

History of the Society of Indiana Archivists

From the 1989 Membership Directory, by Thomas Krasean and Connie McBirney, this sketch of SIA History provides a good idea of the original purposes of the Society, its programs, and its development during the first 14 years of its existence.

It was a sub-zero day in January 1972 that a small group of individuals met at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, to discuss the possible formation of a statewide archival organization. John Newman, State Archivist, and the man most responsible for calling the group together opened the meeting with a story.

He stated that while attending a meeting of the Society of American Archivists in San Francisco in the fall of 1971, he and fellow Hoosier Dave Olson, Archivist at DePauw University, found themselves one evening discussing the fact that it was unfortunate that more of Indiana's Archivists could not be at the meeting. It was reasoned that for many of the folks back home in Indiana, financial constraints and limited travel budgets were the key factors in prohibiting many from attending. Newman and Olson decided that there should be some means found whereby all of Indiana's archivists might gather together on a regular basis to discuss their mutual archival and records management concerns. Perhaps what Indiana needed was an organization of archivists, librarians, records managers, and manuscript curators, which would provide the vehicle for sharing ideas and professional backgrounds, as well as providing aid and assistance to the numerous small archival programs around the state which were presently being run by dedicated but untrained volunteers. Upon their return from San Francisco both men decided that it would be well to discuss their idea with several other archivists in the state. Newman volunteered to put together an agenda.

Wabash College was chosen as the site for the meeting because it was centrally located in relation to those invited to participate in the new venture. Besides Newman and Olson those in attendance included Thomas Krasean, Archivist at Vincennes University and former Indiana State Archivist; Robert Harvey, Archivist, Wabash College; Gladys Otto, Archivist Librarian, Wabash College; and Howard Eldon, Madison County Historical Society and County records microfilming specialist.

Following his introductory remarks, Newman, serving as temporary chairman, continued his comments on how a statewide archival organization would benefit Indiana. Besides providing a forum for the states' archivists to discuss their mutual concerns it was suggested that the group might also publish information on a number of current archival and records management topics. Membership would be open to all people in Indiana interested in the collection and preservation of archival records, and regional meetings could be held at various locations around the state thereby benefiting the greatest number of people. Such an organization might also serve as a united voice in lobbying for stronger governmental support both on the state and local level. At the conclusion of the meeting Newman and Krasean were designated to draw up a constitution and by-laws in preparation for another meeting. It was also agreed that several other individuals should be asked to attend the next meeting in hopes of gaining further support in the new endeavor.

In March 1972 a second meeting was held at Ball State University and joining those who attended the first meeting were Althea L. Stoeckel, Professor of History, Ball State University, and from the Eli Lilly Company, Gene McCormick, Corporate Historian, and Helen Davidson, Archivist. Two items were on the agenda: to approve the constitution and by-laws and to plan for an organizational meeting sometime in September. By the end of the day the Society of Indiana Archivists was on its way to becoming a reality.

Although a more formal history of the organization needs to be written, the following compilation of annual programs provides the reader with a review of the Society's first fourteen years.

On September 16, 1972, an organizational meeting was held in the Roy O. West Library, DePauw University. Temporary chairman John J. Newman opened the meeting with a review of the work of the steering committee members and read its recommendations for the establishment of a Society of Indiana Archivists. The meeting was then opened for comment and discussion. It was soon apparent that the thirty-seven people in attendance were highly in favor of the proposed association and, following a motion by Newman and a second by Randall Jehs, the vote to organize was unanimous. The first officers of the Society were John Newman, President, David Olson, Vice-President, Thomas Krasean, Secretary / Treasurer, Dr. Robert Harvey, Dr. Althea Stoeckel, Dr. Darrel Bigham, and Sister Mary Kenneth Scheessele were elected Board Members. A program then followed the organizational meeting. First was a discussion by Frederic Luther, owner of the Frederic Luther Microfilming Company, on the history and merits of the microfilming process. Gene McCormick, Corporate Historian with the Eli Lilly Company, presented his talk, "A Historian Views Archives." Following lunch the members heard a keynote address by Dr. Philip Mason, Director, Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit. Dr. Mason spoke on the general theme of archives and their value in preserving the past.

