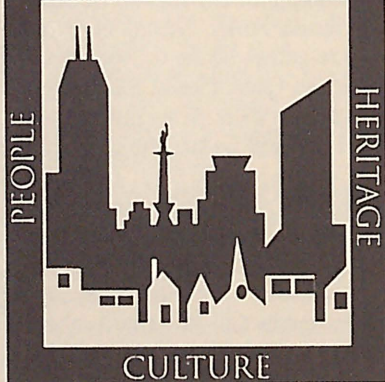


ENCYCLOPEDIA OF INDIANAPOLIS



Presented by the
POLIS Research Center
at
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Purdue University
at Indianapolis**

Fall 1993

Volume 3 • Number 1

The Evolution of Municipal Government in Indianapolis

The evolution of municipal government in Indianapolis from the first town charter in 1832 to the distinctive Unigov structure in place today reflects several themes: a need to provide basic services; a desire for efficient government; and public-private cooperation in meeting local needs. The city's status as the capital of a state without a strong tradition of home rule has also shaped the development of municipal government in Indianapolis.

In 1832, concerns about vice and crime prompted local citizens to form the first town government. It operated on a minimal scale, providing law enforcement through a town marshal, fire protection through a volunteer unit organized in 1835, and sanitation regulation through a board of health established in the aftermath of the 1832-33 cholera epidemic.

Indianapolis became an incorporated city under a special act of the Indiana General Assembly in 1847. This first city charter provided taxing power, councilmen from each of seven city wards, and a separately elected mayor.

Throughout the last half of the 19th century, a rapid increase in population coincided with new and greater demands upon city government. A new charter in 1853 increased the number of councilmen to two from each ward and made the mayor president of the board of councilmen. It also provided for an elected city treasurer. The city needed new streets as well as maintenance on the few original ones, a reliable water and sanitation system, and more extensive police and fire protection. Fulfilling these needs was costly. The city's budget in 1847 had been \$4,000. In 1860 it was over 20 times larger, about \$87,000. By 1870 it grew another five-fold to over \$400,000. Within another decade, the budget approached \$1 million annually as local government tried to keep up

with the needs of a city that was quickly emerging as a regional center.

At century's end, Indianapolis began its long commitment to business models of government. Strong leadership at the Commercial Club (est. 1890), soon to be the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, set the pattern of city reliance on the chamber for leadership in addressing municipal problems. Largely through the chamber, local businessmen took an active interest in the functions and structure of city government and promoted separate city departments governed by appointed public boards of directors. From the 1920s through the 1960s, this business model was taken a step farther, as separate municipal "corporations" were created to perform local government functions.

As early as 1925, studies had recommended the consolidation of city, township, and county governments in Marion County, but little came of it because the separate municipal corporations provided simpler, less comprehensive means around the problems of local government. From the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s, a parade of legislation to create special-purpose governments in Marion County proceeded through the Indiana General Assembly. By the late 1960s, however, voters became increasingly frustrated at the complexity of city-county government. The 1969 Indiana General Assembly passed a bill consolidating some of the elective offices of the city and county and absorbing several of the separately incorporated towns in Marion County.

The new structure was known as "Unigov," short for "unified government," even though it consolidated local government within Marion County only in part. Political leadership is centered in a mayor who is elected county-wide and in a 29-member City-

Continued inside

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Director's Notes

From its beginning, the *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* has pursued an ambitious schedule: five years from inception in 1989 to publication in 1994. We are very close to realizing this goal, even though faith and credit, not cash, continues to fund much of this progress.

At the end of this summer, the editors had submitted almost 1,000 entries—roughly 60 percent of the total—in hard-copy and on computer disk to Indiana University Press; we anticipate sending the remaining text and graphics by the end of November. What happens then? The IU staff copyedits the text by checking for inconsistencies and marking it for the compositor. After the printer returns the first run of the text, called galleys, the *Encyclopedia* staff will read it carefully and mark typographical and other errors for correction.

The book designer also works with the galleys and all art work (photographs and other graphic material) to create an aesthetically appealing and user-friendly design. The printer then makes necessary corrections for a second run of the text, now called page proofs because its format looks very much like the published page. Page proofs must be read for the occasional typo or dropped word, and the indexer uses these pages to compile a comprehensive index for the volume.

During the six to eight months this process takes, the *Encyclopedia* staff will remain

Government — from page 1

County Council that replaced the county council and the city's common council. The Unigov reorganization created six principal departments of city-county government that absorbed the functions of some of the earlier independent municipal corporations, although six of these corporations continue to operate. Local school districts, township fire departments, township property assessment and poor relief functions, and the Marion County court system were not included in the new structure.

