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A History of the League of Women Voters of Indianapolis

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1920 - 1970

By
Barbara E. Zimmer

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of History and Political Science

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SOURCES OF DATA

Because the League of Women Voters is currently celebrating its Fiftieth Anniversary, a concerted effort is being made to collect memorabilia and documents relating to the first fifty years of the organization. All available minutes, reports, bulletins, scrapbooks, broadsides and program materials are being collected. The Indiana League of Women Voters has transferred its archives to the State Historical Society Library and they are most valuable to this study. Because of the gaps in the collections for the Indianapolis League, interviews with former officers of the League whose active leadership extended over periods not covered by the data have been used. In addition, the Indianapolis News, Indianapolis Star and Indianapolis Times have been consulted for corroboration as well as for information on the entire period.

This thesis is one of a number of histories currently being prepared. The League of Women Voters of the United States has prepared several brief studies throughout the years and these have been valuable in placing the local League in context with the national organization. The definitive history of the national organization is being prepared by Dr. Louise Young, whose summarizing speech at the National Convention in Chicago on May 1, 1968, points the way to an
understanding of the national development as a whole. The manuscript history of the Indiana League of Women Voters prepared by Mrs. Walter S. Greenough also provides the necessary contextual relationship for this study.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On April 16, 1920, the Woman’s Franchise League of Indiana, Indianapolis Branch, voted to disband and to establish a League of Women Voters in its place, carrying the members of the Franchise League on its roster for the first six months. Votes for women, the single purpose for which they, and others like them across the continent, had worked, was certain of accomplishment. The Federal Amendment, granting suffrage to women, had passed the Congress in the previous year and ratification by a sufficient number of states seemed certain.

Two months previous the National American Woman’s Suffrage Association had convened for the last time in Chicago concurrently with its offspring, the National League of Women Voters. Delegates pledged their new organization to two goals: "fostering education in citizenship," and "supporting needed legislation."\(^1\) Similarly at the last convention of the Woman’s Franchise League of Indiana held in April in Indianapolis, the transformation into the Indiana League of Women Voters was effected.

As a branch of this national and state organization, the

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Indianapolis League of Women Voters necessarily reflected change and growth which may well have been initiated elsewhere than in the Hoosier capital. Local circumstances and personnel give each unit of an organization a flavor of its own, however, and it is the purpose of this study to trace the local impact of the organization as it reflects the programs and policies of the larger organization, as well as the history of the local organization itself.

It is not the intention of this study to chronicle every event and program in the fifty years of the League in Indianapolis; rather, by concentrating on a few significant areas, to examine the League's development in concrete terms.

Certainly the most widely recognized contribution which the organization has made to the nation has been in the area variously called citizen education or voters' service. President Nixon recently wrote:

For fifty years the League of Women Voters has provided Americans in every state with information on candidates and issues and it has furnished a non-partisan platform from which all candidates may be seen and heard. These activities have strengthened government and have helped to sustain the public weal.2

The League in Indianapolis carried on not only these activities, but also brought to the community opportunities to study government in

2Richard Nixon, A Proclamation By the President of the United States of America, April 17, 1969, The White House.
theory and practice, a recognized contribution to the field of adult education. \(^3\) Programs and activities related to citizen education are therefore studied in detail.

Educating others presupposes self-education. As soon as Indianapolis League women became aware of inequity in the election and registration laws and the inefficiency in local government they were seized with a zeal to clean house. They adopted and worked for reforms which included the elimination of patronage, the use of primary elections, better registration laws, a shorter ballot to make the voter's choice more meaningful and, eventually, a restructuring of the local government itself. These reforms must be treated separately.

Finally there is the broader story of an organization struggling with problems of membership and finance, translating the progressive goals of a national organization into specific legislation in a conservative community, and fostering international cooperation amidst the "latent isolationist attitudes and sentiments common to much of the Middle West." \(^4\)

The relevance of the study in the contemporary context lies in the attempt to answer these broad questions: What were the goals and methods of the Indianapolis League of Women Voters? How did the

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organization change and develop? How effective was the League in attaining its goals in the community?
The primary aim of the League of Women Voters has continuously been to promote informed and active participation in government. Even before it had transformed itself into the Indianapolis League of Women Voters, the Indianapolis Branch of the Woman’s Franchise League had cooperated with the Seventh District Federation of Clubs to open a citizenship school, directed by Mrs. Walter Greenough of the League. Meeting daily from September 22 to September 27, 1919, the women who enrolled were confronted with a formidable program which included sessions on public speaking, practical politics with primary emphasis on political parties, organization, civil government, and a host of national issues including food control, taxes, the League of Nations, Americanization, charitable and industrial questions, and the League of Women Voters.

League women continued to conduct their own classes in citizenship for several years although they heard prominent speakers on social welfare legislation, international relations and other areas of concern. It was not until they began the fruitful association with Howard Jensen, Professor of Sociology at Butler University, that they sought professional
help. Professor Jensen gave his first speech on "Propaganda and Politics" to the League in March, 1925, at an open meeting. Two years later, in October, 1927, Professor Jensen gave a six-session course on government in its relation to rapidly changing economic and social conditions, under League auspices. In the interval, while Miss Sara Lauter, president, and her board of directors were planning for this more advanced kind of citizen education, other goals became involved. By charging four dollars a ticket for the course, and offering the ticket to League members at a dollar discount, the equivalent of the yearly dues, Miss Lauter hoped to encourage new memberships as well as make some money for the League, all the while educating members and the public at large. In September, just before the course was to begin, Mrs. Yeaton, a director, suggested that some night or late afternoon meetings be held for employed women. This provoked the first of many concerned board discussions about reaching out to other segments of the community and resulted in a real attempt to do so. Dr. Jensen's lectures were changed from Wednesday at 2:15 at the Propyleum to "Friday at 3:45 at the playhouse." The innovation was successful. After paying Dr. Jensen and the playhouse, the League managed to make about $100 and added approximately twenty new members.

5League of Women Voters of Indianapolis, Board Minutes, September, 1927.

6Board Minutes, October, 1927. The playhouse is the Booth Tarkington Civic Theater.
Although Dr. Jensen moved to the University of Missouri in the following year, he had helped the League in the interval to set up citizenship schools at Butler in April, 1926, and 1927. Following the first citizenship school a New Voters' League was formed at Butler University with Miss Jane Osborne as president. With characteristic zest the young women escaped the citizenship school format by electing to study electric power and touring a power plant.

The League did not abandon citizenship schools to professionals however, and supplemented the Jensen lectures in November, 1927, with a more elementary approach to voter education, giving a play called "The Voter's Dream," and a speech on "Government in Relation to Everyday Life," at community centers throughout the city, using various League women as their schedules permitted.

The more formal citizenship school was only one of many forms the League used for voter education. An intensive citizen education campaign, featuring League speakers at every organization to which they could wrangle an invitation, broadsides with slogans, open meetings, and newspaper publicity, were used to promote legislation which the League felt was needed. A legacy from the Franchise League catapulted the League into just such a campaign in the very first year. The citizenship amendment, one of thirteen amendments to the state constitution which had been passed by the 1919 session of the General Assembly, had been actively supported in that session by the Franchise League. It
provided that:

In all elections not otherwise provided for in the Constitution, every citizen of the United States of the age of twenty-one years and upward who shall have resided in the state during the six months, and in the township 60 days and in the ward or precinct 30 days immediately preceding such election, shall be entitled to vote in the township or precinct where he or she may reside. 7

The effect of the amendment was to remove the word "male" from the constitutional provisions for voting and, while this change actually had no effect upon the law since suffrage for women was secured by amending the Constitution of the United States, it did bring the state constitution into conformity. The real reason for supporting the amendment was that, prior to 1921, any male could vote in Indiana who had declared his intention of becoming a citizen which resulted in many aliens at the polls who had never completed their naturalization.

The other twelve amendments were sponsored by vigorous and large groups. All of them passed the 1921 session. But the newly-founded League found itself with another sizeable task in connection with the amendments. It had to become familiar with the provisions of the Indiana constitution setting forth the amending process, and in the process, sponsor with the other groups a bill providing for a special election for the consideration of the amendments alone, to be held September 6, 1921. This was necessary because of the language of the Indiana constitution, which not only required that any amendment should go

7Laws of the State of Indiana, 1919, p. 868.
through two consecutive sessions of the General Assembly in exactly the same form, but that it must then be submitted to the electorate of the state, and secure a majority vote of the electors. The difficulty lay in the interpretation of "electors" to mean all those voting at the election. Therefore, if an amendment was submitted at a general election, it could only pass if it had a majority of all those voting at that election. Too many voters failed to vote on the amendment to secure such a majority. Anyone failing to vote on the amendment in effect cast a negative vote. It therefore became necessary to provide for special elections for the consideration of amendments, if there were to be any hope of securing the requisite referendum majority. The bill providing for a special election also was successfully piloted through the General Assembly by the interested groups, including the League.

From the adjournment of the legislature, early in March, until the September 6th special election, the League actively spread information about the citizenship amendment.

Fortunately, it could call upon the experience of suffrage leaders who had originally sponsored the amendment and who had the know-how of reaching the public and securing wide spread support for an issue. It also had the advantage of a carry-over of a large membership from the suffrage organization, and the impetus of the suffrage campaign which was transferred to the citizenship amendment issue.8

The delegates to the state League convention preceding the 1921

General Assembly had taken the position that the League was not prepared to support the other twelve amendments, but had the obligation of disseminating information about them, presenting impartially the arguments for and against them. They set aside the month of August to sponsor forums on the amendments throughout the state, and careful programs for the forums were developed. The amendments covered a variety of subjects: apportionment; lengthening the terms of the two-year state officials and the two-year county officials to four years; providing for the Governor to have the power to veto separate items of an appropriation bill; providing for qualifications to practice law; providing for a state income tax.

The results of the special election were amazing, and in some ways, disconcerting. So vigorously had the League and other groups campaigned for the citizenship amendment, that it was the only one that passed. The vote was 130,242 to 80,574. Every other amendment lost by margins ranging from 20,000 to 134,000.9

Flushed with this success, the League began to tackle other reforms, confident of the power of the franchise they had worked so hard to win. The light turnout at the elections of 1922 was an embarrassment which the national League, under the leadership of its newly-elected president, Miss Belle Sherwin, determined to remove. The League launched a Get-Out-The-Vote campaign prior to the presidential election of 1924. The campaign was nation-wide in scope and was

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9Ibid., p. 8.
directed by state coordinators. Mrs. Walter S. Greenough of Indianapolis was Indiana chairman.

In Indianapolis the League set up registration booths in downtown department stores, registering over 2,000 voters in the four booths before the election. The Indianapolis Times reflected the extent and thoroughness of the campaign, carrying on its front page for several weeks a poem by Pauline Holmes:

You better pick your party and you better pick your man
Or you'll have to seek seclusion and hide the best you can.
Get your mind made up to voting in the next November bout
Or the Voters' League'll getcha if you don't watch out.

The campaign slogan, "Vote As You Please, But Vote," appeared on posters and bumper stickers. At a time when processions of robed Klansmen were marching in the streets of Indianapolis, when Governor McCray was sentenced to the penitentiary and the people were about to elect Klansman Ed Jackson to succeed him, and when D. C. Stephenson, Grand Dragon of the Klan in Indiana, could sit in his luxurious suite of offices in Indianapolis and announce unchallenged, "I am the law in Indiana," the Indianapolis League was distributing the pledge of good citizenship by Maude Wood Park, first national president. It was an essential part of the Get-Out-The-Vote campaign and illustrates the temperament and the ideology of the organization:

Believing in government by the people, for the people, of the people, I will do my best

First: to inform myself about public questions, the principles and policies of political parties and the qualifications of candidates
for public office.

Second: To vote according to my conscience at every election, primary or final, at which I am entitled to vote.

Third: To obey the law even when I am not in sympathy with all its provisions.

Fourth: To support by all fair means the principles that I approve of.

Fifth: To respect the right of others to uphold convictions that may differ from my own.

Sixth: To regard my citizenship as a public trust.

Indianapolis women were practical, too, and their suggestion to the county chairmen that they save rent money by using the schools for polls was adopted, climaxing the campaign.

The results in terms of voter turn-out, "in Indiana, where the interest in politics is perpetual, were gratifying." A joint statement signed by leaders of both parties said in part:

The party groups recognize in the League of Women Voters a citizen agency that is seeking and disseminating authentic information on the basic facts of government and that is developing informed and intelligent voters. Therefore, we urgently recommend that the women of Indiana unite in a concerted effort to bring every qualified voter to the polls November 4, to the end that government may continue to be a government by the people.  

According to a statement of the National Association of Municipalities, Indiana led all states with 83% of the vote cast. However the state had

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11 League of Women Voters of Indiana, The Woman Voter, April, 1924, p. 5.
already been far ahead of the national average, having cast 75% of its potential vote in 1920. Nationally the campaign increased the vote from a little under 50% to a fraction above it. Later, Marguerite M. Wells, national president from 1934-1944, was to remark on this campaign, "It was then that the League learned that increasing the number of people intelligent and responsible about government was a task for every day in the year and not for election time only." Assessing its value in Indiana, Mrs. Greenough stated "it demonstrated the value of pre-election activity and gave the League a chance to emphasize its non-partisan character." It also brought Indianapolis women face to face with facts of political life which they believed made their participation less effective than it should have been and which they intended to change: political parties and the election laws themselves.

Although long aware of the power of the political parties, and long concerned in getting that power on the side of suffrage, which was finally accomplished in 1916 by the National American Woman Suffrage Association in its concerted and successful campaign to get suffrage on the Republican and Democratic party platforms, the relationship of the new organization to political parties themselves posed a problem from the beginning. The Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Woman's

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Franchise League of Indiana, held April 16, 1920, at the Claypool Hotel in Indianapolis, disbanded that organization and formed the League of Women Voters of Indiana just as the local branch had done. Attacking the problem of political affiliation for the new organization, the convention heard three speakers, Mrs. Carlisle for the Republicans, Mrs. Alice Foster McCullough for the Democrats, and Miss Sara Lauter who "spoke on the advantages of non-partisanship." Miss Lauter's point of view prevailed and in February, 1921, the Board of Directors of the Indianapolis League "agreed that it was safest and most advisable for local Leagues to endorse neither candidates nor political issues." 

As individuals, however, these women were actively affiliated with the political parties. As one historian described it:

The Indianapolis League finds itself with a thousand loyal members, all devoting themselves to making themselves worthy of the privilege of the franchise and seeking to do it through the promotion of laws for the benefit of women and children. . . . The most significant thing about the organization is that it numbers in its membership women of both political parties who seek, through the medium of party affiliation, to get desired results.

To obtain results it was first necessary to gain some influence within the party structure, and a state League legislative committee, composed

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15 Board Minutes, February, 1921.

chiefly of Indianapolis women, worked in the 1923 General Assembly on a proposal to change the election law in order to give men and women equal, or "50-50," representation in the parties. The League proposed that both a man and a woman be elected from each precinct, that members elected from the precincts would constitute the county committee and the 50-50 representation should be continued through the county, district and state committees of each political party. The men of the 1923 General Assembly were not prepared to grant this proposal but League women kept working, formulating the first discussion groups on political parties in 1923, and continuing to contact the legislators.

By the 1925 legislative session the legislators were more amenable to League influence and passed a modification of the bill which provided that a vice-chairman of the opposite sex be appointed by the elected precinct committeeman, instead of elected by the voters. There was, however, no prohibition against a woman being elected as chairman and the 50-50 representation in the party hierarchy remained as it was written in the original bill. 17

Before the election of 1928 the Indianapolis League held a government institute in cooperation with individual sponsors and the Indiana League. Mr. Walter J. Millard, field representative of the National Municipal League, covered the subject "How to Make Your

Ballot Count," and Professor Joseph P. Harris of the University of Wisconsin, gave his analysis of "A Permanent Registration Law for Indiana." Following this institute, the League interviewed the candidates for the General Assembly on their position regarding registration laws and held candidates' meetings. The League was supporting a permanent registration measure which would be most convenient to the voter and could be operated with economy. It contained provisions for adequate means of canvassing the lists of voters to keep them up-to-date, required the signature of the voter at the time of registration and of voting, and provided for year-round registration at a central registration place in charge of a single responsible official.

The state League was also working for a direct primary but since this had become a political issue when it was adopted as part of the Republican platform to remove the offices of Governor and United States Senator from the primary, little could really be done by the League except to question the individual candidates about the issue.

By 1928 the voters were thoroughly disgusted with the election scandals resulting from the repeal of the former registration law and a desire for honest elections gave impetus to the drive for the new registration law. The state League set up a committee to draft a model bill which included Mr. Ralph E. Carter, Indianapolis, Mr. Winfield Miller, State Senator, Lewis Taylor, Legislative Chairman of the Farm Bureau, Dan Simms, Legislative Chairman of the Indiana Bar Association,
Professor Frank G. Bates, Indiana University, Mrs. H. R. Misener, former Representative in the General Assembly, and Mrs. Greenough and Miss Florence Kirlin, Executive Secretary of the Indiana League, as Ex-Officio members. Helped by Mr. Charles Kettleborough of the State Legislative Reference Bureau, the committee was ready with a draft bill for the critical analysis of Professor Joseph P. Harris of the University of Wisconsin who was the recognized expert in the field of election laws and particularly registration laws. Further polishing incorporated his suggestions and the bill was drafted, copies were sent to the Governor, the chairmen of the major political parties, County Auditors, whose jobs were enlarged by the bill, the State Board of Election Commissioners, to many newspapers and lawyers throughout the state. Each League had a copy and a digest was sent to each member of the General Assembly, offering the entire bill on request. The pre-election activity of 1928 stressed the need for the bill, and public education about the law continued through the winter.

