

# Illinois History and Lincoln Collections

## Annual Report, FY19 (July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019)

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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 36,000 volumes of cataloged print materials, including books, periodicals, and pamphlets, dating from the late 17th century to the present. In addition, the unit holds about a thousand manuscript collections dating from the early 18th through the 21st century that range from single-item collections to those spanning several dozen cubic feet. We assist researchers both on-site and remotely and respond to reference and photoduplication requests from around the country and the world to provide access to our collections.

In the past fiscal year, the IHLC continued to commemorate the Bicentennial of Illinois Statehood through the end of 2018. We hosted or co-hosted two separate events and curated three exhibits in conjunction with the Bicentennial during FY19 and also co-hosted an event celebrating Lincoln's birthday in February with HPNL.

Over the course of the year, our presence in the Digital Library has increased substantially, from three collections at the start of the fiscal year to eighteen by the end. We have also continued to further our arrangement and description work with archival collections, and developed new projects to assess and address issues in our catalog records in advance of the library's migration to Alma/Primo.

In addition to the work of the unit specifically, we have been engaged with the other members of the Special Collections Division in working with the consultants and in subgroups to contribute to the library building plan.

#### 1. Major Activities and Accomplishments

##### Enhanced access to IHLC materials in the Digital Library

- Digitized or born digital content from 15 collections was added to the Digital Library in FY19, bringing the total number of collections to 18.

##### Increased descriptive access to materials the unit's archival and manuscript collections

- We added or substantively updated or improved archival descriptions for 73 collections during the 2019 fiscal year.

##### Developed strategies to facilitate and improve cataloging for print materials in the unit

- Working with CAM, we refined procedures for handling the cataloging of rare print materials for the unit, including both new acquisitions and those in our uncatalogued backlog.
- IHLC staff developed methods to assess and identify possible item-specific notes in BIB records in order to move these to the holdings records in preparation for the migration to Alma/Primo.

#### Furthered outreach and engagement initiatives in the unit

- For the Bicentennial of Illinois statehood, the IHLC co-hosted a lecture with RBML in October, curated an exhibit for the Marshall Gallery and a pop-up exhibit for RBML in conjunction with the October lecture, and hosted an Open House event in late November.
- In the spring, the IHLC co-hosted an event celebrating Lincoln's 210th birthday with HPNL.
- The IHLC has increased our number of followers on all social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) and refocused our selection of topics for social media and blog posts to highlight materials within our collections.

## **2. Major Challenges**

The unit's heavy reliance on part-time, temporary staffing remains a challenge. Many of the functions and work of the unit currently depend on the work and diverse skillsets of our part-time, hourly or graduate assistant staff. Both anticipated and unanticipated staff turnover mean a loss of institutional knowledge as well as breaks in continuity of projects and the trajectories along which we are pursuing our goals as a unit. The early departure of the Project Archival Specialist (academic hourly position) in August 2018 led to a significant shift in planning for bicentennial outreach and other projects for the fall.

As in past years, the climate control in the IHLC stacks also remains a challenge. We again used multiple dehumidifiers for significant portions of the year to keep humidity levels reasonable and to reduce the risk of mold growth. Overall, due to the less-than-ideal temperature and humidity levels over the course of the year, all three of our stacks areas (two cubes on deck 7 and one on deck 8) were rated as being "ok" for natural aging and "risk" for mechanical damage (out of a three-level rating scale: "good," "ok," and "risk") by the algorithms in the eClimate notebook system used for tracking and evaluating the preservation qualities of the spaces' environmental conditions.

## **3. Significant Changes**

- Jessica Followell, IHLC Project Archival Specialist (academic hourly position), left in August 2018.
- Instead of rehiring for the IHLC Project Archival Specialist position (which was originally intended to run through the end of the 2018 bicentennial year), the IHLC hired two additional grad hourly employees.

## **4. Contributions to Library-wide Programs**

#### Reference, research consultations, and other information services

- 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 conducting research for both fiction and non-fiction books; and others. Reference interactions took place in person as well as over email and the phone.
- During the 2019 fiscal year, the IHLC fulfilled an estimated 22 requests for scans of materials for about 21 patrons, typically remote researchers. Approximately 13 additional digitization requests for IHLC materials were referred to the Digitization Services unit.

#### Instructional services

- The IHLC contributed to instruction in collaboration with several other units in the library. In spring 2019, the IHLC Archives Program Officer, the University Archives Resident, and the

Director of the Champaign County Historical Archives presented on our collections to a 200-level Illinois History class. We also collaborated with the RBML and University Archives to introduce two classes from the Steelworkers Summer Institute to archival sources in our collections related to labor history.

