

These notes pertain to the manuscript collections of the Library's Illinois History and Lincoln Collections. They are submitted on August 29, 2014, in place of the unit's annual report for 2013-2014.

## Introduction

This report obviously does not follow the prescribed format, but its retrospective nature may nonetheless be of interest. I focus not on printed material in the Library's Illinois History and Lincoln Collections but rather on the unit's manuscript sources.

These collections had their origins in the Illinois Historical Survey, which was organized under the Department of History in 1910. The Survey was transferred from that department to the Library in 1980. Meanwhile, in the 1950s, the Lincoln collection of Harlan Hoyt Horner and Henrietta Calhoun Horner became the nucleus of the Lincoln Room in the History and Philosophy Library. In 2001, the Survey and the Lincoln Room were merged at my suggestion and without increasing the budget of either. More recently, the Library Administration sought to dissolve the Survey and Lincoln Room. As an alternative, it reduced the unit's staff to me alone.

Such is enough to say about the sad diminution of the Library's support of Illinois history and Lincoln studies. I choose here rather to review in summary form a portion of the unit's notable manuscript collections.

## Lincoln

I have particularly enjoyed working with Lincoln materials. This includes the acquisition of new Lincoln publications (a veritable flood in recent years), replies to Lincoln-related questions (both interesting and routine), and correspondence with Lincoln researchers in Springfield and elsewhere. It also includes work on manuscript collections pertaining to Lincoln, some of which I note here.

In the 1920s, the Rev. William E. Barton wrote voluminously on Lincoln. The University of Chicago acquired a portion of his papers, but one of his sons held back considerable material (1888-1954) which eventually came here, along with smaller lots from the Lincoln studies of Alonzo Rothschild (1880-1919) and John Formby (1906-21).

In the *Lincoln Collector: The Story of Oliver R. Barrett's Great Private Collection* (1949), Carl Sandburg acknowledged his indebtedness to the Chicago lawyer who had opened to him his vast Lincoln collection. The Newberry Library then acquired a portion of Barrett's

papers but, again, this library now holds material (1933-52) that his son held back, some of it confidential correspondence that Sandburg left with Barrett for safe-keeping.

Another Lincoln collection of note came from the estate of Harry E. Pratt, whose ground-breaking research filled the years from his University of Illinois dissertation in 1930 to his death as Illinois State Historian in 1956. The Pratt collection includes not only Lincoln biographies which he annotated and in which he tipped in Lincoln-era manuscripts, but considerable correspondence from others in the field, often expressing their appreciation for his assistance.

Beyond the collections of these Lincoln scholars is an array of other Lincoln materials. The earliest is a book of "Memoranda for the Biography of A. Lincoln" which his friend Ward Hill Lamon compiled in 1870, from the papers of William H. Herndon, Lincoln's law partner, before others, Jeremiah S. Black and Jesse W. Weik, actually wrote the biographies that were published as Lamon's (1872) and Herndon's (1889). I was fortunate to secure Lamon's volume of memoranda, which had been fortuitously saved from a fire of Black's papers in the backyard of his gardener.

Among the unit's less dramatic, more basic, but under used acquisitions which support Lincoln scholarship are photostats and microfilm of the Library of Congress's Herndon-Weik collection itself as well as other Lincoln sources in that and other manuscript repositories, much of which Professor James G. Randall of the Department of History collected for *Lincoln the President* (1945-55). Even more important are the papers of Abraham Lincoln himself, preserved by Robert Todd Lincoln, deposited at the Library of Congress, and now available here both online and as microfilm prints.

Also on file are typescripts of the correspondence between Herndon and Theodore Parker, a leading Unitarian and abolitionist. In addition, there are papers relating to the Survey's role in establishing the "Lincoln Way" from Indiana to Illinois in 1830. There is also the "Lincoln Calendar," a Works Progress Administration project which abstracted about 11,500 Lincoln items, 1831-65, from some 20 Illinois newspapers.

Lincoln's connections to Champaign County in particular are documented by the legal papers of Henry Clay Whitney and Thomson R. Webber, and in the research files of Clayton F. Daughterty. Lincoln's contacts in Mclean County, for instance, can be illustrated by the papers of William W. Orme and Jesse Fell.