Opposition developed in the political parties. The unfortunate registration legislation of the past had convinced many honest citizens that it was hopeless to attempt to frame a satisfactory registration law. The atmosphere in the General Assembly was so hostile that few people believed the bill would survive the elections committee. "But it did, and in the midst of a bitter fight the bill weathered each crisis in both houses and was finally passed. It was a signal victory and a deep disappointment
to have the measure vetoed by the Governor." 18

The Indiana League continued to work for this legislation and after successful and intensive work in the following General Assembly was again disappointed by a pocket veto. In 1933, however, the League's persistence was rewarded and the permanent registration bill was signed into law. 19

The Indianapolis League continued its pre-election work biennially. In 1926 the League first had candidate questionnaire coupons printed in the local papers and held four candidate meetings where candidates from each party presented their cases and answered questions from the audience. These meetings seemed to fill a need and Indianapolis had initiated a program which, by 1928, had become an assumed pre-election activity, along with the Get-Out-The-Vote campaigns, for Leagues throughout the state.

Candidate meetings prior to each election were a regular feature of League program in Indianapolis throughout the remaining decades. The Bulletin for September, 1932, noted that:

The League will present legislative candidates of the Republican, Democratic, and Socialist parties at an open meeting Wednesday evening, October 19. Candidates or their spokesmen will be given an opportunity to express their personal opinions and


explain their party's stand on questions of public concern. . . . The League in planning this meeting is pursuing its policy of stimulating public interest in elections and giving voters an opportunity to know more about individual candidates of all parties.

In 1934, candidates' meetings became more elaborate with a series of Wednesday morning meetings from April 11 to May 2 preceding the primary election. Each of the four meetings was prefaced by an explanation of the legal qualifications and duties of the office for which the candidates were running, after which the candidates spoke. Offices covered were Mayor, Prosecuting Attorney, Township Trustees and Assessors (Washington and Center Townships), County Commissioner, and Juvenile and Criminal Court judges.

Although the League arranged candidates' meetings for each succeeding election, the format was always being revised. In 1936, for example, when the Board of Directors was considering which candidates should be invited, both Congressional candidates and/or candidates for the State Legislature, "it was decided that, due to the time limit and the fact that all the Congressional candidates cannot be counted upon to come, and the confusion of issues in the state and national field, the meeting be limited to state legislative candidates."21 League proselytizing began to expand too, since the format included a League

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21 Board Minutes, October, 1936.
speaker, Miss Chambers, on the value of the merit system. By 1938 this format was enlarged. The candidates for United States Congress and State Legislature were invited to a luncheon at the Atheneum to listen to the entire League legislative program from the merit system, marriage law revision, the removal of State Superintendent of Public Instruction from the list of elective offices, school attendance and child labor, to the improvement of registration and nominating methods.

Reenforcing the League presentation at a luncheon for candidates at the Lincoln Hotel on October 30, 1940, was guest speaker Professor Ford P. Hall of Indiana University, who said the time had come for some political leader to snatch the opportunity to urge expanding the merit system in Indiana.

Such a leader or party would not only make a name for himself or itself, but would win the eternal gratitude and loyalty of such groups as the League of Women Voters which have so long valiantly championed the cause of better government in the state of Indiana.

While the candidates' meetings, in being used as a forum for League opinions, had become less useful for voter information about the candidates than they had been before or would be since, the citizenship schools carried on. The Indianapolis League held an elaborate two-day citizenship school at Ayres' Auditorium on October 24 and 25, 1934. Mrs. W. W. Ramsey of Chicago, recognized by the National League of Women

\[\text{Indianapolis Star, October 31, 1940.}\]
Voters as the most competent administrator of such schools, launched the opening session by leading a discussion about the elements of success and failure in the United States' democratic form of government. Professor Max Lerner of Bronxville addressed the afternoon session on "Changing Functions of Government." The following morning the ladies showed their deep interest in depression-bred problems as well as an unusual courage. They heard Professor George W. Starr, Director of the Department of Business Research at Indiana University, on "Problems of Public Finance," Mr. C. A. Jackson, Director of the Gross Income Tax Department in Indiana, who explained the tax, its administration and its use, and Mr. Edward Barce, Assistant to the Attorney General, who explained the intangibles tax law and its administration. Citizenship schools during the next four years were conducted by leading League women and the emphasis was still on explaining League program and legislation to advance League-sponsored legislation. Concrete information on the mechanics of voting and sample ballots were included, but the emphasis was on information for new League members, not for the voting public as a whole.

The League did go to the community in 1940, however, with an elaborate First Voters Roundup, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Horace Shonle. All three newspapers featured advance stories, with pictures, for two weeks preceding the event which was held May 1, 1940, in the War Memorial. Mayor Sullivan proclaimed the date First Voters Day;
the cooperation of Butler and Indiana Universities and all major civic organizations was sought and obtained. All young people and naturalized citizens first eligible to vote in the primary the following week were invited to watch a skit performed by Butler's Thespis Club called "Election Day in the Morning." The skit, written by Mrs. Frank Cox, featured the Mayor as a voter and explained the complete voting procedure. Principal speaker, Dr. Roy V. Peel, Professor of Government at Indiana University and Director of Research of the National Municipal League, spoke on the responsibilities of citizenship and Robert E. Barton Allen, Director of Broadcasting at Indiana University, was master of ceremonies at an "Information Please," skit. In addition there were bands, a voting machine for demonstrations, and a contest for questions which would stump the expert panel. Despite the overwhelming amount of publicity, participation by other organizations, and good hard work by over forty League members, Mrs. Shonle reported to the board, "The meeting was not as large as had been anticipated."23 Yet, the minutes continue, "The general feeling however, is that it was a definite contribution to democracy."

The League's contribution to democracy, that is working for an informed and active electorate, emerged as the single goal for the wartime effort of the national organization. Following the attack on Pearl

23 Board minutes, May, 1940.
Harbor, "in a spirit of earnest re-evaluation of the League's usefulness in wartime," the National Council met in Indianapolis on January 8, 1942. Out of this council came the wartime declaration of the League of Women Voters with the subsequent Wartime Service Program. The declaration stated that the council recognized that our national existence as a self-governing, free people was threatened and the war must be won. It wondered whether it was justified in continuing to exist in the emergency situation. And it concluded:

... the League Council votes unanimous conviction that if an organization having the purpose of the League of Women Voters did not exist today, it should be created. That no grant of executive power in a war emergency, however great, lessens the importance of an alert, understanding, critical body of citizens, active continuously in relation to the functioning of government. Without this the people would become passive and democracy at its very roots, die.24

During the war, the League was reorganized into small neighborhood groups since gasoline rationing made it difficult to meet often in the center of the city. Broadside from the national office were distributed by the thousands in Indianapolis, informing those citizens who would read them about the Battle of Production, explaining Lend-Lease, price and wage controls, combating isolationism and explaining Dumbarton Oaks, Bretton Woods, and, finally, the San Francisco Conference.25

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25 For a complete story of the League's war-time service see Goodwin, History.
Yet despite these and other program activities, especially involving foreign relations, the voters service pre-election activity went on. In 1941 voting machine demonstrations were held downtown and a great deal of effort was made by League women to repeat the demonstrations the following year. The County Commissioners would not or could not provide a machine, however, so the League turned to the newspapers in an effort to have the candidate questionnaire printed as a special supplement. Although there was not enough money to finance this venture, the Indianapolis Times did reprint candidates' answers to questions gathered by the League on the front page of the second section for two days prior to the election. 26

In 1944 pre-election activity was under the direction of Mrs. Lester Smith, past president, described as "typical of the ideal for which the organization which she serves is striving--a sane intelligent citizen who approaches life and civic problems with the clear head of a scientist in her laboratory." 27 Beginning in January with an approach to politicians and election officials to clear up problems related to deputy registration officers and voting bottlenecks, the League started early trying to get a demonstration voting machine. The entire community was deluged with flyers asking "Can YOU Vote?" Members studied laws and procedures for registration and election as well as discussing local

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26 Indianapolis Times, October 28 and 29, 1941.

27 Indianapolis Star, "They Achieve," November 2, 1941.
political conventions and becoming acquainted with all primary candidates. Congressional candidates were interviewed and the results of these questionnaires appeared in the newspapers. From October 23, through November 2, League members demonstrated voting machines at the Central Library, eliciting editorial approval from the newspapers.

The Indianapolis Star wrote:

For the benefit of uneasy voters whose blood pressure might soar at the moment of voting booth decision, an instruction machine will be available at the Central Library building... The machines will carry names of candidates on both major parties and instruction will be done by members of the League of Women Voters.

The League is to be congratulated for this very valuable service to the community. Every person who has any doubts at all about operation of the machines should stop by for a refresher course.

The Indianapolis News went further. In an editorial on November 21, it said:

It is good news that a voting machine will be at the Central Library... for the practice use of those voters who either have never used a voting machine, or who wish to refresh their experience with its operation.

Thousands of persons are frightened when they walk into the polling booth, close the curtain and face the voting machine. Although their fears are groundless, many persons believe that they may cancel out their votes...

Machine politicians have long known this, and they are always reluctant to permit machines to be used for practice. These machines are used once every two years...

The League of Women Voters for years has battled with the politicians to get voting machines installed for practice. It is to be

28 Indianapolis Star, October 24, 1944.
hoped that the day will come when not only this group, but veterans' organizations and other civic-minded groups will insist upon installing practice machines for a reasonable period prior to each election.  

The problem, which had been understood, but never clearly stated, was roundly outlined by Norman E. Isaacs in his column, "Frankly Speaking."

... the record is that the Indianapolis League of Women Voters tried every trick in the book to get a machine--one machine--for the purpose of showing voters how it worked.

From (politician) to (politician) the story was the same. Just a grand ring-around the rosy and no machine.

The story is clear. The politicians on both sides of the fence agree on one thing: They do not want the voters to learn how to scratch a ticket. And, as a result, few voters know how to scratch.

Voters' information booths were manned by League members at the Claypool Hotel for the three days preceding the elections in 1940. By 1946, the League had obtained permission to use two voting machines for demonstrations and for ten days preceding the elections these were demonstrated by League members at the William H. Block department store and the Phyllis Wheatley Y. W. C. A. Over eight hundred people came to the booth at Block's during that period.

The use of radio had already proved useful on the national level and in 1946 the Indianapolis League began to explore further ways of using the medium. A monthly Saturday morning program over station WISH began in the fall. The fifteen-minute scripts were performed by League

29 Indianapolis News, November 21, 1944.

30 Indianapolis Times, November 11, 1942.
members. Subjects included the importance of voting, in October and in May, the Marshall Plan and world trade, featuring guest speakers, and the pros and cons of the Taft-Hartley Law. Prior to the election, League spot announcements on voting were carried over station WIBC.

Candidates' meetings returned in 1948 as a public service with open meetings being held at the War Memorial Building in the evening. Primary candidates spoke on May 1, and the candidates for Congress and Prosecutor on October 28. The Indianapolis Star headline reporting on the meeting read: "Women Ask Questions, Put Candidates on Spot." 31 The fall campaign was also marked by press, radio and display advertising reminding the community to, "Make a Note! Be Sure to Vote."

Election machine demonstrations at the Sears, Roebuck department store brought better attendance than usual. "Whether the excellent response of the public or some other reason provoked it, the machine was removed before the stated time had expired." 32

Similar activities continued through most of the next two decades. Candidates' meetings before the primary and general elections, all disappointing in attendance, registration and voting drives before each general election, and candidate questionnaires. The candidates' meetings returned to being the non-partisan forums which they had originally been

31 Indianapolis Star, October 29, 1948.
and League members discussed the legislation they hoped to see enacted with the newly-elected State Legislators at a December luncheon rather than with all candidates at an earlier date. Some years were marked by greater success than others, both because of the energy displayed by the leaders and because of the cooperation given by politicians. In 1949, for example, Mrs. John Burkhardt had to report that the League had again been denied a voting machine for demonstration purposes.

In 1952, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Lowell Thomas, publicity director, television was first used as a tool in pre-election information. Overhearing a chance remark at a dinner party by the president of a local bank, a League member hastened to Mrs. Thomas with the news that the bank would be sponsoring voting machine demonstrations on television, and that she had volunteered the services of the League. "It appears we got there in the nick of time, since their idea of demonstrating a voting machine was to show everyone how to pull the party lever." 33 Thirteen programs were scheduled before the primary election, one of special significance since there were so many candidates for the Presidency, President Truman having declined to run again.

Other media were used as well. The Indianapolis News devoted nearly a full page to a pictorial demonstration of the voting process posed by Indianapolis League members. 34 And the League cooperated

33 Mrs. Lowell Thomas, personal interview, September, 1969, with the author.

with *Life Magazine* and L. S. Ayres and Company to conduct one of 365 local forums held throughout the country on *The Citizen's View of '52*, the results of which were published in May.

In that same year a short course for voters designed to teach Indianapolis adults "political party organization, conventions, nominating procedures and general election procedure on the local, state, and national levels," 35 was offered by the League in cooperation with the adult education department of the Indianapolis Public Schools. Voting machine demonstrations were given in conjunction with the lectures which were held between September 29 and October 2 at all Indianapolis high schools. A forum featuring Republican and Democratic candidates for Senator and Governor, set for October 7, had to be cancelled because, although the speakers' bureaus of both parties had cleared the dates, the Democratic candidates said they had other commitments. Republicans lost no time in charging their opponents with evading a confrontation and the League received more prominent publicity for the cancelled meeting that it had ever received for those that were held. 36 Publicity for the League even appeared in Mary Mayfields' column when she answered a letter from A Husband and Father who had just turned down

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35 *Indianapolis Star*, September 18, 1952.

a League finance plea by saying those "beady-eyed do-Gooders had no business meddling in politics." Miss Mayfield said she thought the League of Women Voters "are doing an unusually effective job in encouraging registration and urging women to exercise their right to vote . . . and in taking enlightened positions on non-party issues." 37

Further innovations were made in 1954 when the League took on a weekly column in the Indiana Democrat which ran from July, 1954, through September, 1955. These columns covered not only the appropriate voter information at registration and election time but also explored most of the reform legislation in which the League had an interest. During October the League submitted questions for reporters and editors to ask candidates on the "Political Showcase" program sponsored by the Indianapolis Times and station WISH-TV on Monday nights at eight o'clock. Because of embarrassingly small attendance, candidates' meetings had been abandoned in favor of television. Mrs. Lowell Thomas, who confessed to being "incurably addicted to television as the only worthwhile means of reaching the public," 38 had introduced the League to television in 1952 and, as voters service chairman, used the medium unstintingly. The League had five minutes daily for two weeks on Station WFBM-TV's program "Open House," before the fall elections in 1955, and in the spring involved Leagues throughout the viewing area for

37 Indianapolis Times, September 24, 1952.

38 League of Women Voters of Indianapolis, Annual Report, 1956.
eight half-hour pre-primary shows on station WTTV. WFBM-TV also asked for pre-primary programs, although the candidates and the scripts were all that the League provided. Gilbert Forbes moderated the programs which were shown at prime time, 10:30 P.M. on Sunday nights. Television was also used for voting machine demonstrations, although they were held downtown again the following year.

Mrs. Gordon McCalment, president of the Indianapolis League, was a permanent member of the WFBM radio panel show moderated by Mr. Forbes, entitled, "You, the Government." It was aired at one o'clock Sunday afternoons and featured, besides Mrs. McCalment, representatives of the State Legislature, Chamber of Commerce and other organizations concerned with the subject currently under discussion.

In 1959 the voting machine demonstrations moved out to the Eagledale shopping center for the first time, as well as at Kresge's on the Circle downtown. "Response was not enthusiastic. About 700 demonstrations were given," Mrs. Karl M. Koons, voters service chairman reported. 39 Although shopping center demonstrations were abandoned the following year, voting machines were demonstrated at the Glendale shopping center for the 1960 presidential election from Thursday through Saturday the week before election, as well as on the Circle. Candidate

information was published by the Indianapolis Times as an eight-page supplement called Who's Who in the '60 Election. The cooperation of the political parties, the state League, and industry made possible the distribution of 25,000 copies to schools, libraries, industries, and to the public who attended voting machine demonstrations.

The Indianapolis Star, on receipt of the first primary questionnaires sent to candidates for delegate to the nominating conventions, in which the League asked them to outline their qualifications for the job, the basis on which they would learn about and vote for nominees for state offices, and their political philosophies, wrote:

Voters who get hold of the League's report will find it helpful in applying some standards of reasonable selection in choosing among the long list of delegate candidates. Selectivity in this way will pay off in the choices of nominees to run for the state offices in the general election in November. It will also pay off in the drafting of the party platforms on which they will run. . . . The gathering of these reports is good work. . . . It gives the voter quick reference material from which to appraise unknown candidates. No doubt the mere act of responding to the questionnaires sometimes stimulates the candidates themselves to a little extra thinking. And the fact that such a basis of judgment exists is encouraging to competent potential candidates. There is at least a vehicle here by which voters can move toward more thoughtful selection of public officials.

Both the Indianapolis Star and the Indianapolis Times published the pre-primary questionnaire in 1962 which broadened the distribution. Voting machines were demonstrated in the WXLW mobile radio unit.

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40 Indianapolis Times, October 21, 1959.

41 Indianapolis Star, April 29, 1960.
However, despite the wide distribution of the questionnaire, and the cooperation of the newspapers in presenting candidate information as well as their own publicity about the primary, only 23% of those eligible voted in the primary of 1963. Under voters service chairman, Mrs. Edward Tyler, the League reappraised the work it had been doing in this field and launched a broad-based campaign called "Operation Wide Awake," "to help the citizens of Indianapolis know, use and care about their city." Every conceivable type of organization in the city was solicited by letter to help plan and carry out the campaign, including one hundred eighty one churches, civic groups and the colleges.

The first phase was a massive registration drive.

