2 negatives)  
Deep River on Road #6, North Hobart [6-B-769]

Kankakee River, Indiana, 1927 (17 prints, 15 negatives)  
[41-O-1489 or 41-U-1489; Contr. 596]

Knox, Indiana, 1927 (3 prints, 1 negative)  
Yellow River

Lafayette, Indiana, 1937 (1 print, 1 negative)  
Wabash River Bridge

Lagootee, Indiana, 1923 (2 prints, 0 negatives)  
[S.A. 5C-143]

Michigan City, Indiana, 1931 (10 prints, 5 negatives)  
Dunes Relief Road, South Shore Overpass, State Road 212 [212-A-1025; Contr. 383]

Michigan City, Indiana, 1931 (3 prints, 3 negatives)  
Over Trail Creek [20-C-1022; Contr. 370]

Middletown, Indiana, 1941 (3 prints)  
Vigo County [C-1615-180]

## **Box 2: Cities M-Z and Unknown Cities**

Miller, Indiana, 1932; 1936 (8 prints, 8 negatives)

B & O [Bridge and Overpass?], Dunes Relief Road [Contr. 309]  
Road 6, Near Valparaise

Pleasant Gardens, Indiana, 1941 (52 prints, 31 negatives)

Big Walnut Creek, U.S. 40 [40 F 1834; Contr. 2069]  
Flooding of Big Walnut Creek, U.S. 40 [40 F 1834; Contr. 2069]

Poland, Indiana, 1938 (33 prints, 22 negatives)

Eel River, Poland Beach Bridge, State Road 42 [42-C-3101; Contr. 1586A; 1872-1938]

Poland, Indiana, 1939 (5 prints, 1 negative)

State Road 42 [42-D-3171; Contr. 1829]

Prairie City, Indiana, 1942-1943 (30 prints, 9 negatives)

Birch Creek to Prairie City, Bridgeport U.S. 40, State Road 42 [42-C-3100; Contr. 2278]

Pyrmont, Indiana, n.d. (1 print, 1 negative)

Covered Bridge, Wildcat Creek, two miles south of Delphi

Schneider, Indiana, n.d. (1 print)

[41-U-1114]

St. John, Indiana, n.d. (1 print, 1 negative)

New York Central Overpass, St. Johns on U.S. 41

Terre Haute, Indiana, 1934; 1937 (27 prints, 7 negatives)

Bridge Repair, U.S. 40, Wabash River Bridge [40-B-464-A or 40-B-564-A; Contr. 1518]

Terre Haute, Indiana, 1936 (9 prints, 3 negatives)

Arch Repair [40-C-1637-A]

Terre Haute, Indiana, 1936-1937 (18 prints, 20 negatives)

Pennsylvania Railroad Overpass [40-C-1637; 40-C-2016-A; Contr. 1191]

Valpo, Indiana, 1932 (2 prints, 2 negatives)

Salt Creek [130A 1362]

Valparaiso, Indiana, n.d. (1 print, 3 negatives)

3.9 miles southwest of Valparaiso [2-C-1171]

Wanatah, Indiana, 1927 (2 prints, 0 negatives)

[S2A 540]



Washington, Indiana, n.d. (3 prints, 0 negatives)  
Between Vincennes and Washington

[Unknown City], Indiana, n.d. (2 prints)  
Bridge [S.A.11 I 446]

[Unknown City], Indiana, 1923 (1 print)  
Bridge [SA 5A-25]

[Unknown City], Indiana, 1928 (4 prints, 4 negatives)  
[29U 335]

[Unknown City], Indiana, 1940 (2 prints)  
Parke County [C-2045-7]

### **Box 3: Oversized Panorama Photographs**

Hazelton, Indiana, 1923 (2 prints, 0 negatives)  
Hazelton Bridge Dedication, December 12, 1923  
Built by Stein Construction Company [**Oversized Panoramic Print**]  
People on the Hazelton Bridge, December 12, 1923 [**Oversized Panoramic Print**]