The unit also includes diverse materials on Lincoln either written or collected by Herbert Wells Fay, custodian of the Lincoln

Tomb; Earl C. Kubicek, an administrator at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago; and Ralph G. Lindstrom, president of the Lincoln Fellowship of Southern California. Then, too, there are the Lincoln plays which are documented by a collection of theater programs dating from 1906, and by the extensive archives of the Great American People Show, which between 1975 and 1995 mounted Lincoln plays at New Salem. Most diverse of all are the many collections which contain scrapbooks and clippings about Lincoln. Not to be overlooked, of course, is the Library's small but significant collection of letters and legal papers in Lincoln's own hand as well as the military appointments that he signed.

### Colonial

Before 1939, the Illinois Historical Survey, located on campus, was the editorial office of the Illinois State Historical Library, located in Springfield. The Survey collected, and the Library published, two multi-volume series that defined the field of Illinois history. I wrote at length about these series in "A History of *The Centennial History of Illinois, 1907-1920*," and in "Collecting and Publishing Illinois History Sources: Collaboration between the Illinois State Historical Library and the Illinois Historical Survey, 1909-1939."

Much of the material used for both the *Centennial History* and the *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library* consists of transcripts, photostats, and microfilm of original documents in the British, French, Spanish, and Canadian Archives. The Survey collected other sources relating to the colonial and territorial periods of Illinois such as copies of the Gage papers at the University of Michigan and the Loudoun Papers at the Huntington Library. The unit also selectively acquired original manuscripts such as the George Morgan papers (1766-1826) and the Vincennes Oath (1778), emblematic of George Rogers Clark's conquest of the Illinois country. These and other primary sources, and a vast collection of related secondary studies, continue to support research in the field. One scholar recently described the unit's holdings as "the greatest single collection of materials on colonial Illinois" in existence (*Illinois Heritage*, July-August 2014).

### Early National

No period of Illinois history is more heavily studied than the decades between statehood in 1818 and the Civil War, and researchers often draw on the unit's multiplicity of manuscript sources for that era. However, they have yet to use many collections such as the

records of Stephen H. Long, superintendent of the U.S. Bureau of Topographical Engineers, who was engaged on improving the navigation of the Mississippi and other western rivers, and Cyrus E. Palmer, who collected photographs of steamboats on those waterways.

Also of value are the photostats of many early nineteenth-century newspapers, and extracts from many more, the originals of which were lost before digital technology became available. The unit also preserves the comprehensive research files of two U. of I. historians, Arthur E. Bestor, Jr. on American communitarianism in the period, and Robert W. Johannsen on James K. Polk, the U.S.-Mexican War, and Stephen A. Douglas, the state's leading political figure before the Civil War. Then too are the recently acquired archives of the Lovejoy Society, an organization engaged in studies of Owen Lovejoy, a leading anti-slavery politician.

### Civil War

Year after year the unit acquires collections that document diverse aspects of the American Civil War. No other concentration of sources is used by so many researchers.

There is also considerable Civil War material that is relatively hidden in other collections such as the Heinrich A. Rattermann archive of German-American manuscripts and Duncan Chalmers Milner's papers that otherwise focus on Chicago after the Civil War.

### Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

The unit's most substantial collections that illuminate Illinois history in the generations around 1900 are the papers (1880-1910) of Thomas J. and Elizabeth Chambers Morgan, leaders of the labor movement in Chicago, and the papers (1910-55) of John Hunter Walker, who organized the Illinois district of the United Mine Workers of America. Also of interest are the papers (1873-1937) of Edward F. Dunne, the only political figure to have served both as mayor of Chicago and as governor of Illinois.

Smaller acquisitions document the lives of less prominent but no less interesting individuals. Charles Francis Adams, a Champaign County farm boy who graduated from the U. of I. in 1883, became the taxidermist of the Auckland Museum in New Zealand and kept a detailed record of his ornithological work which included many specimens now extinct. Anna Riehl Thompson, a member of the Class of 1904, whose family in Madison County were leading horticulturalists in the state, described her disappointments as a missionary in Korea. Frederick S.

Wild of Chicago, a company commander in the Spanish-American War, wrote bitter letters about the Filipino insurgents. "Rolyat" (Taylor spelled backward), a traveling salesman in 1913, kept a remarkable list of his spare-time reading in small-town Illinois libraries.