The first spring meeting was held on Saturday, March 31, 1973, in the Pittenger Student Union, Ball State University. Dave Olson presented a program on the subject of university archives, and Thomas Krasean spoke on building a regional local history collection. Following lunch Dr. Althea Stoeckel discussed the development of the Delaware County archival program. The members then toured the new archival facilities.

The second annual meeting of the Society was held in the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis on November 2, 1973. The theme of the program was a look at some of the major archival agencies in the Indianapolis area. Helen Davidson, Archivist, the Eli Lilly Company, presented a history of the Eli Lilly Archives. John Newman and Leona Alig then took the members on a tour of the State Archives and the Indiana Historical Society Library. Following lunch the keynote address was presented by Dr. Frank Burke, Director of Educational Programs for the National Archives. A brief business meeting was held in the morning. Ron Frederick, Archivist, Indiana State University, agreed to serve as the first editor of the proposed society Newsletter. The meeting was held in conjunction with the annual Indiana history conference, a format that was to continue on a regular basis through the years.

On May 10, 1974, thirty-seven members of the Society met at the Convent of the Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, in a day-long meeting on religious archives. The morning session began with a talk by State Archivist, John Newman. His topic was Creating an Administrative History: The First Step in Archival Activity. Following lunch, a panel discussion on religious archives was presented by Sister Mary Kenneth Scheessele, Archivist, Convent Immaculate Conception, and David Horn, newly appointed Archivist of DePauw University and the United Methodist Church of Indiana. The afternoon session also included a tour of the Immaculate Conception Archives and nearby St. Meinrad Archabbey, conducted by Father Cyprian Davis. Friday, September 27, 1974, was the date of the third annual meeting held at the Indiana University Student Union, Bloomington. Thirty three members attended the meeting which had as a theme the relationship of the historian and the archivist. Guest speaker was Dr. Samuel P. Hays, a native of Corydon, Indiana and Professor of History at the University of Pittsburgh. His topic was "Archival Sources for Community History."

The Society of Indiana Archivists again offered a program in Indianapolis as part of the Indiana History Conference. The November 1 meeting was an informal program which discussed the techniques of microfilming and preservation of archival records. Since the September 27 meeting had been the formal business meeting only, those members of the Society who were attending the Conference signed up for the microfilming session.

The 1975 Spring Workshop was held at Indiana State University in the Hulman Conference Center. Sister Jan Schilling, Martin Center, Indianapolis, was the featured speaker. Her topic was the collecting and preservation of Black records in Indiana. Dave Horn spoke on the subject of copyright and literary property rights (a topic that later would be published as the Society's second publication). John Newman spoke on the importance of conservation in the preservation of archival records. (In June 1975, Newman wrote and published the Administrator's Manual: Preservation / Restoration of Documentary Materials as the first Society publication.) Ron Frederick concluded the meeting by providing those in attendance with a tour of the Indiana State University archives.

The annual fall meeting was held on December 5, 1975, in room 409 of the Indiana State Library and Historical Building. The program for the day consisted of the usual business meeting and election of officers. The meeting was followed by a panel discussion on "Archival and Other Historical Agencies and Organizations," moderated by David Horn. The afternoon session was a discussion on "Local Records and the Bicentennial" by David J. Olson, now State Archivist of Michigan.

The 1976 Spring Workshop was held at DePauw University, Greencastle, in May, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the DePauw University Archives and the Archives of the Indiana United Methodist Church. The morning program consisted of a panel discussion on church and university archives "DePauw as a Case History." Panel members were Rev. Robert L. Epps, Miss Eleanor Cammack, and David J. Olson. The luncheon speaker was Meyer Fishbein of the National Archives, who spoke on "Archives Past, Present, and Future." A walking tour of the DePauw University historic sites followed the luncheon.

The fifth annual meeting of the Society of Indiana Archivists was held at Wabash College, Crawfordsville, on Friday, November 19. The morning sessions consisted of the annual business meeting, election of officers and reports on several Society projects including: business archives, women's history sources survey, and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The afternoon session heard a talk on archival security by Timothy Walch, Associate Director, SAA Archival Security Program.