Unigov has had a mixed effect on municipal government in Indianapolis. Since the Unigov reorganization, Indianapolis has had three mayors (Richard G. Lugar, William H. Hudnut III, Stephen Goldsmith), one City-County Council president (Beurt SerVaas), and single-party control of City-County Council. This stability of political leadership has contributed to such indicators of success as the city's favorable bond rating, and it has reflected the dominance of Marion County Republicans in local government. Republicans have retained the mayor's office and the majority of City-County Council seats each year since Unigov's implementation in 1970.

busy, cross-reading all entries and double-checking for factual errors. We will even add new material to entries where the story continues—for example, Circle Centre Mall or Select Schools—and even write new entries when necessary. We also will update the statistical abstract.

There are other things to do during this final year, such as work with local teachers to develop a curriculum that will use information from the *Encyclopedia*. Or continue our efforts to convert the text to CD-ROM and other electronic media. We will also coordinate efforts with the Press to promote the volume and ensure that it has wide distribution. And we will work on several other spin-off projects from the *Encyclopedia*.

Much work is done, but much remains. The authors and staff already have accomplished more than some observers believed possible: efforts in Cleveland and New York required more staff, more money, and more time for a similar-sized book. The effort here is not in doubt — nor is the quality or the value of the product. What is uncertain is the funding. Recent contributions and pledges—more than \$85,000 since spring—have given hope and reduced the amount needed to approximately \$225,000. Please consider a donation. Any sum helps meet the goal of giving our city a sense of its past, present, and future.

Indianapolis' third Unigov mayor, Stephen Goldsmith, took office in January, 1992, and initiated several projects that may rearrange certain aspects of city government and service delivery. The efforts include privatizing the delivery of some services, decentralizing the delivery of others, and increasing the involvement of neighborhoods in decision-making. To date, however, no actions have been taken or announced to alter the basic organization of municipal government in Indianapolis by amending the Unigov law.

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Researchers

Meet the Contributing Editor — Government in Indianapolis

The contributing editor for the Government section of the *Encyclopedia* is William Blomquist, associate professor of political science at Indiana University, Indianapolis. Blomquist is a specialist in local government and political theory and is the author of several articles, monographs, and books. He holds a bachelor's degree in economics from Ohio University and a Ph.D. in political science from Indiana University.

As contributing editor, Blomquist has written the overview essay on the Evolution of Municipal Government in Indianapolis and a number of essays and general entries. The government section will present a variety of topics, from entries on all the mayors in Indianapolis history to essays that will explain the creation and structure of Unigov and its various offices. The number and variety of entries ensures a comprehensive study of municipal government in the state capital.

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Government — Approved Entries to Date

Essays

Evolution of Municipal Government in Marion County
Budget Process
Taxes
Townships
Unigov, Creation of
Unigov, Structure of
Unigov and Political Participation
Unigov and Public Finance
Unigov and Service Delivery
Zoning

General Entries

Capital Improvement Board
City Charters
City Controller
City-County Council
City Manager Proposal
Committee on Post-War Planning
Common Council
Department of Administration
Department of Metropolitan Development
Department of Parks and Recreation
Department of Public Safety
Department of Public Works
Department of Transportation
Economic Development Commission
Excluded Cities
Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee
Health and Hospital Corporation
Home Rule
Included Towns
Indianapolis Airport Authority
Indianapolis Downtown, Inc.
Indianapolis Housing Authority
Indianapolis-Marion County Building Authority
Indianapolis Project
Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation
Marion County
Marion County Assessor
Marion County Auditor
Marion County Board of Voter Registration
Marion County Clerk
Marion County Commissioners
Marion County Coroner
Marion County Courts
Marion County Department of Welfare
Marion County Election Board
Marion County Prosecutor
Marion County Recorder
Marion County Sheriff

Marion County Surveyor
Marion County Treasurer
Mayor, Office of
Mayoral Administration of:

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Philip L. Bayt, Jr.
Joseph E. Bell
Walter C. Boetcher
Charles A. Bookwalter
Charles Boswell
John Caven
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William J. Wallace
Henry F. West

Metropolitan Development Commission
Minigov
Regional Center Plans
School Districts
Seals and Flags
Special Service Districts
Special Taxing Districts
Vision Committee

Timeline

Municipal Government in Indianapolis, 1821-1993

1821 Marion County organized. County judge and sheriff appointed by the state.

1822 Elected county officers — the clerk, recorder, associate judges, and three county commissioners divide the county into townships for administrative purposes.

1832 First town government organized. Voters elect a town board of five trustees representing five wards. Following a cholera epidemic, first board of health established and sanitary commissioner appointed.

1838 First town charter supplanted by a reincorporation act and special charter creating governing board of six members, increasing the town's police powers, and expanding jurisdiction to the entire four-square-mile congressional donation.

