

MOORESVILLE'S WORLD- FAMOUS ARTIST, ROBERT INDIANA

Famous Mooresvillians



VIDEO: "ROBERT INDIANA" (MOORESVILLE MOMENTS #10)

- <https://youtu.be/GjRIQIA9aXo>



ROBERT INDIANA (1928-2018) (ROBERT EARL CLARK)

- Adopted in 1928 by Earl & Carmen Clark (ca. 1930 photos; Robert, age 2-3)



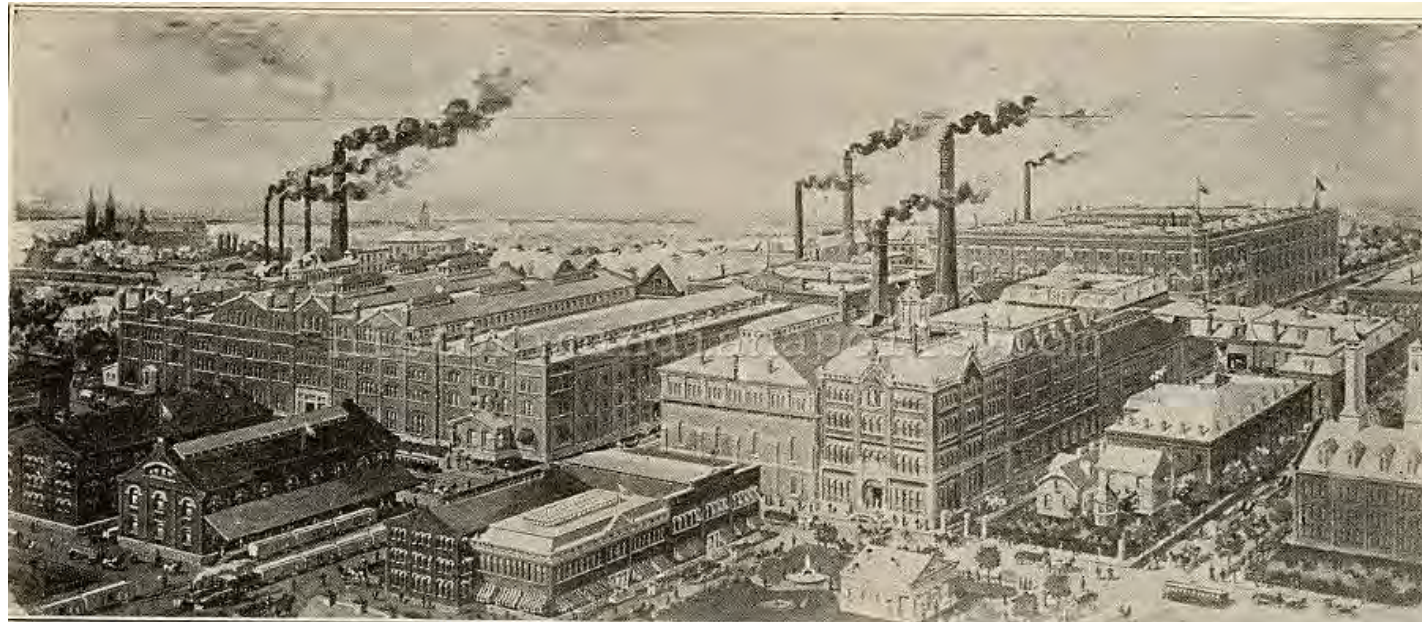
A FAMILY ON THE MOVE

- Employment was hard to find during the Great Depression, forcing Earl to move his family many times in search of work.
- In 1934, the Clarks moved to Robert's grandparents farm near Mooresville, and then shortly thereafter, they moved into a home on Lockerbie Street.



MOVING TO IMPROVE ROBERT'S HEALTH

- The 1934 move from Indianapolis to Mooresville was prompted by Robert's chronic respiratory illnesses, which were attributed to the smoke and fumes from an automobile manufacturing plant near their Indianapolis home.



