

# Cultural History of Indianapolis: Literature, 1875-1890

## II

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While club activities encouraged literary appreciation and gave numerous writers their chief opportunity for self-expression, many in Indianapolis wrote for occasional publication and some were truly professional. The press rendered a great service to many professional writers by providing employment to satisfy their immediate needs and by acting as a stepping stone toward an independent literary career. Of the Indianapolis fraternity of letters, those most widely known to the general reader are James Whitcomb Riley, Meredith Nicholson, and Booth Tarkington. In the 1880's, Tarkington was still in school and had not yet turned professional; Meredith Nicholson was getting valuable experience writing both for the *Sentinel* and the *News*. Neither Tarkington nor Nicholson was able to establish himself as an independent professional writer until about the turn of the century when their first successful publications appeared. Both were much influenced by the example of Riley and by the friendly advice which he was always ready to give to young and struggling authors.<sup>145</sup>

Riley had come to Indianapolis to live in 1879, and during the next decade he worked to build the reputation which has since gathered considerable legend around it. These years were not easy ones. By joining the *Journal* staff in November, 1879, at a salary of \$25.00 a week, he was enabled to live while he worked to perfect his writing technique.<sup>146</sup> Until the publication of his first book in 1883, he commonly wrote under assumed names, such as "Benj. F. Johnson of Boone," "John C. Walker," "Jay Whit," and "Edryn."<sup>147</sup> This fondness for pseudonyms is further illus-

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<sup>145</sup> Banta, *Indiana Authors and their Books, 1816-1916*, pp. 313, 238; Robert Cortes Holliday, *Booth Tarkington* (Garden City, New York, 1919), 8-9.

<sup>146</sup> Jeanette Covert Nolan, *James Whitcomb Riley, Hoosier Poet* (New York, 1941), 186-187.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 174, 200-204; *Indianapolis Times*, June 22, 1940.

trated by the variety of humorous and witty signatures which appeared on his letters to close friends, for instance, "Doc Marigold," "Brother Whittleford," "Uncle Sidney," "Troubled Tom," and "Old E. Z. Mark." Once he signed a poem for Edward Bok, editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, "James Hoosier Riley, the Whitcomb Poet."<sup>148</sup>

Though he wrote some prose, it did not rank with his poetry, for which he is best known. Success came slowly and rejection slips were regularly received.<sup>149</sup> Yet he labored diligently; and in 1883 his good friend, George C. Hitt, business manager of the *Journal*, acted as his publisher to bring out the first Riley book, "*The Old Swimmin'-hole*," and '*Leven More Poems*.' The entire edition of one thousand copies was quickly sold, netting a profit of \$166.40. Unable to persuade the Robert Clarke Company of Cincinnati to undertake the project, Hitt valiantly assumed the entire financial responsibility himself and generously turned over all the net proceeds to Riley.<sup>150</sup> Concerning this book the *News* commented: "Mr. Riley shows himself an artist of no mean order . . . Although immensely popular, and destined in its present handy and tasteful form to have a wider reading, this work is much in the nature of a diversion, and does not contain Mr. Riley's best and more serious efforts. These will doubtless follow in other volumes in time. This very modest and altogether pleasing volume is for sale at all the book stores for fifty cents."<sup>151</sup>

Later in 1883, soon after this first edition was exhausted, a second appeared under the imprint of Merrill, Meigs and Company of Indianapolis. In many ways it resembled the earlier one, for it was similarly bound in parchment and a red line bordered each page.<sup>152</sup> Publication of the second edition was perhaps the turning point or climax for literary culture in the Inland City, for it was to set a standard by which accomplishment in the publishing field would in the future be measured. It further proved to be a happy occasion for both author and publisher, for it contributed substantially to the excellent reputation and fruitful career of each. Their long association, broken only by

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<sup>148</sup> *Indianapolis Times*, June 22, 1940.

<sup>149</sup> Dickey, *The Maturity of James Whitcomb Riley*, 136.

<sup>150</sup> Nolan, *James Whitcomb Riley, Hoosier Poet*, 206-209; Banta, *Indiana Authors and their Books, 1816-1916*, pp. 270-271.

<sup>151</sup> *Indianapolis News*, July 20, 1883.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, October 3, 1883.

Riley's death in 1916, appears to have been an exceedingly happy one.<sup>153</sup>

The publishing firm of Merrill, Meigs and Company possessed an old as well as a broad and distinguished background in both bookselling and in the publication of legal books. In fact, its history antedated the Hoosier capital, for one of its founders, Samuel Merrill, was noted for his erudition and love of books, perhaps even sold books, before coming to Indianapolis in the 1820's. Riley, on the other hand, was a man of simple human qualities, unassuming and modest, who took no credit for his poetry, claimed no unusual ability, and insisted that he was only the instrument for the inspiration which flowed through his pen.<sup>154</sup> He was without formal education, as far as college training was concerned, yet he possessed a knowledge of people that no college course could have given him. By whatever means he acquired this wisdom, it contributed to his writings an appeal which reached deep into the hearts of his readers of every station.

A gentle humor was characteristic of both his writing and his speaking. Those still living who remember him well feel that this was his outstanding quality.<sup>155</sup> His humor was not of a hilarious sort; a note of pathos was always present so that the laughter he caused was often close to tears. Whether or not he was a great poet—critics continue to disagree over the quality of his contribution—he was an important one for Indiana. The Hoosier poet was on the threshold of a national and international reputation.

The editors of the Bobbs-Merrill Company recall those regular morning visits in later years when Riley would drop in to open his mail, to warm his hands by the great open fireplace—a feature of the publishing house on the south side of Washington Street—and perhaps to confer briefly with his editor. The poet often kept "in character" a week at a time and, during one of those periods, came in each day as "Brother Brightwaters," a lay reader from down state; such performances, of course, were a never-ending source of entertainment for the entire staff of the firm. No formal contracts were ever made, for Riley professed an aver-

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<sup>153</sup> Interview with Julius Birge.

<sup>154</sup> Dickey, *The Maturity of James Whitcomb Riley*, 330-331.