Ball State University was the site for the annual spring meeting held Friday, April 15, 1977. The entire day was devoted to the topic of appraisal and disposition as practiced by several different repositories in Indiana. Panel members were Helen Davidson, The Eli Lilly Company, John Newman, State Archivist, and Sandra Taylor, Lilly Library at Bloomington.

November 4, 1977, was the date for the sixth annual meeting held in the new State Library and Historical Building auditorium. The business meeting consisted of an election of officers, proposed amendments to the Constitution, and the proposed meeting of the Midwest Archives Conference and SIA in November 1978. The remainder of the morning was devoted to a discussion on the proposed archival repository survey to be conducted by Don Thompson. Following lunch the members heard Dr. James S. Broussard, historian, talk about his work as researcher and author of the Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly. The membership was also given an opportunity to tour the new Indiana Historical Society facilities. thirty-eight members attended the meeting. Membership in the Society stood at seventy-nine.

The spring 1978 meeting was held in the auditorium of the State Library on April 14. The theme for the day was "Technical Considerations in Archival Programs." The morning session heard Indiana Historical Society Conservator Pamela Najar discuss developing a professional conservation program. In the afternoon John Newman, State Archivist, talked about Administrative considerations in archival microfilming. Following Newman's talk the membership was given a tour of the conservation and microfilming facilities in the State Library.

Much work and planning involved a number of SIA officers and members in preparation for the joint meeting of the members of the Midwest Archives Conference and the SIA scheduled for November 9-11, 1978. The local planning committee was composed of Pam Bennett, Jeannette Matthews and Helen Davidson. The joint meeting served as the annual fall gathering for the SIA membership. The Conference brought in a number of excellent speakers from around the midwest and was declared a success by all who attended. Membership in the SIA rose to 98, reaching an all time high for the organization.

Fort Wayne and the Louis Warren Library and Museum was the site for the annual spring meeting held on April 27, 1979. Speakers for the day were John David Smith, Warren Library, who talked about southern historian Ulrich Bonnell Phillips and his use of early plantations records found in several archival repositories; David Crosson, Allen County / Fort Wayne Historical Society who discussed getting the research and researcher together; and Rick J Ashton, Fort Wayne Public Library, who lectured on Archives and the Genealogist. Members present were also given an opportunity to tour the Warren Library and Museum as well as the Fort Wayne Public Library.

Conservation and use of photographs were the subjects of the fall 1979 meeting. The Indiana State Library auditorium was the site, November 2 the date, Indiana Historical Society staff members Pam Najar and Dan Kiernan were speakers during the morning session. The afternoon program was presented by Maynard Brichford, University Archivist, University of Illinois, who spoke about his recent trip and tour of several Western Europe archival repositories. Membership in the SIA reached a new high of 115 members.

The 1980 annual spring meeting was held on April 25, at the State Library auditorium. The business meeting centered around the joint regional archival workshop to be held in Cincinnati in September 1980. The meeting would be a combined effort of the SIA, the Society of Ohio Archivists and the Kentucky Council of Archivists. Following discussion on the Cincinnati meeting, the members heard two sessions on legal matters centered on records and privacy. James Williams, Archival Consultant, talked about the matter of privacy, its origins and development, and F. Gerald Handfield spoke on oral history and privacy. In the afternoon David Horn, DePauw, and Eric Pumroy, Indiana Historical Society, discussed ethics for researchers and archivists.

The Netherland Hilton Hotel, Cincinnati, was the site for the joint meeting of the Society of Indiana Archivists and Society of Ohio Archivists, September 29-30. Photographic Access was the theme of the two day conference. A number of SIA members attended the various sessions that were centered around the collecting, preserving and use of photographs.

The 1981 annual spring meeting was held at the Holiday Inn Downtown, in Indianapolis on March 27. The morning session was devoted to the review of several important on-going archival programs in the state. John J. Newman, Sandra Taylor and David Horn spoke on the subject "NHPRC: Its Future". Newman then joined F. Gerald Handfield in a discussion of the County Records of Indiana Microfilming Program (CRIMP). This statewide program seeks to microfilm records of genealogical value in both the private (local historical society, public library) and public (courthouse) sectors. Don Thompson concluded the morning program with a discussion on his recent manuscript survey of Indiana's public libraries and historical societies. The afternoon session was a tour of the Archives Division, State Commission on Public Records, led by Kerry Bartels. The members present were introduced to the Division's new word processing system.

