

Spring Hill Preservation Alliance - June 29, 2026 Newsletter

From Spring Hill Preservation Alliance <springhillpreservationalliance@gmail.com>

To Spring Hill Preservation Alliance <springhillpreservationalliance@gmail.com>

Date Monday, June 29th, 2026 at 7:11 PM

Reminder: Spring Hill Centennial Celebration – Saturday, August 22, 2026

Mark your calendar: The Spring Hill Town Council, the Holcomb Estate Owners Association and the Spring Hill Preservation Alliance are cosponsoring the Spring Hill Centennial Celebration on the afternoon and early evening of Saturday, August 22, 2026.

Who lived in Spring Hill when it was incorporated in 1926?

Twenty-eight people lived in the area that was incorporated as the Town of Spring Hill in 1926. We know who most of them were thanks to a census completed as part of the incorporation process. The following provides basic information about the individuals that lived and, in some cases, worked in Spring Hill one hundred years ago. Some of their names are still familiar names in Indianapolis, and some of them are not. To help readers understand where they lived, the information is organized by the current street addresses within Spring Hill, with current homeowners indicated for the remaining private homes. This summary leaves out many details but includes some pre- and post-1926 notes of interest.

4315 Cold Spring Road (current homeowners - the Quinns)

- The Flanners, Francis “Frank” Bates Flanner (b. 1876, DeGraff, Minnesota; d. 1954, Indianapolis) and Annie Lou Flanner (born Annie Lounette Johnston, 1871, Marion, Alabama; d. 1934 at their Spring Hill home) owned this property, which they called “Singing Pines.” They had married in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1903. In 1926 Frank B. Flanner was vice president of Flanner & Buchanan, which had been co-founded by his uncle, Frank W. Flanner. Flanner was active in various civic organizations and, although not as famous as his cousin Janet Flanner, he also was a writer who had published poems and humorous articles. When Annie Lou Flanner died, one of the local newspapers said that “She was well-known in Indianapolis for civic work, and her home was one of the show places in this section for landscape gardening done under her supervision.... She sponsored week-end excursions for groups of old women in institutions and camping expeditions for Boy Scouts. These groups she invited to her home and the ground around it.”
- Matilda Cole (b. 1874, Alabama; d. 1941, Indianapolis) and her son, Harry Cole (b. 1907, Birmingham, Alabama; d. 1965, Birmingham, Alabama) also lived at Singing Pines. Matilda Cole worked as a maid for the Flanners according to the 1930 US Census. It seems likely that there was a connection between the families of Annie Lou and Matilda in Alabama, but we have not been able to confirm this. We also have not been able to determine whether Harry Cole was working for the Flanners as well in 1926 or if he had other employment. In any case, we suspect that Matilda and Harry lived in a separate residence on the Flanners’ property – two other individuals listed as working as servants for the Flanners on the 1940 US Census were living in a separate home on the Flanners’ property.

4363 Cold Spring Road (current homeowners – the Kleimans)

- The Krause family - J. Edward Krause (born John Edward Krause, 1867, Indianapolis; d. 1935, Saint Cloud, Florida) and Ida May Adams Krause (b. 1879, Rushville, Indiana; d. 1954, Osceola, Florida) and their children, Katherine Naomi Krause (b. 1910, Indianapolis; d. 1963, Indianapolis), John Edward Jr. (b. 1913, Indianapolis; d. 1970, Kissimmee, Florida), and Jane Elizabeth Krause (b. 1914, Indianapolis (?); d. 1970, Indianapolis). J. Edward Krause and Ida May Adams married in Ohio in 1909. The 1926 census listed the “Resident owner of real estate” for the Krauses’ property as John Realty Co. J. Edward Krause had a series of business ventures in Indianapolis, including the Krause Brothers chair factory and the Morton

Hotel and the Iroquois hotel. In the mid-1920s he owned and operated the Hotel Washington and the Hotel Edward in the mid-1920s. During that time, he also was an active proponent of a city coliseum. In 1931, however, his hotel property went into receivership, and he reportedly moved to Florida for health reasons.

