



Historical Holcomb.

Originally built at the hands of James Irving Holcomb, the Holcomb Estate's imposing 1919 English-style mansion and 32 acres of parklike grounds reflect a truly lavish lifestyle.

From modest beginnings to multi-millionaire industrialist, Holcomb earned most of his fortune from a brush manufacturing business that he started at age 20. The business flourished and eventually grew to be the largest manufacturer of cleaning supplies in the country. Holcomb was also a part-owner of the American Box Ball Company, a producer of box-ball bowling alleys.

And selfish Holcomb wasn't. Indianapolis regarded him as a generous philanthropist. His wealth became the good fortune of many—especially Butler University, to which he donated more than \$4 million.

Though generous, and dedicated to Butler University, Holcomb satisfied his other two passions, art and landscape design, with eccentric furnishings and grand outdoor creations. An artificial cave, elaborate Japanese gardens, a forty-foot waterfall and an around-the-world collection of rocks and boulders are a few of Holcomb's landscaping masterpieces. Extravagances such as a carved marble fireplace traceable to the Dolfin family of Venice, a Spanish Bishop's coat, and a Louis XIII tapestry were typical of furnishings throughout the mansion.

In 1962 the estate was bequeathed to Butler University, with instructions from Holcomb that it was to "remain intact, so as to record a pattern of life, a way of life." Butler held the property as an investment for several years. But when trustees saw that they might never be able to fulfill the creator's wishes, they sensibly decided to sell.

Carefully screening prospective buyers, Butler reached an agreement with private developers who shared an appreciation for the grounds, the mansion and the viewpoint they represent.

Now the beauty of the The Holcomb Estate has been restored. The land will finally become the preserve it was intended to be. Its elegance will endure, not just to "record" a pattern of life, but to perpetuate it.

circa 1985: by developer George Sweet