The registration drive was successful, as a letter from the Board of Voters Registration of Marion County, October 14, 1963, attests. "The record breaking registration drive just concluded was at least partially attributable to your efforts. We commend you for your spirited campaign." Since the Registration Board was not allowed to deputize citizens to help with registration, the League requested permission to experiment with four shopping centers to which the Board would send its regular registration teams but which the League would publicize. The Board tried six in every segment of the city. The Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce provided pamphlets on education, industry and history,

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and the Department of Commerce provided material on recreation to decorate the registration booths. The Highway Department put up a new map, and the Historical Society made special displays using old election documents and some pamphlets on Indiana history and the Civil War. Teenagers and League members manned the booths and got people in. Over fifteen hundred registrations were taken at these centers, and a record-breaking total of 213,000 registered voters were eligible to vote. An additional 25,250 new voters, also a record for a municipal election, had been signed up.

The second phase of "Operation Wide Awake," was the distribution of information and the League was able to distribute over 34,000 copies of its candidate questionnaire to schools, churches, and libraries. Over 23,000 additional copies were sold and the cooperation of all Indianapolis businesses and the news media was exceptional. The Jaycees bought bus placards with the Wide Awake slogan, Indiana Bell Telephone Company and the Power and Light Company had window displays, and a bank had a voting reminder on all its statements. Registration and voting information was distributed by churches, Senior Citizens, the Bar Association and industries, and there were programs at the area colleges.

Voting machine demonstrations were frustrated by a missing key until the final day of registration in the City-County building, but "there were probably more people in four hours than we had in four days at other locations." 43 The League also demonstrated the use of the

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43 Ibid., 1964.
Publicity for all of these efforts was overwhelming, the newspapers devoting space nearly every day in October to publicize the drive. Every door in Marion County was visited by the Girl Scouts who hung a small placard with the bell-ringing jester symbol and the legend "The League of Women Voters of Indianapolis says--Be a Wide Awake. Vote for the Candidate of Your Choice November 5." The doorhangers were printed as a public service by Mr. Burford Danner of the Burford Printing Company and attest to the persuasiveness of Mrs. Tyler, Chairman of the campaign and Mrs. Edward Leary, publicity director. No amount of persuasiveness, however, could have bought the page one publicity the League received concerning this campaign.

On August 22, 1963, a banner headline in the Indianapolis News read, "Women Denied C-C Building Use in Vote Drive." The article reported that Mr. Henry Manz, Director of the City-County Building Authority, had announced that a Meet-the-Candidates meeting, scheduled by the League, would not be allowed to take place in the City-County Building, although the League had received this permission early in June. The newspapers took up the League's cause and a month-long controversy was waged in the press and by the television stations. The Indianapolis News editorial "No Partisan Matter," urged that the Building Authority had made bad use of a good principle, that is that the building should not be used for partisan purposes.
Concerning the League of Women Voters meeting, however, no such issue can be raised. Let us insure that clearly non-partisan ventures, designed to benefit all citizens equally, are not barred from these tax-supported facilities.

The Indianapolis Times editorialized:

Let the Ladies in!

The ladies of the League have only one purpose—to pump some life into this year’s city elections. What better use could there possibly be for its fine auditorium than a rally dedicated to the simple proposition that voters should have the chance to find out what’s going on?

Television station WFBM-TV ran editorials on August 21 and August 27, 1963, pointing out the civic service which the League was trying to perform by holding the meeting.

The result of the furor was reported in a front-page headline, "Voters League Wins C-C Building Use." The article explained, "In a letter to Mrs. Howard Gustafson, League president, Manz confirmed reservations requested by the League for the two events." And an Indianapolis Times editorial urged, "Enter, Ladies. Congratulations to City-County building manager Henry Manz on doing additional legal spadework on the issue of who can use the building."


\[46\] Indianapolis News, September 13, 1963. The other event was a government day for scouts scheduled for October 26, 1963.

\[47\] Indianapolis Times, September 14, 1963. Originally Building Authority Council, Howard Kahlenbeck, had interpreted the law creating the building as stating that only governmental organizations could use it.
Even this candidates' meeting was dramatized by the organizers, who preceded it with a torchlight parade and rally. The candidates and the political parties were invited to include floats and members of high school Key Clubs marched in Civil War costumes. The Marion County Civil War Centennial Group, headed by Mr. Roy Hendricks, helped out by providing fifty authentic torches which passed the Fire Department's specifications, thus bringing to life the historical connection of a Wide Awake torchlight parade, on which the rally was based. Although the newspaper coverage in story and picture of this event was exceptionally full, the account on the following day was realistic:

The hard-working gals of the League of Women Voters put on a colorful downtown parade last night to stir up interest in the city elections but there were almost as many participants as spectators. Fewer than 450 stayed for speeches and Police Chief Reilly sized up the sidewalk viewers at 5000 to 7000. And he may have been gallant.

Nevertheless Mrs. Howard Gustafson, League president, cheerfully concluded: "I think it was fun. I think we made our point."

An evaluation committee within the League also concluded that even though few people came, the newspaper coverage had put the city election on the map.

The tradition which allows a woman to leave the presidency of the League after two years in office accounts for the fact that Mrs. Tyler had already stepped down and Mrs. Leary had just become president

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when the city elections were again held in 1967. In keeping with many discussions about the "ombudsman" approach to citizen education, the League launched a new project to dramatize local government. Called "Sidewalk City Hall," with Mrs. Tyler as chairman, it was described as "a kind of government fair with all the exciting embellishments we could think of."\footnote{Mrs. Edward Tyler, letter to participants, July, 1967.} City and County governments endorsed the project as did the mayorality candidates and the League obtained the cooperation of many organizations, including the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee, the Indiana Taxpayers Association, the Chamber of Commerce, the Urban League, the Jaycees, the AFL-CIO of Marion County, the Indianapolis Power and Light Company, and Fort Benjamin Harrison.

Each of thirty local government departments sent displays and competent staff personnel to four large shopping centers, one in each quarter of the city, on four successive weeks. Voter activity included registration, information, practice on the voting machine, prizes, including lunch with the newly-elected Mayor, a look at the police monitoring system, the plan for Indianapolis of the future, and a ride in a Stutz Bearcat fire engine. The candidates appeared at each location and although attendance by the public was not overwhelming, the League was not disappointed. The United States Information Agency filmed the last appearance of Sidewalk City Hall for a documentary to be shown outside the country.
This new look in pre-election activity was mirrored by the kind of work done in citizen education too. Directing its work to specific groups rather than an amorphous community, the League set up several new programs. Since the Girl Scouts had approached the League for information and projects for a government badge, Mrs. Lowell Thomas conceived a Government Day for scouts which was held in the State House on October 26, 1962. After a welcome by Mrs. Harold Nash, president, and an official welcome by Governor Welsh, a panel of politicians spoke on what every voter should know and gave consideration to state services for Indiana citizens paid for by tax dollars. Representatives of the Conservation Department, the Welfare Department, the State Police, the Department of Correction attended. After luncheon Speaker of the House Richard Guthrie presided over a mock legislative session which was considering tax bills.

In 1963 and again in 1965 local government, rather than state government, was the subject for the Scout Government Day program, held in the City-County Building. The speakers at the latter were Mayor John Barton, City Council President, Joseph Wallace, President of the County Commissioners, Lewis Ping, and the President of the County Council, Edwin Koch. Mr. Lee Burton discussed the Park Department as an example of a special district and Mrs. Fred McCarthy of the Chamber of Commerce explained the relationship of state and local government.
With the passage of the law requiring five hours of pre-election civics in junior and senior high schools, League materials and speakers were in great demand in the fall of 1964 and the government day was expanded to include tours of the state house for the 1965 General Assembly for any school class as well as a requested mock legislative session for a class at a high school during the following session.

On a much more professional level the League evolved a program to help meet the issues of the 1960’s by assisting in the development of leadership in public affairs and civic organization. The League of Women Voters Education Fund, established as an arm of the national League in 1957, had developed a Government in Action project. Designed as a university level course which would be applicable to the public affairs concerns of voluntary organizations, this course was given in Indianapolis by Indiana University Downtown Center during the Spring semester, in 1961 and 1962. Although neither given nor conceived by the Indianapolis League, some of the members were involved in the planning and especially in recruitment of the participants, since a wide community representation was desired. Given by faculty members of the University and by state officials and including a field trip to Washington, the course covered the gamut of the major issues and problems of government as well as procedures. Its effect can be measured by the fact that two of the participants who had never been involved in politics became city councilmen after the program and another became a state legislator. The individ-
ual League members also made contact with participants who, although they did not run for office, represented segments of the community with which the League had previously not worked.

The Education Fund, of which Mrs. John A. Campbell of Indianapolis was a trustee, helped to set up the Indianapolis Citizens Committee for Voter Registration in 1964 under the chairmanship of Mrs. Edward Tyler. One of five pilot projects in the United States, its purpose was to experiment with techniques for reaching those groups who for reasons of education or motivation had never participated in the election process. Cooperating with the Indianapolis League were the Broadway Christian Center, the Fletcher Place Community Center, Mayer Chapel Neighborhood Services, Eastside Christian Center, National Council of Negro Women, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Indiana Social Action Council, Young Women's Christian Association, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and the United Auto Workers Regional office.

Two project areas were selected, the 15th ward where activity centered around Mayer Chapel and Fletcher Place, and the 23rd and 3rd wards where efforts centered around the Broadway Christian and Eastside Centers. The larger organizations helped with organization, materials, manpower and money while the materials and techniques developed through the centers were used by the larger organizations in their own efforts. Statistically the League could point to success since
the Marion County vote in the 1964 election was 82% of registered voters in comparison to 76% of registered voters in Indiana as a whole, and the total of new registrations was 71,324. The wards on which the project concentrated were not alone in increased percentages, however.

The development of techniques to reach inner-city residents proved to be much more important. Just a year after Michael Harrington's *The Other America* had pointed out the problem of another culture in America, Indianapolis women were trying to reach into that culture and bring its members into participation in the political process of American life. As Mrs. Edward Tyler, voters' service chairman, explained, "We learned most of what we know from our mistakes."\(^50\) It was not until nearly election time that the project directors realized that only neighborhood people could approach these voters and break through the apathy and suspicion which their overtures provoked. William White, director of the Broadway Christian Center, rifled the edges of some "Register and Vote" dodgers and a tavern owner used them for coasters. Contact was made with some men and women who were natural leaders in their blocks and these people later worked with the Community Action Against Poverty neighborhood centers. It is impossible to say how much interest was truly generated which only later was translated into action. One member of the League who worked on the project, Mrs. Frank Williams,
was stimulated into action of her own, however.

Finding that inner-city mothers had often to depend upon Public Assistance because they had small children whom they could not leave in order to work, Mrs. Williams helped to organize and establish a day-care center at St. Rita's Roman Catholic Church. In 1968 she became a trustee of the Education Fund of the League of Women Voters and was named coordinator of inner-city projects for that organization.

Since the inner-city vote is viewed as being overwhelmingly Democratic, there is some question that registration and voting drives confined to those areas are truly non-partisan. The League has taken the position that the proportion of non-registered voters in the city as contrasted to the suburbs justifies concentrating in that area. A Get-Out-The-Vote Campaign confined to the inner city, such as that conducted by the League in the elections of 1968 in cooperation with the Urban League, is susceptible to the same interpretations.

The Indianapolis League is presently working on a pilot Information Referral Project to be set up at the City Market which would answer questions about all services and agencies, governmental or private, which could be of assistance to the citizen and would include follow up of these referrals for meaningful action.
CHAPTER III

REFORMS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Of all program areas in which the League studied and acted, those affecting local government were by their very nature most important to the relationship between the Indianapolis League of Women Voters and the community. The "needed legislation" which the League had pledged itself to support was translated into specifics on the local level as well as that of the state and the nation.

Although the general outline of local League programs for the first twenty-five years was determined by national and state conventions, local League members often instigated study into possible governmental reforms, and pinpointing the source of specific concerns is nearly impossible. Often one thing led to another as for example a World War I study of the high cost of food, leading to the need for more fertilizer, leading to support of the government's use of the already begun plant at Muscle Shoals which led ultimately to support of TVA. National conventions determined the emphasis and the program, and were conventions of state Leagues until 1944, at which time delegations from local Leagues were called to the biennial national conventions to determine national program as well as to state conventions to determine state programs.
During the first twenty-five years the women of the League became more expert and, in the words of national president, Miss Marguerite Wells, 1934-1944,

A program participated in by the few rather than the many is alien to the League's purpose--To cause more people to use effectively what knowledge they possess seems to be the unique aim of the League of Women Voters. 51

Thus the reorganization.

Organized into nationally determined departments, the Indianapolis League began early to instigate changes locally. With characteristic independence they organized a local affairs committee and began visiting meetings of governmental boards. Urging other Leagues in Indiana to duplicate this effort, Miss Alma Sickler, Indianapolis League president wrote:

Some of the questions which have been raised and on which the local affairs committee has been able to shed some light include the quality of ice cream sold in Indianapolis (the Health Board committee took care of that), the policing of the amusement places on the river (the Park Board helped solve that), the question of enlarging the county tuberculosis hospital (the County Council must be seen about that); the matter of closing hours for dance halls, of jitney bus regulation, and of sewer accommodations (all of these coming before the City Council), and the perplexing question of garbage disposal (the Board of Sanitary Commissioners is wrestling with that). 52

Embarking on studies of parks and recreation, women in the police de-


partment, schools, and all the social welfare legislation in the pro-
gressive tradition which the League supported in its early years.
Indianapolis women were never so forceful as when they could, in
effect, clean house in local government. Their support for the city
manager plan grew from this impulse as well as from the inspiration
of Mrs. Walter S. Greenough.

Katharine Croan Greenough was educated at Indiana University
and had been recording secretary of the Woman's Franchise League,
Indianapolis Branch, in 1917. She was elected President of the Indiana
League of Women Voters in 1922, serving another term in 1928. For
seven years Mrs. Greenough was chairman of the National League of
Women Voters Department of Government and its Operation and served as well
on the National Municipal League executive committee, working on the city
manager committee of that organization. It was she who helped organize
many of the local Leagues throughout the state and as the author, in the
national League, of study materials for local Leagues, including Know
Your County and Know Your Town. Mrs. Greenough's influence was
pervasive. 53

During her first term as president of the state League, Mrs.
Greenough had initiated a service through The Woman Voter of suggested
study programs with detailed agendas for each month for local Leagues

to adopt as they saw fit. The response was enthusiastic and, in the suggested program for 1925-1926, Mrs. Greenough, as editor of *The Woman Voter*, included in the December agenda, "A talk on the city manager forms of government." 54 In March, 1926, the Indiana League of Women Voters adopted the study of the city manager plan at its convention in Indianapolis. In the following month the national league met in St. Louis and adopted the same study under the Department of Efficiency in Government. Miss Belle Sherwin, national president, and chairman of the Department of Efficiency in Government had attended the Indianapolis convention.

The Indianapolis League lost no time in bringing the question before the public, presenting speeches in April and May to their own members and two public meetings at which Miss Marie Wing, a member of the Cleveland City Council, presented that city's experiences with the plan and Professor A. R. Hatton of Northwestern University discussed it with the League and other interested citizens. However, in May, 1927, when the Indianapolis League board of directors was discussing what part the organization should take in the referendum campaign for adoption of the city manager plan for Indianapolis, it was "moved and seconded that the League as an organization take no definite

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stand for or against the plan, but that every member should work to get out the vote." Many League members did join the Indianapolis City Manager League, a group of citizens who were working for reform through pressing the adoption of the city manager plan and in June the board decided to take a definite part in the campaign. The difficulty lay in the fact that League ranks and finances had been seriously depleted in 1925 and the League felt itself committed to work for its new registration law. Miss Florence Harrison, regional secretary of the national League of Women Voters who was at that time attending Indianapolis League board meetings, reminded the board "that the League's particular aim in Indiana this year is to work for a new registration law and for changes in the city charter. She explained that without a registration law, the city manager election would be very hard to manage." 

Although the registration law was important to all League members, it appealed more to women from the counties bordering other states, since it was in those districts that the lack of a registration law allowed the easy importation of ineligible voters. To urban women, among whom must be counted the state president, Mrs. Frank Streightoff of Indianapolis, the city manager plan seemed to offer a solution to the duplication, irresponsibility and wastefulness of municipal government

55 Board Minutes, May 6, 1927.
56 Board Minutes, June 29, 1927. For a description of the organization's difficulties in 1925, see pp. 94-95.
and, specifically, the "nightmare" of the Duvall administration. The program of state convention in Indianapolis March 14 through 16, 1928, indicates that the successful referendum in Indianapolis, in which the voters adopted the plan five to one, promoted more enthusiasm. An entire day of the convention was given over to a conference on the city manager plan of government, sponsored by the Indianapolis City Manager League in cooperation with the Indiana League of Women Voters to fill the requests for information from all over the state. Under the chairmanship of John W. Esterline, the conference featured Professor Leonard D. White from the University of Chicago who spoke on "The Way Out for Indiana Cities," Mrs. H. R. Misener, a vice-president of the state League from Michigan City whose speech was titled, "The City Manager Plan--A Challenge to Citizenship," and L. W. Clapp of Wichita, Kansas, who spoke about what the city manager plan had done in his city. The luncheon speaker was Charles P. Taft II of Cincinnati, on "The Future of America is in the Keeping of Her Cities." The afternoon was given over to a panel discussion on how to organize and execute a campaign for city manager government. Panel members were Claude H. Anderson, Executive Secretary of the Indianapolis City Manager League, and Winfield Miller, State Senator from Indianapolis.

