

Illinois History and Lincoln Collections

Annual Report, FY16 (July 1, 2015–June 30, 2016)

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I. Unit Narrative

The Illinois History and Lincoln Collections acquires, preserves, and provides access to both print and manuscript materials documenting the history of Illinois as well as Abraham Lincoln's life and legacy. The IHLC holds approximately 34,000 volumes of cataloged print materials, including books, periodicals, and pamphlets, dating from the late 17th century to the present. In addition, the unit has close to a thousand manuscript collections, ranging from single-item collections to those spanning several dozen cubic feet, and with materials dating from the 18th through the 21st century. In the past fiscal year, the IHLC has made progress on several projects to further access to and preservation of the unit's archival and manuscript collection materials, while continuing to acquire new print and archival materials, respond to reference and photoduplication requests, and assist researchers both on-site and remotely.

1. Major Activities and Accomplishments

Increased access to over a hundred archives and manuscript collections

- Collection descriptions in the IHLC Manuscript Collections Database (Archon) were added or substantively updated for 120 collections during the 2016 fiscal year. This progress built on work done in the 2015 fiscal year to assess the extent of the IHLC backlog of hidden or unprocessed collections and additions.
- Of these 120 collections, 53 had no prior descriptions in Archon. These consisted primarily of collections that had been in the unit's backlog of unprocessed collections. Of the remaining 67 collections, 27 had prior descriptions in Archon but were hidden from the public pending review and revision, 1 was updated to added digitized content, and 39 were updated to include additional descriptive information (such as a folder-level inventory of the contents) or to incorporate additional materials, donated at a later date, into the existing collection.
- This level of progress was possible through the work of both full-time staff members as well as the commitment of a part-time grad hourly employee. NEH Challenge Grant funding was requested in August 2015 for hiring a grad hourly student to assist with manuscript collections processing. A second allocation was successfully requested in March, which has played a significant role in the continued progress of the project.

Prepared broadsides and printed ephemera from three collections for digitization

- Created metadata and workflow guides for the project in consultation with Preservation Services and Content Access Management (CAM).
- Hired a graduate hourly student who assessed, rehoused, and created metadata for over 800 items in three collections. Approximately 95% of the items had no prior descriptive access available online.

Improved preservation and access for oversize archival collections materials

- Acquired an additional 30 flat file drawers (six 5-drawer units) that were installed in January. Plans for acquiring these additional flat files were developed in collaboration with Preservation Services in an effort to address the severe overcrowding of the 40 existing flat files drawers used to store oversize archival collection materials in the IHLC.
- Developed workflow procedures for rehousing, identifying, labeling, and relocating folders of oversized collection material.
- With support from Preservation Services, which funded the acquisition of the new flat file drawers as well as the rehousing work, completed the processing of the contents of 25 drawers (about 400 folders) between February and June 2016.

Expanded visibility of the IHLC with a new wall case mounted outside the unit

- Requested support from the exhibits committee for establishing a small exhibit space in the hallway outside the IHLC. Library facilities located a surplus wall case and it was installed in late spring.
- An exhibit was designed and mounted in June 2016 to highlight the variety of topics and types of materials available for research in the IHLC.

2. Major Challenges

Staffing levels and space limitations remain key challenges for the IHLC.

During the 2016 fiscal year, the unit had only two full-time employees. During the 2017 fiscal year the IHLC will have only one full-time employee. This makes managing cases of sick leave or vacation time, previously very challenging, even more difficult. At a minimum, contingency plans will need to be created for handling these cases in cooperation with other units, possibility borrowing personnel or space from them.

Space has also been a challenge. The IHLC reading room is very small and can only accommodate 2 or 3 people conducting research, depending on the nature of the materials they are using. In some cases, one person's research takes up nearly the entire table. Plans are in development to reconfigure the reading room to provide some additional space for researchers.

There have also been continued challenges in managing the climate in the IHLC stacks. In August 2015, the relative humidity in the stacks reached a high of 87%, significantly higher than the 50% target. It has been necessary to run industrial dehumidifiers throughout the summer and early fall to keep the relative humidity at reasonable, but still high, levels.

3. Significant Changes

John Hoffmann retired at the end of June 2016. Krista Gray's appointment was converted from Visiting to Permanent Academic Professional in mid-June 2016. The unit also hired grad hourly employees for the first time in many years.