The ninth annual meeting of the Society was held in Indianapolis on November 6 at the Indiana State Library auditorium. The theme for the day was manuscript appraisal and appraisal policy. In the morning session Eric Pumroy, Manuscript Curator, Indiana Historical Society, spoke on developing an appraisal policy for libraries. In the afternoon members heard Ralph Newman, Lincoln Book Store, Chicago, talk about manuscript appraisals.

"Archives in Indiana" was the central theme of the spring meeting of the SIA as it celebrated its tenth anniversary. DePauw University, site of the first meeting, was chosen for this special meeting held April 16, 1982. In the morning, members heard papers read by Thomas Krasean, who reviewed the ten year history of the organization, Dorothy Bailey, who spoke on her experience working in a small local historical society archives, and David Horn, who lectured on the history of DePauw's East College and the University Archives. The afternoon program

featured two speakers: Darrel E. Bigham, Professor of History, Indiana State University at Evansville, discussed historians and archivists in Indiana and their present and future relationship in the field of scholarship; Patrick Quinn, University Archivist, Northwestern University, spoke on "Archives in Indiana and the Midwest: An Archivist's View."

The theme for the 1982 fall annual meeting was "Archives and Exhibits". The meeting was held November 5, at the Indiana State Library. The morning sessions heard a panel discussion on exhibits. Speakers were William Cagle, Lilly Library, Bloomington, who spoke on exhibit philosophy; Linda Carlson Sharp, Indiana Historical Society, who lectured on exhibit techniques; and Kerry Bartels, Indiana Commission on Public Records, who discussed exhibit problems. In the afternoon, Jack M. Moore, Curator of Exhibits, Indiana State Museum, presented a program on "Exhibits in the Archives: What Do I Do? -- A Practicum." Membership in the Society stood at 96.

May 13, 1983, was the date for the eleventh annual meeting as members traveled south to Evansville for the first SIA meeting in this southwestern Indiana community. The collections and use of architectural records was the theme for the meeting. The morning sessions, held at Willard Library, heard the library director, Donald Baker, talk about collecting architectural records. Connie McBirney, Architectural Librarian, Indiana Historical Society, lectured on handling architectural records, and Joan Marchand, Historic Preservation Specialist, City of Evansville, spoke on architectural records and historic preservationists. The afternoon sessions were held at the University Center, Indiana State University, Evansville. Members were treated to a tour and history of the ISUE archives and special collection. Douglas Stern, Administrator of Historic Preservation and Archives, Jefferson County, Kentucky, spoke on historic preservation in Evansville. The final session of the day heard Pam Bennett Director, Indiana Historical Bureau, discuss the ramifications of the proposed Indiana archival assessment program recently funded by the National Historical Publication and Records Commission.

The 1983 fall meeting was held in Indianapolis at the Indiana State Library on Friday, November 4. The morning session began with a brief business meeting and was followed by three speakers who discussed specific topics under the theme "The State of Archives in Indiana". Judith Endelman, Indiana University, discussed the condition of religious archives in the state. Lawrence McCrank, Indiana State University, lectured on regional archives and archival networks, and Pam Bennett, Indiana Historical Bureau, spoke on Indiana's archival institutions with statewide interests. The afternoon session was devoted entirely to the Indiana records assessment grant and its impact on Indiana; John Newman, State Archivist, led the discussion.

The spring meeting for 1984 was held April 13 at Indiana University Northwest, Gary. John Newman, State Archivist again discussed the NHPRC assessment grant before the membership and public assembled for the meeting. (One requirement of the grant was that several public meetings were to be held in various parts of the state to discuss the statewide grant program.) The afternoon session included a tour of the Calumet Regional Archives and a program devoted to historical research in the Calumet. Speakers were: Stephen McShane, University Archivist, and historians Lance Trusty, Purdue University-Calumet, and Ronald Cohen, Indiana University Northwest.