57 For a complete discussion of Indianapolis citizens' reform movement see Barnhart and Carmony, Indiana, pp. 398-399.
The successful referendum in Indianapolis gave rise to plans within the Indianapolis League to assure "a clean election for the City Manager Plan," as the President, Mrs. Thomas Sheerin, explained in her outlook for work at the May 8, 1929, board meeting. Before the election, however, the Indiana Supreme Court held that the 1921 law, which had provided that urban communities could, by referendum, become city manager cities, electing by popular vote a city council to formulate the policies of the city and to employ a competent manager to carry out these policies, was unconstitutional. Their decision was based on an extremely technical point, that since the City Clerk must verify the signatures petitioning referendum and since, in the time allowed, it was not possible for him to do so personally, the law was unconstitutional.

An attack on the problem of inefficient administration in municipalities, of, seemingly, unchangeable structure, came next through the county surveys conducted by all local Leagues which were sifted through by the board of the state League and presented to the state convention in South Bend, in March, 1932. Foreshadowed by an article in The Indiana Woman Voter for November, 1931, written by Miss Florence Kirlin who was Executive Secretary for the Indiana League, the program adopted by the convention to be implemented by action in the Legislature, included

a gradual revision of the structure of county and township government to eliminate overlapping functions, to focus responsibility, to eliminate obsolete units and to reduce the cost of local government. The committee recommendations had included specifically the elimination of the Board of County Commissioners and the County Council and the substitution of a strong executive type of government with an elected council and a county administrator. This program was remarkably similar to that which the Indianapolis League would continue to pursue for four decades.

With the coming of the depression some of the hardest members could no longer devote time, effort and money to volunteer activities, yet the Indianapolis League continued to work for informed and active citizen participation in government as well as for progressive reforms. When Mrs. Walter S. Greenough agreed to take the presidency of the Indianapolis League in 1932, continuing activity was assured. Her philosophy and clear-sightedness set a tone for League work during the bleak depression years. This is illuminated by the announcement in the Bulletin for April, 1933, of a series of Wednesday morning meetings at the Rauh Memorial Library on Indianapolis City Government and Its Cost.

We have had to scrutinize our family budgets to determine how we can make our incomes cover our needs. We need to use the same care in scrutinizing the city budget to determine where economies can be made. Cities cannot continue to exist without many of the services provided by the city government. Which ones can be curtailed or eliminated?

Reductions are inevitable, but they should be made in such a way that the welfare of the whole community will be safeguarded.
The series of group meetings . . . is designed to give to members of the League of Women Voters the knowledge we, as citizens, need in order to support the efforts of city officials to reduce the cost of government and still maintain services.

Topics covered in the series were "City Government in Relation to State and County," by Miss Florence Kirlin, executive secretary, Indiana League of Women Voters, "The Indianapolis City Charter," by Frederick E. Matson, and "The Executive's Job," by Mayor Reginald H. Sullivan. City services were discussed on two separate mornings, Miss Frances Holliday explained the Board of Health, Dr. Herman G. Morgan, secretary of the Indianapolis Board of Health spoke on health problems and Charles A. Sallee, Superintendent of the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners explained the Park Board. Chief of Police Michael F. Morrissey spoke about his department, Mrs. Lehman Dunning, the Board of Safety, Mrs. Fletcher Hodges, sanitation and E. Kirk McKinney, member of the Board of Public Works, explained that city service. The summarizing meeting revolved around city finances with a panel consisting of Mrs. Leo M. Garner, William H. Book, Civic Affairs Secretary of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, who gave a critical analysis of city services and their cost, and Miss Kirlin, who explained how other cities have met the problem.

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During the following year the national League revamped the departments under which program had been studied and shifted the emphasis of structure of government studies to concentrate on the merit system and tax reform. Support of the merit system became so entwined with all future reforms for municipal government suggested by the League of Women Voters of Indianapolis for the next twenty years that this campaign must be examined in detail. Through these years the League was the only general citizen group working and acting consistently for the merit system.60

It was the 1934 national convention which elected to mobilize all members in a campaign for two years to obtain "A merit system in all branches of government at all levels." Mrs. Thomas Sheerin of Indianapolis became chairman of the special campaign committee, attended the Civil Service Assembly of the United States and discussed the proposed Indiana bill with Dr. Harvey Walker of Ohio State University, state League President Mrs. S. N. Campbell of Indianapolis, and Dr. Leonard White of the University of Chicago who had recently been appointed as a member of the United States Civil Service Commission. The Public Personnel bill had support of the Governor's Committee on Governmental Economy which had been working for two years and had produced a voluminous report full of recommendations, one of which was

to place state employees under the merit system. The first Senate hearing was an open one and a strong opposition showing forced the bill's recommittance to committee.

In 1935 the Indianapolis League held a school for speakers on the personnel campaign, headed by Miss Evelyn Chambers, and Miss Margaret Denny of Indianapolis was appointed state chairman of the campaign. The Leagues all over the country were at work to arouse public opinion to the need for such legislation, especially since the proliferation of government agencies brought on by the New Deal and the additional social welfare legislation. League speakers addressed women's clubs, men's service clubs, church societies and other organizations.

January 29, 1936, was Public Personnel Day throughout the country, with a national broadcast on NBC radio, and listening parties throughout the country. Although the Indianapolis League had planned to have a mass meeting the evening before, preparations took longer than anticipated and the meeting was arranged for February 12, 1936, at the Kirshbaum Community Center. The sponsors list included thirty-five prominent citizens and invitations were sent to numerous organizations. Marshall Dimock of the University of Chicago was the chief speaker and representatives of the two major parties added opposition, speaking on the subject, "Can Political Parties Exist Without Patronage?"
As the national League would later describe the campaign for a merit system:

The timing was right. The campaign was waged when federal and state governments were hiring thousands to administer the new social and economic laws. About half of the federal civil employees were outside the Civil Service system. Only nine states had civil service laws, and the percentage decreased through cities, counties and other units of government. Yet never was it more important to administer laws wisely and economically because of the depression; never was qualified personnel more needed. Contests for slogans brought catchy phrases which are still in use, among them "Good Government is Good Politics" and "Find the Man for the Job, not the Job for the Man." 61

The Indiana slogan contest was won by Miss Virginia Hill of Bloomington with "Efficiency depends upon Qualifications, not Affiliations."

The Indianapolis League embarked on an ambitious program to make a survey of the city which was presented with great fanfare in the fall of 1936. Over fifteen women interviewed top officials in all city departments and charted the organization, responsibilities and personnel in each. Directed by Mrs. Lester Smith, Mrs. Clarence Merrell, Mrs. Howard Griffith, Mrs. Ralph Vonnegut and Mrs. Ross Ottinger, it "re-impressed us with the fact that our municipal government is a large and complex machine." 62 The summary concluded that the appointive powers of the Mayor could be used more effectively in the public interest if a

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61 Forty Years, p. 27.

62 League of Women Voters of Indianapolis, Survey of the City of Indianapolis, 1936. p. 65.
merit system were established. The League was also able in the course of the interviews to present the League's views on the merit system to various officials.

These views had been broadcast to the public in the spring over radio station WFBM as well as through the usual League channels, that is in newspapers and at meetings. Borrowing a page from the suffragettes' book, over fifty members of the Indianapolis League visited the conventions of the Republican and Democratic parties wearing banners which read "For Merit--Against Spoils," and distributing bills which had been prepared by Mrs. Greenough and Mrs. Warren K. Mannon, Executive Secretary of the Indiana League. Mrs. Lester Smith, Miss Denny and Mrs. Mannon had also attended City Council meetings to advocate the restoration of the appropriation for the merit commissioners for the police and firemen schools, and had been successful. 63

That same eventful summer, Mrs. Richard E. Edwards of Peru, the first Treasurer of the League of Women Voters of the United States, was appointed to the State Public Welfare Board as one of the Republican members by Governor McNutt. Because her League background made her aware of the personnel department's problems, she was appointed a member of a committee to draft a plan for merit appointment of welfare employees. The other members were Virgil Sheppard and Mrs. A. H.

63 Board Minutes, September 9, 1936.
Zink, officials of the Welfare Department. At the same time Mrs. Walter S. Greenough of Indianapolis was designated as the representative of the Indiana League of Women Voters on the Committee to draw up a merit plan for employees of the State Unemployment Compensation Division. The other members were Dr. R. Clyde White, Director of the Indiana University Bureau of Social Research and Martin F. Carpenter, Director of the Indiana State Employment Service. The two committees consolidated their efforts and worked out joint plans. Partially because of the intensive personnel campaign carried on by the national and state Leagues, the committees secured the services of the Public Administration Clearing House which made a thorough study of the jobs of both divisions, classified them, defined them, and set up salary scales. Their report was accepted by the boards of the two groups and the administration placed in the hands of a personnel board consisting of the directors of the Public Welfare Department and Unemployment Compensation Division, together with a representative of the public who was experienced in personnel work. This opening wedge in Indiana's patronage system gave heart to the League steering committee, which lobbied under the chairmanship of Mrs. Oliver Greer and Mrs. John Goodwin of Indianapolis. Despite the attention given the merit bill in the legislature and the vigorous lobbying efforts made by the League, it did not even pass the house of origin.

64 Now the Employment Security Division.
Perseverance finally granted the League some measure of success but not before a great deal more work and compromise. Every member of the League was expected to join in a project called "Consider the Party Patronage System," under the direction of Mrs. Tristam Coffin of Indianapolis. In this state-wide effort each League member was expected to interview precinct committeemen and vice-committeemen asking a series of probing questions about their experiences in filling jobs and in procuring them. With this understanding, and with these personal contacts, the League then appeared before the platform committees of both major parties in the summer of 1940, asking for plans endorsing a system of public personnel management in the state government with special emphasis on qualified employees in the penal, correctional, and benevolent institutions. When the Republicans acquiesced, the Indianapolis News editorialized:

The League desires more than ever to place both parties on record in favor of merit. It will carry the campaign to the 1941 session of the General Assembly. This year's Republican state platform declares that the party stands for the adoption of a program similar to that used in private industry, "the elimination of all unnecessary positions and the provision for control of governmental personnel so that appointments, promotions and discharges may be made solely upon the basis of merit."

Such a movement, the platform says, would be in the interest of economy. It urges the aid of state educational institutions in perfecting a merit law that will make government service "an attractive and secure profession." The League is justified, in expecting that the Democratic pledge will be equally strong.  

This was the case.

\[65\] Indianopolis News, May 28, 1940.
Enlisting the support of other interested citizens not in the League, Mrs. Greenough helped to form the Indiana Merit System Association which lobbied for the merit bill. Mrs. William J. Stout was chairman, Mrs. Greenough, vice-chairman, and Miss Mary Sinclair, League legislative chairman, was secretary and legislative chairman of the new organization. Despite the opposition of the Governor, who objected strongly to the method by which the merit board was to be appointed, since his party was not in power and the bill provided that he had two appointments, matched by two for the Lieutenant Governor, the bill passed. The Governor allowed it to become law without his signature.

The bill was crippled in the following legislature by the deletion of the director from the classified list. Attacked in succeeding sessions, the merit system was defended by the testimony of League women in 1943, 1945 and 1947, in which year they succeeded in pushing the extension of the system to include personnel of the new state mental hospitals. Indianapolis League women made up the bulk of the League's lobbyists. They also succeeded in 1947 in their efforts to get the merit system for the city government to the extent that a bill for a Personnel Study Commission for first class cities was introduced. For the League in Indianapolis had not abandoned its interest in local government nor the city manager plan.

During the late 1930’s, cooperation with the Junior Chamber of
Commerce and other interested groups, who wished to push for legislative action which would make it possible for Indianapolis to adopt the city manager plan, had resulted in the establishment of a City Manager Study Commission by the General Assembly. Its thorough study of the possibilities in Indiana and in other states resulted in a report to the 1941 General Assembly with the recommendation of an amendment to the constitution. The Indianapolis League was ready to support this amendment, since a restudy in 1939 had resulted in hearty endorsement of the city manager plan of government. The amendment passed the 1941 session of the General Assembly, but in 1943, when the second session passage required for constitutional amendments became imminent, many of the young men who had supported the amendment in the first session were absent in military service and the opponents of the plan had had time to gather their forces. The amendment was defeated.

It was at this point that the League's interest in local governmental structure and in the merit system merged and its influence and involvement reached a high water mark. In May, 1944, Mr. Fred Telford, a representative of J. L. Jacobs, Co., Chicago, consultants in public administration who were making a survey of City Hall employees, spoke to the League on "Better Personnel Practices for Indianapolis." The response to his ideas was so enthusiastic that he suggested that

66 Minutes of the Annual Meeting, May 17, 1939.
the Indianapolis League of Women Voters assign to various departments of the city government two or three women to keep continuing contact--"friendly, cooperative and critical"--with that department. The suggestion was soon concrete.

This program will be started under Mr. Telford's guidance with (1) a meeting of all the workers at which time Mr. Telford will explain the project; (2) the introduction by Mr. Telford of each unit to the department head to which it is assigned. The feeling of the Board was that this opportunity offered the chance of a lifetime to (1) become thoroughly informed about city government, (2) do a worthwhile local project.\(^67\)

Deciding to "follow through on this opportunity,"\(^68\) the League was soon in the midst of a controversy. The results of Mr. Telford's survey were announced in July and the League heartily endorsed its implementation, which the *Indianapolis Star* found of sufficient importance to headline "Women Voters Favor Streamlined City Government." Although the survey was not attacked directly, some members of the City Council questioned the amount of money which it had cost and the fact that Mr. Telford was still in City Hall two months after the survey had been completed. They wished to know who hired him and who authorized him to stay. It became clear at the City Council meeting on September 6, 1944, "that Mayor Tyndall, the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Personnel,\(^67\)

\(^{67}\) *Board Minutes*, September 4, 1944.

\(^{68}\) *Ibid.*
the League of Women Voters and Mr. Ostram (the Republican County Chairman) had urged him to stay although no further appropriations for his salary were made."

The League prepared a statement for the newspapers explaining that the survey would be useless without proper implementation, which could best be accomplished by Mr. Telford himself. To this statement the Indianapolis News responded editorially:

Sound public opinion supports the plea of the Indianapolis League of Women Voters that the merit plan authorized for city employes be given a fair trial. The League believes that the city now has the legal machinery and the facilities for placing city jobs on a basis of efficiency. Whether good results are obtained depends upon administrative procedure.

In a statement defending the new personnel system, the League recalled that Mayor Robert H. Tyndall "has had a vision of many improvements in Indianapolis government, including a personnel department for the city." The plan, as outlined by governmental experts, is now in its initial stage. The League believes Mayor Tyndall has authority to make it work as it should and that he will make the necessary effort.

It will be generally recognized that adoption of a plan is only a start in the direction in which a wisely-governed city must go if it is to give its taxpayers an adequate return for their money. As the League said, "A merit plan sets up rules of the game to make for fair play." The task now is to enforce these rules and make the plan a reality.

As the controversy blew over and Mr. Telford returned to Chicago, Indianapolis League members whom he had introduced into

69 Indianapolis Times, September 7, 1944.

70 Indianapolis News, October 24, 1944.
the city departments continued their friendly, cooperative and critical observations. At the annual meeting in May, 1945, Mrs. Merton Good reported that the City Survey Project had contacted some fifteen city departments, made inspection trips, acquired much knowledge of the working of the city government, analyzed and watched legislations, and brought a clarification from the state League of the action possible by local Leagues on purely local matters in the Legislature. By 1946, Mrs. John Fuller's report indicated, League women had really dug in. Mrs. Arthur Medlicott, and Mrs. Charles Harmon, both later to become presidents of the League, who were the Controller's team, made it a practice to attend every meeting of the City Council for the last two years. By now each is accepted as "one of the boys" and are given copies of all reports and documents, and are even consulted on matters in which the League may be interested. 71

The larger committees on the city hospital and the Health Department had now progressed to a point where they sit in on the preparation of the budgets. In addition, they have initiated plans for a citizens' Health Committee to be formed of representatives of various organizations interested in health problems to work with the Board of Health and Hospitals to educate the public on the necessity for obtaining adequate appropriations. 72

League members assigned to the Department of Parks and Recreation

71 Minutes of the Annual Meeting, May, 1946.

72 Ibid.
were members of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Recreation. They were Mrs. Thomas Sheerin, Mrs. Bert McCammon, Mrs. Robert Wild, Mrs. Joseph Miner and Mrs. C. D. Vawter. These women sat in on budget hearings, worked for better-trained personnel and helped to get the cooperation of the Council of Social Agencies for a survey of recreation and park needs in crowded sections of the city where delinquency was high. This department was able to carry on many of the continuing League concerns. League women were assigned to the Department of Works and Sanitation, which included the Traffic Engineer and Street Commission as well as the Sanitation Department and Smoke Abatement Committee which was just getting started.

The Personnel and City Merit Committee, which Mr. Telford must have had high hopes for, was doing a thorough job under the direction of Mrs. A. W. Noling and Mrs. Walter Greenough. They had a separate recommendation, as it was not hard to imagine, since they had worked on merit on the state level for ten years. Finding that Indianapolis was the only city of the country's twenty-three largest municipalities which did not employ all of its personnel on a merit basis, they proposed drafting a law for submission to the legislature and were busy negotiating for the support of the Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations. This bill proposed classifying all city employees except elected officials, board members, heads of departments, and one principal assistant or deputy and one private secretary
to the Mayor and each of the department heads.

The work of this committee during the following year is an excellent example of the League legislative activity on the local level. The committee first produced a bill comprising the "best features" of the State Personnel Act, the Civil Service Law and Rules of Milwaukee and of Louisville, the Personnel Law for Cincinnati, the Personnel Law in the Model City Charter of the National Municipal League, and the Personnel Bill introduced two years previously by Mr. Telford's group. Having spent hours going over every point in this first draft the committee submitted the bill for comment and correction to Mr. Marmaduke of the State Personnel Department, Mr. Carl Dortch of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Virgil Shepherd, Executive Secretary of the American Red Cross, Mr. Ford Hall of Indiana University, Mr. Hall Cochrane, Attorney-at-Law and Mr. Eugene Pulliam of the Indianapolis Star. The committee incorporated their suggestions and were ready for the General Assembly in January, 1947.