4. Contributions to Library-wide Programs

Reference

- The IHLC responds to reference questions from a variety of sources, including University of Illinois faculty, staff, and students; academic researchers from other institutions; individuals researching genealogy or family history; authors and scriptwriters conducting research for their writing projects; members researching their organization's history; professionals investigating land and property issues; descendants of past donors; and others. Reference interactions took place in person as well as over email and the phone.
- During the 2016 fiscal year, the IHLC fulfilled an estimated 48 requests for scans of materials for about 30 patrons, typically remote researchers.

Collection management

Acquisitions

- The IHLC acquired materials published as recently as 2016 as well as books, pamphlets, and ephemera dating back to the nineteenth century. According to statistics from CAM, a total of 278 items were added to the catalog in the 2016 fiscal year (by format: 261 monographs, 6 serials, 2 maps, 10 scores, and 3 in other formats). These statistics do not include archival collections, which are currently described only in the IHLC Manuscript Collections Database (Archon).
- Notable acquisitions included the purchase of two lots of early Illinois imprints, encompassing over 250 pieces in total. Many of these items were described and prepared for scanning as part of the IHLC Broadsides and Printed Ephemera Digitization project. Books and longer pamphlets and periodicals have been queued for cataloging in Voyager.

Preservation

- As described above under section I-1, an additional 30 flat files drawers were acquired and installed in January to relieve the severe overcrowding of the 40 existing drawers. To further the preservation of and access to the contents, materials are being rehoused, examined in relation to existing finding aids, and labeled in a uniform manner before being moved to the new drawers. By the end of June, approximately 25 out of 40 drawers had been processed.
- Conservation continued to work on treating items from the flat files identified by Preservation in fall 2014 as needing treatment for possible mold. Other conservation work has included the stabilization of several nineteenth-century Abraham Lincoln posters purchased in the 2015 fiscal year and treatment of various documents written in Lincoln's own hand.
- Preliminary discussions began regarding the possibility of moving the large rolled maps from the IHLC stacks to Oak Street, which would provide a better climate for the preservation of these materials.
- A microfilm assessment project, focusing on archival collections materials, began in June 2016 to identify the reels that are physically in most need of

preservation reformatting. Subsequent phases of the project will involve setting priorities for reformatting based on the condition of the reels and the enduring value of their content.

Archival Collections Processing

- As described above under section I-1, the IHLC took significant steps toward reducing the backlog of unprocessed collections in the unit during the 2016 fiscal year. A total of 120 collections were added or substantively updated in the Manuscript Collections Database during the 2016 fiscal year.

Digital Content Creation

- A project proposal was developed to digitize the IHLC “Broad­sides and Printed Ephemera Collection,” as well as components of other archival collections containing similar materials. The project plan drew on funding made available to the Special Collections Division units for FY 2016 to support preparing special collections materials for digitization. This funding made it possible for the IHLC to hire a graduate hourly employee to create metadata for the items, rehouse them, and assess potential conservation and copyright concerns. Over 800 items were described between February and June 2016. The digitization is scheduled for the 2017 fiscal year.
- In December, scans created in 2013 of the Joseph Hand Papers were uploaded to the IHLC Manuscript Collections Database (Archon) to test the digital content module of the system and to increase access to the materials.
- In the spring, DCC digitized the Sheffer Family Papers (0.2 cubic feet) upon the request of the late donor’s daughter. See the spring 2016 issue of *Friendscript* for more on her discovery of this collection, which was in the unit’s backlog of unprocessed manuscript collections for almost two decades.

Public Engagement

- In collaboration with University Archives and the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the IHLC participated in presentations to four classes from the United Steelworkers Summer Institute on June 8-9.
- The IHLC lent materials to the Library Advancement Office for display at an LAS Alumni Association event, “Lincoln Meets David Davis,” which took place at the David Davis Mansion on June 11.
- In late June, the IHLC mounted a small exhibit in the newly installed wall case outside the unit. For security and preservation reasons, the exhibit consists of reproductions rather than original materials. The exhibit features selections from the diverse collections of the IHLC, from early Illinois imprints and Civil War correspondence to twentieth-century theatre programs about Lincoln and his legacy.