- The IHLC facilitated the partial digitization of the McNitt Family Papers in support of the SourceLab digital edition of letters in this collection.

#### Scholarly communications and publishing

- The IHLC received several requests to publish images from our collections in scholarly works and facilitated the digitization of these through the Digitization Services unit.

#### Collection management

- Acquisitions: Highlights from FY19 included the acquisitions of two early 18th century documents relating to the French in Illinois (one funded by a Library Friends gift generated from *Friendscript*), which are now our oldest original manuscript items. We also acquired several pieces of rare Lincoln printed ephemera, including a series of envelopes with political cartoons depicting Lincoln and Davis in a boxing match.
- Preservation: The IHLC continued to collaborate with colleagues in the Preservation Services unit to assess and improve the preservation conditions of collection materials. Major projects included the construction of custom enclosures for a collection that included several dozen cased daguerreotypes and moving rolled oversized maps to the Oak Street High Density Storage Facility. Another project was co-supervising a practicum student conducting a preservation assessment of our small archival collections.
- Archival Collections Processing: As enumerated in section II-4 below, work continued on reducing the backlog of unprocessed archival collections, as well as enhancing descriptive information available online through the IHLC Manuscript Collections Database.

#### Digital Content Creation

- Over the course of FY19, Digitization Services digitized content from about 20 archival collections from the IHLC. About 60% of these collections or components of collections were patron requests, about 10% were for an exhibit, and the remaining approximately 30% were selected for digitization by the IHLC to go into the Digital Library.
- The IHLC and Digitization Services worked together to identify and repackage content previous digitized for patron requests so that it could be added to the Digital Library as well. While none of these were in the Digital Library by the end of FY19, several went in at the beginning of FY20.
- After putting the Internet Archive scanning project on hold in November (following damage from scanning discovered with several items) to reassess the risks involved in scanning materials for through the Internet Archive scanning center, IHLC staff and Preservation collaborated on revised procedures for condition assessment and criteria for scanning. The project was restarted in April. Over the course of the fiscal year, over 250 books were digitized.

#### Diversity

- For the Bicentennial in 2018, each month of social media posts was devoted to a different theme in Illinois history, and we selected immigration and immigrants as the theme for August,

highlighting both books and archival materials in our collections that document the immigrant experience in Illinois.

- In October, our exhibit in the Marshall Gallery as well as a pop-up exhibit in RBML and the Road Scholar lecture co-hosted with RBML focused on Illinois labor history and histories of working class people in Illinois. The Marshall Gallery exhibit showcased a woman active in the labor movement in Chicago, Elizabeth Chambers Morgan.

#### Public Engagement

- To commemorate the bicentennial of Illinois Statehood, the IHLC co-sponsored a lecture with RBML in early October and also hosted an Open House in late November.
- The IHLC participated in the Library Friends event in October 2018, presenting a mini-exhibit with selected materials from different time periods and topics documented in our collections.
- IHLC staff curated two small exhibits in the IHLC reading room over the course of the 2018 fiscal year: “World’s Fairs of the Midwest” (September 2018-February 2019) and “Votes for Women” (February-June 2019). The IHLC also curated an exhibit on Illinois history for the Marshall Gallery of the Main Library, “Elizabeth Chambers Morgan: A Radical Woman” (October 2018).
- In collaboration with University Archives and the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the IHLC participated in presentations to two classes from the United Steelworkers Summer Institute in early June. Students in these classes had the opportunity to examine original materials from two of the IHLC's archival collections in a hands-on session following their professor's presentation.
- The IHLC continued to engage with followers on its three social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) to increase the visibility of the unit and further engagement with Illinois history and Lincoln. At the end of FY19, we had 460 followers on Twitter (a net increase of 155), 161 followers on Facebook (at net increase of 44), and 301 followers on Instagram (a net increase of 85 followers).

## **5. Progress on Unit Annual Goals for FY2019**

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”*)

- The IHLC added or substantively revised descriptions for 73 collections in the IHLC Manuscript Collections Database (Archon) during the 2019 fiscal year. For more detail, see “Other Statistics” in Part II of this report.
- IHLC developed templates and standard procedures for composing descriptions for born-digital and digitized content, both in the Manuscript Collections Database and the Digital Library.
- The IHLC refined its use of Trello to track the progress of work completed and pending with archival collections and other related projects.
- IHLC staff made progress on organizing, rehousing, and providing access to the backlog of periodicals, but the project is still ongoing.

Conduct research to define collections and acquisitions policies and procedures

- This work has again been on hold for most of the year.

