

# Historical Resources

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## Mission

To promote, preserve and make accessible Indiana's historical artifacts, papers, properties, photographs and legal records of government.

## Summary of Activities

Historical Resources programs are managed by the Historical Bureau, the Commission on Public Records, the Department of Natural Resources, and the War Memorials Commission.

**Historical Bureau** activities promoting public awareness of Indiana's history include coordinating special events and preserving and marking historic places and buildings. The Bureau collects, preserves and makes accessible books, papers, photographs, pamphlets, published state documents, and newspapers related to the history of Indiana. It edits and publishes Indiana history books, pamphlets and articles; coordinates an annual Indiana History Day and Archeology Week; develops public education materials; celebrates special events such as the Indiana Territory Bicentennial; administers grant programs for these purposes, and shares coordination of county historians and the Junior Historical Society with the private Indiana Historical Society.

The **Commission on Public Records** manages the birth-to-death life cycle of all government records, preserving the most valuable legal and historical records in the State Archives, the holdings of which include government records dating from the territorial period of the 1790s. The Archives include over 25,000 square feet of records, including 100,000 aerial photographs.

The **Department of Natural Resources (DNR)** Division of Museums and Historic Sites includes sixteen historic properties throughout the state. The Division identifies, collects, preserves and interprets the natural and cultural history of Indiana. Through on-site interpretive tours, programs, and special events, the historic sites collectively strive to educate the visiting public about the state.

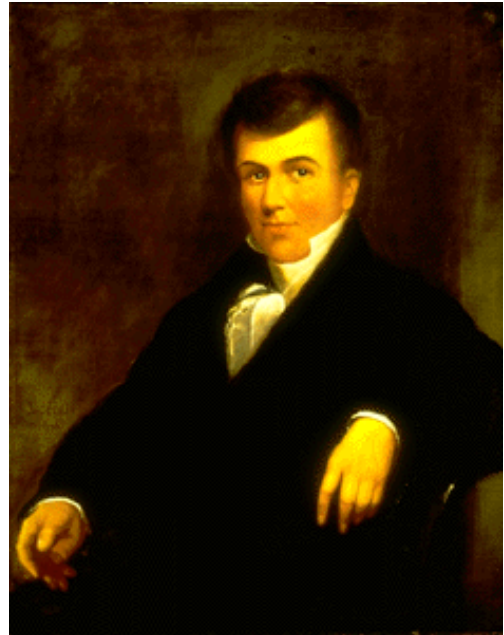
The **War Memorials Commission** manages the War Memorial Plaza and Soldiers and Sailors Monument in downtown Indianapolis, including the Military Museum and Colonel Eli Lilly Civil War Museum.

## External Factors

Indiana's success in preserving and promoting its historical resources has led to increasing demands created by an increasing number of visitors and researchers, coupled with an additional need for research material and increasing numbers of historic places, markers and buildings. For example, the new State Museum expects a 300 percent increase in visitation, while the DNR division of Historic Artifacts and Places reported a 40 percent increase in attendance over the past six years.

The Commission on Public Records is confronting the rapid deterioration and disappearance of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century legal records, brittle paper records and the ever-changing technology of late 20<sup>th</sup> century electronic records, while reporting nearly 250,000 monthly accesses to its web site this year.

Use of the War Memorials has necessitated extensive renovations, which are currently being completed. In addition, the opening of the private Indiana Historical Society's new building in 1999 highlighted its contributions and mission to collect, preserve and disseminate all Indiana history with a primary concentration on research materials and education and a secondary role for exhibits.



Jonathan Jennings, First Governor of Indiana

## Evaluation and Accomplishments

Despite an increasing number of visitors and researchers, improved physical and staff services are provided each year. Public Records patrons have increased more than 100 percent since the early 1990s, while a smaller staff handles a more than 200 percent increase in the number of legal records created, preserved and made accessible. The 1816 and 1851 Constitutions were restored and placed on public display in the State House

The Historical Bureau added 19 historical markers, distributed quarterly publications to 3,600 institutions, encouraged 2,200 students to participate in Indiana History Day, completed 60 grant projects, and surveyed three historic buildings in three counties. The War Memorials Commission hosted over twenty major events involving a half million attendees.



## Plans for the Biennium

The Commission Public Records staff will work with volunteers to place all indexes to records on the Internet after microfilming the original records. There will be a major effort to collect legal public records that are inaccessible, organize them, and make them accessible to the public. On-line use of public records at the State Archives is expected to top 500,000 accesses per month.

The DNR will add three new interpretive programs, create a cemetery database, open a full operation at Mansfield Mill, collaborate with public broadcasting stations for a series on historic sites, develop a program for historic trails, and prepare a comprehensive study of recommended improvements to historic sites. The new State Museum will offer greatly increased public access to a variety of historical exhibits and artifacts.

