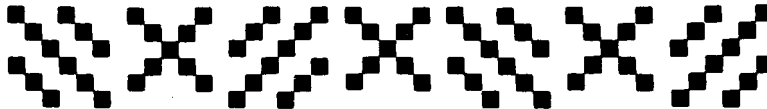


William E. Henry's
 "Outline for the Study of History":
 A Guide for Local Historians

*Contributed, with an introduction, by
 Robert G. Barrows**



The celebration of the American Revolution Bicentennial has heightened interest in American history and culture. The past two or three years have witnessed a flood of publications, televised "specials," lectures, and symposia dealing with American history in general and the Revolution in particular. None of this should come as any surprise, especially when the events of a century ago are recalled. The Centennial of 1876 produced its own spate of celebrations. But it also produced something that may yet result from the bicentennial—an interest in local history that persisted for a quarter century.

In May, 1876, President Ulysses S. Grant issued a proclamation to implement a joint resolution of Congress. The proclamation urged

the people of the several States . . . [to] assemble in their several counties or towns on the approaching centennial anniversary of our national independence, and that they cause to have delivered on such day an historical sketch of said county or town from its formation, and that a copy of said sketch may be filed, in print or manuscript, in the clerk's office of said county, and an additional copy, in print or manuscript, be filed in the office of the Librarian of Congress, to the intent that a complete record may thus be obtained of the progress of our institutions during the first centennial of their existence.¹

* Robert G. Barrows is a graduate student in the Department of History, Indiana University, Bloomington. The author wishes to thank James W. Williams for his help in securing the accompanying photograph of William E. Henry.

¹ James D. Richardson, comp., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (10 vols., Washington, 1896-1899), VII, 391. An article by Michael Kammen, "The American Revolution Bicentennial and The Writing of Local History," *History News*, XXX (August, 1975), [187], called attention to this citation.

Although the immediate impact of this proclamation is unknown, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century—and especially during the 1880s—a sudden surge occurred in the production of local histories. Indiana, like many states, benefited from this renewed historical interest. Works published during these years—generally narrative, frequently biographical, and usually heavy—remain for many Indiana counties the most complete, if not always the most accurate, compendia of local history up to and including the Gilded Age.²

This interest in Hoosier local history peaked near the end of the century with the appearance of *The Indianian*, a publication whose “chief aim” was to “encourage the study of history, not only in the schools of the State, but in the home reading circle.”³ The editors hoped to make their journal “the historical magazine of Indiana” and made an appeal to their readers: “Help us, friends, and you will be helped in your study of Indiana history.”⁴

The editors tried in a variety of ways to foster historical study and interest. They encouraged the formation of local history clubs; they sponsored contests for school children on matters pertaining to Indiana history; they published a series of articles under the general title “Historic and Picturesque Indiana” in which a well illustrated sketch of a different county was presented each issue; and they offered copies of William Henry Smith’s *History of the State of Indiana* as prizes in a subscription drive. Finally, to aid local historians with enthusiasm but no clear idea of where to begin, the editors published a guide prepared by William E. Henry, the state librarian—an “Outline for the Study of History” at the local level.⁵

Hoosier born and bred, Henry had received “such education as was offered by district schools . . . , never having

² For examples of these publications, selected at random, see Weston A. Goodspeed and Charles Blanchard, *Counties of Porter and Lake, Indiana: Historical and Biographical* (Chicago, 1882); *History of the Ohio Falls Cities and Their Counties* [Floyd and Clark counties, Indiana] (2 vols., Cleveland, 1882); Berry R. Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana* (Philadelphia, 1884); *History of Knox and Daviess Counties, Indiana* (Chicago, 1886); *Biographical and Historical Record of Jay and Blackford Counties, Indiana* (Chicago, 1887); and H. C. Bradsby, *History of Vigo County, Indiana, with Biographical Selections* (Chicago, 1891).