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

- In late November, the IHLC hosted an open house to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Illinois statehood. The event brought people into the unit to see our current exhibit, examine items

from our collections, and view a pop-up exhibit in the hallway showcasing items from different time periods of Illinois history. Visitors also engaged with Lincoln and Illinois history, and we provided research tips and information on how to search our collection for visitors interested in learning more and using our collections in the future.

- IHLC staff developed and implemented new protocols for selecting topics to feature on the blog, emphasizing materials found in our collections. In addition, a new approach to social media posts has made them more collection-focused, including featuring two #CollectionSpotlight posts per month to highlight subjects within our collections.

#### Commemorate the bicentennial of Illinois statehood in 2018

- As mentioned above, the unit held two events in fall 2018 around the theme of the bicentennial: the Road Scholar lecture co-hosted with RBML and the Open House event.
- IHLC social media continued to explore a different theme in Illinois history each month through the end of 2018.

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

- The IHLC, DS, and CAM successfully collaborated to digitize and provide access to materials in several small collections as planned, including the Jonathan Catlin A. Collection and the Margaret A. King Correspondence.
- The IHLC worked with CAM to develop procedures and workflows for cataloging rare print acquisitions for the IHLC, and over 150 items have now been cataloged through this workflow.
- Although the project was on hold for a significant portion of the fiscal year, while we reassessed our procedures and condition criteria for scanning, over 250 books were digitized through the on-site Internet Archive Scanning Center during the 2019 fiscal year.
- Our goal of exploring ways to add books previously digitized from the unit to the IHLC Internet Archive collection created in 2018 for items digitized through the Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/details/illinoishistoryandlincoln>) and of working with CAM to update old Illinois Harvest links in the catalog has been on hold throughout the fiscal year.
- Cataloger David Griffiths in the Map Library cataloged several hundred maps from the IHLC during the 2019 fiscal year. The number of items under the IHLC map location in Voyager increased by over 600 in FY19, bringing the total to over 1,000.

## **6. Unit Annual Goals for FY2020**

Improve access to materials in archival and manuscript collections (SD1: "Optimize discovery of, and access to..."; SD3: "Provide access to collections...")

- Continue to reduce the backlog of unprocessed archival collections and additions.
- Continue work to enhance existing descriptive information about archival collections available in the IHLC Manuscript Collections Database (Archon) to improve access and discovery.
- Develop and implement a process to gain better physical and intellectual control over archival materials in oversize flat drawers.
- Develop an approach to provide online descriptive access to items in the unit's extensive collection of Lincoln-related prints and ephemera.
- Continue to develop and implement procedures and processes for organizing, rehousing, and providing access to the backlog of periodicals.

Increase online access to components of our collections to researchers worldwide through the Digital Library (SD3: "Provide access to collections...")

- Select and prepare more collections for partial or full digitization through the Digitization Services unit. Identify themes represented in our collections as a whole and work to make the selection of collections partially or fully available online through the Digital Library more reflective of the diverse nature of our holdings.
- Refine our processes and develop standard procedures for assigning copyright statements to archival materials in the Digital Library.

Refine and improve procedures for acquisitions and collection development (SD1: "Implement sustainable approaches to collection development policies"; SD3: "Provide access to collections...")

- Draft a collection development policy for the IHLC.
- Take steps toward building our collections in areas identified for growth.

Improve descriptive access for our print collection (SD1: "Optimize discovery of, and access to...")

- Continue resolving issues with our catalog records to prepare for Alma migration.
- Refine workflows with cataloging ACS staff for cataloging rare materials to optimize the division of labor within the workflow between the cataloger and IHLC staff.

Increase visibility of, and engagement with, our collections (SD3: "Implement library outreach...", "Provide access to collections...")

- Continue to explore new opportunities to feature our collections in ways that educate and engage our audiences and increase the unit's visibility.
- Explore the feasibility of continuing to host or co-host at least one event per semester (as we did in FY19) to connect more people with our collections.
- Work to connect directly with more professors to encourage increased opportunities for student engagement with our collections.

## **7. Support needed for these specific goals & the unit's overall mission**

The greatest need is consistent, permanent staffing support. During FY18, IHLC continued to have only one full-time employee and no permanent hourly wage budget. Relying heavily on allocations of temporary funding for hourly employees to maintain basic unit operations is far from ideal and makes longer-term planning difficult.

For the 2018-2019 academic year, the IHLC was fortunate to have been awarded a quarter-time GA position, as well as additional temporary funding that supported about 0.4 FTE of grad and 0.4 FTE of undergrad hourly support. These graduate and undergraduate student positions have been key for sustaining both the ongoing work of the unit as well as for our new outreach and digitization initiatives.

