

Book Reviews

A *Bibliography of Indiana Imprints, 1804-1853*. By Cecil K. Byrd and Howard H. Peckham. Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XXXV. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1955. Pp. xxi, 479. Indices. \$10.00.)

The titles of the various works printed in Indiana and listed in this bibliography give a picture of a developing society in a pioneer state. The first titles listed concern the laws of Indiana Territory; the first personal item is a speech by William Henry Harrison, its governor; the first non-political publication was produced by the Baptists in 1813; a new town was advertised in 1816; while a group of the stockholders of the Bank of Vincennes and the Freemasons entered the list of publishers in 1817. After the appearance of the Bank of Vincennes broadside, the Jeffersonville Ohio Canal Company produced the first imprint related directly to economic activity; a medical society had been formed by 1820; the Friends began to rival the Baptists in printing their records; and the Harmony Society in 1824 printed more titles than the remainder of the state. The Vincennes Thespian Society broke into print the next year. The first scholarly work listed in this bibliography is *American Ichthyology* by Charles Alexandre Lesueur, which appeared in 1827 and which was followed by many others, including titles by Thomas Say and William Maclure. An insurance company was chartered in Madison by 1831, and the Madison, Indianapolis and Lafayette railroad company published its act of incorporation the following year. Titles concerning railroads indicate the growing importance of the new system of transportation around the year 1850.

Although of interest to many persons, a work of this kind is of special concern to historians and to librarians. Since modern historians obtain most of their information from manuscript and printed sources, guides to the sources are particularly helpful to them. The Indiana Historical Bureau has done a great service to historians, librarians, and the public by publishing this bibliography of material printed in Indiana from 1804 to 1853. Cecil K. Byrd and Howard H. Peckham were the compilers.

Many interesting things can be learned from a study of this volume. Twenty-two per cent of the items listed were published by the Baptist church. This record of getting its activity in print is nothing short of amazing, in part because it was almost double the publishing activities of the territorial and state governments. The Indiana State Library and the Indiana Historical Society library, located in the same building, constitute much the best research center for this type of material, for together they possess over sixty per cent of the titles found. The library of Indiana University in contrast has less than twenty-five per cent. Other libraries have even less. Considerable duplication exists between the State Library and the Historical Society library. The chief strength of the State Library is in its possession of state publications; its most obvious weakness is the lack of material published by the Baptist church. These characteristics are also true of the University library. Both, on the other hand, have extensive collections of New Harmony material.

In preparing this bibliography, the compilers have made certain decisions, some of which conform to previous practice and some of which constitute deviations. Magazines and newspapers have been excluded as in the past because they constitute a class of material in themselves. On the other hand, broadsides and sheet music have been included although they have been omitted by previous Indiana lists of this character. With these decisions no objection need be taken. The omission of the printed documents found in the Documentary Journals of the state government is another matter. Indiana's peculiar procedure in this matter is not well understood and the failure to include them either collectively or individually may lead researchers to miss them altogether. These documents are imprints, and as important or more important than other matter included, and yet the only reference to them is in the introduction to the volume. Rather than follow the policy of omission, a shorter time period might have been covered if it were necessary to keep down the expense. The compilers, however, have found and listed many titles not previously known and have produced a work of great usefulness and excellence, and for it they are to be commended.

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