5. Progress on Unit Annual Goals for FY2016

None were articulated.

6. Unit Annual Goals for FY2017

Increase access to collection materials (In support of element 2a from the *Framework for Strategic Action*: “Optimize discovery of, access to, and accessibility of all library resources, collections, and services”)

- Continue to reduce the backlog of unprocessed archival collections and additions; aim to complete phase 2 of the NEH Challenge Grant-funded processing work by December and reapply for more funding to process additional backlogged collections in the 2017 calendar year.
- Continue to reduce the number of collections lacking publicly accessible descriptions in the IHLC Manuscript Collections Database (Archon).
- Develop and implement procedures to evaluate materials in the backlog of unprocessed books, pamphlets, and periodicals that have been given to the unit.
- Establish procedures for processing incoming periodicals and managing the backlog of unbound issues of periodicals for better access and preservation.
- Complete work required to make the materials that will form the IHLC Broadsides and Printed Ephemera Digital Collection available for researchers to discover and access online (see Collaborative Projects below).

Develop and implement new reader services procedures and staffing models for the unit

- Reconfigure the space to have a front desk from which staff can greet and assist researchers coming into the unit as well as monitor the reading room.
- Move reference books from the IHLC stacks corridor to the entry room or reading room to facilitate researcher access to these materials. Also work with Library IT to provide researchers access to a computer and scanner in the entry room or reading room.
- Establish policies for researchers, including user registration procedures for use of collection materials.
- Hire and train graduate and undergraduate students to assist with a variety of responsibilities and projects in the unit, including monitoring the reading room.
- Develop better methods for tracking work with archival collections including reference and photoduplication requests as well as arrangement, description, and/or preservation tasks pending or completed.

Conduct research to define collections and acquisitions policies and procedures

- Investigate using GOBI to streamline book selection and acquisitions processes.
- Develop standards for documenting acquisitions of archival collections.
- Assess the scope of the IHLC print and archival collections to inform future collecting priorities and areas of focus.
- Consult with collection managers of related archives and special collections libraries in Urbana-Champaign and survey the collecting scopes of related collections in Illinois (for Illinois history) and nationally (for Lincoln) to inform the development of a collection policy for the IHLC.

Plan projects to increase the visibility of and engagement with collection materials

- Design and mount additional mini-exhibits for display in the wall case outside the unit.
- Investigate options to expand user engagement with collection materials online.
- Develop ideas for potential projects or initiatives to commemorate the state's bicentennial in 2018.

Collaborate with other units to further access and preservation of collection materials

- In cooperation with Preservation Services, complete the flat files project to improve preservation of these materials as well as establishing better physical and intellectual control of the oversize content in archival manuscript collections.
- In cooperation with Preservation Services, complete the preliminary assessment of manuscript collection microfilm reels and determine priorities for reformatting.
- Work with colleagues in DCC and CAM to complete the digitization of approximately 750 broadsides and printed ephemera and provide online access to the resulting image files and metadata.
- Co-supervise an internship in RBML during the spring semester to increase access to the contents of two printer's scrapbooks of early Illinois imprints.
- Collaborate with colleagues in the Map Library on a project to catalog maps in the IHLC and make them discoverable through the online catalog.

7. Number of Graduate Assistants/Hourly

FTE:

- Graduate assistants: 0
- Graduate hourly: 0.3 for fall (2 months only), 0.6 for spring, 1.3 for summer

Head count:

- Graduate assistants: 0
- Graduate hourly: 2

8. Funding sources for Graduate Assistants/Hourly

Graduate assistants: n/a

Graduate hourly:

- NEH Challenge Grant: 0.3 FTE for fall and spring; 0.5 FTE for summer
- Special Collections Digitization Funding: 0.3 FTE for spring; 0.6 FTE for summer
- State funds (Library summer grad hourly allocation): 0.2 FTE for summer

9. Major Responsibilities and Contributions Made by GAs/Hourly

Graduate assistants: n/a

Graduate hourly:

- Processing backlogged collections: Kathleen Lucas arranged and described 16 archival and manuscript collections and incorporated additions to 7 more collections (in total, processing about 90 cubic feet), added an inventory to one other existing collection, and revised descriptions for 3 hidden collections to be made publicly available online.
- Preparing materials for digitization: Emily Menendez created metadata for more than 800 items from 3 collections while rehousing and assessing them for conservation and copyright concerns. The digitization of about 750 of these items is planned for FY2017.
- Assisting with promotion and outreach: Kathleen Lucas collaborated with Krista to design and mount 1 small exhibit in the wall case outside the IHLC.