The fall annual meeting for 1984 was again held in Indianapolis at the Indiana State Library. The November 2nd meeting consisted of a morning session devoted to the usual business meeting, election of officers, and an update on the NHPRC assessment grant. The afternoon session dealt with "Networks and the Archives". Barbara Markuson, INCOLSA, spoke on the advantages of networking; Patricia Cloud, Northwestern University Archives, discussed the utilization of RLIN in university archives; and Penny Mattern, OCLC, Inc., lectured on the new OCLC manuscript and archives format.

Ball State University was the site for the spring meeting of the SIA, held in the Bracken Library on April 12, 1985. The theme was "Local History and Archives" and the program sessions heard speakers discussing the collecting and use of local public and private records. The first session in the morning concerned the collecting of local history and materials. F. Gerald Handfield, Indiana Historical Society, served as moderator. Panel members included: Howard Eldon, Anderson Public Library, Sallie Cooke, Tippecanoe County Historical Association, and Stephen McShane, Calumet Regional Archives. A second session dealt with using local history materials; Dave Tambo, Ball State University, served as moderator. Panel speakers were Ball State University faculty and staff members: Dwight Hoover, Raymond White, Andrew Seager, and Carol Fisher. The afternoon sessions included tours of the Bracken Library Special Collections, the architectural archives, and a demonstration of the University's Interactive Video Disc System.

The fall annual meeting was held in Indianapolis on October 25, 1985, in the Indiana State Library. The subject of the meeting was "Genealogy and Archives." The morning session began with a lengthy and detailed report of the NHPRC state assessments needs grant by John Newman. A panel discussion on genealogical use of archival materials followed Newman's paper. Panel members were: Moderator, Nancy Turner, Ball State University; Thomas Krasean, Indiana Historical Society; Robert Zilliox, Hanover College; and Carol Fisher, Ball State. Following the panel discussion, John Newman conducted a tour of the State Archives where members viewed the various records that contain genealogical information. In the afternoon session Bill Harris, Head, Genealogy Division, Indiana State Library, discussed the genealogical records held in his department and then led those in attendance on a tour of the Genealogy Division's collections. Membership in the Society stood at 106.

The spring 1986 meeting of the SIA was held on May 9, in the Heritage Lounge, Tiley Memorial Union, Indiana State University, Terre Haute. The morning session listed two programs: "Academic Archives -- Getting Them Off the Ground and Keeping Them in the Air," and "Archival Operations --A Little Free Advice." Speakers for the first program were: Moderator, Stephen McShane, Calumet Regional Archives; J. Thomas Brown, Indiana State University; Wendy Schlereth, University of Notre Dame; and David Tambo, Ball State University. The second session heard State Senator Edward Pease, Assistant to the President for Legal Affairs, Indiana State University, and author "Access to Public Records Law." In the afternoon session Sandra Taylor, Indiana University, discussed her recent tour of archival repositories in China. A brief discussion on certification of archivists followed Taylor's talk. The remainder of the afternoon consisted of tours of the various archival repositories on the campus of Indiana State University.

The fall annual meeting was held in Indianapolis on Friday, October 31, 1986 in the Indiana State Library and Historical Building auditorium. In celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Society of American Archivists the meeting was devoted to exploring the significance of the national, regional and state archival organizations. During the brief business meeting, Pam Bennett reviewed the progress of the proposed NHPRC statewide archival survey. Ann Morgan Campbell, former executive director, Society of American Archivists, then read a paper entitled, "Society of American Archivists: A Fifty-Year Perspective." The afternoon sessions consisted of talks by Mary E. Janzen, President, Midwest Archives Conference (MAC), who presented a brief history of this regional group and its place in the archival profession. Thomas Krusean, SIA Secretary, then spoke on the history of the Society of Indiana Archivists. The last session for the day was a demonstration of the MICROMARC-AMC program (on-line cataloging of manuscripts and archives), by Eric Pumroy, Indiana Historical Society.

