The Madison County Historical Society recently donated to the Illinois State Archives original Civil War muster rolls, enlistment papers and miscellaneous documents related to the 144th Infantry Regiment—a state militia unit based out of Madison County.

“The Madison County Historical Society has been in possession of these records for many years, and they remain in excellent condition,” said Secretary of State and State Archivist Jesse White. “We appreciate that the society realized these records should be in Springfield, where we keep the official records for the 144th Infantry Regiment.”

The 144th Infantry Regiment served as prison guards at the Alton Prison, one of four prisoner of war camps for Confederate soldiers in Illinois.

Madison County Historical Society donates Civil War items to Archives

Jenn Van Bibber, curator of Objects and Textiles for the Madison County Historical Society, and Illinois State Archives Director Dave Jones look over muster rolls for the 144th Illinois Infantry Regiment. The Madison County Historical Society recently donated the muster rolls to the State Archives.

Illinois Archival Repositories Directory

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For the Record

In June 2021, the Illinois State Archives will celebrate 100 years as an Illinois government agency. In anticipation of the centennial celebration, For The Record will feature past and current photographs of the various departments of the Archives.

The Illinois State Archives is responsible for housing state government records of permanent legal, historical and administrative value. Since 1957, it also has been responsible for records management of state government. In 1961, the General Assembly placed the Archives in charge of records management for local units of government as well; however, this mandate did not extend to professionally maintaining, housing and making accessible the permanent records of those local units of government. This changed in the 1970s, when the State Archives created the Illinois Regional Archives Depository (IRAD) System, a program that identifies, collects, preserves and maintains the permanent records of local government agencies through a network of seven regional depositories located on Illinois university campuses.

By the mid-1970s, many units of local government were struggling with how to maintain their permanent records and make them accessible to the public. In 1975 the Illinois State Archives applied for and received a two-year National Endowment for the Humanities grant of $211,800 to set up a regional depository system to house local government records. Agreements were made between the Office of the Secretary of State and six state universities to provide an initial framework for the system. The six universities were Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Illinois Universities; Illinois State University, and Sangamon State University (now known as the University of Illinois at Springfield).

Each university agreed to provide secure storage space and public access for local government records from its geographic area (ranging from 14 to 23 contiguous counties). The universities also agreed to provide graduate students to work as interns, staffing the depositories, and a staff member to serve as an on-campus supervisor. The Illinois State Archives administered the program by locating and transferring archival records to each depository, training graduate student interns in archival methods, and paying the graduate students’ salaries.

In the spring of 1976, the first graduate student interns were selected, and by August of that year, the IRAD System began targeting the records of local government agencies to house at the depositories. After expiration of the initial two-year grant period in 1978, the Secretary of State’s office fully funded the system. In October 1990, Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago became the seventh regional depository in the IRAD System. It houses local government records for Cook County and the City of Chicago.

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Participation by local governments in the system is voluntary. The IRAD System’s collection policy has resulted in the accession of approximately 8,850 cubic feet of local government records, 3,475 linear feet of bound volumes and 19,400 reels of microfilm. All records transferred into the IRAD System retain the chain of custody and full legal value.

Select Archives Publications

Abraham Lincoln in Illinois: A Selection of Documents from the Illinois State Archives (2008), teacher’s manual (87 pp.) and 35 document facsimiles with transcriptions – $10.00*


From the Ashes, 1872-1900: A Selection of Documents from the Proceedings Files of the Chicago City Council (1998), teacher’s manual (125 pp.) and 50 document facsimiles with transcriptions – $10*


*Teaching packets are available FREE to Illinois educational institutions by submitting a request on letterhead stationery. All other requests are filled for the fee listed. To order Illinois State Archives publications, please visit: http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/publications.html

The Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board (ISHRAB) is offering professional development scholarships to Illinois archivists and archival volunteers to attend an archival workshop/seminar of their choice in Illinois (or an online professional archival development course). Awards are available for up to $200 per applicant, per year, and may be used toward the cost of registration, housing and/or travel to the event. This is a reimbursable award and scholarships will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until the funding is exhausted. Complete information and an application form can be found at www.cyberdriveillinois.com (click on Departments, Illinois State Archives, Illinois Historical Records Advisory Board).

This archival educational opportunity is funded by a State Board Programming grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

Doc Helm Project reaches halfway point

The Illinois State Archives recently hit the midpoint of scanning photograph negatives of the Doc Helm Collection as part of a project to digitize and provide online access to the 21,000 photographs of that collection. Eddie Winifred “Doc” Helm served as the state photographer for Illinois from the 1940s to 1992. The Illinois State Archives received a $60,178 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission to scan, create metadata and place online the 21,000 photographs in the collection. Photo number 10,500 was a picture from the 1953 Illinois State Fair.
Participation by local governments in the system is voluntary. The IRAD System's collection policy has resulted in the accession of approximately 8,650 cubic feet of local government records, 3,475 linear feet of bound volumes and 19,400 reels of microfilm. All records transferred into the IRAD System retain the chain of custody and full legal value.

Local government agencies that have transferred records to IRAD include counties, townships, municipalities, school districts and special districts. Types of records in the collection include: county board proceedings files and meeting minutes; records of births, deaths and marriages; land records; naturalization records; probate records; court case files (civil and criminal), chancery cases (including divorces) and other court records; coroners' inquest records and files; township records; municipal records; school records; and other miscellaneous county records. Published information and finding aids regarding the IRAD records holdings can be found online at the Illinois State Archives website.

The historical records located at the IRAD facilities provide an important link to Illinois’ past. They are available to genealogists, researchers, government employees, attorneys and the general public. Researchers can utilize the IRAD System by visiting a depository in person or via telephone or mail requests.

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The 10,500th negative scanned from the Doc Helm Collection. Illinois State Fair, 1953.

Contractual worker Kathryn Powell scans the 10,500th negative in the Doc Helm Project on March 19, 2021.

The Illinois State Archives centennial (1921-2021): Illinois Regional Archives Depository (cont.)

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20 years of service

Secretary of State Jesse White recently recognized Records Archivist Jim Ladd for 20 years of service with the Office of the Secretary of State. Jim began his career with the Secretary of State's office at the Illinois State Library and became a State Archivist employee in 2007. He currently serves in the Operations Department in the Margaret Cross Norton Building, where he assists with reference requests and accessioning new records.
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For the Record

Spring 2021
www.cyberdriveillinois.com
Newsletter of the Illinois State Archives & The Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board
Jesse White
Secretary of State & State Archivist
Volume 35
Number 1

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(Cont. on pg. 2)

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The Illinois State Archives recently unveiled a small exhibit in the Reference Room commemorating its centennial. The display features a copy of the legislation that created the Archives, plus various photographs and items highlighting its 100 years of existence.