<sup>155</sup> Interview with Anna Hasselman.

sion to them. He impressed many as being whimsical and somewhat temperamental; his personality was unique and helped foster the legend which grew up around and about him.<sup>156</sup>

Merrill, Meigs brought out a second Riley book in 1885, *Character Sketches, a Christmas Story and Other Sketches*, and a third one, *Afterwhiles*, in 1887.<sup>157</sup> The next year it was announced that Riley had two more books in preparation, one of which—*Old-Fashioned Roses*—was already in the press of an English firm, and that he was also busy arranging the manuscript of a volume of story and verse to be published by the Indianapolis house. This latter volume, *Pipes O' Pan at Zekesbury*, appeared in 1889, and two years later, in 1891, his *Rhymes of Childhood* was published. That same year another edition of "*The Old Swimmin'-hole*," and *'Leven More Poems* with additional selections was published in Indianapolis.<sup>158</sup> After that the list grew steadily and rapidly until Riley's death and included a total of thirty-nine titles, two of which were reissues of his first book, and three others collected editions of his writings in both verse and prose. All but nine of these titles were brought out by the Indianapolis firm.<sup>159</sup>

No records are available to indicate the degree of material success enjoyed by either the publishing firm or the author through the sale of Riley's books locally or nationally.<sup>160</sup> The continuance of the relationship, of course, would indicate that it was regarded as mutually profitable, and the progress of the firm in what was for them a completely new subject-matter field was indeed prophetic. Present local evidences of Riley's beneficence bear further witness to his financial success.<sup>161</sup>

After the first full evening's program in Indianapolis in October, 1879, which was so well received, Riley went on to regular circuits throughout Indiana and neighboring states. He began such a tour in February, 1880, going first to

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<sup>156</sup> Interview with Julius Birge; *Indianapolis News*, October 4, 1949.

<sup>157</sup> Data from the files of the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

<sup>158</sup> Banta, *Indiana Authors and their Books, 1816-1916*, p. 271.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 271-272.

<sup>160</sup> Interview with Julius Birge.

<sup>161</sup> It is well known that Riley gave to the city of Indianapolis the land on which stands the children's hospital named for him.

Greencastle, then to Terre Haute.<sup>162</sup> In September he gave another complete program in Indianapolis at the Grand Opera House before a large audience. His critic noted that he showed much improvement over his last appearance but that "a little more of the polished art of the reader would not injure the introductory part of the entertainment."<sup>163</sup> In addition to his tours, he continued to appear on almost every benefit program given in Indianapolis, adding valuable experience to his natural ability. In 1881 he signed a contract with the Redpath Lyceum Bureau and began work with them after Christmas of that year. His first appearance under the new management was at Canton, Ohio, on December 28, after which he appeared at Tremont Temple, Boston, on January 3, 1882.<sup>164</sup> Since apparently no further reference to Redpath was made, it is not known just how long this association continued.

In 1886 the Riley-Nye combination began. Their first performance was given at the Grand Opera House in February in collaboration with Eugene Field, who had come from Chicago for the event. Bill (Edgar Wilson) Nye, the well-known humorist, was no novice at this time but it was Field's stage debut. Mrs. John C. New and Miss Sallie Bingham provided the musical part of the program. One of the best audiences ever gathered in Indianapolis greeted the performers with a reception almost embarrassing in its warmth. The affair was indeed a success.<sup>165</sup> From this beginning the partnership of Nye and Riley continued about five years. Mark Twain and George W. Cable had successfully swung around the circuit before them, and it is quite probable that the Riley-Nye performances were equally effective. Both humorists, their alternate appearances on the program usually consisted of attempts to out-insult each other, to the delight of the audience. Riley's part always included a number of original readings, well interspersed with anecdotes as only he could tell them.<sup>166</sup> For a time during this partnership they added to their program a singer, Miss

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<sup>162</sup> *Indianapolis News*, February 6, 1880.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, September 15, 1880.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, August 12 and December 23, 1881.

<sup>165</sup> Dickey, *The Maturity of James Whitcomb Riley*, 234; Nolan, *James Whitcomb Riley, Hoosier Poet*, 214-215; *Indianapolis News*, February 5, 1886.

<sup>166</sup> *Indianapolis News*, December 12, 1889.

Katherine Willard, niece of the famous temperance lecturer, Frances Willard.<sup>167</sup>

Riley had embarked upon a gruelling schedule, one which would tax the endurance of a far sturdier person than he appeared to be. There was some complaint that this work was causing him to sacrifice his writing. This was no doubt justified; yet in the face of such criticism a thirty-weeks' tour was planned with the Western Lyceum Agency for the winter and spring of 1889-1890. This tour was a great success, financially and otherwise, for all concerned except Riley, who continued to receive but \$40.00 a performance when the box office receipts for a single evening totaled as much as \$1,600. But Nye had managed better than Riley and was growing richer. Friction developed between them, doubtless because of this situation and also because Riley, fatigued by his heavy schedule, had taken to drink. Finally at Louisville in January, 1890, Riley lost his temper and broke the contract which would soon have come to an end anyway. But in spite of the fact that they were no longer business partners, the two managed to continue their friendship. Riley feared the reaction of his public at home toward this turn of events but was relieved when the Indianapolis Literary Club accorded him a most heart-warming reception upon his return.<sup>168</sup>

In 1887 Riley was honored by an invitation to participate in the American Author's Entertainment sponsored by the International Copyright League, at Chickering Hall, New York. The League had been holding similar annual meetings for ten years, but this was the first time Riley had been invited to participate and probably the first time any writer from Indianapolis had been so honored. The program, held November 28-29, 1887, was presided over by James Russell Lowell and included also such well-known names as Richard Henry Stoddard, Henry Cuyler Bunner, Edward Eggleston, George W. Cable, and Mark Twain. Unknown at the outset, Riley read with success and received an ovation from his audience. He was invited to return to Chickering Hall the following February to participate in a program planned by Augustin Daly to honor Henry Irving and Ellen Terry.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Interview with Anna Hasselman.

<sup>168</sup> Dickey, *The Maturity of James Whitcomb Riley*, 257-263.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 242; Nolan, *James Whitcomb Riley, Hoosier Poet*, 217-222, 226; *Indianapolis News*, December 1, 1887.

Indianapolis had been heard from and the East had met a poet from the West.