Going forward, the IHLC was allocated a quarter-time GA position for FY20, as well as additional temporary funding from the library for hourly positions that will be used to fund approximately 0.3 FTE of graduate and 0.55 FTE of undergraduate support during the academic year. We plan to supplement these library funds with IHLC endowment and gift funds to support another 0.8 FTE of graduate support and 0.2 FTE of undergraduate support, which is critical in order to enable us to sustain unit operations and pursue many of our goals.

To reiterate, hourly wage support is critical for fulfilling the goals of the IHLC, as well as maintaining basic unit operations. The ability of the unit to pursue its mission more fully, however, will continue to

be constrained by a heavy reliance on temporary student staffing without a permanent, predictable wage budget and/or a second full-time employee on staff.

## **8. Number of Graduate Assistants/Hourly**

FTE:

- Graduate assistants: 0.25
- Graduate hourly: 0.6 for summer 2018; 1.2 for fall 2018; 1.3 for spring 2019; 0.6 for summer 2019

Head count:

- Graduate assistants: 1
- Graduate hourly: 2 for summer 2018; 3 (not double counting the GA) for fall 2018 and spring 2019; 3 for summer 2019 (not all concurrently)

## **9. Funding sources for Graduate Assistants/Hourly**

Graduate assistants:

- State funds: 0.25 FTE

Graduate hourly:

- State funds: 0.6 FTE for summer 2018; 0.4 FTE for fall 2018; 0.3 FTE spring 2019; 0.3 FTE for summer 2019
- IHLC endowment funds: 0.5 FTE for fall 2018; 0.65 FTE for spring 2019; 0.3 FTE for summer 2019
- IHLC gift funds: 0.3 FTE for fall 2018 and spring 2019

## **10. Major Responsibilities and Contributions Made by GAs/Hourly**

Graduate assistant:

- Processed over a dozen small archival collections and additions to two existing collections.
- Conducted event planning and promotion for three events sponsored or co-sponsored by the unit (Illinois Humanities Road Scholar lecture, Bicentennial Open House event, Lincoln Birthday event). Assisted with the IHLC exhibit at the October Library Friends event.
- Curated three exhibits: one for the Marshall Gallery, one pop-up exhibit in RBML (for the Road Scholar lecture), and one for the IHLC reading room.
- Drafted procedures and protocol for the small manuscript collections rehousing project.
- Provided reference services to on-site and remote researchers.

Graduate hourly employees:

- Processed archival collections, including processing new accessions and those from the backlog; reprocessing existing collections to improve access to materials; and reviewing and improving access and preservation for partially processed collections.
- Co-curated (with an undergraduate student) an exhibit for the IHLC reading room.
- Checked and added item-specific information to holding records for IHLC print materials.
- Developed and implemented processes for identifying possible item-specific notes in BIB records to move to the holding records in preparation for the migration from Voyager to Alma.

- Created metadata and composed collection descriptions for digitized materials to go into the Digital Library.
- Assisted with outreach and planning for the unit Open House and Lincoln birthday events, including developing a pop-up exhibit of Lincoln items for the IHLC/HPNL event in the library and representing the IHLC at the College of Education for its own Lincoln birthday event.
- Composed social media posts to promote Illinois history and the IHLC on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and the IHLC blog.
- Provided reference services to on-site and remote researchers.

## II. Statistical Profile

### 1. Facilities

#### User seating:

- 4 seats around the table in the reading room
- 1 at a public access computer (adjustable height computer table in reading room)

#### Hours:

- Fall and spring semesters: 9:00am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday (40 hours/week)
- Summer and semester breaks: 1-5pm, Monday-Friday (20 hours/week)

### 2. Personnel

#### Professional staff (1 FTE total)

- Krista Gray (Full year): Academic Professional, 1.0 FTE

#### Academic Hourly Staff (about 0.65 FTE total for the summer)

- Jessica Followell (May-August 2018): summer 2018 at 0.65 FTE

#### Graduate Assistants (0.25 FTE total for the academic year)

- Allison Kilberg (August 2018-May 2019): academic year at 0.25 FTE

#### Graduate Hourly Staff (about 0.6 FTE for summer, 1.2 FTE for fall, and 1.3 FTE for spring)

- Michelle Miller (July 2018-May 2019): about 0.4 FTE for summer, fall, and spring
- Allison Kilberg (starting August 2018): about 0.2 FTE supplementing assistantship in fall and spring, about 0.3 FTE for summer 2019 (3 weeks for FY19)
- Claire Weibel (starting September 2018): about 0.3 FTE for fall and spring, 0.5 FTE for summer 2019
- Courtney Smith (starting September 2018): about 0.3 FTE for fall and spring
- Cindy Tian (starting June 2019): about 0.3 FTE for summer 2019 (3.5 weeks for FY19)

