Manuscript Accessions—Indiana State Library

By MILDRED C. STOLER

“If I had only known a year ago that they were worth saving, I should have sent them to the Library instead of burning them.” This or a similar statement all too frequently follows an inquiry as to whether or not a person has manuscripts of historical interest. There is something of the tragic in it at times, especially when account books of pre-Civil War days or letters which might have thrown light on partially explained historical events have been destroyed.

The Indiana State Library has been striving for years to preserve these very important sources of our knowledge of Indiana history and of those leaders who have directed the course of that history. Its efforts have been rewarded and an appreciable beginning has been made. Nevertheless, manuscripts and pamphlets by the hundreds of thousands must be stored in attics, barns and storerooms and remain half-forgotten and almost wholly neglected. Many of the owners of this material either do not know that historians need it or do not know that the State Library is prepared to care for it. Upon the completion of the new Library and Historical Building next summer with its equipment especially designed for the care and preservation of manuscripts, it is hoped that people will realize as never before that they should co-operate with the state in this work of preserving the state’s historical source material.

During the past year about fifty persons have given their support. They have not only provided for the permanent preservation of manuscripts which were oftentimes treasured possessions, but they have made possible a fuller and more accurate understanding of the past. They have in some cases enabled our own and future generations to acquire a greater appreciation of the character and achievements of men who might otherwise never have attained their deserved position in the record of the past.

One of these donors is William Dudley Foulke of Richmond, who is well-known for his activities in the interest of Civil Service Reform and the Progressive movement as well as for his writings. A biography of Lucius B. Swift, civil service reformer of Indianapolis, was recently published by Mr.
Foulke whose correspondence shows a wide range of interests. Mr. Foulke wrote and published articles about the World War (1916-1918), the League to Enforce Peace, the League of Nations, the Philippine Islands, woman suffrage, the World Court and the tariff. Among his correspondents were Albert J. Beveridge, Emma Goldman, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft and George Kennan, author and lecturer on Russia and the Far East. The originals of the Kennan, Taft and Roosevelt letters are in the Library of Congress. The papers cover the period from 1849 to 1931.

The papers of Thomas R. Marshall (1860-1925), placed in the Library by Mrs. Marshall, consist chiefly of his speeches and other writings. From college days, represented by his argument in a debate on the question, "Are men great independent of circumstances?" until the close of his life, his pen was busy. He wrote speeches to be given at cornerstone layoffs, before meetings of lawyers, physicians, Christian Endeavor societies, and the G. A. R. Entrance into the political arena resulted in articles on the social, economic and political problems which confronted him. Freedom from state duties and a tour of Europe brought forth from his pen his impressions of the countries and people visited. Shortly before his death he finished his recollections. A typewritten copy with interlineations made by hand is included in the collection.

The extensive correspondence of Daniel D. Pratt, prominent northern Indiana lawyer and United States Senator from 1869-1875, has material of interest to students of political, economic and social conditions of his period. Mr. Pratt was educated in New York schools, came to Rising Sun, Indiana, in 1832, where he taught school for a short time, and then studied law under Calvin Fletcher in Indianapolis. Mr. Fletcher's interest in his pupil continued for many years, for at intervals during the next thirty-five years Pratt received letters of advice from his preceptor in the law. Mr. Pratt selected the new but thriving town of Logansport as the scene of his first efforts to practice law and through steady application and honest endeavor attained success. In 1850 and again in 1853, he was sent to the state house of representatives by his district and in 1868 was elected a member of the national house of representatives. Before he took his seat, however, he was chosen United States Senator by the state legislature. He
spent six years in Washington much against his will, for he
tried to resign before he had been there a month. While there
his reputation for honesty and integrity was enhanced in spite
of the corruption prevalent among public officeholders. The
collection (1832-1877) includes many letters from Charles
Butler New York, lawyer for the Wabash and Erie Canal
trustees, Thomas Dowling, one of the Wabash and Erie Canal
trustees, Conrad Baker, Governor of Indiana from 1867 to
1873, John D. Defrees, Indianapolis editor and state senator,
Thomas C. Slaughter, of Corydon, Gilbert A. Pierce, Val-
paraiso journalist and member of the state legislature, God-
love S. Orth, United States Representative, Schuyler Colfax,
speaker of the national house of representatives and vice-
president, and other prominent men.

More than a hundred letters have been added to the large
Civil War collection. Those of Orion A. Bartholomew com-
ment upon foraging expeditions, the people's attitude toward
negro regiments and the soldiers' feeling that to steal was a
privilege acquired with a uniform. Ransom T. Young relates
his experiences with the Union army in Mississippi and
Georgia. Photostatic copies of letters in the United States
War Department show conditions in Camp Morton, a prison
camp in Indianapolis during the war.

The evacuation of Corinth, the feelings of a soldier under
fire and the practice of pretending illness to escape unpleasant
duties are described in letters in the Lucius C. Embree Col-
lection. Mr. and Mrs. Lucius C. Embree presented to the
Library a large group of the papers of Mr. Embree and earlier
members of the Embree and Robb families, both pioneers in
Indiana. Mr. Embree was a widely known and highly esteem-
ed attorney of Princeton, Indiana. Besides the Civil War let-
ters already mentioned, there are two bills of sale for slaves in
Kentucky and Tennessee in 1800 and 1823, respectively, and
an interesting letter by Henry Robb telling the story of his
brother David's life from his birth in Ireland to his removal to
Indiana, including a story of hunting trips along the Ohio
river and his capture by pirates. David Robb was later a
member of the Council of Indiana Territory, of the constitu-
tional convention of 1816 and of the state legislature. Another
letter of interest was written by David Robb to Judge Elisha
Embree in 1833 from LaPorte in which the heavy immigration
and rising land values are mentioned. Only a small portion of the collection has been filed but that part is ready for use.

The papers of Nathaniel Preston, placed in the Library by Mrs. E. V. Smith, include ten account books (1834-1871). Mr. Preston arrived in Terre Haute in 1836. He taught school for a year and then began work in the Terre Haute branch of the State Bank. His carefully kept accounts cover tuition received from school pupils, household expenditures and business accounts. The collection contains papers of later members of the family and dates from 1821 to 1918. It is chiefly valuable for data on economic conditions but there is some material on political questions of the decade following 1838 and on certain phases of social history.

Nine letter books and many loose letters of John Coburn were presented by Mr. Schuyler Haas, formerly a law partner of Mr. Coburn. This collection (1850-1904) will be useful in the study of economic conditions and of the life of General Coburn.

Among Judge W. W. Thornton's papers, presented by Mrs. Thornton, are letters criticizing the fee system for paying prosecuting attorneys (1886), discussing his race for nomination as supreme court reporter in 1888 and showing the conservative opinion concerning the Spanish-American War. Mr. Thornton was judge of the superior court, dean of the Benjamin Harrison Law School and a writer on legal subjects.

The manuscript autobiography of Rev. Eli P. Farmer, Methodist circuit rider, who resided for many years in or near Bloomington, Indiana, throws light on the hardships and successes of a pioneer preacher. His experiences in the War of 1812, in politics from 1835 to 1845, and with frontier rowdies are interesting.

Mrs. Grace Julian Clarke added to the collection of her father's papers which she had previously presented three notebooks, kept by George W. Julian in 1848-1849 and 1858 for use in political campaigns, and copies of correspondence relating to the publication of his Life of Joshua R. Giddings.

Mrs. Lucius B. Swift presented four diaries (1875-1897) recording her husband's experiences while superintendent of schools in LaPorte and several meetings held in the interest of civil service reform. A large group of Mr. Swift's papers was received last year.