Before 1880 Riley had had five portraits made; the first of these, by Theodore C. Steele, is the only one the whereabouts of which was known in 1938, when it was owned by members of the Riley family. One of the lost portraits was by John Love and another by Fred Hetherington. In 1893, Steele had returned from Europe and painted one of the greatest of the Riley portraits, which was presented to the Indianapolis Press Club and later found its way to the Indianapolis Literary Club. The seventh portrait also was made by Steele on commission from the Bobbs-Merrill Company. In 1900 John Singer Sargent made the eighth, generally known as the official Riley portrait, which became the possession of the John Herron Art Museum. The ninth and last portrait, painted by Steele in 1912, is a copy of the 1893 portrait and now hangs in the Riley Hospital at the Indiana University Medical Center.<sup>170</sup>

Riley was one of those uncommon individuals who received the plaudits of his fellow townsmen during his lifetime. They loved the wit and humor of his private conversation and were charmed by his personality.<sup>171</sup> "His incompetence—real or pretended—in many directions was one of the most delightful things about him."<sup>172</sup> His critics have divided on the question of whether he really loved children. Meredith Nicholson stated that Riley's "wide popularity as a poet of childhood was due to a special genius for understanding the child mind. Yet he was shy in the presence of children, and though he . . . could establish himself on good terms with them, he seemed uncomfortable when suddenly confronted by a strange child."<sup>173</sup>

It was always the human element that appealed to him. The people he knew were his chief interest in life. Riley "comprehended one great truth that few poets, and for that matter few other writers, learn, namely, that unlettered folk have the same emotional experiences which their more

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<sup>170</sup> *Indianapolis Times*, November 10, 1938.

<sup>171</sup> Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 518.

<sup>172</sup> Meredith Nicholson, *The Man in the Street* (New York, 1921), 58.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

learned neighbors feel. . . . Though they may themselves be inarticulate when it comes to the expression of their finer emotions and dreams, they welcome those who put into words what they dumbly feel."<sup>174</sup>

Educational circles objected to his use of dialect, but Riley defended himself by pointing out that Bret Harte, John Hay, and others used it.<sup>175</sup> In the estimate of recent writers, Riley not only invented the dialect which he employed in his writing but also "invented the typical Hoosier . . . . The figure emerging. . . is of a mellow, humorous rustic, a quaint, bucolic philosopher, unlettered but gifted with an earthly shrewdness, a peasant wisdom, a heart of gold, speaking a drawling, hybrid tongue, a dubious dialect as yet unidentified by any philologist—but a figure so convincing that even the Hoosier himself was persuaded to proclaim it his true likeness and to try to emulate it."<sup>176</sup> Opinion has generally prevailed that in his poetry Riley actually characterized himself.<sup>177</sup>

In addition to Riley a list of Indianapolis authors of the 1880's would include at least thirty-four other names. Some of these were not literary folk in the strictest sense, for they were all members of other professions, such as law and education, and generally have few books to their credit. Still others were more exclusively of the writing fraternity and made specific contributions to the literary culture of Indianapolis.

Sarah T. Bolton was one of the earliest poets in Indiana, as well as Indianapolis, and in the decade of the 1880's was regarded somewhat as one whose life work was well-nigh completed, for a volume entitled *The Life and Poems of Sarah T. Bolton*, edited by Major Jonathan W. Gordon, was published in 1880.<sup>178</sup> Nevertheless she continued to read her original poems at social gatherings and to write books for young people. In 1888 it was learned that over ten thousand copies of each of the three books in her series of

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<sup>174</sup> Anna Nicholas, *The Story of Crown Hill* (Indianapolis, c1928), 289.

<sup>175</sup> Dickey, *The Maturity of James Whitcomb Riley*, 83.

<sup>176</sup> Jeannette Covert Nolan, Horace Gregory, James T. Farrell, *Poet of the People; an Evaluation of James Whitcomb Riley* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1951), 18.

<sup>177</sup> Dickey, *The Maturity of James Whitcomb Riley*, 889ff.

<sup>178</sup> *Indianapolis News*, May 5, 1880.



biographies for young people had been sold, and she was persuaded to start work on two additional volumes.<sup>179</sup> Mrs. Bolton contributed valuable counsel to the literary scene by her encouragement of Riley. Her poetry expressed vividly the spirit of her time.<sup>180</sup> She is particularly remembered as author of "Paddle Your Own Canoe," which was set to music and became a song hit of its day.

Ben D. House was a prominent literary figure in Indianapolis. He had been in the city since the Civil War writing poetry of a patriotic nature; however, the extent of his publication during his lifetime was through the press, for he did executive work with various newspapers. His chief contribution to literary culture was a moral one, in the giving of advice and the upholding of literary standards. Both Riley and Nicholson wrote of him with gratitude.<sup>181</sup>

George C. Harding, who was editor of several newspapers at various times, likewise rendered a great service to the literary culture of Indianapolis by the encouragement which he gave to other writers. He provided an avenue for their publication and enjoyed entertaining them in his home, where they might discuss and freely criticize each other's work.<sup>182</sup>

Mary Hartwell Catherwood lived in Indianapolis only from 1879 to 1882 but was closely identified with the literary scene during that time. Her co-operation with and encouragement of other writers, especially Riley, is worthy of mention.<sup>183</sup>

Julia Constance Fletcher, daughter of Rev. James Cooley Fletcher, lived abroad but was a native of Indianapolis. Under the pseudonym "George Fleming," she wrote two novels, *Mirage* and *Kismet*, which were widely read in the 1880's.<sup>184</sup>

Daniel L. Paine was one of the so-called cloak poets. He was a shy man, well known only to close associates who

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<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, December 1, 1888.

<sup>180</sup> Nicholas, *The Story of Crown Hill*, 266-268.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 281-283; Banta, *Indiana Authors and their Books, 1816-1916*, p. 156.

