

Illinois History and Lincoln Collections

Unit Annual Report, July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

This report is largely an epitome of my work as the unit's only employee in 2012-2013, although Ryan Ross, who was compensated by the Horner endowment, was my colleague before he left the Library five months ago to take a position at the University of Illinois Foundation.

Ryan was compensated by drawing down the Horner endowment which had previously been used to augment the holdings of the Library's Lincoln Room. That endowment was created in 1951 by Harlan Hoyt Horner and Henrietta Calhoun Horner, members of the Class of 1901. For many years, the Lincoln Room collection was attached to the History and Philosophy Library and its staff included a Library-funded graduate assistant. In 2001, I became responsible for the Lincoln Room and arranged, at no cost to the Library, for its merger with the Illinois Historical Survey, a unit for the study of Illinois history. This brought together two closely related collections.

The Survey, which dates from 1909, had been transferred from the Graduate College to the Library in 1980. Shortly after that transfer, its director (a member of the Department of History) retired, and, in subsequent years, the unit has also lost its student and clerical assistants, its graduate assistants, and the position funded by the Horner endowment.

The combined Illinois History and Lincoln Collections support research on any level on virtually any topic related to Illinois history and Lincoln studies. Such research has been facilitated since 2009 by having the reading and staff rooms adjacent to the collections.

Without a staff, I now handle ordinary clerical chores such as ordering and accessioning books. In addition, I continue to give priority to reference work, responding in recent years not so much to the questions of on-site users as to phone and e-mail inquiries.

This situation has diminished the attention that I can devote to the work on the acquisition, processing, and publication on the web of the unit's manuscript collections. Nonetheless, I still regard the development of those collections, especially those that I have myself brought to the Library, as the most important

activity in which I can be engaged. Both now and in the future, I see it as important for the unit to maintain a comprehensive collection of Illinois and Lincoln publications at the same time that it augments its unpublished holdings in those fields.

Here is an incomplete--a very incomplete--list of the unit's manuscript collections which are either not processed or not sufficiently processed to post in Archon, the Library's database for special collections. For the most part, I list only relatively large manuscript collections, and omit small collections (smaller than an archival box):

Illinois History

American Association of University Women: recent additions to the records of several Illinois chapters.

Blair-Stiffler: a very large, multi-generational collection of family and Baptist materials, saved in the families of the Suttons. (Robert M. Sutton was the part-time director of the Illinois Historical Survey from 1964 to 1983. The tentative name of the collection derives from Betty Sutton's family, who preserved most of the material.)

Champaign School District (Unit 4) equity case: records of the plaintiff's law firm, mid-1990s-early 2000s.

Cohen, Sol B., papers of a violinist, composer, and teacher, prominent in the musical life of Urbana and Champaign from World War I to the 1980s.

Mangan, Fr. Martin, additions to the papers of a leading figure in the Staley strike in Decatur in the mid-1990s.

Perkins, Frederick Wainwright, architectural work, 1900-28. (Archon now includes only lists of his buildings, by commission and by location, without data on the mass of related drawings and correspondence in the collection.)

Rattermann, Heinrich A.: additions to the 1979 *Guide* to his collection of German-American manuscripts.

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers): regular additions to the records of numerous yearly, quarterly, and monthly meetings.

Woman's Christian Temperance Union: records of many downstate branches.

Lincoln

Great American People Show records, documenting its repertoire of Lincoln plays at New Salem, 1975-95.

Herndon-Weik microfilm and microfilm prints; Ward Hill Lamon

materials, and copies of papers of more recent Lincoln biographers which add to the papers, already organized, of William E. Barton, Alonzo Rothschild, and others in the field. Horner, Harlan Hoyt, and Henrietta Calhoun Horner, papers. Johannsen, Robert W., papers, 1948-2011, relating to Lincoln, Douglas, and the U.S.-Mexican War. Lincoln graphics, artifacts, and ephemera, mostly accumulated in the Lincoln Room before 2001, as well as a few original Lincoln manuscripts that need additional research. Lindstrom, Ralph G., a Lincoln book manuscript, c.1950. Pratt, Harry E. (1901-56): correspondence and notes relating to Lincoln. Randall, James G., History Department: photostats and microfilm of Lincoln material. Van Norman, Clare, Jr., ephemera donated to the unit by a dealer in Illinois and Lincoln material.

Altogether, the unit contains several hundred manuscript collections, for many of which there are summary descriptions on the web. For some of these collections, there is also an inventory, varying in length from one to 350 pages. However, a capsule summary of many collections has yet to be written or edited sufficiently to be placed on the web. Almost every collection was donated to the Library, not bought by it. The work file for the typical collection contains papers relating to its acquisition and use, typed inventories of its contents, and pages from pre-Archon databases.

It is my intention to continue to push ahead with work on the unit's manuscript collections. I see this as my principal legacy to the Library and as demonstrably more lasting than the multiplicity of committee, professional, and personal activities which engage others in the Library.

I keep a log that documents in detail my time at the Library and my work each day with individual users and collections. Although it would take several pages of this report to summarize this log, it is enough to note that it reflects the variety and the unpredictability that sustain my interest in the work. By its nature, such documentation is unlike the statistical reports of larger units which circulate their cataloged collections and monitor database usage.

August 9, 2013

John Hoffmann