Inform Quarterly

A Newsletter from the Illinois State Library's Reference Section

Jesse White • Secretary of State & State Librarian

From the Reference Desk

For all you historians and genealogists, the Illinois State Library is pleased to offer access to its expansive collection of county histories. From historical narratives to detailed descriptions of life in the late 1800s and early 1900s, you will discover a world of knowledge and interesting facts about the people, places and spirit of the times. More about this great historical resource is available in this issue of *Inform Quarterly*. Also in this issue is information about an online directory to foundations that offer funding, which may be of interest to you or your organization, as well as information on the Reference Desk's special exhibits in the State Library.

To request materials or find answers to your questions, please contact:

Reference phone • 217-782-7596

Reference fax • 217-524-0041

Map Collection • 217-782-5823

Patent & Trademark Division • 217-782-5659

"Ask the State Library"
www.cyberdriveillinois.com/library/forms/ email_ref.html

Access the State Library database at
http://library.ilcso.illinois.edu/isl

Illinois State Library hours:
Mon. – Fri., 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

We look forward to hearing from you!

In the Collection: County Histories

The State Library has one of the largest collections of county histories in the state, including not only traditional countywide historical narratives but titles that have countywide historical significance as well — more than 500 in all. County histories are a favorite item for genealogists tracing their family histories and getting a glimpse of what the area was like when their family lived there. Others may be looking for mention of a relation from long ago, and historians will find it beneficial in doing research on a specific region of the state and looking for clues to past details.

The collection covers all 102 Illinois counties; however, not all counties have their own separate volumes — some are shared (e.g. History of Mercer & Henderson Counties 1882). Most of the county histories were written in the late 19th century and reflect the spirit and flavor of the time with a sometimes folksy writing style. A large number of the original Illinois county histories dating from the late 1800s and early 1900s have an in-library use only, non-circulating status. Besides the original editions, the State Library also has reproductions of some of the histories, both in book and microfilm formats.

During the 1910s, historian Newton Bateman, with the collaboration of various writers, issued a series of Illinois county histories, each consisting of two volumes. The first volume is Bateman's work, "Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois," while the second volume is the history of the specific county. Please note that it is this second volume of a Bateman title that should be consulted when researching the history of a given county. Additionally, any Bateman title owned by the State Library in reprint or microfilm format consists of only the second volume.

While the great years of local county histories and atlases were written from 1880 to 1920, history has become more of a growing national hobby, and Illinois again has entered into a new spurt of county history publication. In 1989, Du Page County produced a sesquicentennial history. In 1993, author Carol Pirtle wrote a new history of Randolph County, appropriately titled, "Where Illinois Began." These newer titles offer an updated account of the area as viewed by early European-American settlers as they moved west.

Foundation Directory Online

One of the many databases the State Library subscribes to is the Foundation Directory Online Platinum. This resource offers extensive program details for 1,000+ foundations, detailed application guidelines for 6,000+ foundation grants, and sponsoring company information for corporate givers. It also includes a searchable file of approximately 250,000 grants of $10,000 or more awarded by the top 1,200 funders. The database may be searched by foundation name, state and city, fields of interest, type of support and geographic focus. In addition, the trustees, officers and donors search field and corresponding index allow users to search among 300,000 names.

WWW.CYBERDRIVEILLINOIS.COM