<sup>182</sup> Esarey, *A History of Indiana*, II, 1130; Banta, *Indiana Authors and their Books, 1816-1916*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>183</sup> M. L. Wilson, *Biography of Mary Hartwell Catherwood* (Newark, Ohio, 1904), 43; Banta, *Indiana Authors and their Books, 1816-1916*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>184</sup> *Indianapolis News*, November 1, 1916.

sought him out. His poem, "At Elberon," in memory of President Garfield, was considered by many the finest poetical tribute honoring that martyred president.<sup>185</sup>

Berry R. Sulgrove published his *History of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana* during this decade. He probably exerted more influence through his editorial writing for the *News* and *Journal* than through his one published work.<sup>186</sup>

Daniel Wait Howe, for a time president of the Indiana Historical Society, did much to encourage the preservation of important documents and to foster public interest in state and local history. Writer of several volumes, the first of which was published in 1886, he made a collection of Indiana laws which he later presented to the Indianapolis Public Library.<sup>187</sup>

Also in the historical field was Jacob Piatt Dunn, whose books began to appear during this decade. His work was praised for its historical accuracy, originality, and literary merit.<sup>188</sup>

William H. English, although publishing nothing during this decade, was throughout his life interested in literary and scientific subjects and was constantly engaged in collecting the materials which bore fruit later in his historical works, *Conquest of the Country Northwest of the River Ohio 1778-1783* and a *History of Indiana*.<sup>189</sup>

Catharine Merrill was a born teacher, but a writer largely by force of circumstance. At the suggestion of her mother, she had kept a journal from childhood and thus early began her habit of observation. Educated carefully by her father, and later in Germany, she reflected through her writing and classroom lectures the thorough training which she had received. Because of her literary skill she was chosen, as noted earlier, to write the story of Indiana in the Civil War. Her other book, *The Man Shakespeare*, doubtless grew out of lectures to students. To the literary culture of the age her chief contribution was the inspiration she gave to many

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<sup>185</sup> Nicholas, *The Story of Crown Hill*, 279.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 270-271; *Indiana Magazine of History*, II, 139-150.

<sup>187</sup> Rabb and Herschell, *An Account of Indianapolis and Marion County*, 103; Banta, *Indiana Authors and their Books, 1816-1916*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>188</sup> *Indianapolis News*, March 20, 1886.

<sup>189</sup> Rabb and Herschell, *An Account of Indianapolis and Marion County*, 103-104; Banta, *Indiana Authors and their Books, 1816-1916*, p. 105.

students, for she seemed to possess a "divine curiosity" which she was able to transmit to those whom she taught. After her resignation from Butler University in 1883, she conducted private classes in literature in her own home and through this means established an appreciation for literary works, the extent and value of which it would be difficult to estimate. Her influence on the cultural scene in her time was broad and profound.<sup>190</sup> It was only natural that a literary club be established and named for her, with its chief objective to continue her influence and the activities which she had begun.

Meredith Nicholson, who later became an outstanding literary figure in Indianapolis, was getting valuable training and experience in the 1880's. He once stated that there was considerable interest in literature in Indiana during his youth, and that this fact was important in shaping his career. Nicholson worked in a law office and associated with learned people; and, though his own training was scant, he was to a considerable extent able to educate himself by reading the books he heard people talk about.<sup>191</sup> Having written some poetry in 1886, he turned to prose, and one of his sketches won a prize in a *Chicago Daily Tribune* contest.<sup>192</sup> Although Nicholson was born in Crawfordsville, he spent most of his life in the Hoosier capital and became closely identified with life in Indianapolis.

For Booth Tarkington this decade was one of apprenticeship for his later emergence as a professional writer.<sup>193</sup> At a very early age, before he could even spell the words, he dictated stories to his sister and as he grew older he was continuously engaged in writing. When Tarkington was about eleven his acquaintance with Riley began, and he later acknowledged that the poet exercised over him a strong, though often unconsciously-felt, influence all his life.<sup>194</sup> Another writer refers to Tarkington as a "James Whitcomb

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<sup>190</sup> Katharine Merrill Graydon, *Catharine Merrill, Life and Letters* (Greenfield, Indiana, 1934), *passim*; *Indianapolis News*, January 31, 1882; September 24, 1883; interview with Anna Hasselman.

<sup>191</sup> Charity Dye, *Some Torch Bearers in Indiana* (Indianapolis, c1917), 275-280.

<sup>192</sup> *Indianapolis News*, February 22, 1886.

<sup>193</sup> Ima Honaker Herron, *The Small Town in American Literature* (Durham, N. C., 1939), 341.

<sup>194</sup> Holliday, *Booth Tarkington*, 8-9.

Riley with a college education, writing fiction instead of verse."<sup>195</sup>

In 1889 Tarkington graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy, following which he spent a year at Purdue and three more at Princeton.<sup>196</sup> Then came a period of writing during which his only published works were occasional short sketches in periodicals. His first novel, *The Gentleman from Indiana*, was published in 1899. The initial phase of his writing was devoted to praise and glorification of life in the Hoosier capital and in other Indiana towns. He defended small-town ways and middle-class thinking. Although he made no attempt at historical accuracy, his novels and essays contributed much to the history of the time by his portrayal of the change which began to take place in Indianapolis at the end of the 1880's when the coming of natural gas hastened the transformation of the city into a manufacturing center. Older residents who witnessed this change agree that Tarkington gave a true picture of the social and cultural life of Indianapolis as it was in the seventies and eighties and later as the face of the town changed. "Like hundreds of others throughout the country, this town, too, moved forward with the times, its old stock becoming less and less typical, and newcomers with energy and business acumen taking their places of community leadership. In the offspring of German, Jewish, Irish, Italian, and other settlers 'a new Midlander—in fact, a new American—was beginning dimly to emerge.' To this new spirit of citizenship the magnificent Ambersons, reared in luxury, were unable to adapt themselves. Others, with a heritage of labor, rapidly took high places as the town progressed from village to market town to a manufacturing city."<sup>197</sup>

And this was Tarkington's contribution. He could interpret so well the Inland City because he was a product of it and had had the advantage of the example and inspiration of other writers of that period.

Albert J. Beveridge, like Tarkington, also benefited from association with cultural Indianapolis of the 1880's and was later able to reap the benefits of that influence. In

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<sup>195</sup> Herron, *The Small Town in American Literature*, 341.

<sup>196</sup> *National Cyclopedia of American Biography* (New York, 1930), Vol. A, p. 84.

<sup>197</sup> Herron, *The Small Town in American Literature*, 343.

1887 he was admitted to the bar. Very soon in his successful career he became known as a political orator, and he delivered many public addresses. His biographical works written much later were in some measure the product of his study and work in this period when many were turning to letters both as an avocation and as a profession.<sup>198</sup>

Although Lew Wallace lived in Indianapolis during his youth and the Inland City would like to claim him, he is much more closely identified with Crawfordsville, where he spent the greater part of his life.<sup>199</sup> He did, of course, have various associations in Indianapolis, but he was principally a part of that great literary movement evident throughout Indiana.

