

Editor's Note

The Small City in the Midwest: A Special Issue

From Fort Wayne to Evansville, Indiana has long been a state of large towns and small cities. One of those cities, Muncie, acquired an almost iconic status after sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd designated it America's "Middletown," in their 1929 study of the same name. Today, Ball State University's Center for Middletown Studies builds on its hometown's reputation by supporting research into town and city life, in Muncie and elsewhere. This special issue of the IMH, guest-edited by BSU's Bruce Geelhoed and James Connelly, draws on material generated by one of the most important of the Center's research efforts: the "Small Cities: Past, Present, and Future" conference, held annually on the BSU campus. Featured here are four articles based on papers delivered at the 2001 and 2002 conferences, as well as an introductory essay by the editors. Taken together, these works highlight the need for historians to develop specific questions and adopt particular modes of understanding for the small city—a place that, as the articles demonstrate, differs in important ways from both the small town and the metropolis. Today, as small towns struggle to survive and as big cities evolve into decentered, fragmented urban regions, the middle ground of the small city—a place long familiar to most Indianans—offers itself as a potential source of both community and heterogeneity. Surely it merits a closer look.

Readers' Survey

More than 1,100 readers responded to the IMH survey that was delivered earlier this year. Your answers sketch a profile of an engaged, opinionated, and serious readership. A majority of readers asked to see more on such traditionally popular subjects as the pioneer era and the Civil War, although a significant number of you also added comments indicating your desire for more variety, both in subject and in style, in the pages of the magazine. In keeping with the point of David Thelen's recent article in these pages ("Learning from the Past: Individual Experience and Re-enactment," June 2003), many wrote of their interest in establishing a more personal connection—through family or hometown ties—to the material they read in the IMH. In like manner, a majority of you expressed interest in hearing more about ongoing local-history and genealogical activity around the state. A more thorough treatment of the survey's results, and their implications for the IMH, will follow in our next issue. In the meantime, do not hesitate to write or e-mail the editors of the magazine with your continued comments and suggestions. The conversation ought not to stop with the appearance of one printed survey.

Martin Ridge

The IMH notes sadly the passing of Martin Ridge, a recent contributor to this journal ("A View from the Faculty," in "Remembering Indiana University in the 1960s: Perspectives on *Dissent in the*

Heartland," March 2003) and, from 1965 to 1977, professor of history at IU Bloomington. Ridge was an authority on the history of the American West who served as editor of the *Journal of American History* from 1966 to 1977 and, most recently, as director of research at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California.

Indiana Association of Historians Annual Meeting

The Indiana Association of Historians holds its twenty-fourth annual meeting at the University of Indianapolis on February 27, 2004. For more information, contact James Fuller, Department of History, University of Indianapolis, 1400 East Hanna Avenue, Indianapolis 46227.

IMH Changes

With our 100th volume (which begins with the next issue), IMH readers will notice several changes to the journal. The most obvious will be a new design to replace the familiar red cover that has been our standard since 1987. In addition, two regular features of the magazine will shift in their schedule. The journal's annual index, traditionally part of our December issue, will now appear each March, allowing our indexer more time to prepare this important resource. Our regular listing of recent published works in Indiana history, which has appeared in March, will shift to the June issue. Other features will evolve, just as the journal always has. But in its overall mission, the IMH will continue to pursue its longstanding goal: providing a wide audience with original, interesting, historically based research on Indiana and the Midwest.

Correction: "Indiana Archives," September 2003

Thank you to Rand Burnette, professor emeritus of history at MacMurray College, Jacksonville, Illinois, and immediate past president of the Illinois State Historical Society, for the following correction to "Indiana Archives: Indiana before Statehood," which appeared in the September 2003 issue:

Footnote 1 in "Indiana Archives: Indiana before Statehood" states that one could locate material on Lewis and Clark at the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, among other locations.

The Illinois State Historical Society is an independent not-for-profit body that receives no aid from the state of Illinois. We have no library, but we were at one time a subdivision of the Illinois State Historical Library. The ISHL has a vast collection of historical materials. They are under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, and Kathryn Harris is the librarian. Currently located in the basement of the Old State Capitol, the collection, including the Lincoln Collection, will be moved to the new Lincoln Presidential Library sometime in 2004.