

Ball Brothers Write-Ups

Frank Clayton Ball

Frank Clayton Ball (1857-1943), one of the five Ball Brothers who founded the Ball Brothers Company that became the world's largest manufacturer of glass jars, used the power and influence of his financial wealth, leadership, and philanthropic vision to help build and shape many of Indiana's educational and hospital institutions including Riley Hospital for Children. Once, after he and his brothers donated \$1 million to benefit a several Indiana institutions, Frank Ball said: *"Life at best is short and uncertain and the time for men who have it to do good with their money is when they can personally direct the use of it. Nobody has ever found a way of taking his money with him to wherever he goes after he dies. We are glad to make these gifts to these institutions and for these purposes, not because we seek appreciation, but because we believe it to be a good thing to do and because of the satisfaction we receive in knowing that we may be responsible in some extent in aiding humanity."*

The first definite steps toward the foundation of Riley Hospital for Children were taken on August 19, 1917 at a meeting of a representative group of Indianapolis business men. Seven men were chosen to work out the details for construction of the hospital. These seven men are Josiah K. Lilly, chairman; W.C. Bobbs, secretary; James A. Allison; Linnaes C. Boyd; Henry Kahn; Will G. Irwin of Columbus, and Frank C. Ball of Muncie. Frank C. Ball of Muncie conveyed in a letter to all at this meeting that he "would be glad to be one of the incorporators of the hospital" and expressed hearty favor of the plan. It was after this meeting that a formal public announcement was made of plans to build the James Whitcomb Riley Hospital for Children.

In addition to helping shape the organizing details for Riley Hospital, Ball went on to become of 21 Incorporators of the James Whitcomb Riley Memorial Association (now the Riley Children's Foundation) in 1921 and served as a charter director of the Association from 1921-1937. He and his brother, George A. Ball, signed the check in June 1926 for a \$500,000 donation to the Association that was given under the condition that the Association raise an additional \$1 million through a fund-raising campaign to support hospital operations and expansion. With the success of the Association in raising the additional funds, the \$500,000 donation from the Ball brothers funded the construction of the Ball Nurses Residence in 1928 that provided living quarters for 165 nurses and staff as well as space for teaching and training. The Ball Nurses Residence was a boost to Riley Hospital for Children's capabilities to attract nursing staff and to the growth of the Medical Center campus, and Indiana University Training School for Nurses (now the Indiana University School of Nursing).

Frank C. Ball served as the first company president of the Ball Brothers business enterprise for sixty-three years, from 1880 until his passing in 1943. Hugh McK Landon, President of the Riley Memorial Association, said in tribute to Mr. Ball: "Frank C. Ball, together with the other members of this most remarkable family, did much to make the James Whitcomb Riley Hospital for Children and its attendant facilities a reality. Through his far-sighted interest and his generous impulses thousands of Indiana children have been tremendously benefitted. . . Men like Frank C. Ball appear at rare intervals. He set for those to follow a standard of citizenship and leadership which will prove an inspiration for generations to come." Today the Ball Corporation is an international manufacturing company, recognized around the world for its metal and plastic food and beverage containers, as well as for its aerospace technology products and services. The famous Ball canning supplies, which made the Ball name a household word in

millions of kitchens across the nation for generations, are now made by the Alltrista Corporation, a separate, independent company spun off from Ball.

References:

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