

## The Bobbs-Merrill Company

Samuel Merrill established the publishing firm eventually to be known as the Bobbs-Merrill Company at Indianapolis in 1838, only two decades after the Indian title to the region around the city had been extinguished. In 1822 the General Assembly had elected Merrill as state treasurer; and in 1825, when Indianapolis succeeded Corydon as the state capital, it was Merrill's task to arrange for the removal of state property to the new capital. An historic wagon train, conducted by the state treasurer, spent two weeks making the trip of about 160 miles in daily treks varying from two to eleven miles.

Although Samuel Merrill founded his publishing company in 1838, it was not until 1895, when William C. Bobbs became associated with the firm, that it was known as Bobbs-Merrill. In 1899 Bobbs-Merrill published Charles Major's *When Knighthood was in Flower*, which sold over a million copies and helped usher in the era of best sellers. In 1900 the company published L. Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz*, which became an unusually popular book for children. Bobbs-Merrill has also published books by James Whitcomb Riley, George Ade, James Oliver Curwood, Bruce Barton, Ring Lardner, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Kenneth Roberts, John Erskine, Irvin S. Cobb, and many other writers. In the juvenile field, its *Childhood of Famous American Series* now numbers more than one hundred titles.

Bobbs-Merrill, then, has deep roots among Hoosiers, and its Hoosier associations and flavor have been maintained through the years. Late in 1958, Bobbs-Merrill was acquired by Howard W. Sams & Company of Indianapolis, an organization that has specialized in technical publications. According to Howard W. Sams, however, Bobbs-Merrill will retain its present identity and will continue with its educational, legal, and trade books. D. Laurance Chambers, associated with Bobbs-Merrill for more than fifty years, is Chairman Emeritus of the Board of the new firm, while Colonel Robert L. Moorhead continues as Honorary Secretary-Treasurer. With the Sesquicentennial of Indiana Statehood coming up in the decade immediately ahead it is hoped that the Bobbs-Merrill tradition, which has included the publication of numerous books concerning Indiana, will be continued and strengthened.