Illinois History and Lincoln Collections
New Service Model Planning Team- Services Subgroup

Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2013

Present: John Hoffmann, Karen Hogenboom, Lisa Romero, Anke Voss

The team met to tour the Illinois History and Lincoln Room, to identify specific items in the charge related to services, and to plan the work of the subgroup.

The IHLC consists of a small ready reference collection, a Stacks collection classified in Dewey Decimal and with rare materials intermingled, maps classified in a homegrown system and accessed via a card catalog, microfilm, folios (largely county atlases), and manuscripts. Most of the unprocessed materials in the collection are manuscripts. Nothing in the collection circulates.

IHLC maintains files on the more frequent users who return to the unit or contact it over a period of years. Bags are not allowed in the stacks. Unit staff must remain near the door of the unit for security reasons, so users enter the stacks unattended. While this is not ideal, the unit is staffed by one person so it is unavoidable. Unit hours are 8:30-5, though John Hoffman regularly meets users by appointment outside these hours.

The collection covers all of Illinois history. While the Lincoln materials may be considered a small part of the collection, they get the most use (it previously formed a collection of its own in Library 422 and 426 for many years in the 1990s and before). The Lincoln collection is assigned only one call number (973.7L63), but many volumes turn up elsewhere in Dewey.

The collection has been promoted in the past through exhibits, but security is an issue in mounting exhibits in the less secure spaces of the library. The space, collection and services of the IHLC are not visible in the library or for the most part on campus, though the collection is used by faculty and graduate and undergraduate students from many departments, as well as PhD students from around the country and across the world.

The group discussed possible way to assess use of the collection and services, including taking note of what and how many items are reshelved each day in addition to the notes John Hoffman currently keeps of the time he spends with users. It may be useful to establish the time of day and day of the week when in-person users access the collection or ask for help, in order to decide on staffing patterns.

The group will meet with the staff of RBML to talk about its findings and some possible recommendations, in response to the letter that the team received from RBML about the continuation of the IHLC in its current form.