Aspects of women's history in the same period are documented by records of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, especially in several central Illinois communities, and materials collected by Jean Thompson relating to the woman's suffrage movement.

### Subject Groupings

The unit's largest holdings are organizational archives, many of which receive additions from time to time. Most notable in this category are the records of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Dating from 1828 but fullest for recent decades, this collection includes the records of Illinois Yearly Meeting and its constituent quarterly and monthly meetings.

Among other organizational archives are the records of the Illinois State Division of the American Association of University Women and of several AAUW branches in Illinois (1902-). Champaign County accounts for the largest set of records of the League of Woman Voters (1922-). The unit also contains records of other Champaign County organizations, such as the Champaign Public Library and Burnham Athenaeum (1882-1936), the Cunningham Children's Home (1895-1994), the Fortnightly Club of Urbana (1895-), the Champaign Business and Professional Women's Club (1923-53), the Women's Town Club (1927-35), and the Navy Mothers' Club (1944-90).

Not only Champaign County organizations but also Champaign County families are well represented in the unit's manuscript collections. Among recent and significant acquisitions are the Baker-Busey-Dunlap collection (1866-1933) and the Busey-Yntema collection (1906-99), the latter including William Maxwell's letters to Garetta Busey, 1938-95. The papers of the Hammet-Talbot-Goodell families (1816-1921) document many topics. The papers of Sol B. Cohen (1870-1980), a violinist, composer, and teacher, throw considerable light on the musical life of Urbana and Champaign. Other multi-generational collections include the papers of the Wingard-Forney-Vaky families, which began in business in West Urbana/Champaign (1834-2012), and the papers of the Rea family, regarding an Urbana lawyer and an editor of the *Urbana Courier* (1870-1953).

Other multi-generational collections include the Williams-Woodbury families in Danville, Vermilion County (1820-1900), the

Bodman family in Bement, Piatt County (1855-1903), and, most recently, the Perkins family, based in Kane County (1754-1997).

The unit's manuscript collections fall into many thematic categories. Environmental topics are documented by the papers of James S. Ayars (1911-85) and Douglas E. Wade (1925-91). Collections of architectural papers document the work of Frederick Wainwright Perkins (1900-28) and Harry F. Robinson (1907-53). The religious spectrum stretches from the Religious Society of Friends, already noted, to the Roman Catholic Church, which is represented by the papers of Frank A. Cleary, rector in Watseka and Crescent City, Iroquois County (1911-35), and the papers of Fr. Martin Mangan (1930s-2010), who was deeply involved in the labor disputes in Decatur in the 1990s.

Many collections support research in legal and political history. They include the papers of the Urbana lawyers Thomson R. Webber (1828-81) and William B. Webber (1846-1916). They also include papers of William B. McKinley, Champaign County's only U.S. Senator (1904-26). Other collections document the judicial and non-judicial interests of Robert C. Underwood, an Illinois Supreme Court justice, 1962-84, and Harlington Wood, Jr., who sat on the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, after serving as the Justice Department's mediator at Wounded Knee. (Underwood's papers are now fully open for research but Wood's court files are restricted until 2024.)

The multi-faceted Dannel Angus McCollum collection (1940-2010) includes his family's files relating to the *McCollum* case, decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948. The unit also contains the files, not yet processed, of the plaintiffs' lawyers in the equity case against the Board of Education of Champaign (Unit 4). Also of interest are the papers of Henry I. Green, a delegate to the Illinois Constitutional Convention of 1969-70, which pertain to the state's pension obligations.

### Acknowledgments

Although I have been engaged in curating all of these manuscript collections, being either solely or partially involved in acquiring, organizing, and describing them, and in making them available to researchers, I have been immeasurably assisted by others who once staffed the unit.

I would mention in particular a number of graduate students in History, employed as graduate assistants, who proved to be both productive and congenial colleagues: Wendy Hamand (now at Georgia State University), Ken Noe (now at Auburn University), Tom Murphy and

Brian Kenny (both employed in academia), and finally Tom Schwartz, Bryon Andreasen, and James Cornelius (now or formerly at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library).

Also employed were students in Library Science, including Jody Moeller (who served as a Library Technical Assistant), Adam Groves, Willy Kries (now in CAM), Jenny Freed (now at Earlham College), and Ryan Ross (appointed first as a GA and then funded on the Horner endowment).

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