The Western Association of Writers, formed in Indianapolis in June, 1886, was at first called the American Writers' Association. Writers from all of the United States were welcome, but at that time only two eastern states were represented. The sixty-four charter members, thirty-nine of whom were women, were writers of poetry, fiction, historical and descriptive literature, and dialect sketches. The object of this association was to encourage amateur authors and to be of some advantage to professional authors.<sup>200</sup> It was hoped that each member would present to the association an original production which would then be published in a collective volume of representative western literature. This was the first such movement in the history of the United States, and no pattern of action existed to help the members in their early organizational difficulties. Riley, Sarah T. Bolton, and Mary Hartwell Catherwood were among those participating in the first meeting.<sup>201</sup>

The name of the group was soon changed to Western Literary Association, and the members sought the cooperation of the Indiana Historical Society in promoting sound literature in Indiana.<sup>202</sup> At its meeting in February, 1887, the association decided to omit the miscellaneous reading of prose and poetic works in order to relieve the long and

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<sup>198</sup> Claude G. Bowers, *Beveridge and the Progressive Era* (New York, 1932), 31-61.

<sup>199</sup> Rabb and Herschell, *An Account of Indianapolis and Marion County*, 98.

<sup>200</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, October 24, 1886.

<sup>201</sup> *Indianapolis News*, June 25, 1886.

<sup>202</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, July 2 and 4, 1886.

tedious program and, instead, to have papers and addresses on special topics. By that time the membership included people prominent in literary and newspaper work as well as philosophers and educators.<sup>203</sup> In July, 1887, the name was again changed to the Western Association of Writers.<sup>204</sup> In June, 1888, the enthusiasm manifested at earlier meetings was not apparent. Light attendance at sessions was noted and some embarrassment was felt by the officers over the lack of interest of members.<sup>205</sup> Riley was honored with a special dinner by the association in October, when addresses were given by Theodore L. Sewall, Mamie S. Paden of Cincinnati, John C. Ochiltree, and Professor David Starr Jordan of Indiana University.<sup>206</sup> The place of Indianapolis in the literary culture of the age was understood, for one of the speakers, James Boyle O'Reilly, said, "A man can rise in Indianapolis a thousand miles from Boston, and strike a literary note that the whole country turns its ear to hear."<sup>207</sup>

The Indiana Historical Society, organized in 1830, had functioned so little in its early years, except for brief periods of activity, that it hardly seemed to exist. In 1886 it was reorganized by a group of Indianapolis men who inaugurated a publishing program. The first results included a series of pamphlets, dated 1886-1888, which covered subjects of statewide historical interest. Jacob P. Dunn, who served as secretary of the Society from 1886 to 1924, was an important figure in this renewed activity. William H. English was elected president in 1886, and under his guidance the Society sought to aid the State Library in building up its collection of books and pamphlets on Indiana history. About one thousand of these had already been collected.<sup>208</sup> Since in many sections of the state the interest in local history seemed to extend very little beyond the local area, the impetus for the work through the years came principally from Indianapolis men. For this reason the cultural benefits gained were confined largely to that city.

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<sup>203</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, February 22, 1887.

<sup>204</sup> *Indianapolis News*, July 1, 1887.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, June 8, 1888.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, October 19, 1888.

<sup>207</sup> Dickey, *The Maturity of James Whitcomb Riley*, 230.

<sup>208</sup> *Indianapolis News*, December 1, 1880; July 21, 1885; June 4, 1886; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, December 12, 1886.

Probably no phase of literary life was more active in the eighties than the lecture or lyceum. Courses were offered each year, and in addition, all the outstanding lecturers in almost every field of thought in the United States, as well as some from England, appeared in Indianapolis during the decade. The content of the many lyceum programs offered ranged from pure entertainment to the serious and more learned subjects. Some evidence indicates a deliberate attempt at education of young people through a series of historical addresses. Probably adult education benefited from lectures only incidentally, since popular interest seemed to be the only criterion for the selection of speakers and subjects.

A course of historical lectures for young people, aimed at inspiring them with patriotism, and begun in 1885 largely through the efforts of Charity Dye and Mary E. Nicholson, was given at Plymouth Church free to children but at a cost of one dollar for adults. All the speakers were Indianapolis residents who gave freely of their time.<sup>209</sup> The series, which apparently continued from 1885 through the decade, was well attended, and the sponsors felt that their efforts had been well rewarded.<sup>210</sup>

In the regular lecture or lyceum courses, a season's program generally included a wide variety of topics, such as temperance, science, philosophy, literature, and music. The series announced in 1885 by the Indianapolis Lecture Course seems typical. It included: A. P. Burbank in an adaptation of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*; Rev. A. A. Willetts, "Moonshine, or the Illusions of Life"; Major H. C. Dane, "Naval Battles of the War"; Mrs. Mary A. Livermore, a women's rights lecturer; Lieutenant Schwatka, "The Search for Sir John Franklin"; Harvard College Quartet and E. A. Pierce, reader; Miss Nella F. Brown, subject unannounced; Will Carleton, author of *Farm Ballads*; the Rock Band and the Till family of English balladists; and Rev. DeWitt Talmadge, subject unannounced. Course tickets sold for \$2.50 and seats could be reserved before each lecture.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, October 24, 1886,

<sup>210</sup> *Indianapolis News*, November 14, 21, and 28, 1885; January 28, 1889.

<sup>211</sup> *Indianapolis Evening Minute*, November 7, 1885; *Indianapolis News*, October 31 and November 12, 1885.