³ *The Indianian*, I (December, 1897), 10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, II (November, 1898), 183.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I (December, 1897)-VII (January-February, 1901), *passim*.

attended school more than three months in any one year until he was twenty-one years of age, at which time he began teaching a country school."⁶ He subsequently attended the Indiana State Normal School (now Indiana State University) at Terre Haute, graduated from Indiana University (with A.B. and A.M. degrees), and did graduate work at the University of Chicago. He served as professor of English at Franklin College following his study in Chicago and was appointed state librarian in March, 1897. He held that position ten years, leaving in 1907 to become head librarian at the State University of Washington at Seattle.⁷

Henry's "Outline for the Study of History" first appeared in *The Indianian* in November, 1898.⁸ It appears here with the hope that it might spur a renaissance of research and writing on local history. In addition to the previously mentioned county histories produced during the late nineteenth century, there were numerous local studies published in the years surrounding Indiana's centennial celebration in 1916. But the output since then has been modest.⁹ Perhaps, with the bicentennial induced interest that currently exists, Henry's

⁶ William E. Henry, comp., *Legislative and State Manual of Indiana for 1899 and 1900* (Indianapolis, 1899), 127.

⁷ *Ibid.*; *Commemorative Biographical Record of Prominent and Representative Men of Indianapolis and Vicinity* (Chicago, 1908), 312-13; *Who Was Who in America* (Chicago, 1943), I, 552.

⁸ The "Outline" was reprinted in three subsequent issues, and the editors offered to make additional copies available upon request. Preparation of this "Outline" was not Henry's last excursion into the field of Indiana local history. After *The Indianian* ceased publication in 1901, having failed to become "the historical magazine of Indiana," Henry became involved in efforts to establish a state historical journal. The prospectus for an "Indiana Quarterly Magazine of History," apparently issued in 1904, carried Henry's name as "manager." (A copy of this prospectus is held by the Indiana Division, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.) Slightly revised, and retitled "Our Reasons for Being," this prospectus was reprinted in volume I, number 1, of the *Indiana Quarterly Magazine of History* (now the *Indiana Magazine of History*), which appeared in 1905 with George S. Cottman as editor and publisher and Henry again listed as "manager."

⁹ In October, 1975, the author of this introduction conducted a survey of the county histories shelved in the reading room of the Indiana Division, Indiana State Library. This visual survey was supplemented by reference to a special Indiana Division card catalog dealing with Indiana counties. This examination indicated that only eleven Indiana counties have had a relatively full scale history written since 1930; only seven counties can claim to have such published since 1950. This was, to be sure, only a superficial survey, and these figures should by no means be considered definitive. But the broad outline seems clear—the experiences of most Indiana counties and towns through two world wars and the Great Depression have not yet been carefully studied.

"Outline" may provide a useful starting point for the individual who wishes to study his or her community.

Henry's "Outline" is not presented here, however, as a definitive guide for the student or writer of local history. For a variety of reasons it is now somewhat dated. Either because the subject did not then exist or because its relevance was not recognized, Henry failed to ask some questions that need to be considered today. The absence of any mention of radio, television, or automobile roads from the section on "Transportation and Communication" is merely one example.

Furthermore, Henry's "Outline" is a historical document in its own right. It reflects attitudes and assumptions about historical writing current at the turn of the century. While still useful, it should not be followed uncritically. For example, Henry's emphasis on narration and his stress on "first," "chief," "noted," or "prominent" events are somewhat anachronistic today. Moreover, the "Outline" is heavily biased toward institutional descriptions and gives virtually no attention to analysis of a community's social structure and changes that occurred in that structure over time. Who held power in the community and why? How stable was the population? How great were the opportunities for social mobility? Did racial, religious, or national minorities encounter ready acceptance or protracted hostility? How was the community affected during years of war or economic depression? Such questions (meant to be illustrative not exhaustive) were not considered by Henry in 1898. They are, however, considered important by historians researching and writing today.

Bearing such caveats in mind, it is hoped that Henry's "Outline for the Study of History" may be of interest and use to local historians. If work begins in this bicentennial year, perhaps the 1980s will see a surge in local history writing that rivals or surpasses that of a century ago.



WILLIAM E. HENRY

Reproduced from *Commemorative Biographical Record of Prominent and Representative Men of Indianapolis and Vicinity* (Chicago, 1908), facing p. 312.

Outline for the Study of History for the use of Clubs and Schools—Unit of Study: County, Town or Township. Prepared by Prof. W. E. Henry State Librarian.