The League bill had the full and enthusiastic support of all three Indianapolis newspapers and the Chamber of Commerce. The League committee met with Mayor Tyndall and Mr. Herman Bower of the City Council as well as a group of prominent citizens. Meeting with each member of the Marion County delegation to the General Assembly, the League tried to get one of the legislators to introduce the bill, even paying for some publicity to keep it in the public eye. Lack of success
in these efforts provoked the following comment from Mrs. Noling:

In the end we had to admit that not enough groundwork had been laid within the League itself, with the general public including many organizations which should have been ready to help us, nor with the legislators who did not feel prepared to stand the questions and objections with which they would have been bombarded.

Believing that effective political action depends upon compromise, the committee worked out a compromise with the legislators from Marion County and with Mr. Ostrom whereby a bill would be introduced calling for a Personnel Study Commission to be appointed by the Governor composed of three members of the House, two members of the Senate, one person trained in personnel work, one member of the League of Women Voters, and two citizens representing good citizen groups.

Having written this new bill and having secured co-sponsors in the legislature, the committee "pushed, prodded and urged" it through the legislature with the help of the state Steering Committee, seeing it pass both houses. Assuming that Governor Gates would have no objection to such a bill, the committee sent him a letter over Mrs. Durham's signature, asking him to let the League confer with him before he made the appointments to the commission.

To our amazement on the final day for action by the Governor, he vetoed the bill, stating that he believed such a study commission should be appointed locally and not by the Governor.

Stunned but not knocked flat we started over with the press

and the candidates and we have secured from each candidate a written statement that he will appoint such a study commission if elected.  

The new Mayor did indeed appoint a study commission and it included three members of the Indianapolis League: Mrs. Walter Greenough, Mrs. Alfred Noling and Mrs. Guy Byrd. In addition, the city affairs committee under the general direction of Mrs. Charles Harmon and Mrs. R. K. Zimmerly, developed their contacts in the new administration and continued to attend all City Council sessions and budget hearings, and called conferences with the various city departments. The need for a uniform personnel system for the city was stressed by League speakers at women's clubs and church groups as well as to the units of the League itself.

The hiatus which World War II had brought to the work for establishing the city manager form of government for the city remained. Although the League had consulted with the members of the original study commission after the war, and helped in the submission of the original amendment to the General Assembly of 1949, the House Committee on Cities and Towns kept the amendment until there were only three days left in the session. At that time the Chairman reported it out because "he had promised the ladies he would get it out." Since only three

74 Ibid.

days remained, however, the measure was never called for a vote. The General Assembly of 1949 did, however, bring out the shifting emphasis of those interested in reform of the law governing municipalities. The city manager form was no longer the issue; reformers had shifted to a more general view of increased home rule for cities under adoption of new charters. In any case, the constitutional amendment route to reform was blocked since other amendments were pending, which meant a wait of four years.

In response to considerable lobbying for some sort of solution to the multitude of problems created by a 1951 metropolitan area trying to govern itself by an 1851 constitution, the 1951 General Assembly created a Metropolitan Area Study Commission of Marion County. The Commission Chairman was J. Dwight Peterson and the Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Frank Cox of the Indianapolis League of Women Voters. Katy Cox was educated at Butler and DePauw Universities and was inspired to become interested in politics by Professor Carson of the Department of Political Science at DePauw. A woman of courage and penetrating wit, Mrs. Cox had served on League committees studying the structure and powers of local governments since 1939, and has been the goad and mentor of all such committees to the present time.

The General Assembly had charged the Commission with the following duties:

Making a survey of existing conditions in the metropolitan area of such county relative to possible duplication and confusion
of governmental functions and public services provided by all governmental units within the area with the view of ascertaining whether or not legislation on the subject of consolidation or merging of governmental functions and services in the above designated areas is desirable, necessary and advantageous to the public affected thereby . . . and to prepare and submit to the 88th Session of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana a report showing the results of such survey together with its recommendations as to legislation on the subject, if legislation is found by such commission to be desirable.

Much of the impetus for the Commission came from League lobbyists, for the League had already decided that such a survey would effectively point up the need for reform. The Indiana League of Women Voters had asked all local Leagues in 1950 to cooperate on a well-planned survey of their own counties for the purpose of identifying problems and recommending changes in the interest of maximum economy and efficiency.

In Indianapolis the city affairs committee was naturally interested in the survey since many of the functions of city and county government overlapped. Mrs. Bennet Kraft, Chairman, reported that "their zeal matched that of the early Christian martyrs," although their efforts in the General Assembly to get a personnel bill for the city met with no success. That being the case, the League solicited


77 Minutes of the Annual Meeting, May, 1951.
the help of other interested groups and called together a meeting which eventually organized the Association for Improved Municipal Personnel Administration. The A.I.M.P.A., with which the League cooperated fully, carried on the work to establish a merit system for the city, as the League was turning to a new emphasis in municipal reform, and wished to be ready to testify before the Commission.

The Indianapolis Local Government Survey Report was made public by Mrs. Frank Cox, Mrs. R. G. Bomgardner and Mrs. Jerome K. Bash, on April 24, 1952, with as much fanfare as the League could muster. Not only did the newspapers carry the story, but League women also appeared on radio at the invitation of the Chamber of Commerce, and on television at the invitation of the Bar Association, to publicize the results of the survey.

The report summary made no definite recommendations although a list of questions telegraphed a number of League positions which are still current, i.e., improvement of assessment procedures, a centralized purchasing authority, consolidation of services, a personnel system and a single administrative head, preferably appointed.

At the annual meeting on May 27, 1952, the Indianapolis League did elect to support:

Action to effect efficiency and economy in city-county government through:

1. continued support of sound personnel practices
2. elimination of overlapping functions of government
3. support of certain consolidated functions in Marion County as reflected in our Local Government Survey. 79

As a result of all local surveys, the state League agreed on the following recommendations for county government in Indiana: A single administrative head; setting up qualifications for officials; correction of the fee system; and combining services of related offices for county government.

On August 6, 1952, the Indianapolis League read a statement to the Metropolitan Area Study Commission making recommendations which incorporated the findings of the League survey. Some of these reforms could be achieved only by a possible constitutional revision, i.e., a single administrative head for county government, eliminating certain county officials from the ballot, and abolition of the office of Justice of the Peace. Others required legislative action and included the establishment of a personnel system for county employees, consolidation of certain city-county services such as police and fire protection, sanitation, planning and zoning, poor relief, health and hospital facilities. The recommendations also included the suggestion for more efficient business practices by consolidation of the purchasing function.

of civil and school administrations.

The Commission's report was released on November 1, 1952. The general conclusion was quite similar to that of the League, that duplication of services and functions is substantial and that confusion exists in regard to what functions are the responsibility of which layer of government. Since the League had approached its survey by officials and had done the work with volunteers, while the Commission approached the survey by functions and employed professional help, it is not surprising that, although agreeing on some specifics, the surveys did not make the same general recommendations. The Commission's recommendations were aimed at the expansion of the boundaries of Greater Indianapolis to include the entire urbanized area and expanding the boundaries of Center Township to conform to those of Greater Indianapolis. It recommended that county-wide functions be handled by a new County Council which would replace the County Council and the County Commissioners and operate through a single administrator. Primarily the report recommended the establishment of a Regional Planning Commission which would establish a master plan. Subsequently, the League wrote on November 8, 1952, to Mr. Peterson urging the members of the commission "to assume leadership in implementing their recommendations with the necessary legislative action." 80

80 Board Minutes, November, 1952.
When the newly elected Marion County legislators held public hearings to determine public opinion in December, the League and the A.I.M.P.A. appeared to make recommendations. Since the policy of the League of Women Voters requires a local League to ask permission of its state League to lobby in a state legislature for programs which are not state-wide, the Indianapolis board requested permission from the state board to support legislation in the General Assembly which embodied those recommendations of the Metropolitan Area Study Commission which agreed with the Indianapolis League's positions. The consent was given on January 5, 1953, with the exception that the Indianapolis League was not allowed to lobby for the elimination of Justices of the Peace, since a constitutional amendment would be necessary and an amendment would affect the entire state.

Although a great deal of time and effort was consumed, neither the city personnel bill nor the bill calling for changes in the structure of government in Marion County passed. Piecemeal consolidation began. The bill establishing a Metropolitan Planning Department became law, and the Health and Hospital Corporation was established. Throughout the discussions of consolidation of city and county services which had been carried on in the League, the fact that county residents used the city hospital yet were not taxed for its operation seemed most galling. Mrs. Zimmerly, the chairman of the League's local committee covering the health department, served on the Health and Welfare
Council and on the committee which reviewed city and county budgets. The committee had therefore an intimate knowledge of the problems which this legislation was designed to correct.

An essential part of both the Commission and the League proposals and studies had been the provision that a local unit of government, in this case Marion County or Metropolitan Indianapolis, should be allowed to adopt its own form of government. The frustration stemming from the fact that the legislators from other areas of the state were the ones who decided the fate of all their efforts, led the League to believe that the crux of governmental reorganization lay in the achievement of home rule for Indianapolis. Since this could only be done through the legislature and through constitutional amendment, and since constitutional revision was already part of the state program, the Indianapolis League went to the state League convention and made a successful effort to convince the convention to adopt a study of home rule. After the usual procedure of study and consensus, the League was ready to act and for the next two legislative sessions and most of the intervening period, Leagues all over the state worked for the Optional City Charter Amendment.

Tactics were essentially the same as those used in the campaign for a merit system. Each legislative session was covered by a steering committee of twenty women, two of whom were on duty at all times during a session. Careful observations, bill reading, helpful
services for legislators, in short all the paid lobbyist's activities, were pursued by these women on a volunteer basis. Since it is the capital city, Indianapolis provided most of the members of this committee. Public meetings featuring prominent speakers were held and were advertised. Newspaper, radio and television coverage of these events was sought and obtained.

In fact the campaign to pass Home Rule, or the Optional City Charter plan, received enormous press coverage. Not a week went by without an article in all three newspapers and the League's role, along with that of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, was stressed, brickbats equalling bouquets. Irving Leibowitz had already written some kind words in his column in the Indianapolis Times:

For the most part women's groups in Indianapolis are effective. Take the League of Women Voters. They have a program they want enacted in Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana, and the United States. Some of it gets left by the wayside. But a bit of it somehow becomes law. 81

He went on to explain that the League was working for the Optional City Charter Amendment with the Indiana Jaycees.

The League is the only citizens group now that covers every meeting of City Council, County Council, City-County Health and Hospital Board, and the General Assembly. Women's groups, like the League, are growing in political importance every day. 82

81Indianapolis Times, June 17, 1954.
82Ibid.
By January his tune had changed somewhat. Writing about the League's Personnel Bill, which "the ladies hope would bring better local government to Indianapolis," he stated that "the LWV may not be aware of it yet, but a number of politicians are out to torpedo the bill. . . . Why? Because Democrats and Republicans want the jobs that go with the control of City Hall. That's how they keep the people interested in the party." 83

The Indianapolis Times devoted a half-page to an explanation of the Optional City Charter Amendment, 84 and the Indianapolis Star attacked it on the editorial pages. 85 When the Indiana Municipal League came out against the Optional City Charter Amendment in November, all three papers devoted several stories to a restatement of the League's reasons for supporting it. The opponents referred to in a Times headline "A Key Battle Is Shaping Up," 86 were Mrs. Gordon McCalment, President of the Indianapolis League of Women Voters, and E. Pralle Erni, President of the Indiana Municipal League.

The League itself was the target of the anti-home rule forces. Both at the hearing in the Senate and in the floor debates the "keep them in the kitchen" forces attacked the League. Representative W. O. Hughes

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83Indianapolis Times, January 21, 1955.
84Indianapolis Times, December 5, 1954.
85Indianapolis Star, November 27, 1954.
86Indianapolis Times, December 12, 1954.
of Ft. Wayne asked the lawmakers in the floor debate, "Who approached you for this measure? People who had nothing else to do. If they would have busied themselves working for the system we now have, we would have good government." 87 In carrying on this line of reasoning, opponents finally implied that the League of Women Voters had no faith in the democratic system. This was too much for Representative Harriet Stout of Indianapolis who, jumping to the defense of the League declared,

I want to clear up a few things about the League of Women Voters. The League is not communistic and the members do work at elections. It's all right to let the women work for your elections though, isn't it? It's all right if they leave their children to go out and campaign for you. 88

After the Senate debate the Indianapolis Times editorially congratulated the League. "Both organizations worked hard to see that arguments against the amendment received intelligent answers out in the open." 89

Mrs. John A. Campbell, Indianapolis, president of the Indiana League, appeared at all hearings of the bill. A soft-spoken and intelligent woman who later served on the national board of the League and as chairman of the League of Women Voters Education Fund, Mrs. Campbell led off the defense for the amendment in the Senate hearing. She was

89 Indianapolis Times, January 26, 1955.
quoted often and once, responding to a question about voter apathy at home, said, "Voters become frustrated because more and more local government is being carried on in Washington and Indianapolis, rather than in municipalities." 90 In assessing the reasons for the defeat of the amendment, the Indianapolis News reported: "In one sense the battle was amateurs against professionals and the professionals won." 91

In order to keep abreast of changing emphasis in the study of local government and the shift of focus from existing governments to innovations in metropolitan government, the Indianapolis League undertook a new survey. The purpose of the new Metropolitan Area Survey was to:

lead us to a study of various approaches to solving metropolitan area problems. The 1957-1958 aim of the survey is to help League members become informed about local government and metropolitan area problems and to share that information with the public at large by publishing a booklet and distributing it widely through Marion County. 92

First published in 1959, Who's In Charge Here? combined efforts to become informed about local government with citizen education in this field. Designed "as a tool to help the citizens of the Indianapolis metropolitan area understand the government under which they live,

90 Ibid., January 19, 1955.
92 League of Women Voters of Indianapolis, Metropolitan Area Survey, Background Information, 1957, p. 2.
and, armed with knowledge, work to improve it," this publication elicited a great deal of favorable community reaction. The Indianapolis Times in its lead editorial for April 15, 1959, said:

We've seen any number of dissertations on government, and countless surveys of federal, state and local political systems. But for completeness, practical usefulness and plan evidence that care and common sense have been used in its preparation, the best we've seen lately is a 47-page mimeographed booklet prepared by the League of Women Voters of Indianapolis. . . . and after skimming through the new publication . . . we wouldn't mind if some of those ladies who wrote the book would go ahead and take charge themselves.

In the story announcing the publication, the Indianapolis News suggested that "The layman who seeks readable information about the various levels of government . . . will find it in a booklet just issued by the Indianapolis League of Women Voters." The Indianapolis Times further devoted a half-page to a precis of the booklet, quoting League authors on such things as county government, "an anachronism . . . without a single administrative head or a single legislative body," and wholesale annexation, "Its intelligent use can alleviate problems but can not be counted on as a final solution to metropolitan growth." Of Who's In Charge Here? the Times editor said, "It is a monumental and valuable research job than can do much to improve the political,

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94 Indianapolis News, April 11, 1959.

95 Indianapolis Times, May 17, 1959.
Among the many congratulatory letters was one received from Joseph W. Barr, Congressman from the 11th District.

You have certainly made an extremely valuable contribution to the metropolitan area of Indianapolis and I'd like to repeat that if you ever get really ambitious I would love to see you turn loose on a similar booklet covering the U.S.A. 97

The booklet was distributed to schools and to the community and was reprinted in 1960. It was further brought up to date in 1961 and in 1963 with corrections and addenda to include the work of the General Assembly which, by 1963, had passed legislation creating the Metropolitan Park Board, the Metropolitan Thoroughfare Authority, the Airport Authority District and the City-County Building Authority.

Who's In Charge Here? was continuously requested by schools and libraries but was out-of-date by the summer of 1965 when the Board of Directors decided that it must be reissued. Hoping for much wider distribution, Mrs. Lowell Thomas and Mrs. Frank Cox revised the information, and the Indianapolis News published a special reference edition on February 4, 1966, which went to every subscriber of the paper as well as to the usual League distribution lists through large corporations, schools, libraries and citizens who requested it.

96 Ibid.

During the 1959 legislative session, the Indianapolis League supported a bill to provide for an elected county manager to replace the three-member Board of County Commissioners. The bill had the solid backing of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce and other civic groups who were interested in increasing the efficiency of Marion County government. An urgent plea to the League membership was addressed by Mrs. Edwin H. Ferree, president, on February 23, 1959, asking them to contact every senator they knew in support of the bill when it was up for third reading, but the bill failed to pass. The following summer the League appeared before the Republican platform Committee urging consideration of metropolitan problems in the platform as well as "home rule" and new tax sources for municipalities.

League members were constantly brought up to date on local government by their own study groups as well as by local government officials. Having studied the several forms of metropolitan government, the League was able to concentrate its efforts on federation or urban-county types since they were deemed most feasible for Marion County. In the 1961 General Assembly the League supported bills to create county-wide districts for the parks, thoroughfares and highways. Success on the piecemeal approach previously had led to the decision to support these bills and this session of the General Assembly did

98SB 207, Townsend and Burnett.
create the Metropolitan Park Department and the Marion County
Thoroughfare Authority, although the latter's power to raise funds
was seriously curtailed by a 1964 decision of the Supreme Court which
declared its power to tax passenger vehicles unconstitutional.

Through the assistance of the Miami League of Women Voters,
the Indianapolis League arranged for a visit to Indianapolis by Dr. H.
Franklin Williams, Vice-President of the University of Miami and
Director of its Department of Community Affairs. A member of the
Charter Board which helped to draft the new Miami-Dade County metro-
politan plan, Dr. Williams had followed its development closely and,
in order to gain support for this type of metropolitan government in
the community, the League invited twenty community leaders to lunch
to hear him speak. The subsequent difficulties which Miami had with
metropolitan government were not at this time apparent.