II. Statistical Profile

1. Facilities

User seating:

- 3-4 seats at a round table in the reading room (while this table fits 3-4 chairs, it only provides enough space for 2 or 3 people if they are each conducting their own research)
- 1 at a public access computer (not in reading room)
- 1 at another desk/table (not in reading room)

Hours:

- 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday (42.5 hours/week)

2. Personnel

- John Hoffmann (Faculty, 1.0 FTE)
- Krista Gray (Academic Professional, 1.0 FTE; Visiting until June 16, Permanent starting June 17)
- Kathleen Lucas (Grad. Hourly, fall and spring at 0.3 FTE, summer at 0.7 FTE; funded by NEH Challenge Grant and library summer graduate hourly allocation; started in October 2015)
- Emily Menendez (Grad. Hourly, spring at 0.3 FTE, summer at 0.6 FTE; funded by Special Collections Digitization funding allocation; started in February 2016)

3. User Services

Gate Count (as reported during FY16 Sweeps Week)

- Fall: no data reported
- Spring: 17 visits/week

Circulation (from Voyager circulation reports)

Note: All IHLC materials are non-circulating, with the exception of two or three books that were placed on reserve for the fall and spring semesters. It is unclear whether these statistics represent reserve materials or materials transferred to the IHLC from other locations within the fiscal year.

- Charges: 54
- Renewals: 10
- Discharges: 55

Reference interactions (from DeskTracker, as reported during FY16 Sweeps Week)

- Fall: no data reported
- Spring: 10 total/week (5 email, 5 in-person)

Presentations (from the Instructional Statistics database)

- Contributed to 4 presentations to groups (United Steelworkers Summer Institute, with Jameatris Rinkus and Adam Doskey)
- Average of 22 participants per group, 87 participants total

4. Other Statistics

In FY 2015, Krista began gathering and analyzing data to better understand the extent of unprocessed collections and additions in the IHLC. This included:

- Writing custom code for Archon to export basic data about collections into Excel in order to identify issues (such as duplicate records, or records missing key information) and collections requiring additional review.
- Conducting a survey of all archival collection materials stored on the shelves in the IHLC stacks (i.e., not including those stored in vertical or flat file cabinets) to identify unprocessed collections and additions, as well as the location and condition of the materials.

The following data come from these two sources.

Based on data exported from the IHLC Manuscript Collections Database (Archon):

Collections with:	As of July 1, 2015	As of June 30, 2016
Descriptions that are publicly available in Archon	81.3% (780 collections)	88.5% (878 collections)
Basic records only (publicly available); no description	3.4% (33 collections)	2.5% (25 collections)
Draft descriptions, hidden from the public	15.3% (147 collections)	9.0% (89 collections)
Total	960	992

Based on the collections survey conducted in June 2015, and updated to reflect additional processing work completed during this fiscal year:

Material on shelves in collections with:	As of July 1, 2015	As of June 30, 2016
Descriptions that are publicly available in Archon	68% (325 collections, estimated 950 cubic feet)	81% (383 collections, estimated 1,187 cubic feet)
Basic records only (publicly available); no description	11% (26 collections, estimated 157 cubic feet)	8% (17 collections, estimated 121 cubic feet)
Draft descriptions, hidden from the public	17% (54 collections, estimated 236 cubic feet)	8% (20 collections, estimated 121 cubic feet)
Not in archon	4% (about 50 collections, estimated 50 cubic feet)	2% (about 40 collections, estimated 31 cubic feet)
Total	405 collections in Archon, estimated 1,342 cubic feet	420 collections in Archon, estimated 1,427 cubic feet*

*Note: The increase in total cubic feet does not imply that the IHLC acquired an additional 85 cubic feet of collection material during the 2016 fiscal year. Instead, it reflects revised estimates of collection extents as well as the addition of new or backlogged collections not previously included in Archon.