I. Conditions which made it desirable as a home, hence led to its settlement.

1. Geography of the surface; timber, prairie, streams, lakes, hills.
2. Nature of the soil; its formation and adaptability for cultivation.
3. Chief sources of wealth when settled.
4. Productions of place or immediate surroundings.
5. Kind and relative amount of labor required to bring it to its present condition.

II. By whom settled.

1. Nationality; by birth, by parentage.
2. From what place directly did the settlers come, if many of them came from one place.
3. Particular incentive which led them to this place.
4. From what condition of life and from what occupations did they come.
5. What prominent characteristics have the people retained up to the present time, if any?
6. Biographical sketches of characteristic early settlers.

III. Map of the Unit of Study.

1. If town, show all details, such as location of prominent buildings, especially of the earlier buildings, and the location of the residences of prominent citizens from the earliest settlement.
2. If county or township, show location of

all towns and villages, especially the early ones, which may be now in decay.

3. Show early natural drainage and present artificial drainage, if it has been changed by the agency of man.

IV. Cemeteries.

1. When and where located from the earliest history down to the present. It will be found desirable to copy the early inscriptions where the stones bearing them are not properly looked after. Later these will become valuable local history.

2. Look up early records, for in some instances records may yet be found of early burials not recorded on stones.

V. Transportation and Communication.

1. History in narrative form of each of the following:

- (a) Canals.
- (b) Noted wagon roads.
- (c) Early mail routes.
- (d) Railroads.
- (e) Telegraph.
- (f) Telephone.

2. Chief lines of goods shipped to and from this center.

3. Chief points of shipment, both to and from.

4. Is the Unit of Study on any great line of travel between two or more prominent points?

VI. Material Progress of the Unit of Study.

1. Early industries carried on by individuals or by organized companies.

2. Have the primitive industries developed into the present chief industries or have the industrial lines changed?

3. If the lines have changed assign reason.

VII. Educational Institutions.

1. Schools.

(a) When, where and by whom were the earliest located?

(b) Sketches of prominent teachers and students.

(c) Prominent schools since organized, not now existing.

(d) Present schools and teachers.

2. Libraries and museums, if any.

(a) When and where established.

(b) How sustained.

(c) Prominence reached.

(d) When in greatest prominence.

(e) Does the same still continue.

(f) What are the present conditions?

(g) What is the sentiment of the community with regard to?

3. Clubs.

(a) Narrate history of all so far formed.

(b) Present conditions and leading members in.

4. Newspapers.

(a) History of each from the first.

(b) Sketches of prominent men and women connected with.

VIII. Literary History.

1. Biographical sketches of prominent

writers, and especially of those who have written for publication in other than the local papers.

2. Give name, date and place of publication of each book, pamphlet, magazine article or series of articles upon an important subject in local papers.

IX. Churches.

1. When and where was each organized?

2. Give names of charter members.

3. Sketches of most noted pastors or a complete list if possible.

4. Sketches of the leading workers from the first.

5. Present conditions.

X. Charitable, Penal and Correctional Institutions.

1. Homes for the destitute dependent and defective.

2. Reformatories.

3. Jails and penitentiaries.

XI. Courts.

1. History of the organization of.

2. Noted judges and attorneys, sketches of.

3. Complete list of court officials from the first.

XII. War History (each war participated in treated separately).

1. List of enlistments.

2. List of killed in battle or dying from wounds.

3. List of deaths in the army from other causes.

4. List and location of members still living.

5. Biographical sketches of noted soldiers.

XIII. Professional Life, Sketches of.

1. Legal profession.

2. Medical profession.

3. Educational.

4. Ministerial.

XIV. Local Government.

1. When organized.

2. What departments were first organized?

3. What departments added since, if any?

4. Make list as complete as possible of officers serving in each department since the organization.

XV. Genealogy of the Older Families.

1. Ancestry of early settlers as far as can be traced.

2. A full record of each branch and each member of the family since settlement in this locality.

(a) Births.

(b) Marriages.

(c) To whom married.

(d) Deaths.

Note.—This material must be collected from church, court and cemetery records and supplemented from the memories of the older, more intelligent and more trustworthy citizens.