Other famous persons who appeared in lyceum series during the 1880's included John B. Gough, well-known temperance orator, who spoke in 1882, 1883, and again in 1886. Mrs. Livermore spoke several times, as did Lew Wallace, Rev. Myron W. Reed, and George W. Cable. In 1886, when two courses of six lectures each were offered, the price was reduced to one dollar for six, though the quality of the program was declared to be higher than formerly.<sup>212</sup> In 1883 the aging Henry Ward Beecher spoke at the Park Theater. He remarked that he saw no familiar faces, for it had been a generation since he had given lectures in the city.<sup>213</sup> His talk in 1884 was announced as his last appearance in Indianapolis as a lecturer, but he did speak once more in 1886, a year before his death.<sup>214</sup>

Sponsors of the lyceum included the Young Men's Christian Association, the Indianapolis Lecture Association, and the Indianapolis Lecture Bureau (possibly the same as the preceding group). Other groups which offered regular programs were: the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle at Fletcher Place Church,<sup>215</sup> the Indianapolis School of Elocution and Oratory, the Central Avenue Lyceum, and the Leonine Club. The Methodist Episcopal Church offered a series of educational lectures,<sup>216</sup> and the Mayflower Congregational Church arranged for several talks on the Bible.<sup>217</sup>

Many other lectures on various subjects were given during the 1880's which may have been independent of the regular courses. Robert Ingersoll, famous agnostic, lectured in 1880 on what seems for him a strange topic, "What Must We Do To Be Saved?"<sup>218</sup> In 1881, A. Bronson Alcott spoke on the Concord authors;<sup>219</sup> and later that season during the same week both Ingersoll and Beecher gave lectures, the former on "The Great Infidels," the latter on "The New Profession."<sup>220</sup> In 1883 Emily Bingham returned from Boston, where she had been studying, to teach elocution and she gave

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<sup>212</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, October 31, 1886.

<sup>213</sup> *Indianapolis News*, February 8, 1883.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, April 4 and 7, 1884; April 6, 1886.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, September 19, 1881.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, March 15, 1880.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, April 3, 1880.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, May 6, 1880.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, January 21, 1881.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, May 23, 1881.



a program of readings.<sup>221</sup> Will Dickson endeavored in vain to arrange for a lecture by Henry George, famous political economist who had recently returned from a successful tour of Great Britain.<sup>222</sup> Carl Schurz addressed an audience of four thousand in a political speech at the Park Theater in 1884.<sup>223</sup> Anna Dickinson spoke during the same season on Joan of Arc.<sup>242</sup> Justin McCarthy, who appeared in 1887 in behalf of Irish home rule, received a touching tribute from a delegation of Irish-American citizens.<sup>225</sup> Charles Dickens read from his father's works at Plymouth Church in 1887, but in no way seemed to compare with the elder Dickens.<sup>226</sup> The cause of women was advanced in 1886 in a paper read before the American Association for the Advancement of Science by Lillie J. Martin, of Indianapolis, who at the same time was elected to membership in that society. She was the only woman member of the Indiana Scientific Association which had been organized the preceding winter.<sup>227</sup>

Probably the high points of the lecture activities were the appearances of two famous Englishmen, Oscar Wilde and Matthew Arnold. The latter came in February, 1884, sponsored by Rev. O. C. McCulloch, at a cost of \$300. He was well received and later wrote his daughter that he "had a capital audience, and found some zealous disciples who interested [him]."<sup>228</sup> Afterwards in public comments on his visit to America, he criticized the commercialism and crudeness which he had found in some places but stated that he thought the American lecture courses were an excellent way to educate the public.<sup>229</sup>

The appearance of Oscar Wilde gave the people of Indianapolis a sensation they would not soon forget. The entire occasion was unusual. No one introduced him; he seemed to prefer a solitary entrance and kept his audience waiting

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<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, July 4, December 6 and 12, 1883. Emily Bingham was probably a sister of Sallie Bingham, a singer.

<sup>222</sup> *Indianapolis News*, May 5, 1884.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, September 16, 1884.

<sup>224</sup> *Indianapolis Evening Minute*, December 11, 1884.

<sup>225</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, January 27, 1887.

<sup>226</sup> *Indianapolis News*, December 3, 1887.

<sup>227</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, October 24, 1886.

<sup>228</sup> Robert R. Hubach, "Nineteenth-Century Literary Visitors to the Hoosier State," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XLV, 46-48.

<sup>229</sup> *Indianapolis News*, April 25, 1884.

a half hour for the privilege of gazing upon him. He was six feet of languid demeanor, with a low, monotonous voice and a self-assured, positive, careless manner. His costume for the occasion included, in addition to the customary swallow-tailed coat, a double-breasted vest, velvet knee breeches, black silk hose, and enormous shoes with silver buckles. He wore his hair long, perhaps to cover his extremely large ears. Occasionally he struck a deliberate pose with hand on desk, other arm akimbo, and eyes fastened on the rail of the second gallery. His lecture on the English Renaissance was listened to attentively by the large audience, which would have expressed itself by applauding occasionally had the speaker permitted. The door receipts totaled \$350 and Wilde received for his efforts three-fourths of this sum.<sup>230</sup>

The Social Science Association, intellectual ancestor of the town hall idea, held its second annual meeting in 1880, at which time it offered a program of lectures by Professor J. C. Ridpath of Greencastle, Miss Carrie Smith of Madison, C. W. Coffin of Richmond, and Rev. N. A. Hyde of Indianapolis. Their subjects varied from art to prisons.<sup>231</sup> The next year at the third annual meeting, Sue Ketcham delivered a lecture on art; other speakers included Professor W. A. Bell of the Indianapolis public schools, Professor J. B. Roberts, Dr. Lemuel Moss of Indiana University, Mrs. E. E. Starrett of Chicago, Mrs. Shipp, and a Mrs. McRae of Muncie.<sup>232</sup>

Among the booksellers of the decade the principal firms were those of Herman Engelbach and Francis M. Crouse, second-hand dealers; Bowen, Stewart and Company; Merrill, Meigs and Company; and Cathcart and Cleland. The *Atlantic*, *Century*, *Scribner's*, and *Harper's* were extremely popular magazines, the arrival of which provided an occasion for many citizens to visit the book shops. But some would have visited the book dealers anyway, for Indianapolis was a city of readers. A number of residents at this time owned fine, costly private libraries.<sup>233</sup> New books adver-

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<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, February 23 and 24, 1882; August 18, 1882. *Indianapolis Times*, February 22, 1937; February 22, 1939.

<sup>231</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, November 24, 1940; *Indianapolis Journal*, May 8, 1880.

<sup>232</sup> Social Science Association program, 1881.

