

Indiana Historical Society

*Hubert H. Hawkins**

A fine, history-minded gentleman was in the office not long ago. He is an officer of one of the county historical societies and has been a member of the Indiana Historical Society for nearly two decades. During our conversation, he asked, "How big an appropriation does the Society get from the state legislature now?" The Society does not receive and has never received a legislative appropriation, and we hastened to explain this fact. The belief that it does is just one of several misconceptions that persist about the Society—even among its members. We need to achieve a clearer image of the Society in the public mind as a prerequisite to its further growth. Let's set the record straight:

1. The Indiana Historical Society is a private, nonprofit corporation. Chartered in 1830, it is one of the oldest corporations in the state.

2. The Society has no lineage or residence requirements for membership.

3. Membership dues paid to the Society beyond the basic five dollars are tax deductible.

4. Membership in a local society, the Society of Indiana Pioneers, or any other organization does not confer or constitute membership in the Indiana Historical Society. There are no joint memberships.

5. The Society does not "sell" its publications to its membership as some state societies do. Members are entitled to receive without charge publications issued while a membership is in effect.

6. The Society is not an organization of great wealth. It has an endowment of approximately \$850,000 that is largely dedicated to the support of the William Henry Smith Library, Indianapolis, which belongs to the Society. The New York Historical Society, for example, reported endowment in excess of \$10,850,000 in 1960.

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The Indiana Historical Society is a private corporation with public responsibility. Over the years it has built a fine record of public service. The Society took a leading part in securing the creation of the Indiana Historical Bureau (the state historical agency); the establishment of December 11 as Indiana Day; and the preservation of the Lanier mansion at Madison, the Old State Capitol at Corydon, the Angel Mounds site at Newburgh, and the Little Cedar Grove Church near Brookville.

The Society maintains an excellent library which is an indispensable source for Hoosier and midwestern history. It has gained a national reputation for its archaeological program. Specialized work is also carried on through standing committees on such subjects as genealogy, covered bridges, historical markers, mills, and transportation. Increasing amounts of materials on Indiana history have been provided for use in the schools of the state.

The Society's greatest service is in its publishing program by which research is encouraged and a growing body of information is made available. It has issued approximately one hundred publications in more than twenty volumes. Special publications include archaeological and anthropological studies, biography, bibliography, and R. Carlyle Buley's Pulitzer prize-winning history of the Old Northwest. In cooperation with the History Department of Indiana University the Society distributes the quarterly *Indiana Magazine of History* to its membership.

This record of constructive achievement and service is the basis for the Society's claim to your interest and support. The Society now has approximately three thousand members; let us make it five thousand by Indiana's sequicentennial in 1966. With your continued help the Indiana Historical Society will continue to grow both in membership and program.