ROBERT'S ARTISTIC INSPIRATION: FIRST GRADE IN MOORESVILLE

- During 1935-1936, Robert attended first grade at the Mooresville Academy School, in a wing addition that was removed in 1936 to make room for construction of Newby Memorial Elementary School. (Left photo below from Academy School Museum, 2018; right photo below from 1916-1917 MHS yearbook.)



WINTER SCENE

ROBERT'S FIRST GRADE TEACHER: RUTH COFFMAN (HAASE)



- Robert's first grade teacher, Miss Ruth Coffman (later, Mrs. Ruth Haase), encouraged him to pursue art as a profession.
- In a 1963 Library of Congress interview, Robert acknowledged that Ruth Coffman was his earliest artistic influence.
- Photo (left) of Ruth (Coffman) Haase from the *Indianapolis News*, Saturday, December 3, 1960, p. 10.

Teachers Get Hungry, Too

Teachers at the school don't usually eat from card tables, but the dining tables were covered with displays. Around the table (left to right) are Wilma Pogue, fourth-grade teacher; Ruth Mc-

Millan, second grade; Reva Truax, fifth grade; Ruth Haase, fourth grade; principal George T. Goodwin; Ruby Corn, fourth grade, and Max Glenn, sixth grade. The teachers are served in the pupils' cafeteria, but eat in a separate room.

AN INSPIRING TEACHER

- Ruth Coffman recognized Robert's advanced artistic talents (even at age 7) and encouraged him to develop his skills.
- Ruth said that, even at that young age, Robert's use of perspective and story-telling were already well-developed.
- Clipping from Becky Hardin's *Becky's Bit* feature in the *Mooreville Times*, January 18, 1973 (right); and the *Indianapolis News*, Saturday, November 2, 1968, p. 9 (left).

place. A first grade crayon drawing the early artist did for the Hoosier teacher who inspired him most, Ruth Coffman Haase, also hangs here. Mrs. Haase is still teaching in Mooreville. Indiana visited her last month.

His teacher was Miss Ruth Coffman (Mrs. Maurice Haase). She said that his pictures were unusual and she told him to save them in a folder, and he did.

She says that even at that age his drawings were in perfect perspective, and they told a story. The little figures were little minatures. She recalls one of skaters and another with women with parasols. There was a rhythm in the figures, and he used pastels.

ROBERT'S FIRST GRADE ARTWORK

- A first-grade drawing by Robert Clark (1935-1936).



MOVIN' ALONG (SUMMER 1936) But Keeping in Touch (1950s-1990s)

- The Clark family moved from Mooresville during the Summer of 1936.
- When Ruth Coffman returned to newly-constructed Newby Memorial Elementary School in Fall 1936, she discovered Robert's family had moved out-of-town.
- Ruth Coffman married Maurice Turley "Pee Wee" Haase on May 28, 1942.
- Robert Indiana kept in touch with Mrs. Haase until her death on September 24, 1995, sending her postcards (mostly) from various places around the globe.
- In 1968, Robert gave Ruth an autographed poster he had designed, which is on display near Mooresville Public Library's Indiana Room.

- Robert Indiana's autographed poster to Ruth Coffman Haase (1968).
- Article from the *Martinsville Reporter-Times*, Thursday, April 27, 1995, p. 4.



This art will complement the artwork owned by MPL, including an original painting by famed artist Robert Indiana, who spent part of his childhood in Mooresville.

Indiana's painting is located in the teen area at the library. He gave it to his first grade teacher, Ruth Haase of Mooresville, in 1968. She later donated the painting to the library, so that the community could see it and be reminded of the artist's roots in Mooresville.



THE ROAD TO FAME (1960S)

- Robert Indiana became famous in the 1960s, hanging out in his New York City studio with other avant-garde artists, such as Andy Warhol, as featured in *Vogue*, March 1, 1965.
- Robert Indiana is on the left with a black cat; Andy Warhol is on the right, with a light cat. It's clear from the photos featured in the article that the two artists were poking fun at themselves (and the pretensions of the art world).



- Robert Indiana at the dedication of his LOVE sculpture at the Indianapolis Museum of Art (October 22, 1975).

