

Indiana State Documents: A History and a Critique

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The identification and acquisition of Indiana State Documents has been a function of the Indiana State Library for many years. Some of the Library's oldest documents are the territorial laws and early legislation of the newly founded state. From this beginning of a relatively modest output of published material, the amount and variety of state publications has multiplied to the proportions we know today. As the publications of the state grew in number so did the awareness of their potential to the general public and to other state governments and officials. Many agencies began to publish two "genres" of documents. The first genre, the "official" publication such as annual reports, were mandated by law. The second genre, the "public" publication, were for dissemination to the general public. Within this genre are bulletins, magazines, brochures and other special publications.

The way Indiana developed a state document depository program and how it is currently working are the subjects of this paper. Our attempts to make state publications available to the public and to encourage their use has been as successful as other states,

but I feel that we are at the crossroads of our program. The future depends on the library community's commitment to promote state documents and integrate them into the larger network of information sources.

It is important to define a state or public document (I will use the terms "state document" and "state publication" interchangeably), and also to differentiate between the State Library's responsibility in collecting state materials and the Archives' responsibility. The first definition is from a memo of Marcelle Foote, State Librarian, to Governor Otis Bowen. It is dated April 24, 1973:

A public document is defined as any book, booklet, magazine, or periodical, pamphlet, leaflet, sheet or other published items produced by printing press, multilith, multigraph, mimeograph, or similar quantity duplication means, and issued by an official department, division, bureau, board, commission, educational institution or agency of state government of Indiana for public information, guidance, or regulation. Copies of the annual reports of state departments made to the Governor, whether printed, processed or typewritten are also included.¹

The second definition is from the

Informational Statement of the Archives, Commission on Public Records:

A public document is a publication generated by each and every state official, department, board, commission, or agency of any kind whether printed, mimeographed, or duplicated in any way which is of general interest or use and which is not issued solely for use within the issuing office. Exempted from this definition are directives for internal administration, intra-office and interoffice publication and forms.²

From these two definitions you can get some idea of the wide variety of published materials that can be considered a state or public document.

These are the materials collected by the State Library. In other words: the State Library collects the (public) *published* documents of the State. The archives collects the (public) unpublished or procedural documents of the State.³

It has been the responsibility of the State Library for many years to collect the publications of state agencies.

In 1841 a law was passed that defined the responsibilities of the state librarian.⁴ In addition to house-keeping chores such as taking up the carpets and sweeping the State House rooms after the legislature, the librarian was required to collect and preserve the reports of department heads of state governments, and messages of the President of the United States and State Governors. This act appears to be the first statute to specify that state publications should be collected and housed in the State Library. Throughout the years there have been various laws that determine the number of copies of public documents that the library received and distribut-

ed. In many cases the library acted as a clearinghouse for state publications, receiving 300 copies for distribution to the other states and their libraries.⁵

In 1973, Indiana Public Law 27 was passed and it began the Document Depository Program as we know it today.⁶ The law established: 1) a definition of the public document and its need to be made public; 2) outlined the system of depository libraries; 3) established the *Checklist* as a part of the Program; and 4) established other programs that utilized State Documents.

The current depository law is found in the *Indiana Code*.⁷ The State Statutes mandate the depository program, establish the network of depository and secondary depository libraries, set the number and the type of public documents deposited in the program, note exemptions to the law, and mandate the responsibility of state agencies to deposit material in the State Library.

In the *Indiana Administrative Code* are the rules established by the agency (State Library) under the authority of the law.⁸ The rules establish the responsibilities of the secondary depository libraries and the State Library, note exemptions from depository programs, and establish the procedures for selection and determination of depository libraries. In other words, the *Indiana Code* establishes the relationship between State agencies and the State Library. The *Indiana Administrative Code* defines the relationship between the State Library and the secondary depository libraries.

The basic framework of the depository program is based on the individual state agencies providing the State Library with two to fifty copies of publications. The State Library keeps two copies for its collection and distributes the others to the secondary

depository libraries. The State Library is required to publish the *Checklist of Indiana State Documents* and distribute it to interested libraries and institutions. Secondary depository libraries make the documents available to the public within their area and provide reference and interlibrary loan services. Of course, the law and rules and regulations also note exemptions and provide direction for administration of the program.

Within this framework of the law, the Indiana Division administers the Document Depository Program. The Coordinator acquires material either by direct request to the agency or "standing order" from the agency. As new items arrive they are added to the current issue of the *Checklist*, sent to the depository libraries if copies are available, and processed for the Division's collection.

All state documents that are cataloged are a part of the Indiana Division's general collection and since 1978 are accessible on OCLC. Uncataloged material is added to clipping or vertical files. Acquisition sources vary. We use: (1) notices in the newspapers; (2) sample copies routed to the division; (3) mention made in prefaces, bibliographies, or professional articles; (4) "blind" requests to agencies for new material; or (5) *Monthly Checklist of State Publications*. Shipments to depository libraries are irregular, at least once a quarter, or more often if enough material accumulates.

The *Checklist of Indiana State Documents* is the official publication of the program. The *Checklist* is a quarterly list of new documents received by the Indiana State Library. At the end of the year, the four quarterly issues are cumulated into one issue with an index. The history of the *Checklist* goes back to about 1924 when the Catalog Division of the State

Library published a *Checklist of Indiana Documents* in *Library Occurrent*, a library journal published by the State Library. In 1973, the Coordinator of Services to State Government took over the editorial responsibilities and published the *Checklist* as a separate publication, in addition to the section in *Library Occurrent*, but instead as a separate publication by the State Documents Librarian. Even as a section in *Library Occurrent*, the *Checklist* offered libraries free material for their collections. Some recent changes in the *Checklist* include listing more complete addresses and marking depository items. The federal publication, *Monthly Checklist of State Publications*, lists citations to documents that we send to the Library of Congress.