#### Student Assistant Staff (about 0.4-0.6 FTE, varying by semester)

- Madeline Decker (July 2018-December 2018): 0.7 FTE for summer 2018 (3.5 weeks for FY19), 0.2 FTE for fall
- Hailey Vasquez (August 2018-June 2019): about 0.2 FTE for fall, about 0.35 FTE for spring
- Austin Justice (August 2018-May 2019): about 0.2 FTE for fall and spring



Extra Help Staff (about 0.3 FTE for summer 2019)

- Michelle Miller (May-August 2019): summer 2019 at 0.3 FTE

Hourly wage budget (used to fund both student and graduate hourly positions) for FY19: \$20,622 (academic year 2018-2019, \$16,597; summer 2019, \$4,025). This supported approximately:

- Summer 2018 (July-August): 0.6 FTE of grad hourly support and 0.4 FTE of student hourly support (using funding allocated in FY18 for summer 2018)
- Fall 2018: 0.4 FTE of grad hourly support & 0.4 FTE of student hourly support
- Spring 2019: 0.3 FTE of grad hourly support & 0.5 FTE of student hourly
- Summer 2019 (May-June): 0.35 FTE of grad hourly support & 0.1 FTE of student hourly support (with about half of the summer 2019 allocation remaining for the FY20 half of the summer)

### 3. User Services

Gate Count (head counts as reported during FY19 Sweeps Week)

- Fall: 12 visits/week (Internal statistics kept throughout the semester: about 6 visits/week)
- Spring: 15 visits/week (Internal statistics kept throughout the semester: about 7 visits/week)
- Annual extrapolation: 432 (Note: the fiscal year total as compiled from internal unit statistics was significantly different, accounting for 290 visits)

Circulation

*Note: All IHLC materials are non-circulating. The circulation statistics generated by Voyager therefore do not present an accurate picture of the nature of circulation in the IHLC and are not reported here.*

Internal statistics for retrieval requests (note: these statistics do not include items pulled for the Internet Archive scanning project or for Collections Care batch rehousing projects):

Requests for:	Books and other print materials	Manuscript collections	Microfilm reels	Total
On-site researchers	183	208	13	404
Remote researchers	15	56	11	82
<b>Subtotal (on-site and remote researchers)</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>486</b>
Staff use for outreach events/projects	131	122	0	253
Internal staff use (e.g., processing)	146	175	20	341
<b>Subtotal (IHLC staff)</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>594</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>1100</b>

Reference interactions (from DeskTracker, as reported during FY19 Sweeps Week)

- Fall: 2 total/week (2 in-person)
- Spring: 10 total/week (1 email, 2 phone, 7 in-person)
- Annual extrapolation: 192

#### Presentations (from the Instructional Statistics database)

- Contributed to 1 presentation to a 200-level History class with Jessica Ballard of the University Archives and Anke Voss of the Champaign County Historical Archives, 26 participants
- Contributed to 2 presentations to groups with colleagues from the University Archives and the RBML (classes from the Steelworkers Summer Institute), 15 participants each
- Total estimated: 56 participants, average of 19 per group

## 4. Other Statistics

#### Archival processing (internal statistics)

Work completed to improve access to archival collections in our Manuscript Collections Database (Archon) during FY19, arranged by type of work completed:

Type of processing work completed	Number of collections
<b>New collection in Archon; processed from scratch</b> (includes collections that were in Archon previously but with an empty scope note, or hidden in Archon but required extensive changes or additions)	17
<b>Newly published</b> (reviewing and opening a previously hidden collection with few changes to the original description)	1
<b>Update in Archon</b> (incorporating collection additions, adding an inventory, and/or improving the description)	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

Progress on collections processing and researchers' access to collections descriptions online, based on data exported from the IHLC Manuscript Collections Database (Archon):

Collections with:	As of July 30, 2018	As of June 30, 2019
Descriptions that are publicly available in Archon	93.1% (953 collections)	93.3% (981 collections)
Basic records only (publicly available); no description	1.8% (18 collections)	1.8% (19 collections)
Draft descriptions, hidden from the public	3.8% (39 collections)	3.7% (39 collections)
Basic records, hidden from the public	1.4% (14 collections)	1.2% (13 collections)
Total	1,024	1,052

\*Note: The total net increase of 28 collections includes recent acquisitions as well as collections in the backlog not previously entered into Archon and materials that were described previously as belonging to a single collection previously but that are now described separately to better reflect their provenance and archival standards.