Encouraged by the interest in this program, the League had a
bill drawn up which incorporated the structural changes which the
members had agreed after reevaluating their previous studies were
necessary. A summary of this bill was prepared and sent to community
leaders. The League was advocating:

A single legislative body on the county level, consisting of
a County Council elected on a population basis with staggered
four-year terms.

The Council shall elect their own President of Council.

A single executive for the County who will be a professionally
qualified administrator will be hired by the County Council.
Under this authority will be placed those functions of government which are county-wide. 99

In order to stem the objections which arose from suburban dwellers, Mrs. William Polay, Chairman of the metropolitan government committee, wrote a letter to all school board members in the nine county school systems, assuring them that metropolitan government did not affect the school.

We are trying to inform the community of the bill and get support for it. At the outset we want to allay the fears of everyone who thinks a metropolitan government would mean a metropolitan school district. Our bill does not affect the schools at all. 100

Not one legislator from Marion County would introduce the League's bill, but the General Assembly did appoint a Marion County Study Commission to study overlapping and duplication of functions of elected officials and governing boards in Indianapolis and Marion County. This Commission included two appointees from the House, two from the Senate, one from the League of Women voters, one member appointed by the Chamber of Commerce, one by the County Commissioners, one by the County Council and one by the Mayor of Indianapolis. Mrs. William B. Polay, a Vice-president of the Indianapolis League, was appointed to this commission.

During 1963 and 1964 all public hearings of this commission

99League of Women Voters of Indianapolis, Memorandum, July 1, 1962.

100Mrs. William Polay, Indianapolis, December 5, 1962, letter to school board members.
were attended by League observers and on June 29, 1964, Mrs. Howard F. Gustafson, President, appeared before the commission to read an official statement which restated the several points in the League’s bill.

In July, 1964, the Commission issued a preliminary report of its findings and held a public meeting in the Statehouse to hear objections.

As the Indianapolis Star reported:

A state legislative committee studying Marion County government got a scolding last night from a League of Women Voters spokesman for not pushing further toward a unified metropolitan set-up.

The lawmakers were accused of "concentrating on the symptoms, not the disease" by Mrs. Frank H. Cox, vice-president of the League’s Indianapolis unit. . . . "We have numerous boards to stopgap the problems of a metropolitan community," she stated, "We have expanded city boards with county-wide jurisdiction, we have county boards, we have at least one autonomous board . . . we’ve got a mess."101

The bills which this commission prepared for submission to the 1965 General Assembly made no structural changes and were geared to correct or improve departmental functions, answering the need for increased efficiency within existing departments. However the election in 1964 removed from office all the legislators who sat on the commission, so despite the fact that the League became thoroughly familiar with them, they were not introduced.

The League did sponsor a wide-ranging program to acquaint members and the community with local government in September, 1964.

at a Know Your Local Government Day. In addition to the Mayor, John Barton, and Walter Hemphill, County Commissioner, the audience heard a panel on planning and zoning and a panel on law enforcement.

Meeting the newly-elected legislators at a luncheon in December, 1964, League members pushed for the concepts in the League bill, hoping to interest some of the legislators in introducing a bill designed to bring Metropolitan government to Marion County.

This new General Assembly did introduce an act which provided for another study commission. The League made statements at the public hearings on the proposals which tried, without success, to conceal the exasperation of women who had been studying, surveying and working to get structural changes in local government for three decades.

The League statement suggested that the legislation for the study commission be mandatory, that it provide that the recommendations of the commission be in the form of legislation, that it carry an appropriation and use the "information on the need for and proposals concerning metropolitan government in Marion County . . . from the reports of previous study commissions starting in 1933." 102 Appearing before the Senate Affairs of Marion County committee, the League spoke against a bill which would achieve a metropolitan government by adding another layer of government to those already existing.

102 League of Women Voters of Indianapolis, Statement on Proposed Metropolitan Study Commission Bills, undated.
When the bill to establish the study commission was signed by Governor Branigan, a WISH-TV editorial commended him on signing it and stated, "... the enactment of the law authorizing an official study of the proposal puts it in a class beyond the purely theoretical stage for the first time." 103 If the League had had any impact on the community it had certainly failed in communications, although the editorial went on to admit that a number of local officials and civic groups had advocated the proposition for some time.

The bill was not mandatory however, and the Mayor failed to appoint the commission, explaining that the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee which he had formed could more ably do the job. Mrs. Frank Cox was the League's representative to that committee which suggested legislation creating a Metropolitan Police Force to the next legislation session, which failed to pass.

The creation of separate boards with metropolitan jurisdiction was made necessary, according to some lawyers, because of constitutional provisions limiting the bonding power of any corporation to 2% of the assessed valuation within that corporation. In answer to agitation from many segments of the citizenry for reform, the General Assembly of 1967 passed legislation which created a Constitutional Revision Commission to which Mrs. Frank Cox, was appointed. The Commission

did not grapple with the problems of cities until the deadline for its report was imminent, however, and reported no recommendations for home rule legislation.

The Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee Task Force on Local Government Reorganization appointed by Mayor Lugar in November, 1968, had a League member as its only woman. This committee, working with a newly elected delegation to the General Assembly, drafted legislation creating unified government for Marion County which passed the General Assembly of 1969. Since it embodied the principles for which the League had been working, with the exception of merit provisions, it was supported vigorously by the League.

Mrs. Edward Leary, president, appeared at two public hearings on the legislation, which had become known as Unigov, and was televised giving the League position at a stormy meeting in the City-County Building. Personal letters were sent to all legislators urging the support of the bill and telegrams were sent to the Governor, to the officers of both Houses and all members of Senate and House Affairs of Marion County Committees. Petitions in support of Unigov were circulated by the League throughout the county, and League lobbyists attended every session of the legislature. Although it is too early to assess the impact and effect of this legislation, it was certainly the culmination of many years of study and meetings devoted to local government. The League is presently working out a program of observation
and study to keep the members and the community up-to-date on the workings of Unigov, as well as preparing to be in a position to suggest needed changes.
CHAPTER IV

THE ORGANIZATION IN THE COMMUNITY

Every organization working in the field of politics needs the support of the community as well as the interest and enthusiasm of its membership and the Indianapolis League of Women Voters has consistently recognized this fact. On March 6, 1920, Miss Sara Lauter, president of the Woman's Franchise League, wrote to all presidents of women's clubs in the city inviting them to a meeting to discuss the League of Women Voters and to hear Mrs. Richard Edwards of Peru, first Treasurer of the National League of Women Voters.\textsuperscript{104} The far-reaching purposes of the new organization promised to require organizational efficiency and broad community understanding which many of these women might supply.

At the first organizing meeting on April 16, 1920, it was not even possible to elect a president, since no one would accept nomination, and several months of tenuous organization passed before Miss Alma Sickler finally took the reins. Early problems of organization concerned the lack of real information among the members and the enormous numbers carried on the membership lists. \textquoteleft\textquoteleft During the fight for

\textsuperscript{104}The office of the national League was in her home for the first year and the volume of her mail caused the post office to move Peru up one class.
suffrage sheer numbers of members was the goal and many women of means paid the nominal dues for an entire group of members, many of whom did not know they were carried on the lists." As the issues became complicated and as the goal changed to provide women with the means of becoming active and informed participants in government, the problem of communication became acute. Since membership was actually in the Indiana League of Women Voters until the reorganization of 1944, when membership in the League of Women Voters of the United States included working through a local League, this problem was solved on the state level.

Mrs. Walter S. Greenough was elected state president in 1922. The state office moved to Indianapolis, after a year spent in Elkhart under the presidency of Mrs. A. H. Beasley. Mrs. Greenough founded The Woman Voter, published by the Indiana League of Women Voters, which was sent regularly to each member, the subscription being included in the yearly dues of $1.00. The Indianapolis League did not begin publication of its Bulletin until 1932, the year Mrs. Greenough became president of the local League.

One great help in problems of organization has always been the maintenance of an office and a secretary. Keeping the office which had belonged to the Franchise League in the Chamber of Commerce

105 Greenough, History, p. 4.
Building at the beginning, the Indianapolis League soon joined the state League in offices in the Spink Arms Hotel and both Leagues moved to the Illinois Building across from the State House a few years later. Although the state League stayed at that location the Indianapolis League moved to offices on the city's north side in the 1950's, reflecting the affluence of the times and the members who wanted the office located where they could easily park their cars.

Although the history of any organization is the essence of innumerable biographies, and although the Indianapolis League of Women Voters has been shaped by the character and intelligence of its officers and directors, very few of these women stand out as specific shapers of the organization's destiny. One reason for this has been the tradition of the two-year presidency and another has been the insatiable demand of the state League's Board of Directors for women of talent and purpose. A glance at Appendix B will show that many Indianapolis women shaped state League policy, yet never served as president of the local League, and a list of directorships would multiply this fact several times over. At times this has left the local League without the talents of its best members and the pattern of growth shown in Appendix A in terms of members and finance reflects this fact at

106 Now the Continental Hotel.
least as much as the broader historical context.

A most serious drop in number of members as well as yearly budget occurs, for example, between 1923 and 1925 when the membership dropped from over one thousand to one hundred sixty-seven. Records for these years are missing and research beyond the scope of this study would necessarily precede any substantive conclusions as to cause. The facts there are, however, are suggestive. In 1922, Mrs. Allen T. Fleming was elected to the presidency of the Indianapolis League. During her two-year term of office she more than doubled the membership of the organization, and carefully preserved non-partisanship by naming co-chairmen, one Democrat and one Republican, to each of the several League committees. An announcement in The Woman Voter, February, 1924, in the column devoted to honors received by League members read:

Mrs. Allen T. Fleming, president of the Indianapolis League, has accepted the appointment of campaign manager for Ed Jackson, secretary of state, who is a candidate for the nomination for Governor of Indiana. 107

It was Ed Jackson who, as Secretary of State under Governor McCray, issued the Ku Klux Klan its charter in Indiana and "in 1924 the Klan rewarded Jackson by electing him governor." 108 The Klan controlled the

city government in Indianapolis and the school board as well until
after the April, 1925, arrest of Grand Dragon, D. C. Stephenson and
his subsequent conviction on the charge of murdering a young
Indianapolis woman. In 1926 a Marion County grand jury indicted Mayor
Duvall who was sent to prison and six members of the City Council
were punished for taking bribes to vote against his impeachment.109
These events must have had some relationship to the drop in League
membership, if only to reflect a general disgust with politics.

Now life came to the organization, however, when Miss Sara
Lauter accepted the presidency in 1927. Having been president of the
Indianapolis Branch of the Woman's Franchise League, Miss Lauter
had declined the presidency of the League upon its organization and had,
instead, held several directorships on the state League board. Together
with her sister, Miss Eldena Lauter, she had been active in the Franchise
League and in the Indiana Little Theater Society. As finance chairman
for the latter, Miss Lauter chaired the drive to provide a permanent
building for the Booth Tarkington Civic Theater in 1926. Her interests
were also reflected in early finance efforts and programs by the
Indianapolis League of Women Voters.

Influenced by the Indianapolis centennial celebration with its
flamboyant pageants of the previous year, the Indianapolis League

staged an Inaugural Day program in March, 1921, which included the sketches of six presidents. Miss Lauter organized and wrote with Miss Alma Sickler a pageant on Americanization which was presented to the state convention. In 1922, as a finance effort, the League sponsored the opening performance of *East Is West*, starring Miss Fay Bainter, a member of the Indianapolis League, and in June of the same year a pageant "Kar-A-Ban" was given at the State Fairgrounds which had a cast of 600 of which 300 were dancers. League files still contain skits written by Miss Lauter to illustrate the value of the League and demonstrate why young ladies should prefer membership in it to bridge, mah-jong, and endless shopping trips.\(^{110}\) Educated at Smith College, Miss Lauter was interested in all phases of government and in 1943 was appointed to the Indiana Employment Security Division.

Miss Lauter and her fellow suffragists had sold ice cream cones and baked goods to raise money for the Franchise League, yet she brought to the League of Women Voters a larger vision in the field of finance, as well as theatrical production. Time-consuming discussion of finance matters fill board minutes in every decade and a consistent finance policy was a serious lack in the organization. Speakers and broadsides cost money, as did publications like the state's *Voters*

\(^{110}\)The League did have one bridge and mah-jong party, in 1924.
Handbook,\textsuperscript{111} and innumerable national and state publications which the Indianapolis League distributed to schools and libraries. The national and state monies were collected through the local League and dues, which were kept low to encourage membership, did not begin to cover the cost. The local League relied on donations and sometimes a loan from the Treasurer to balance the budget or take care of unpaid bills.

The social composition of the constantly changing membership was reflected in the kinds of fund-raising projects which the League undertook. In 1934, for example, undaunted by the depression, the League sponsored the opening night of the production Of Thee I Sing. The society pages of the local papers carried three-column portraits of each member of the ticket committee and, in a single night, the League netted over $800 which paid an entire year’s obligation to the state and national treasuries. A Lawrence Tibbett concert in the following year, preceded by society page publicity covering box holders and dinner parties, was almost as successful. The more usual project, however, and the one which combined fund-raising with an interest in informed participation in government, was the sponsorship of a lecture

\textsuperscript{111}The Voter’s Handbook was published by the Indiana League of Women Voters from 1931 until 1945. Each revision was undertaken with the help of Dr. Charles Kettleborough of the Indiana Legislative Reference Bureau and, upon his death, publication ceased. The League has since published a pamphlet on election laws, The ABC’s of Voting in Indiana, and has used the Chamber of Commerce publication, Know Your Indiana Government to fill this need.
by a nationally prominent speaker. In terms of publicity and profit
the greatest successes were the Clifton Utley lectures, given each
year from 1937 to 1940, and the William Shirer lecture in 1941.

An expansion drive for more money and more members was
launched nationally in 1939 to mark the League's twentieth anniversary
but the outbreak of World War II caused its cancellation. The League
has, for the past two decades, relied upon donations from the community
and from its members to support its budget which, although matching
the inflation of the country, has never kept up with needs. The present
finance drive for a Fiftieth Anniversary Fund of eleven million dollars
nationally represents an attempt to cope with this problem.

The social status of the leadership may well influence the
League's effectiveness in the community since a direct line to civic
leadership over dinner or cocktails is an invaluable asset in the political
arena. A great many women of prominent Indianapolis families have
been members and directors of the League over the years, especially
during the depression which may account for its continued high level of
operation in those years. It is outside the scope of this study, obviously,
to make any definite rankings in this regard although League members
have generally come from what is called upper middle class, preponder-
ately representative of the wives of business and professional men.
Meeting places might reflect the rank of the League leadership within
this group, although there is no necessary correlation between them.
Early meetings were held at the Propyleum, but also at the Rauh Memorial Library and Caleb Mills Hall. The Woodstock Club and the D. A. R. Chapter House alternated with Ayres Auditorium and a local bank, or church. The minutes reveal, in fact, that choice of meeting place was more often dictated by a concern for the convenience or comfort of all the members, rather than a few. In recent years all meeting places have been chosen with a view to making Negro members feel welcome.

Interacting with the character of the leadership and strengths of the organization, along with the cooperation or lack of it shown by the party in power, nothing determined effectiveness more than the program of issues and reform on which the League was working. A high water mark was reached in 1952 and 1953 in terms of League participation in government when members of the Indianapolis League of Women Voters served on the Indiana State Mental Health Council, the Mayor's Human Rights Commission, the Juvenile Court Advisory Council, the Marion County Government Survey Commission, the Indiana Council for Children and Youth, the Indiana Advisory Health Council, the Governor's Advisory Committee on Recreation, the Marion County Civilian Defense Advisory Council, the Marion County Jury Commission, the Indiana State Board of Directors of the Health Advisory Council, the Governor's Commission for Study of Chronic Illness, the Indiana State Personnel Board, the Sheriff’s Advisory Committee and Chairman
of the Mayor’s United Nations Citizen Committee. Some of these
appointments reflect the League’s interest in local government, which
has already been examined in detail. But half of these appointments
were to boards and commissions concerned with health and welfare,
children and education, the natural interests of women and ones on
which the League had had an early start.

The "needed legislation" which the National League of Women
Voters had pledged to support at its first convention in 1920 was primarily
concerned with social welfare. Issues on which the women were united
included: support of collective bargaining, wages on basis of occupation
and not of sex, a Women’s Bureau in the Department of Labor, a joint
federal-state employment service, a child-labor law, wage-hour legis­
lation, a minimum wage, a merit system in federal, state and local
governments, maternity-infancy protective legislation, regulation of
the meat-packing industry, laws to prevent food profiteering, pure-food
laws, cooperative associations, social-hygiene legislation, uniform
marriage and divorce laws in the United States, independent citizenship
for married women, equal interest of spouses in each other's real
estate, mothers' pensions, equal guardianship, jury service for women,
compulsory education for all children between 6 and 16 for nine months
of each year and nearly fifty more. 112 Now that they had the vote, they

112Forty Years, p. 13.
used the energies which they had concentrated on attaining suffrage to accomplish these "needed" reforms.