The secondary depository libraries are arranged in fourteen areas that correspond to the ALSA regions. In addition, copies are also sent to the Library of Congress and the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago. Documents must be retained for at least five years. The four state university libraries must request approval before disposing of depository documents. The other secondary depository libraries can dispose of materials after five years at their own discretion.

The problems involved in the depository program are similar to any program that has a number of separate agencies involved in producing one end product. It should be emphasized that blame cannot be placed on any one agency. These are problems often faced by large, diverse groups such as, inadequate funding and staffing, and a changing understanding and interest in the program.

The depository program sounds as if it should run smoothly, and in fact, it works fairly well. The law is set up to put the burden of sending the materials to the State Library on the

individual agencies. However, this does not always work. Not every agency automatically sends documents to the State Library. Therefore, the responsibility falls to the librarian to discover new titles and consequently many documents are missed. If the state had a central printing office a large part of this problem would be solved. There are a number of other problems inherent in the system that do not generally reflect on state agencies or the State Library, but on the current structure of the depository system.⁹ A summary of these problems follows:

- A. Many state agencies are totally ignorant of the law. The State Library must constantly inform agencies of their responsibility and our needs.
- B. The law cannot be enforced; there are no penalties for those agencies not complying with law. Also, there is no incentive for the agencies to comply with the law; such as additional budget money for printing.
- C. There are frequent personnel changes in the state government that make continuity very difficult, many of the changes occurring in a regular four year cycle.
- D. Frequent changes in office location and the changes in responsibility of agencies cause confusion (i.e. the formation recently of the Department of Fire Prevention and Building Safety from the State Fire Marshall's office, Administrative Building Council, Boiler and Pressure Vessel Board, and the Bureau of Elevator Safety).
- E. Budget restraints hamper the wide publication of many documents. Many agencies are using commercial printers to do their printing and then selling

the product to the public. Needless to say, the agency is reluctant to provide the State Library with free copies.

- F. Philosophically, it is not uncommon for agencies to see no value in providing the Library with copies of their publications. This stems from a couple misconceptions. The first, a document is better distributed through the agency's own system of mailings. In other words, "The agency knows its public." Second, the library is basically not useful to people or used by people, or as one state official asked me, "Why should I give the library copies to gather dust on the shelves?" This response must prompt librarians to ask, "What does the library do to promote use?"
- G. The State Library is supposed to select the documents that are appropriate for distribution. But more often than not, the State Library does not know what is needed or wanted by the depository libraries and uses the "shot gun" method of distribution. If a sufficient quantity is received by the State Library, the document is distributed to the depository libraries.
- H. Probably the most basic problem is determining exactly what constitutes a state document. Even with the very precise definitions given at the beginning of this paper, many agencies, librarians, and patrons have difficulty in understanding what a document is. This is due to the wide variety of formats, publishing styles and purpose of documents.

There is a future for state documents in Indiana because state agencies will continue to produce valuable materials that can be made available to the public and they will always be an underutilized resource. State agencies are cooperative and willing to assist when they can. This spirit of helping needs to be encouraged and recognition given when appropriate.

Improvement or change cannot be haphazard. Evaluation and recommendations are needed first. This step was taken by the state's long-range plan. The *Indiana Long-range Plan for Library Services and Development: 1985-1990* includes in goal three the following objective:

"3.8. Use of federal and state documents provided by depository libraries in Indiana will increase 20% by 1990."¹⁰

On March 10, 1985, the *Indiana Plan for Depository Library Services*, a component of the long-range plan was published.¹¹ This plan specifically addressed the problems and potential of the state document depository program. It represents the base line for improvements in the depository program.

Improvement of the depository program can and should be implemented at two levels. The first level is with the mechanics of the program. For example, the Indiana State Documents Coordinator is developing a project to utilize the currently assigned Records Coordinators within each agency to alert and supply the State Library with documents. This will provide a wider network of contacts for communication with state agencies. By 1987, the program should be running.

The second level is to work at creating an awareness within the profession and among citizens of the state to encourage use of state documents and advertise their capabilities. This responsibility falls to librarians

not only in the depository libraries, but also those served by depository libraries. I hope that in the future efforts will be made by various professional organizations and councils to encourage document gathering and use in Indiana.

Creating and sustaining a successful state documents program takes a great deal of hard work, enthusiasm, and encouragement. The first step is complete. We have a depository law and a program that has been functioning since 1974. The next step of using the program to its potential depends on the depository libraries, state agencies and the public becoming better informed, fostering cooperation, and promoting its value. That is the road map for the future.

NOTES

1. Marcelle K. Foote, "Memo Regarding the Documents Depository Act" (mimeographed), April 24, 1973.
2. "Informational Statement of the Archives, Commission on Public Record" (mimeographed), n. d.
3. *Indiana Code* 5-15-5.1-5[a(10)].
4. 1841 *General Laws*, XXXII.
5. 1899 *Indiana Acts*, CCX.
6. Pub. L. No. 27, 1973 *Indiana Acts*.
7. *Indiana Code* 4-23-7.1-25 et seq.
8. 590IAC 1-3-1 et seq.
9. Patricia Matkovic, "Docs Law Aids Collection," *Focus on Indiana Libraries*, 31(No. 4 July/August 1977), p. 6.
10. Carol O. Rogers, ed, *Indiana Long-Range Plan for Library Services and Development: 1985-1990*. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1984), p. 35.
11. "Indiana Plan for Depository Library Service," *Focus on Indiana Libraries*, 39(No. 3 March 1985), pp. 7-10.