The spring 1987 meeting of the SIA was held in Elkhart on May 1. Site of the day-long meeting was the Miles Laboratories Archives, and SIA member Don Yates served as host. After a brief business meeting, Yates presented a paper entitled "Miles: American Industry's Oldest Business Archives." Following lunch the members were treated to a tour of Ruthmere, a 1908 house built by Albert Beardsley, located several blocks from the Miles Laboratories. Reverend George Minnix, curator of Ruthmere, discussed the challenge of developing a house museum archives. Marilou Ritchie, librarian, then escorted the group on a tour of the library and museum.

The sixteenth annual meeting of the SIA was held on November 6, 1987, in Indianapolis at the State Library and Historical Building. The meeting featured James C. Anderson, Photo Archivist, Ekstrom Library, University of Louisville. His topic was the preservation and management of photograph collections. In the morning session he discussed the various means of preserving photographs and in the afternoon he talked about collection management. The meeting concluded with a tour of the Indiana Historical Society photo archives and collections.

New Harmony was the site of the April 8, 1988, spring meeting of the SIA. The theme of the workshop was the "Archives of New Harmony," and consisted of a paper read by Josephine M. Elliott, SIA member and retired archivist, University of Southern Indiana, in which she described the various repositories and their collections that have existed in New Harmony over its long and interesting history. The morning program ended with a tour of the Workingmen's Institute Library. Members were then given a free afternoon to tour the historic sites of New Harmony.

The fall annual meeting was held in conjunction with the three day meeting of the Midwest Archives Conference held November 3-5, 1988, in Cincinnati, Ohio. A brief business meeting was conducted on the morning of November 4, in Cincinnati. Officers were elected, and various reports were made to the membership present. No other sessions were planned as all members were encouraged to attend the MAC sessions.

The campus of the University of Notre Dame was the site for the 1989 spring meeting held on April 14. The theme for the day-long meeting was a panel discussion on "How the Computer Can Enhance Archival Finding Aids." Staff members of the Notre Dame University Archives, led by SIA member and University Archivist, Wendy Schlereth. A brief business meeting was

held prior to the program. The afternoon session consisted of a continuation of the morning topic followed by a tour of the University archives and a demonstration of the computer programs.

Over the past sixteen years the organization has managed to accomplish much of what it set out to do. A review of the purposes of the Society as spelled out in its Constitution reveal a number of successes and a few failures. No more, no less, than many other similar membership / volunteer organizations.

A number of the charter members of the society have either retired or are no longer with us. Some 325 people have joined our ranks over the past sixteen years and for the last decade our membership has remained fairly stable in the range of 100-110 members. The Society has been successful in its efforts to bring together people with a common bond, as our membership reveals a variety of individuals working in a number of different archival programs. The organization's goal of two meetings a year has been met, spring meetings have been held throughout the state, and the programs offered have been varied enough to attract an average attendance of forty or more members.

As for publications, the Society has published three well received pamphlets. The Administrator's Manual: Preservation / Restoration of Documentary Materials (1975) was written by John Newman. Over 800 copies have been sold and / or distributed throughout Indiana and the United States. In 1978 the Society published Copyright, Literary Rights, and Ownership: A Guide for Archivists by David E. Horn. Over 400 Copies of this publication have been sold. In 1988 the Society published Public Accountability and Our Documentary Heritage: The Indiana Access to Public Records Law by J. Thomas Brown. In 1974 the Society began a Newsletter which continues to be published today. Distribution of the Newsletter includes not only Society members, but all local historical societies and Indiana's County Historians.

In 1978 the membership supported the publication of a statewide survey of local repositories by Society member Don Thompson and printed by the Indiana Historical Society. In 1983 Indiana applied for and received a NHPRC Assessment Grant to survey the state's archival needs and programs. Several members of the Society were involved in preparing the soon to be published report of the survey `s findings. The organization has offered one or two summer workshops for the beginning archivist and non professional, and two of our members, John Newman and Saundra Taylor, have combined their efforts in offering through Indiana University a credit course in archival management.

These programs and services are only a few of the activities supported by the Society and or its members. A review of the past sixteen years gives a fairly accurate picture of how Indiana and its "keepers of the past," have viewed their responsibilities. There is much encouragement in this review.