· The MacDougalls - William S. L. MacDougall (listed as Wm. F. L. MacDougall on Brant census, b. 1883, Scotland; d. 1976, Indianapolis) and Janet Mill Edward MacDougall (b. 1890, ; d. 1980, Indianapolis). William and Janet came to the United States on the same ship in 1920 and married in Indianapolis later that year. William MacDougall worked as caretaker and gardener for the Krauses. It is not clear if Janet MacDougall also worked for the Krauses. Their first child was born in early 1927. They were living in Crows Nest when the 1930 US Census was done, where William worked as a gardener and caretaker for another wealthy family.

4401 Cold Spring Road (the 1926 entrance was at or near where the current Holcomb Estate service entrance)

· The Holcombs - James Irving Holcomb (b. 1876, La Salle, Illinois; d. 1962 at their Spring Hill home) and Musetta "Etta" Black Holcomb (b. 1875 [or 1874 or 1876?], Owosso, Michigan; d. 1957, Indianapolis). They married in New York in 1899. After first living in Indianapolis, they bought 12 acres on Cold Spring Road with the intention of building a large country home at the end of 1916, paid for with the profits that J. I. Holcomb made from manufacturing and selling cleaning chemicals, bowling alley equipment, and the Butter-Kist Popcorn machine, etc. But the war changed their plans, and they converted a former district schoolhouse next to the Cold Spring Road curve into a home. The Holcombs called their property Woodvale. In 1926 they moved into their new home that today is known as "the Mansion" of Holcomb Estate. The Indianapolis Times described it as "One of the most artistic and palatial homes of Indianapolis...." J. I. Holcomb was President of Holcomb & Hoke Manufacturing Company in 1926 and was active in the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations. Etta Holcomb also kept busy, e.g., a June 1926 newspaper article described a "garden tea" that she gave for members of the Matinee Musicale and out-of-town guests – three hundred total guests attended.

· Jessie Mae Holcomb (daughter of Etta Holcomb and step-daughter of J.I Holcomb, b. 1893, Belding, Michigan [?]; d. 1938, Seattle, Washington, having become ill there while returning with her parents from a trip to Alaska) and Clarence Raymond Strickland (b. 1883 [or 1882 or 1884?], Greenfield, Indiana; d. 1954, Lakewood, Washington. Jessie Holcomb and C.R. Strickland, who was a physician, married in Indianapolis in 1917. They were living with her parents at Woodvale in 1920; it appears they may have remained in the converted school house when her parents moved into their new home in 1926. Clarence and Jessie separated in 1931, apparently after he became ill and moved to Colorado Springs for his health. After Jessie filed for divorce in 1932, Clarence filed a suit against J.I. and Musetta Holcomb for alienation of affections in 1933 – and the divorce case apparently was still pending in early 1935.

· John Wesley Stovall (b. 1883, Illinois; d. 19??, [?]) and his wife, possibly Dovie Stovall (b. [?]; d. [?]). Stovall was married and employed as a chauffeur for J. I. Holcomb and living on Cold Spring Road when he registered for the draft on September 12, 1918. He and Cora Black had married in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1912, but there was a divorce suit filed for John W. Stovall vs. Cora M. Stovall in early 1924. Based on the 1926 census used for the incorporation petition, he apparently was married in 1926. It appears that his second wife may have been named Dovie but we do not have much information about her (there was a divorce suit filed in Marion County in 1942 - Dovie L. Stovall vs. John W. Stovall). While we have minimal information about his wives, we do know that Stovall was one of seven incorporators of the Kilt Realty Holdings Company and a subsidiary called the Kilt Club in 1927, which opened the Kilt Golf Club house across from Douglass Park in 1928, where the Parks Board had recently approved a six-hole course as part of the segregated "Jim Crow" park created for African American residents in 1921. When the Kilt Golf Club house opened, Stovall was one of the speakers and/or people that demonstrated golf technique – had he played on the Holcombs' nine-hole golf course surrounding the gardens at Woodvale?