ROBERT INDIANA'S "LOVE" SCULPTURE SERIES (BEGINNING IN 1970)



RUTH DINING AMONG THE ARTISTS

It's Indiana Art

© 1976, New York Times

Forty years ago most first-grade pupils in Mooresville, Ind., were less excited about drawing than the gunning down of John Dillinger, a hometown boy at Chicago's Biograph Theater.

But the young teacher has impressed enough by the sketches of one little boy to keep some of them.

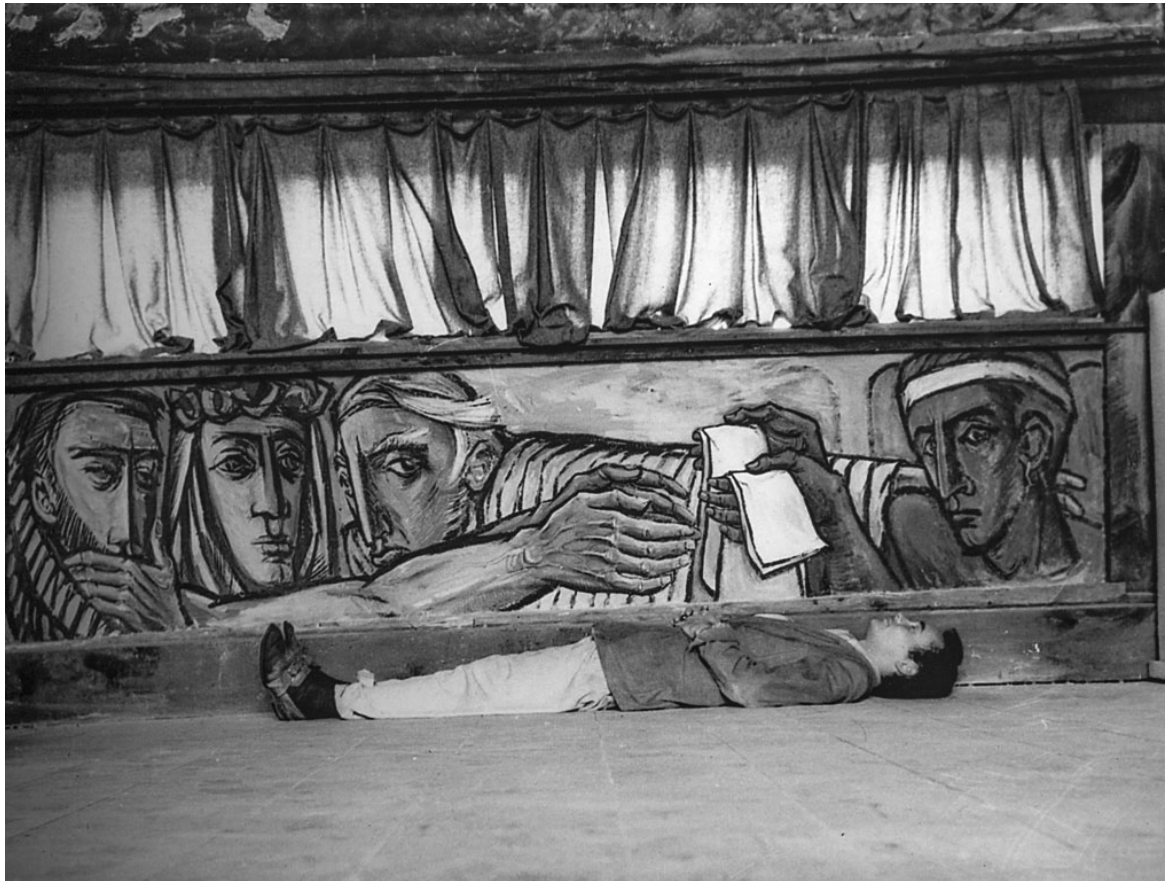
The artist, now known as Robert Indiana, looked up his former teacher, Ruth Coffman Haase, when he was in Indianapolis for the dedication of his

"LOVE" sculpture five years ago.

Last weekend Mrs. Haase, ending a trip to the New York area, visited Indiana's Spring Street studio, near the Bowery, and had dinner with him and Louise Nevelson, the sculptor.