<sup>233</sup> Nolan, *James Whitcomb Riley, Hoosier Poet*, 179.

tised for sale by Cathcart and Cleland in 1880 included such titles as *Moths*, by "Ouida" (Louise De La Ramée); *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*; and *Progress and Poverty*, by Henry George.<sup>234</sup>

About 1880 a book-and map-publishing firm, Granger Davis and Company, was established in Indianapolis. Its existence was brief, for a year later the establishment was closed by the sheriff, allegedly for mismanagement, and all its equipment was advertised for sale.<sup>235</sup>

The merger of the book-selling firms of Bowen, Stewart and Company and Merrill, Meigs and Company in 1885 was the second step during the decade in the direction of the position currently held by the Bobbs-Merrill Company in the publishing field. In 1883 Merrill, Meigs had stepped into the general literary field of publishing when William C. Bobbs arranged with George C. Hitt to take over "*The Old Swimm'ing-hole*" and get out a second edition. As Riley phrased it, the firm had donned "its literary overalls."<sup>236</sup> Two years later, on December 31, 1884, the merger was effected and on January 1, 1885, the firm became known as the Bowen-Merrill Company. That year its second Riley title was issued, and two years later, in 1887, the third one appeared.<sup>237</sup> During the decade the publishing program already under way was continued. It included law books, elementary arithmetic texts, and books for Sunday school teachers. In later years Bowen-Merrill expanded its list of law books and public school texts but discontinued its religious books, which were taken over by the Meigs Publishing Company, an offshoot of the old Merrill, Meigs and Company.<sup>238</sup>

The three men principally responsible for the policies developed by the Bobbs-Merrill Company into the 1900's were brought together by the merger. They were Charles Merrill and William C. Bobbs of Merrill, Meigs and Company, and John J. Curtis of Bowen, Stewart and Company. Merrill, son of Colonel Samuel Merrill and grandson of the founder,

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<sup>234</sup> *Indianapolis News*, February 20, 1880.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, January 26, 1881.

<sup>236</sup> Bobbs-Merrill Co., *The Hoosier House* (Indianapolis, 1923), 8-9.

<sup>237</sup> Interview with Julius Birge; data from the files of the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

<sup>238</sup> Interview with Julius Birge; data from the files of the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

managed the firm's business affairs, while Bobbs was supervisor of the law department until 1895, when he became general manager.<sup>239</sup> The company has accorded Curtis credit for two ideas which contributed much toward the progress made in the trade book field: the decision to search out manuscripts that would have popular appeal and become best-sellers, and the introduction of brightly illustrated book jackets.<sup>240</sup>

The entry of Bowen-Merrill into the trade book field was a strongly energizing influence for authorship in Indianapolis, in Indiana, and the entire Middle West. The firm in its own biographical sketch declares that "there can be no doubt that the presence of a publishing house stimulated her [Indiana's] literary activities. The knowledge that effort would unquestionably be considered and that obscurity was no bar to acceptance must have given hope to the ambitious, must have, indeed, created ambition where ambition never grew before. The influence not always concrete in its expression, is none the less potent, and Indiana's literary life has felt it, whether it flowed through the young local channel or through shores more definitely marked by the passage of time.

"Art can not thrive, lacking opportunity for expression, and the more readily accessible the opportunity, the more abundant the striving. The potential Hoosier author awoke and that amazingly productive era began."<sup>241</sup>

The Riley volumes constituted only the beginning for the Bowen-Merrill Company. Its publication of the first Meredith Nicholson book in 1891 started another mutually profitable relationship. The firm was indeed taking on the stature of a Hoosier House. So far it had published only poetry in the trade field but in 1895 its first novel was issued: *A Woman Reigns*, by Catherine McLaen New. This work made little impression either literarily or financially but was an important step for the firm, which in 1895, upon the death of Bowen, changed its official name to The Bobbs-Merrill Company. *When Knighthood Was in Flower*, by Charles Major of Shelbyville, published in 1897, gave to the

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<sup>239</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, January 25, 1903.

<sup>240</sup> Bobbs-Merrill, *The Hoosier House*, 9-10; *Indianapolis Star Magazine*, February 2, 1947.

<sup>241</sup> Bobbs-Merrill, *The Hoosier House*, 6-7.

firm its first best-seller and with it a national reputation. It came near to breaking its own record in 1900 with *Alice of Old Vincennes*, by J. Maurice Thompson. From there on, the story of Bobbs-Merrill has been one of many successful ventures. In 1900 the firm had three of the ten best-sellers in the United States; in 1907, four out of the top ten; and in 1926 it topped the best-seller lists in both fiction and non-fiction.<sup>242</sup> In 1935 the company could claim the distinction of having helped in the development of more than one hundred Indiana writers.<sup>243</sup>

Sales figures are not available to determine the number of books sold or the breadth of the field served by Bowen-Merrill during the 1880's. Much of this sort of data was lost in the disastrous fire of 1890, in which the building with nearly all its contents was destroyed.<sup>244</sup> The company had greatly expanded since the reorganization of 1885 and in 1890 carried an extremely large stock of books. The firm occupied five floors in its building, two of them used for their book-selling business, while the remaining three floors were stocked with newsprint for sale to county weeklies. About fifty people worked in the building, in addition to the salesmen who traveled over three or four states supplying drug stores with stationery and school books.<sup>245</sup>

The building, then on the north side of Washington Street where the western portion of the H. P. Wasson building now stands, caught fire on the afternoon of March 17, 1890. In an effort to control the flames, firemen had gone to the roof when, without warning, the building collapsed, carrying twelve firemen to their death and injuring sixteen others. The iron façade of the building was no doubt responsible for this tragedy. In addition to the loss of life, nearly all the books and other supplies were destroyed, among them most of an edition of Riley's poems. Two hundred copies of the latter had been sold to Christmas shoppers, but nearly all that remained were burned. The financial loss was estimated at \$125,000, only \$70,000 of which was covered by insurance.<sup>246</sup> Afterwards the company occupied a building,

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<sup>242</sup> Interview with Julius Birge.

<sup>243</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, July 23, 1935.

<sup>244</sup> *Indianapolis News*, October 5, 1949.

<sup>245</sup> *Indianapolis Times*, March 17, 1944.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

almost an exact replica of the first one, on the south side of Washington Street, until it moved to the present quarters in 1910.