Although a great deal could be accomplished in Washington, it was necessary to concentrate some effort on the state legislatures as well. The Indiana League of Women Voters secured office space in the state house with the help of Miss Adah Bush, the governor's secretary and a member of the Indianapolis League of Women Voters. 113 Most of the legislative work was done by members of the Indianapolis League, although under the auspices of the Indiana League. Armed with the techniques which they had used to obtain suffrage, the women concentrated on equal guardianship for children, a child labor–school attendance law, and legislation which would establish an eight-hour day for women in industry. They were successful with the first two measures although "the most demanding task was to familiarize both the legislators and the public with the provisions of the proposed (Child Labor) law and how it would operate." 114 The law would require the attendance of all children in school until the age of sixteen with certain necessary exceptions, that is reasons of health, marriage, delinquency (under court order) or economic necessity, provided he had finished the eighth grade. The provisions as to child labor specified prohibited employment for those under age sixteen, eighteen and twenty-one, confined working

113Greenough, History, p. 5.
114Ibid.
hours for children to an eight-hour day and forty-eight-hour week and made it unlawful to employ anyone under eighteen without a work certificate which could only be issued to those completing the eighth grade. The most important feature of the law was that it abolished the truant officer and put the administration of the law in the hands of a State Attendance Officer, selected by the State Board of Education, with a local attendance officer for every two thousand children. The emphasis was shifted away from treating the truant as a criminal toward finding the causes for absence. Coming before the Federal Child Labor Law, its passage was a major victory for its supporters in Indiana.

The opposition to the third League legislative program, an eight-hour day for women in industry, came not only from employers but also from business and professional women. Although the League continued to study under a department of Women in Industry, it did not introduce legislation again and, in fact, worked rather to remove specific discriminatory references to women. It was necessary, however, to protect the Child Labor-School Attendance Law from crippling amendments or lack of adequate funding in each succeeding legislative session, especially that of 1927.

Legislation for the promotion of the welfare and hygiene of maternity and infancy cases, the Sheppard-Towner Act, was vigorously supported by the League and was enacted by Congress in 1921. In September of that year the Indianapolis League of Women Voters invited
representatives of the Young Women's Christian Association, the Parent Teacher Association, the Business and Professional Women, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Daughters of the American Republic, the Council of Jewish Women, and the Women's Federation of Clubs, all of which organizations were also working for the legislation, to a summer party at Christmas Park. The Indiana League, along with state Leagues throughout the country, would be supporting legislation in the 1923 General Assembly which appropriated the matching funds, under the Sheppard-Towner Act, to establish a separate bureau in the State Board of Health for education in maternal and child hygiene and care. The success of similar programs in other countries, as well as in the few states which had already instituted such a program in reducing the infant mortality rate and the numbers of deaths in childbirth, made women that much more eager that Indiana qualify for the federal funds by appropriating the necessary matching funds.

Despite the fact that matching funds were already being set aside in other fields, notably in road construction and agricultural programs, bitter opposition developed in the General Assembly. The campaign was successful, however, and the enabling legislation passed with comfortable majorities. When the federal legislation came to an end in 1926, the League worked again for the appropriations necessary for the state to continue the program. The success of the measure in
reducing the mortality rate had by that time changed the attitudes which led to opposition and the measure passed easily.

The continuing work on the Child Labor-School Attendance Law and continuing observation of its administration led the Indianapolis League to a study of the Juvenile Court, the juvenile detention home and the probation department. The Indianapolis Times announced in December, 1931:

Demand that county commissioners obtain another site for the Marion County juvenile detention home so playground facilities be afforded the children, was made by a special committee of the League of Women Voters at a conference with commissioners today. \(^{115}\)

The Indianapolis Star announced two months later:

Mrs. S. N. Campbell and Mrs. Albert Beveridge of the League of Women Voters urge both political parties to have strong candidates for judge of the Juvenile Court and to work for the Probation Bill. \(^{116}\)

After a successful effort in the 1935 General Assembly to strengthen the Probation Department and clarify the law establishing the Juvenile Court of Marion County, \(^{117}\) and the subsequent success in the same year, when the legislature ratified the Child Labor amendment, the

\(^{115}\)Indianapolis Times, December 16, 1931.  
\(^{116}\)Indianapolis Star, February 27, 1932.  
\(^{117}\)Laws of the State of Indiana, 1935, pp. 1251-1253. According to Mrs. Walter S. Greenough, the law was written by an interested group formed by the League, using the League's survey as the basis of their work. These records are lost, but this survey must have been
Indianapolis League asked the state board for help in a survey of the Juvenile Court. Mrs. Austin Clifford and Mrs. Perry Lesh in cooperation with the Indiana Council of Social Agencies made the study, with the recommendation that the law be improved to demand a higher standard of qualification for judge. Having found that the administration of the court was less than adequate, the League helped to form the Marion County Bi-Partisan Juvenile Court Committee to arouse citizen interest in getting able candidates. In the election of 1938 the committee supported a candidate from each party in the primary. These candidates won and after the election a better administration of the Juvenile Court was soon apparent.

In 1942, the committee supported Judge Wilford Bramshaw because he had done such an excellent job of reforming the philosophy and operation of the court. The League, too, wrote letters to the newspapers and worked to get Judge Bramshaw elected, the single example of support for a candidate which has come to light. The Bi-partisan Committee continued to support able candidates and eventually became prior to that of 1936.

"I think it was a fine example of the usefulness of the League. Here was a problem—the method of handling juvenile delinquents was unsatisfactory, so the League initiated research and came up with a plan. But wider participation in the community was desirable—and necessary, so the Juvenile Court committee was formed. Jane Sheerin really was the original motive force, and to her should go a great deal of credit." Katharine Greenough, Indian Rocks Beach, Florida, November 6, 1969, letter to the author.
the Juvenile Court Citizens Advisory Council with Mrs. Thomas Sheerin, former president of the Indianapolis League, as a constant member.

Out of their concentrated effort to effect better facilities and administration of the Juvenile Court, the League became aware that good recreational facilities could be a strong factor in the alleviation of juvenile delinquency. After the usual study, surveying public recreation in Indianapolis as administered by the Park Department, comparing programs of other cities of comparable population and budget, and consulting standards established by the National Recreation Association, the League found that Indianapolis needed improvement in both personnel and budget and set about gaining the support of an "awakened and vocal electorate."¹¹⁸ Gaining the support of the Council of Women, the Parent-Teacher Association Council, the American Legion and Legion Auxiliary, the League approached Mayor Sullivan with a request for the appointment of an advisory committee on recreation signed by these organizations. The request was granted in April, 1939, when Mayor Sullivan appointed Mrs. Meredith Nicholson, Jr., Mrs. Joseph Miner and Mrs. Thomas Sheerin of the League as Chairman, and by the fall of 1942 the League could point to the following accomplishments:

Qualified personnel for the Recreation Department.
A school for applicants to the summer playground program followed by written examinations for those qualifying as to minimum standards of education and

¹¹⁸League of Women Voters of Indianapolis. Recreation, 1942.
experience.

Requirements for winter personnel in community homes to take examinations and qualify as to minimum standards of age, education and experience.

Appointment of an assistant director of recreation in charge of program and personnel whose duties include supervision and training of the accredited staff.\(^{119}\)

Both the work for strengthening the Juvenile Court, which later included extending its jurisdiction from 16 to 18 years, and that concerning recreation were, in fact, extensions of the merit campaign although they grew out of the welfare study. The elimination of patronage in municipal as well as state government is the unfinished business of the League and success has been limited to the specific areas on which concentrated work has been done.

The re-formation of the Citizen's School Committee in 1929 to provide able candidates who would wrest the power of the Indianapolis school board from the Ku Klux Klan and the party patronage system accounts for the fact that little League activity relating to schools occurred in the following decades. In 1955, however, the Indianapolis League in convention adopted a study of public schools with emphasis on taxes, budgetary procedures, and school board nominating procedures. The following year a support of sound nominating procedures for the Indianapolis School Board was adopted at the convention, thus narrowing the geographical as well as the practical scope of the item. After this

\(^{119}\)Ibid.
two-year study was brought to the membership, the League decided to work toward putting nomination procedures for the school board on a firmer basis. League activity was reported by Mrs. Howard Gustafson:

Numerous interviews were held with Mr. Petersoln, Chairman of the Citizens School Committee, and with members of their Executive Committee regarding our suggestions.

Their Executive Committee heard our suggestions explained in 1957 and in December of 1958 Mr. Petersoln stated that our recommendations would be considered before they organized for their 1959 campaign activity. Letters explaining our position and mailed with our recommendations were sent in March of this year to our membership, to three newspapers, and to all members listed on the previous Citizens School Committee roster.

... (At the) March 25 general meeting of the Citizens School Committee ... a spirited discussion developed over consideration of our recommendations and the newly elected chairman, Judge Niblack, stated that a League delegation would be invited to appear before the new Committee mandated by the executive committee to study our recommendations and report back to the committee general in 60 days. ... the executive committee has met "sans" the League, and are reportedly working in some direction.120

An editorial in the Indianapolis Star was quite uncomplimentary:

**Be Content With the Golden Egg**

An organization can be organized to death. That could be the result if the Citizens School Committee should take to heart the advice which has been offered to it by the League of Women Voters.121

After a half page devoted to showing that in not using up a lot of steam in

120 Board Minutes, April 8, 1959.

internal administration and in coming to life only every four years to arrange nominations, the Citizens School Committee had been greeted with singular success in that its candidates always won, the editorial continued:

"When a woman's got a husband and you've got none, why should she take advice from you?" So runs a line of song in "The Music Man." The interest of the League of Women Voters in the organization and methods of the Citizens School Committee might have a point, at that. The League might well take another look with a view to discerning the secret of the committee's success. 122

The survey and recommendations made by the League were mentioned with approval, however, in a report published by the National Education Association. 123 During its investigation into the sudden and forced resignation of Dr. Herman L. Shibler on June 30, 1959, a special committee of the National Education Association, with whom the Board of School Commissioners refused to meet, were led to study the method of nomination and election to the board, and subsequently the League survey. The special committee cast serious doubts on the work of the Citizens School Committee and in its recommendations to the citizens of Indianapolis suggested that they:

Insist upon broader participation in the selection of candidates for the Board of School Commissioners. The goal should be to see that the Board is not limited to a group of individuals chosen by any

122 Ibid.

relatively small self-perpetuating group in the city, however conscientious a group it may be.\textsuperscript{124}

The League had not answered the \textit{Indianapolis Star} editorial because "It didn't seem practical to engage in a public controversy and jeopardize our purpose."\textsuperscript{125} Letters were sent, however, to members of the Citizens School Committee and to contributors, and a copy sent to the newspapers by Mrs. Lowell Thomas, President. After tracing the history of the League's study and involvement in the issue, Mrs. Thomas concluded:

It is precisely because we do not want to see a rival slate set up, or the school board election thrown back into partisan politics, that we have urged that the Committee consider changes in their procedure which would make them less vulnerable to criticism. We regret that our suggestions have been interpreted as an attack upon the Committee, for our only purpose was to strengthen the Committee and its position in the community.\textsuperscript{126}

Although this was very polite, the Board of Directors overrode the diplomacy of the President and decided to send to the membership, at least, a statement which would "emphasize the fact that the Citizens' School Committee did not give its general membership even a token chance to endorse their candidates. The membership was informed of the slate, picked by the Executive Committee, by mail."\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{124}Ibid. p. 25.

\textsuperscript{125}Board Minutes, April 8, 1959.

\textsuperscript{126}Mrs. Lowell Thomas, Indianapolis, May 12, 1959, letter to Hon. John Niblack.

\textsuperscript{127}Board Minutes, July 1, 1959.
Complicating this work was the formation of the Committee for Better Schools,\textsuperscript{128} by some members of the Citizens Committee and other civic leaders, including several League members. Although the board decided that "our position should be clarified to them which is, to continue working with the Citizens School Committee for sound nominating procedures for the school board,"\textsuperscript{129} the fact that the Citizens Committee did not meet with the League to discuss or adopt its recommendations and the Committee for Better Schools set themselves up using the nominating procedures recommended by the League, was apparent. Since this condition jeopardized the League's non-partisanship and the principle that the League took stands on issues but never supported a candidate, the school item was dropped the following year.

Much more effective, especially in avoiding controversy, was the League's work to push for an ordinance which would require licensing of private kindergarten and nursery schools with special emphasis on health and safety standards, begun in 1955 and successful in 1957.

Child welfare was not the only aspect of social legislation with which local League women were concerned. A study of relief administration undertaken in 1939, merited the following editorial comment:

Here is a non-partisan group of public spirited women whose experience enables them to make an unbiased appraisal of the relief system and whose familiarity with governmental processes will

\textsuperscript{128} Re-named the Non-Partisan Committee for Better Schools.

\textsuperscript{129} Board Minutes, April 8, 1959.
enable them to make practical suggestions for such changes as their survey indicates. . . . Their courage and initiative is highly commendable. 130

Other work done by the League on social welfare included amending the marriage law to require blood tests and a waiting period, improvement of legislation concerning adoption and illegitimacy, equal guardianship of children and aid to mothers of dependent children, all of which was accomplished in the state legislature with the help of a legislative steering committee composed of women who were preponderantly from Indianapolis. The state welfare study of more recent years which has consistently supported transfer of poor relief funds from the township trustee to the County Welfare Department, still not greeted with success in the General Assembly, has led to a continuing observation and cooperation by the Indianapolis League with the Marion County Welfare Department.

Similarly programs which deal with equality of opportunity for education and employment have been local manifestations of the national program which was adopted in 1965 and has since been expanded to include housing.

National program did affect the image which the League had at home and success in national campaigns for passage and the ratification of the Lame Duck Amendment in 1932, or the ten-year struggle to obtain

130 Indianapolis News, November 4, 1939.
legislation which would improve the quality of water, resulting in the
Water Quality Act of 1965 enhanced, if only sightly, the League's
position in the community. One aspect of national program which did
result in a local controversy, however, was the study of various
measures and issues in the field of foreign policy.

One slogan of those opposed to ratification of the suffrage
amendment was "A vote for suffrage is a vote for the League of Nations," and with good cause. The 1919 Convention of the National American
Woman Suffrage Association had said it "'earnestly favors a League
of Nations to secure a world-wide peace based upon the immutable prin-
ciples of justice' before the League of Nations came into existence." In 1920 the first convention of the League of Women Voters passed a
resolution urging "adhesion of the United States to the League of
Nations with the least possible delay." However, the issue of the United
States' membership in the League of Nations was soon caught up in a
bitter partisan struggle and the League of Women Voters, although it
continued to study the subject, delayed until 1932 a decision to support
membership in the League of Nations for the United States.

In the 1920 presidential election, the first in which Indianapolis
women were allowed to vote, officers and members of the League of
Women Voters were actively supporting candidates. Mrs. Richard

131Forty Years, p. 16.
Edwards, Treasurer of the national League and organizer of local Leagues throughout Indiana, spoke widely for Mr. Harding, for example, and Olive Belden Lewis, who had been an active suffragist and was a member of the state board of the League went to all corners of the state to fulfill speaking engagements for the Democrats. Politicians in both parties were anxious to attract this new block of voters and pressed active League women to travel on the campaign trains and speak in support of candidates. Although it would seem that the fervor of this campaign and the partisanship it evoked might well have crippled the new organization, such was not the case. "We were such good friends and had been through so much together, it didn't matter." 132

Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, honorary national president of the League of Women Voters from its inception to her death in 1947, actively supported organizations supporting membership in the League of Nations and was "partisan in the election," 133 which provoked adverse comment nationally, especially from politicians who began to see the League of Women Voters as a force for independent and scratch voting, rather than as a new block of adherents who could be marshalled to the cause.

Indianapolis sentiment can be measured by a letter from


Emmet Bross, managing editor of the Indianapolis Star to Mrs. Grace Julian Clark, who had been an active suffragist, a leader in the Woman’s Franchise League, and was a noted writer and lecturer.

It will be impossible for us to continue these long campaign documents in the department, "Women in Politics," which was designed to set out the activities of the new voters and not as a vehicle for partisan propaganda. 134

Despite the isolationist sentiment and the return to "100 per cent Americanism" which prevailed in Indiana and the nation as a whole, the League of Women Voters had decided that it could work for United States cooperation in disarmament and development of international law. The Indianapolis League held a mass meeting on disarmament in December, 1921, and staged a "No More War" demonstration the following July, distributing placards and organizing a barrage of letters and telegrams to the President urging steps toward world peace. In the fall of 1923, the Indianapolis League arranged the first of a series of evening programs for business women kicked off by the appearance of Senator James Watson, who spoke on the World Court and the League of Nations. Senator Watson, "the last of the string tie orators," 135 had been at the forefront of the attack on the League of Nations and his appearance suggested the League's desire to establish non-partisanship.

The Indianapolis League continued to keep foreign policy an issue before the public, and following the 1923 convention of the state

134 Emmet Bross, Indianapolis, September 18, 1920, letter to Grace Julian Clarke.

135 Wilson, Indiana, A History, p. 119.
League in Indianapolis, which heard Miss Ruth Morgan, National League Chairman of the Committee on International Cooperation to Prevent War, and Professor Robert Phillips of the History Department at Purdue University, brought Mrs. Edward Evans of Philadelphia to speak on the World Court in December, 1925 and, in March, 1926, Frederick J. Levy on the World Court in Action. Even during the campaign for the city manager referendum and the permanent registration law, activity continued with the appearance of Dr. Thomas Parker Moon, of Columbia University, speaking on the federal tariff, and "Imperialism and World Politics."

The depression and subsequent interest in welfare legislation did not abate the League's interest in foreign policy. During November and December of 1931 the League heard Dr. David M. Edwards at four workshops on international affairs which emphasized forces for war and peace, the World Court, the League of Nations and the Geneva Conference. League members kept themselves informed by sending Mrs. Leonard Smith as a delegate to the Cause and Cure of War Conference in Washington in February, 1936, and by reconstructing the Senate debate on the Neutrality Bill which was sent to them by Senator Nye. 136

The national League of Women Voters received the $3,000

136 Board Minutes, November 5, 1935.
Woodrow Wilson Award for educational efforts in laying a democratic basis for a reasoned and intelligent opinion on foreign policy. It is important to clarify the understanding which Indianapolis League women had of their goals:

(The League believes) that continuity of interest is a necessity for intelligent action and that popular misunderstanding of what makes peaceful foreign policy is often an important factor in determining foreign policy measures. 137

They made wide distribution of the pamphlet American Foreign Policy prepared by Anne Hartwell Johnstone for the national League, since the pamphlet demonstrated the citizen's stake in foreign policy and the importance of public opinion in influencing the President, the State Department, and other governmental agencies including the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate. And they continued to keep foreign affairs before the public sponsoring appearances by Clifton Utley, Director of the Council on Foreign Relations, Dr. Quincy Wright and J. Fred Rippey of the University of Chicago, and Harry Gideonse from Columbia University as the clouds of war began to gather.