"She couldn't believe what she saw," the artist said, noting that "people were working on all five floors" on Indiana's stage designs for a production of "The Mother of Us All," the Virgil Thomson-Gertrude Stein opera, in Santa Fe, N.M., this summer.

Article from the *New York Times*, reprinted in the *Indianapolis News*, Tuesday, April 27, 1976, p. 6.



- Robert Indiana among his art (photos by Robert Walker, *The New York Times* [1964])

- Robert Indiana among his art (con't.)
- (photo by Robert Walker, *The New York Times* [1964])



RUTH COFFMAN HAASE OBITUARIES

- Obituaries from the *Martinsville Reporter-Times*, September 25, 1995; and the *Greenville (SC) News*, Tuesday, September 26, 1995, p. 29.

■ Mrs. Maurice T. Haase, Greenville

Ruth Coffman Haase, 85, of 8507 White Horse Road, formerly of Mooresville, Ind., died Sept. 24, 1995, at her home.

Born in Brownsburg, Ind., she was a daughter of the late Charles and Irma Pierucci Coffman and the wife of the late Maurice Turley Haase.

She was a graduate of Indiana University and Butler University and taught in the Stephen Decatur School System in Indiana before she retired. She was a member of First United Methodist Church in Mooresville and was a 50-year member of the Order of the Eastern Star.

Surviving are a son and daughter-in-law, John W. and Freda Haase of Greenville; a brother, Winston Coffman of Brownsburg; and two grandchildren, Ashley Michelle Haase and Susan H. Bilbrey.

Memorials may be made to Greenville Hospital System Hospice, 701 Grove Road, Greenville, S.C. 29605.

Services: 2 p.m. Wednesday at Thomas McAfee Funeral Home, Downtown, with burial in Graceland West Cemetery.

Visitation: 6 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday at the funeral home.

Ruth Haase

Ruth Coffman Haase, 85, of Greenville, S.C., died Sunday, Sept. 24, 1995, in that city. She had lived in Greenville four years, moving from Mooresville.

Born May 28, 1910, in Brownsburg, she was the daughter of Charles and Irma Peirucci Coffman. She married Maurice Turley "Pee Wee" Haases May 28, 1942. He died March 1, 1991.

Mrs. Haase was a graduate of Indiana and Butler universities. She taught fourth grade for the Mooresville School Corporation, and Stephen Decatur Elementary School in Decatur Township. She retired from Decatur Township after several years.

She was a member of the Mooresville First United Methodist Church, Kappa Kappa Sigma Sorority, and a 50-year member of the Mooresville Order of Eastern Star.

Survivors include a son, John Haase, Greenville, S.C.; a brother, Winston Coffman, Brownsburg; and two grandchildren.

Her service will be 2 p.m. Wednesday at Thomas McAfee Funeral Home, 639 N. Main St., Greenville, S.C. 29601. Burial will be in Graceland Cemetery in Greenville.

Friends may call from 7 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at the funeral home.

ROBERT INDIANA (1928-2018)

By [Jori Finkel](#)

The New York Times

May 21, 2018

Robert Indiana, the Pop artist whose bold rendering of the word “love” became one of the most recognizable artworks of the 20th century, gracing hundreds of prints, paintings and sculptures, some 330 million postage stamps that he authorized and countless tchotchkes that he did not, died on Saturday at his home in Vinalhaven, Me. He was 89.

His lawyer, James W. Brannan, said the cause was respiratory failure.

Mr. Indiana’s famous image features the word L-O-V-E rendered in colorful capital letters, with the first two letters stacked on top of the other two, and the letter “O” tilted as if it were being swept off its feet. Since he designed the earliest versions, in the 1960s, the logo has acquired a life of its own, appearing on everything from posters and album covers to T-shirts and jewelry.

Mr. Indiana called it the 20th century’s “most plagiarized work of art,” and he kept a collection of knockoffs in his home, a historic Victorian building, to prove it.



QUESTIONS?

- William R. Buckley, information director, adult reference services, Mooresville Public Library
- billb@mooresvillepublic.lib.in.us