When the old state house was torn down in 1878, the State Library was faced with the problem of finding a temporary home so that its collections might still prove useful to patrons. The old capitol had been a museum as well as a library, with its accumulation of war mementoes, prehistoric Indian weapons, and relics of all sorts. Satisfactory quarters were found in the building on Market at Tennessee (now Capitol Avenue). When the new state house was completed, the library was moved to quarters in the south wing of the second floor, where it remained until 1934. In 1883 it was said to comprise seventeen thousand volumes.<sup>247</sup> The library collection did not expand rapidly because of the small annual appropriation for books; in 1888 only \$400 was available for books and repairs.<sup>248</sup> Yet, before the state house was quite finished, fears were expressed that the space allotted to the library was entirely inadequate.<sup>249</sup> No satisfactory book catalog existed at the time, and much effort was expended by the librarians during the decade in preparing one. The dictionary plan was adopted as the most desirable, and work proceeded on that arrangement.<sup>250</sup>

Finding its quarters much too crowded, the Indianapolis Public Library in 1880 considered the various plans which had been offered to alleviate this condition. It finally accepted the offer of the Alvord property on the southwest corner of Pennsylvania and Ohio streets, opposite the new Denison Hotel. A building was constructed south of the old Alvord house and was connected directly with the original building which fronted on Ohio Street. This new stone and brick building cost about \$14,000, and a ten-year lease on the property was obtained at a rental of \$3,000 per annum. School offices and stacks were situated on the main floor and

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<sup>247</sup> Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County*, 439.

<sup>248</sup> *Indianapolis News*, February 17, 1888.

<sup>249</sup> *Indianapolis Evening Minute*, January 12, 1885.

<sup>250</sup> *Indianapolis News*, April 29, 1882; June 11, 1883; February 17, 1888. The Cutter system of cataloging (listing names by number) was thought to be too elaborate; so it was decided to list library books alphabetically in a single volume.

the reading room on the second floor. The principal entrance was on Ohio, but a special entrance for ladies was provided through the school board offices on Pennsylvania!<sup>251</sup> The work of moving the books to new shelves was done during state fair week, and the library was formally opened about October 1.<sup>252</sup> During the first two weeks in the new location circulation fell almost to zero, and the librarian was in despair, fearing the new location was to blame. But as soon as the election was over and political activity relaxed, patronage increased.<sup>253</sup>

Book circulation had dropped in 1880 slightly below the figures for 1879, and an even greater decrease was evident in 1881. During the next two years circulation increased, then dropped again in 1884 to 137,256, about 58,000 less than the previous year. A slight gain was noted in 1885, and by 1886 the total almost reached that for 1883. Thereafter a steady growth was observed until 1890, when a considerable loss was again experienced. This smaller volume of circulation continued through 1891 and 1892, but fluctuation occurred despite the constant growth in the number of registration cards issued. Since it has been previously suggested that book circulation figures and business prosperity proceed in opposite directions, it might thus be presumed that the business recess of the later 1880's was reflected directly in the sudden increase in 1886 of the use of the library. It might also be suggested that the return of prosperity affected the circulation, which dropped in 1890; but the librarian reported that some books were withdrawn for reclassification in the years 1889-1891, a fact which might account for some decrease in that period. It will be recalled, too, that the library had been founded in 1873, the year of the panic.<sup>254</sup>

For comparison, the annual figures for registration cards and total book circulation, obtained from the library reports, are here listed for the years 1882-1892. For the year 1888, when two-year cards were first issued, no total was listed.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, March 1 and 12, July 14, September 3 and 27, 1880.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, September 17 and October 4, 1880.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, October 19, 1880.

<sup>254</sup> Indianapolis Public Library, *Annual Report* (1873-1893).

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*

Year	Registration cards issued	Books in circulation
1882	1,268	188,239
1883	1,211	195,377
1884	1,898	137,256
1885	1,545	150,537
1886	1,862	194,170
1887	3,401	314,695
1888		317,108
1889	7,907	347,966
1890	10,732	271,897
1891	13,273	269,542
1892	16,088	265,746

The librarian proudly announced in 1887 that the cost of service by the library amounted to only 1.79 cents per volume handled. This cost was the lowest achieved in the history of the library and was less than that reported by Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Cleveland, or Detroit.<sup>256</sup>

Many books and periodicals were added to the collection in the 1880's, including foreign publications. A catalog on the dictionary plan similar to that being developed in the State Library was in process. The first issue was completed and published in 1885.<sup>257</sup> An interesting effect of the publication of a list of new books was observed in 1883. Early on the morning following its issue, many people were waiting at the door for admission. On other similar occasions as many as fifty persons would be waiting. This time the librarian was forced to issue a new rule that each patron could draw only two books, for it was learned that many readers had been gathering up all the library cards in their neighborhoods in order to borrow a book on each card.<sup>258</sup>

By 1889 the library found itself again in need of enlarged quarters, and it was hoped that authorization might be secured from the legislature to erect a building for the use of the library and the public school offices.<sup>259</sup>

Other libraries in the city during the 1880's included the Marion County Library, housed in the courthouse, which had a collection of 3,500 volumes in 1887. Most of its users were farmers. The law library of the Supreme Court, with 14,000

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, *Sixth Annual Report* (1887).

<sup>257</sup> *Indianapolis News*, January 21, 1882; February 9 and September 24, 1883; July 8, 1885. This catalog consisted of a 940-page dictionary in which each of the 38,500 volumes in the Public Library was listed by author, title, and subject.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, October 6, 1883.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, December 28, 1889.



volumes, was available to the legal profession. The State Library then possessed 18,500 books and documents; the Catholic Library for Workingmen, 1,350 volumes; and the Indiana Medical College, 1,200 volumes. In addition, a special Scottish Rite Masonic Library existed in the city. With the collection at the Indianapolis Public Library totaling 50,000 volumes by 1890, it appeared that efforts were being made to satisfy the cultural needs of the citizens of the Hoosier capital.<sup>260</sup>

The growth of libraries as well as the number of clubs, lectures, and other forms of literary activity which were flourishing may be regarded as an indication of the considerable interest in and enjoyment of literature in Indianapolis during the period of this study, 1875-1890. The large number of writers, representing a number of learned professions, who produced during this period some three hundred published volumes covering a wide variety of subjects,<sup>261</sup> may be seen as further proof that Indianapolis literary life, particularly in the later 1880's, was extremely lively and vigorous.

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<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, May 26, 1887; Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County*, 439; Indianapolis Public Library, *Annual Reports*.

<sup>261</sup> Banta, *Indiana Authors and their Books, 1816-1916*, *passim*.