1847 Indianapolis becomes an incorporated city under a special act of the Indiana General Assembly, subject to a local referendum. Voters endorse the new charter, 449-19, and it becomes effective on March 30. City budget is \$4,000.

Samuel Henderson defeats two other candidates and becomes Indianapolis' first mayor.

1859 The board of councilmen votes to establish Indianapolis' first fire department.

1863 John Caven becomes mayor of Indianapolis. Elected to office a record five times, the first three unopposed, Caven serves longer than any other mayor until William H. Hudnut III (1976-1991). A major achievement is the Belt Line Railroad that stimulates industrial development on the city's southside.

1877 Robert B. Bagby becomes first African-American to serve on the common council.

1884 For first time in 30 years, Democrats win a majority of county commissioner seats.

1891 City receives a new charter that remains in effect until 1970, with a nine-member common council and an elected mayor. Council members elected by a system that combines district representation, party slating, and at-large voting.

1895 Thomas Taggart elected mayor of Indianapolis (1895-1901). His three terms are marked by public improvements and fiscal efficiency. A major achievement is purchase of over 900 acres along White River as a nucleus for a public park system, making Taggart a leader in the national movement to conserve urban natural resources for public use.

1914 Joseph E. Bell wins the mayor's office in an election unusual for attracting three major candidates and four minor ones. Election irregularities lead to the indictment of Bell and many others on charges of conspiracy to commit a felony, but the mayor is acquitted after a two-hour jury deliberation.

1926 With the support of the Ku Klux Klan, then at the height of its political power, John Duvall elected mayor.

1927 After conviction for violating state corrupt practices act, Mayor Duvall resigns at the insistence of the common council.

1945 Indianapolis Sanitary District organized.

1947 Indianapolis Public Library District created.

1951 The Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County established.

1955 Indianapolis Housing Authority formed; Metropolitan Planning Commission created to assume authority over land use planning and zoning.

1958 Mercer Mance elected as Marion County Superior Court judge, the first African-American to be so elected in the state.

1961 Indianapolis Airport Authority established.

1962 The new city government center completed; government offices move from the old City Hall on Alabama Street, which is later converted to the Indiana State Museum.

1964 Democratic Mayor John J. Barton, former superintendent of Indiana State Police, appoints advisory committee of business and civic leaders to "formulate a program of progress that makes use of the city's full potential." Committee becomes known as the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee (GIPC).

1965 Capital Improvement Board created to finance, construct, and operate an Indianapolis convention and exhibition center.

1966 Republican victories in general election of 1966, mayoral election of 1967, and general election of 1968 provide Marion County Republicans with strong base to begin consolidation of city/county government.

1967 A special census lists 60 government units within Marion County: the county itself, 23 cities and towns, 9 townships, 11 school districts, and 16 special-purpose governments.

Richard G. Lugar, a 35-year old businessman and former Rhodes scholar, defeats incumbent mayor John Barton to become first Republican mayor since 1951. Lugar, reelected in 1971, presides over eventual unification of Indianapolis and Marion County governments.

1969 Indiana General Assembly passes bill creating a new municipal government structure known as "Unigov."

1975 William H. Hudnut III (Rep.) defeats Robert V. Welch (Dem.) 124,100 to 109,761 despite lowest voter turnout in 13 years. Hudnut reelected three times (1979, 1983, 1987) to become longest serving mayor in city's history. Downtown revitalization a major accomplishment of his administrations.

1991 Marion County Prosecutor Stephen Goldsmith defeats State Senator Louis Mahern, 110,545 to 79,817, in mayoral election. Campaign costs for both candidates exceed \$2 million.

Encyclopedia of Indianapolis

An Editorial Progress Report as of September 1993

When published in 1994, the *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* will contain 800 pages of text and over 100 pages of statistical information and illustrations on the city.

Total words = 800,000

Over 800 pages have been assigned to 475 separate writers.

Words assigned to date = 800,000
or 100% of the total

Assigned, 100%

600 pages of text, all of the statistical materials, over 350 illustrations, and an extensive timeline have already been prepared for the *Encyclopedia*.

Edited, 75%

Words edited to date = 600,000
or 75% of the total

Funding Commitments as of September 1993

Total direct costs for the *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* are estimated at \$833,000. POLIS has provided half of this amount (\$416,000) through earned income and competitive grants not usually available to community projects, including a \$98,000 challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

\$416,000
Raised

POLIS Grants and Contracts = \$416,000

IUPUI asks the community to contribute about thirty percent of the support for the *Encyclopedia*. Generous foundations, corporations and individuals have already donated over \$181,000, more than 43% of the expected community support. An additional \$236,000 must be secured by mid-1994 in order to publish the *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* by Fall 1994.

\$181,477
Raised

\$235,523
Remaining

Goal for Community Support = \$417,000

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