4501 Cold Spring Road (current homeowner – Greg Dawson)

- Augustus Coburn (b. 1868, Indianapolis; d. 1931, Indianapolis) and Annie Chapin Peck Coburn (b. 1871, Springfield, Massachusetts; d. 1943, Indianapolis) and their two adult sons, Augustus Coburn Jr. (b. 1893, Indianapolis; d. 1972, New Castle, Indiana) and Benjamin Peck Coburn (b. 1898, Indianapolis; d. 1955, Hammond, Indiana). Annie Chapin Peck came to Indianapolis with her parents in 1883. Augustus and Annie married in 1883. Annie was a member of the Progressive Club, the Dramatic Club (she was vice president at one point) and the Propylaeum board (she was President of this at one point). Augustus Coburn was a lumber dealer. At the time of his death, he was president of the Michigan Lumber Company (originally Coburn & Jones), founded by his father, Henry Coburn, before the Civil War. He also was a director of the Henry Coburn Storage and Warehouse Company. It appears that both of their sons were working at Michigan Lumber Company in the mid-1920s.
- Virgil Roosevelt Akers (b. 1901, Indianapolis; d. 1980, Indianapolis) and Eva Wilson Akers (b. 1901, Indianapolis; d. 1966, Indianapolis) and the first two of their five children, their daughters Dorothy and Elizabeth. Virgil Akers and Eva Wilson married in Marion County in 1922. Virgil worked as a gardener for the Coburn family and continued working for them at least until 1930. Although Virgil and Eva Akers left Spring Hill in 1930s, one of Virgil's older brothers, Ulysses Grant Akers (b. 1897, Kentucky; d. 1974, Indianapolis) began working for Frank B. Flanner in the 1930s as a caretaker for the property. Ulysses and his family lived in a separate residence on the Flanner's property that was destroyed in a fire in late 1943. According to an item in "The Wynnedale News," "On the north end of the Flanner lot stood a small frame house where Ulysses and May Akers and their daughter Bessie lived. The Akers were the first black family in the area..." [Note: the Ulysses Akers family was not the first African American family in the area – not only were they preceded by several others included in this summary, i.e., the Coles, the Stovalls, and Virgil and Eva Akers, but by 1870 there were African Americans living in Washington Township, including Henry Duncan (b. ca. 1833 in Virginia; d. 1911, Washington Township [?]), a widower with a four-year old daughter, whose farm was located at the southeast corner of what is now 44th Street and Cold Spring Road between Spring Hill and Wynnedale.]

4525 Cold Spring Road (current homeowners – the Millers)

- John Richard Brant (usually referred to as J.R. Brant, b. 1890, Lima, Allen, Ohio; d. 1970, Indianapolis, Indiana) and Elsa Steinbrecher Brant (b. 1893, Detroit, Michigan; d. 1974, Fort Lauderdale, Broward, Florida), and their son, J.R. Brant Jr. (b. 1922, Indianapolis; d. 2005). Elsa's father was a physician in Detroit, and J.R. Brant and Elsa Steinbrecher married there in 1914. J. R. Brant and his brother Walter Brant co-founded the Indiana Oxygen Company in 1915, and J. R. was president of the company in the mid-1920s. The Brants' home on Cold Spring Road, constructed in 1925, was known as Buena Vista. Etta Holcomb was not the only hostess for large gatherings at Cold Spring Road homes in the 1920s – a 1928 newspaper item describes "a delightful tea" hosted by Elsa Brant and her mother at Buena Vista where they entertained 300 guests. Elsa Brant filed for divorce in late 1933, and she apparently got the Cold Spring property and custody of their son. The 1940 US Census shows her living there with her second husband (Chauncey Hart Eno Jr. whom she married in 1936) (and her son from her marriage to J.R. Brant). J.R. Brant married Clementina "Tina" Merlo in 1935.

Sources: Historical records and documents found on FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com, Indianapolis newspaper articles found on Newspapers.com, and the Encyclopedia of Indianapolis, etc. If you have corrections or additional information to share, please email us at

springhillpreservationalliance@gmail.com.

Some native flowers to look for in Spring Hill this summer...



Clockwise from upper left: Pale Jewelweed (*Impatiens pallida*); Zigzag Spiderwort (*Tradescantia subaspera*); Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*); and, Annual Fleabane (*Erigeron annuus*). [all photos taken in Spring Hill]

Please consider donating to Spring Hill Preservation Alliance

Donations to the Spring Hill Preservation Alliance support the Alliance's continuing efforts to uncover, protect, preserve, and share the natural and cultural heritage of Spring Hill. While we can do some things with volunteer labor, e.g., the Garlic Mustard Weed Wrangle®, other projects can only be accomplished with financial donations.

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Spring Hill Preservation Alliance, Inc., is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

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Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

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