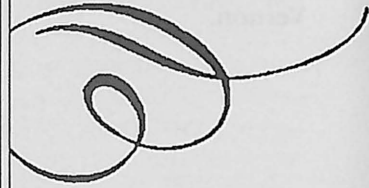


## THE INDIANA STATE LIBRARY: OPEN FOR EXPLORATION

*by Roberta L. Brooker*



Visitors are often astonished by the many rare treasures and the architectural design lying within the limestone walls of the Indiana State Library. Only those who have explored the State Library's collections can truly appreciate these historical marvels which make the State Library the best kept secret in Indiana. In fact, many exceptional treasures are still being discovered deep within the State Library's massive collections.

History does not change. It is the questions that we ask our history which make history expand into a kaleidoscope of ideas and subjects. The State Library is important because of the breadth and depth of the collection. Unlike many libraries, the State Library does not withdraw or weed any materials.

The State Library is a research library, open to the public, with many rare materials and items not found in other libraries. The Library specializes in many areas but is best known for its Indiana history and Genealogy collections. The Indiana collection of current and historical materials includes:

- Books by Indiana authors and books about Indiana
- City directories and telephone books
- County histories
- Hoosier biographies
- Maps and Atlases
- State documents and publications since the mid 1800s
- Photographs, sheet music, and broadsides all with a connection to Indiana history

The Manuscripts collection includes

- Private papers – example: The LaSalle Family Collection 1713 – 1904, in original French
- Civil War diaries and letters
- Papers of political figures

The Library's newspaper collection is the largest repository of Indiana newspapers in the world, with nearly 100,000 reels of microfilmed newspapers available for use on-site or through interlibrary loan. The State Library maintains a collection of original, historical Indiana newspapers, some of which date back to the early 1800s.

Although the rarest treasures are found in the Indiana Collection, by far the Library's most popular collection is its expansive Genealogy Collection – one of the major genealogy and local history collections in the Midwest. This collection includes materials about all states, including but not limited to:

- Federal census records 1790 - 1930
- Printed items in addition to microfilmed federal census records
- County records
- Ship passenger lists
- Military pension information
- Hundreds of CDs with family history information
- Subscription-only online databases, used in-house only
- Special resources for Native American and African-American family history

The State Library's unique collections are exceptional, but few are more surprising than the rare materials contained within the Federal Depository collection. While the term "Federal Depository" may in itself seem dry or ordinary, the truth is these rare documents and publications, posters, lithographs, and artifacts are nothing short of extraordinary. The State Library recently uncovered a collection of extremely unique lithographs portraying America's heroes in the historical battles and events that shaped our country. This cache of military portraits made an excellent addition to this exclusive collection that includes historic government documents, public service publications, and war propaganda, among much else.

These compilations are just a small part of the State Library's ever-growing collection of current and historical items and materials. The State Library is filled with many treasures awaiting exploration, and all are welcome to discover their Hoosier heritage at the Indiana State Library.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

On June 1, 2007, Roberta L. Brooker was appointed as the 32nd State Librarian for Indiana. She has spent nearly twenty years at the State Library, starting as a reference librarian in 1988. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Indianapolis and her Master's Degree in Library Science from Indiana University.

