

Genealogical Section

SPECIAL GENEALOGICAL COLLECTIONS AND RECORDS IN THE INDIANA STATE LIBRARY

The Genealogy Section of the Indiana State Library, as a separate Section, is only as old as the building which now houses its library collection, but no account of its work is complete without calling attention to those who, previous to 1933, were laying the foundation for its present operation.

Genealogical research has for many years been a part of the regime of the Indiana State Library. To the librarians, as directors, to the Chiefs of the Indiana History and Reference Divisions, under whose auspices research has been carried on, and to the Catalogue Division for its aid in the classification and shelving of material, great credit is due for paving the way for the separate handling of this phase of library work. Not only has the Genealogy Section inherited a fine collection of material, chosen through the years with almost prophetic instinct, but the methods in practice today are much the same as those of the earlier years of the library. One of the chief purposes of the new Section has been to maintain the standards set for it.

Certain agencies are contributing to an increased interest in genealogical matters. We are becoming more genealogically minded, or perhaps, record-conscious. The day of the over-zealous housewife who almost literally shoveled accumulations from the attic and, without discrimination, set a match to them, is passing. Difficulties in obtaining age records for pension applicants, the necessity for birth certificates in the industrial and defense worlds, and other conditions have shown the importance of compiling and preserving records. Many of the WPA projects in operation today are connected in some way with genealogical and historical records. Individuals are becoming more interested in family research and it is a hopeful sign that the percentage of young people using the Genealogy Library is far beyond what one might expect it to be.

From time to time the *Indiana Magazine of History* has published lists of material which is being added to the Genealogy Library. It is the purpose of this article to call attention to the many special collections and records that are being placed in the library, hoping thus to stimulate an

even greater interest in making the Genealogy Section a repository for such important material.

For many years the genealogy committees of the local chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Indiana have been collecting and compiling records of a vital nature. Their custom has been to make three copies of all such compilations, one for the chapter itself, one for the D. A. R. Library in Washington, D. C., and one for the Indiana State Library. In this way the Genealogy Section is accumulating a large collection of Family Bible records, marriage and cemetery records, some court records, and many lineage records.

The Indiana Society of the Sons of the American Revolution has placed some valuable records, miscellaneous material, and many back numbers of its magazine, to which the library now subscribes.

The Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Indiana is placing on file, as rapidly as they are being completed, the lineages of its members, and in addition is observing a beautiful custom of contributing volumes in honor of deceased members. These have been taking the form of Registers of the Society in the various states.

The Indiana State Chapter of the Daughters of Founders and Patriots has shown much discrimination in its gifts to the library. These include lineage books of the National Society, such important publications as late editions of Burke's *Peerage and Landed Gentry*, some special sets, and individual volumes.

The Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Indiana has deposited its entire library collection in the Genealogy Section (including the priceless lineage book of its members). The Society of Colonial Wars has done likewise. Both of these organizations make occasional additions to their collections and thus give the public the use of some valuable material on the early New England and Colonial periods.

The Indiana Historical Society, through its Committee on Pioneer Cemeteries and Churches, has been doing an extensive work in its collection of cemetery records, all of which are being placed in this library for preservation. Subcommittees have been appointed in nearly every county in the state and at the meeting of the Indiana History Con-

ference in December, 1940, the Chairman of the committee was able to report that records from nearly one hundred cemeteries in the state had been compiled during the previous year and placed in the Genealogy Section of the Indiana State Library. The importance of this work is recognized when one realizes that many of these cemeteries are old and almost abandoned, and that others have been affected by defense projects and other conditions. One cemetery in Dearborn County had to be removed on account of an extension of the levee. Plats of the graves in the old cemetery, before removal, and of the new location of graves have been placed in this library.

Not only have societies and organizations been contributing in this way, but many individuals have on their own account copied or compiled records. Three young men, in different sections of the state, voluntarily copied cemetery records and offered to place them here. These persons afterwards became members of the Indiana Historical Society's committee. A young woman of Indianapolis has been engaged in the free will service of indexing cemetery records on file. In the June, 1941, number of the *Indiana Magazine of History*, attention was called to a labor of love on the part of two persons who made copies of some old marriage records recently uncovered in Orange County, placing one copy in the Genealogy Section.

For the most part, these collections and records have come to the library without solicitation; however, the Genealogy Section has from its very start made an effort to procure histories of Indiana families and has urged each compiler of a genealogy to place one copy here, not only for use, but for insurance against emergencies and vicissitudes. The response to this appeal has been gratifying and these are being received in book, pamphlet, manuscript, and chart form. In this way some very interesting family material has been received from the Society of Indiana Pioneers. Often a history of a family of some other state, having Indiana connections, has been donated to the library. Recently this library was one of eight libraries selected to receive a two-volume typed manuscript copy of the genealogy of a prominent Ohio family.

It should be remembered that while much of this material is placed here with a view to preservation, the greater

part of it is available for use in the library; none of it can be taken from the building. All of these collections and records are entered in the catalogue in the Genealogy Room. Books as a rule are shelved according to the classification rules of the library. Rare books, manuscripts, and irreplaceable material are, for the most part, kept in locked cases, to be used under surveillance. Occasional checking, especially of the deposits, is practiced. While the Genealogy Section cannot assume unlimited responsibility against emergencies, its purpose is to be on the alert as to the safety of its library collection, and it is glad to have its part in housing what it is hoped will prove to be "Records that defy the tooth of Time."

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Indiana State Library