

Departmental Notes

WITH THE CURTAILMENTS in WPA appropriations the first of June, and the shift of all remaining workers from previously assigned jobs to work related directly to war efforts, many long standing projects sponsored by the Department, or using the facilities of the Department, were discontinued. Others had ceased operations prior to that date. The project with the longest record of operation in the Historical Building was the Iowa Writers Project, which with from five to twenty workers, had used the newspaper collections of the Department extensively for over seven years. Another project to close was at work calandering and indexing the larger collections of private papers in the Manuscript Division. Likewise ended was a small project tracing the evolution of state agencies, bureaus, commissions and departments from the territorial years to date for use in the Public Archives Division. Still another useful project was a book mending and repair unit which for four years was of great assistance to the starving Historical Library. Two sign-card writers and illustrators were also lost, as was a project of six at work alphabetising the 1915 census cards in the Public Archives Division.

BY ARRANGEMENT with the Iowa Writers Project director, Mr. Chester E. Billings, the research records and data compiled by that Project were received by the Manuscript Division for custody. These records, covering seven years of work, filed in large legal sized carton boxes, have already been indexed and arranged by the workers on the Project.

The Manuscript Division has also received during the past quarter a fine Civil War letter from Mrs. Jay Thorpe of Onawa, Iowa, written by a soldier of the Southern forces to a Northern acquaintance in the heat of a splendid fury. Other interesting letters of the Ante-Bellum days and of the war as well were received from Miss Mary Eddy, of Perryville, Ohio, letters of her Uncle, Capt. John Coulter, and others.

Photostats of early circus records and of the Western Stage Company were among other records obtained by the Manuscript Division.

APPROXIMATELY 400 photographs were received from the Iowa WPA Art Project showing progress and developments on many construction and work projects by the WPA; many selected subjects from the Iowa WPA Art Project's contribution to the Index of American Design were also acquired from that project.

THE DEMAND for certifications of census records by those seeking birth records has remained relatively stable during the past quarter. Certifications for the three months, not including inquiries for records not found, ran: 880,100,832.

The appointment of Mr. Ralph Young as Assistant Curator and Superintendent of the Public Archives was announced the middle of May by the Board of Trustees of the Department. Mr. Young succeeds the late Fred L. Mahannah who died October 12, 1941. Familiar with state government operations from long experience, Mr. Young brings to a herculean task a full knowledge of the problems involved.

THE MUSEUM DIVISION acquired a hand drawn fire cart No. 1 used by the Iowa State College in its first years. This was the gift of Mr. Harold Knight of Ames, Iowa. From Mrs. F. E. Spaulding, Des Moines, the museum received an Indian drum and two Indian vases.

The Director of the Museum Division, Jack W. Musgrove, and his assistant, Maynard F. Reece, are at work preparing an illustrated field book on Iowa water fowl based upon records accumulated by this Department and other sources for the State of Iowa.

June 14, Kenneth E. Colton, Director of the Manuscript Division and Assistant Editor of THE ANNALS OF IOWA, spoke before the Tama County Historical Society meeting at Tama, Iowa, on "Acres of Diamonds—Local History." The Tama County Historical Society at latest report is nearing the 500 mark in paid in memberships, a record worthy of imitation by other county societies in the state.

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