The League nationally vigorously opposed the war referendum plan of Louis Ludlow, Representative to Congress from Indianapolis and Marion County although it was supported by the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, and other groups with whom the League might well be in agreement. On the contrary, the

137Board Minutes, November 9, 1936.
Bloom Neutrality Law, reported out by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1939, was supported by the League. The Indianapolis Times headlined the approval which the national League of Women Voters gave to the proposals which restored freedom of action to Congress and the President in the conduct of foreign policy. Miss Marguerite Wells, national president, was quoted as approving also the provisions which safeguarded the United States from the involvement of the nation in a foreign war. 138

During World War II, the work of the League was concentrated on citizen education on policies which affected domestic economy which are treated above. However, one aspect of the League's wartime service, stemming from its long commitment to peace, deserves consideration here.

The League of Women Voters will devise ways and means to see that a Congress is elected in November 1942, which is capable of dealing with the problem it will face, particularly that of post-war organization for peace. 139

The League had already supported the Lend-Lease Bill when it was introduced to Congress by President Roosevelt in January, 1941, and in July, 1942, to combat public misunderstanding of the program, published the broadside "Lend-Lease, Cornerstone of U. S. Foreign Policy."

138 Indianapolis Times, June 1, 1939.

139 League of Women Voters of the United States, Wartime Declaration, Indianapolis, January 8, 1942.
Other broadsides on lend-lease followed as the program developed. A campaign to combat isolationism was opened in 1943 with the broadside "Isolationism Again," and a short quiz, "Am I an Isolationist?" with ten questions to be checked yes or no with an explanation of the correct, or anti-isolationist, answers on the back. Thousands of these tools were used in Indiana to get people talking, thinking and analyzing their attitudes about foreign policy and the post-war world.

The work of 1944 was devoted to a talking campaign to involve as many citizens as possible in foreign policy decisions, with three simple broadsides devoted to showing the citizen just how effective he could be in having a voice in the organization of the post-war world. Activity was not confined to League speakers, and the League continued to bring prominent men in the field of foreign affairs to Indianapolis, notably William Shirer in 1941 and, in 1944, Sir Norman Angle, British writer and former member of Parliament. "Angle urges U.S.-British Unity," was the Indianapolis News headline for his much-publicized speech. Charles Taft, Director of Wartime Economic Affairs, was the keynote speaker at the state League convention held in Indianapolis, and his speech reinforced the League's concern for reciprocal trade agreement continuation as well as economic cooperation for maintaining world peace. During the talking campaign Mrs. John Fuller, President

140 On February 1, 1944.
of the Indianapolis League received a letter from Booth Tarkington about the League's survey of candidates for the Congressional seat. All of the questions were aimed at determining what kind of post-war organization the candidates believed the United States should support.

It seems to me that every effort should be made to accustom the minds not only of politicians but of people generally to the idea that war can be stopped from recurring. Not so long ago few of even the most civilized men were able to believe that dueling could be rendered obsolete. Both law and "public opinion" accomplished this. It seems evident to me now that "public opinion" most of it aware that this war could easily have been stopped before it started, is ready for the international agreements that the politicians are timid about.

With all good wishes, and, if you will permit me, congratulations to the League of Women Voters, 141

By December of that year the League began to distribute the broadside "What Happened at Dumbarton Oaks," which outlined four basic needs in a world organization. Two months later the broadside "Power Politics or the United Nations" carried these ideas forward and finally as the San Francisco Conference was imminent "Victory is Not Peace," was issued. The Indianapolis Times reported, 142 "League Takes Opinion Poll on Peace." Under the chairmanship of Mrs. Lawrence Dorsey and Mrs. John Weldon, the Indianapolis League handed out the broadside and interviewed people on streetcorners and door to door on

141 Booth Tarkington, Indianapolis, May 3, 1944, Letter to Mrs. John Fuller.
142 On May 18, 1945.
its four simple sets of alternative answers on how to work for lasting peace in an effort to get all citizens to think out basic premises in their opinions about the United States' relation to the rest of the world.

From its inception, therefore, the League of Women Voters supported the peace-keeping and peace-building programs of the United Nations and held United Nations Day celebrations yearly, commemorating the founding of that organization. In cooperation with other organizations, such as the Council of Church Women and the American Association of University Women, it sponsored prominent speakers and held workshops on the United Nations and its activities. In 1950, a critical year for the United Nations, called upon to deal with the situation in Korea, the League approached the Mayor with the suggestion that a Citizens Committee for United Nations Day be appointed. This was done and the coordinated efforts of all groups interested in supporting the United Nations produced an United Nations Day observance on the steps of the War Memorial with Admiral Nimitz as chief speaker in 1951 and Anna Lord Strauss, President of national League from 1944-50 and a member of the U. S. delegation to the United Nations in 1952. The Citizens Committee for the United Nations, of which Mrs. Walton G. Wilson, Indianapolis League United Nations chairman, was chairman, continued to bring speakers and programs to the community, becoming part of the Indianapolis Council on World Affairs when it was formed in 1955. Impetus for the formation of the year-round Citizens Committee
for the United Nations came from the League of Women Voters of Indianapolis in 1951 when the League set up eight booths in stores, theaters and hotels during United Nations week, distributing literature, and answered so many questions that Mrs. Wilson was able to communicate to the Mayor a great deal of community interest.

Other efforts to maintain interest in the United Nations were the sponsoring of students to the College Campus U. N. Conference at Indiana University and the presentation of the United Nations Flag to the War Memorial Plaza, in the spring of 1951. The latter effort brought the Indianapolis League a brief national notoriety.

In the spring of 1950 the Indianapolis League had approached the management of the Indiana World War Memorial with a plan for displaying a set of United Nations flags on the plaza. The management showed considerable interest and set the architect consultant to considering the best layout. Organizations and individuals were approached for sponsorship and purchase of a flag of a member nation and "there was much interest." 143 The Korean war, however, changed the project since "display of the Russian flag would probably result in unpleasant dissen­sion." 144 The plan was changed therefore to include only the United


144 Ibid.
Nations flag which was purchased with donations made for this specific purpose and presented to Governor Schricker immediately before the ceremonies in August dedicating the new American Legion Building on the plaza.

From August to the following March the United Nations flag and the United States flag flew on the plaza. A third pole was to be placed for the Indiana flag which had been taken down and needed to be replaced with a new one. The Indiana flag had not yet arrived, however, when The National Tribune in Washington, D. C. carried the following article:

Protest U. N. Flag on Vet Memorial

Trustees of the Indiana World War Memorial at Indianapolis were under fire March 20 because they authorized the Indiana state banner to be replaced by the United Nations flag.

F. G. Brown, secretary of the Memorial, said the change in flags was made at the request of the Indiana (sic) League of Women Voters, a communist-front organization, according to the House Un-American Activities Committee. Brown said there was only room to fly one other flag on the level with the American flag, and the Indiana flag was taken down to make room for the U. N. flag. 145

Upon inquiry by Miss Ada B. Stough from the national League office in Washington, and a personal visit of protest, the editor of the National Tribune, Mr. Edward Inman, called back in abject apology for having made such a mistake. He said he had been in Indianapolis for the American Legion Executive Committee and when he saw the United Nations flag

145 The National Tribune, March 29, 1951.
flying where the Indiana flag had been, he became aroused. When he was told it was the League of Women Voters that had asked to have it done, he confused us with the League of Women Shoppers and the story was the result. 146

The apology, carried on the front page of the issue for April 19, 1951, was abject:

... In that article, this newspaper represented that the League of Women Voters was a "Communist front organization, according to the House Un-American Activities Committee."

This is not a statement of fact. We have had confirmed by the above Committee an assurance that the League of Women Voters has never been cited by it as a Communist front group. This editor was personally responsible for the unfortunate error, he having confused the League of Women Voters with the "League of Women Shoppers."

Although this was a tragic mistake, innocently made, we are anxious to immediately and without hesitation offer our abject apologies to the League of Women Voters and to its membership. We trust that no harm will result from the error and that the good ladies concerned, who are just as loyal to this country as are we, will forgive our moment of unguarded enthusiasm and our confusion of identity. 147

Although the Indianapolis League had perpetrated this "crime" the Indiana League got the blame, in other articles as well. Even before the National Tribune editorial appeared, the Indianapolis News published the following column:

In typical Tribunesque fashion, our newspaper neighbor in the Windy City to the north of us entitles its editorial opinion "The Spiderweb Flag in Indiana-" It then speaks its piece, in part, as follows: "The trustees of the memorial authorized this out-

146 Miss Ada B. Stough, Washington, undated memorandum to Mrs. Brannon, President of the Indiana League of Women Voters.

147 The National Tribune, April 19, 1951.
rage. It was cowardly of them to yield to the importunities of the Indiana League of Women Voters who, as their action in the matter shows, are a misnamed organization, deficient in patriotism and eager to propagandise so anti-American a cause as that of the United Nations. The United Nations has given them (the people of Indiana) nothing and cost them much, including the lives of their sons killed in Korea and many millions of dollars in taxes."

Newspapers in Richmond and Marion, Indiana also took up the cry that the United Nations emblem is a symbol of world government which is alien to American national sovereignty and independence. In other words, Hoosiers are not citizens of the United Nations, they are Americans. Mr. McCarty, however, did not agree. His column continues:

We here at the News have stated editorially that we think it is both fitting and symbolic that the banner of the United Nations should be flown and become known in home front communities, alongside the American flag, since American soldiers are fighting under these twin banners of freedom on the battlefronts of Korea. We have a United Nations flag hanging alongside the American flag in the windows of our building at 397 N. Pennsylvania St. and we feel it has served to increase community awareness of the UN as a living force for the defense of peace the world over.

The suggestion was made, however, that the United Nations flag should fly a little lower than the United States flag and community sentiment, in that year especially, overwhelmingly favored the views expressed in the out-of-town papers. The United Nations flag was taken down from the War Memorial Plaza, ostensibly for cleaning and repair.

149 Ibid.
and after unsuccessful attempts to obtain money for a new one, the League, while deciding to continue to try to assure that the flag would fly, and embroiled in the argument over correct interpretation of the flag code, abandoned the problem to Mrs. Wilson and the Citizen’s Committee for the United Nations, just then being formed.

The large vision of using the War Memorial Plaza as a tribute to peace, alive with the color of the flags of all the member nations had shrunk to only one flag and then to nothing. In Indianapolis, in 1951, the League found that their goal, expressed to Governor Schricker, was beyond their capacity to reach.

We presented the United Nations flag as a symbol offering hope to oppressed people everywhere that they might build the peace and security we enjoy under our democratic form of government.150

In November, 1953, the controversy within the League over the Bricker Amendment received attention from the newspapers. Some members of the League disagreed with the national board’s advice to local Leagues that they could oppose or remain neutral on the amendment, but could not approve it, under the stand taken to support the United Nations. This was “tenuous ground”151 to most board members, and after taking the Bricker Amendment to small group discussions by all members in October the Indianapolis League did not feel it had a consensus to oppose the amendment without further study of the treaty-

150Mrs. Charles Harmon, Statement.
151Board Minutes, November, 1953.
making power. The fact remains that the League was forced to wash its linen in public, in the newspapers and in a panel discussion on the radio, and some doubt about the League's impartial presentation of facts on foreign policy was left in the community.

Although the League has continued to study foreign policy issues, in the field of trade, development aid, United Nations support and, most recently, United States relations with Communist China, it has declined to stand alone in public meetings, other than its own monthly open meetings, seeking rather the support and the effectiveness of other groups within the community with the same interests. The outstanding example of such a program was the appearance of David E. Bell, Administrator of the Agency for International Development, at Clowes Hall for the celebration of International Cooperation Year in October, 1965. Although the League instigated the planning, the program was under the joint sponsorship of the American Association of University Women, the Council of World Affairs, the Indiana Department of Commerce and Industry, the Friends World Service Committee, the Indiana Council of United Church Women, the Marion County A.F.L.-C.I.O., the National Council of Jewish Women, the National Council of Negro Women, the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce World Trade Committee, and the League of Women Voters.

National developments had changed community sentiment to some degree as early as 1957. President Eisenhower, taking his fight
to gain appropriations for foreign aid to the people, launched his first attempt in the garden at the White House in a speech to twenty women from the League of Women Voters. Yet nationally, and locally, the League’s emphasis in the 1960’s has shifted to domestic problems. And there was no suggestion from Indianapolis, nor from a significant number of other local Leagues, to tackle the issue of the Vietnam war.

This history contains many statements about the League of Women Voters by politicians and by editorial writers. One, by T. V. Smith, author of The Promise of American Politics, who spoke to the Indianapolis League on January 15, 1937, is particularly significant in describing just those activities and concerns in which the League’s most effective work can be discerned:

Consider, for instance, the League of Women Voters. Here is an organization which arose from the frank recognition that before women became effective voters they would have to undergo special treatment. To lift their solicitude about persons above the level of domestic love and small-group gossip, this organization set about definitely educational work. To overcome the dispersion of those whose business is not specialized, they established the policy, long and beneficently maintained, of focusing attention upon a very small sector of political activity. By study groups, by pointed literature, by well-chosen speakers, by skilfully conducted discussions, the League has trained a body of citizens into genuine habits of political effectiveness. Their national program is of weight in every state legislature, and their voice is heard penetratively in the halls of Congress. They have gone so systematically about the job of making women voters that they bid fair to overshoot their mark and make their members

When the Indianapolis League has heeded this advice and accepted its role in focussing on a small sector of political activity, it has been successful. And it has been deserving of such accolades as the editorial from station WFBM-TV, remarking on the fiftieth anniversary celebration.

American society today is being shaken by the extremes of apathy and emotionalism. And it's at times like these that we most need the type of responsible, informed citizen participation demonstrated over the years by the League of Women Voters. 154

In the field of citizen education the League has pursued its goal of informed and active participation in government with imagination and enthusiasm. Judged by attendance figures at candidate meetings and government fairs, it has met with a limited success, but the wide use of and positive appreciation for League publications point to a significant contribution in this area.

League thinking has definitely influenced reforms in local government. When reform centered on areas traditionally associated with the concerns of women, for example the juvenile court, and when the League sought cooperation of all other interested community organizations, success came swiftly. Structural reforms toward more efficient municipal government, on the other hand, took four decades, but the League's sus-

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tained interest and involvement was certainly a contributing factor in the eventual consolidation of city and county governments.

In the wider range of reforms and issues on which the national organization has worked, the Indianapolis League of Women Voters has been selective in its emphasis. Although adhering to the principles and program of the national League, it is clear that the local League has given first priority to serving its own community and maintaining its effectiveness in that community. In so doing it has insured its continuing contribution both to the strength of the national organization and to the city of Indianapolis.
### Appendix

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## APPENDIX I

### PRESIDENTS OF THE INDIANAPOLIS LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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<td>Mrs. Joseph J. Daniels</td>
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<td>2146.00</td>
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<td>1935-1936</td>
<td>Mrs. Robert Sinclair (Mrs. Walter Greenough was acting President from January, 1936 until May.)</td>
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1. See note on page 133
1936-1937  Mrs. Clarence Merrell  309  2025.00
1937-1938  Mrs. Clarence Merrell  231  2300.00
1938-1939  Mrs. John Goodwin  299  2300.00
1939-1940  Mrs. John Goodwin  
1940-1941  Mrs. John Goodwin  234  5631.50
1941-1942  Mrs. Lester A. Smith  284  2411.50
1942-1943  Mrs. Lester A. Smith  389  3155.00
1943-1944  Mrs. John Fuller  469  3875.00
1944-1945  Mrs. John Fuller  301  4375.00
1945-1946  Mrs. C. B. Durham  400  4600.00
1946-1947  Mrs. C. B. Durham  
1947-1948  Mrs. Arthur Medlicott  400  6498.00
1948-1949  Mrs. Arthur Medlicott  400  5725.00
1949-1950  Mrs. Charles T. Harman  
1950-1951  Mrs. Charles T. Harman  
1951-1952  Mrs. Horace Shonle  450  5776.00
1952-1953  Mrs. Horace Shonle  450  7600.00
1953-1954  Mrs. Gordon McCalment  360  7500.00
1954-1955  Mrs. Gordon McCalment  370  11,200.00
1955-1956  Mrs. Bennett Kraft  462  9470.00
1956-1957  Mrs. Bennett Kraft  463  9209.00
1957-1958  Mrs. Edwin H. Ferree  425  9005.00
1958-1959  Mrs. Edwin H. Ferree  403  8225.00
1959-1960  Mrs. Lowell Thomas  410  8100.00
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Note</th>
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<td>1960-1961</td>
<td>Mrs. Lowell Thomas</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>7800.00</td>
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<td>1961-1962</td>
<td>Mrs. Howard T. Wood</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>7800.00</td>
<td>(project deficit over $1,000.00)</td>
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<td>1962-1963</td>
<td>Mrs. Harold Nash</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>8400.00</td>
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<td>1963-1964</td>
<td>Mrs. Howard Gustafson</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>8882.00</td>
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<td>1964-1965</td>
<td>Mrs. Howard Gustafson</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>9571.00</td>
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<td>1965-1966</td>
<td>Mrs. Edward Tyler</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>8236.00</td>
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<td>1966-1967</td>
<td>Mrs. Edward Tyler</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>9448.00</td>
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<td>1967-1968</td>
<td>Mrs. Edward Leary</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>9486.00</td>
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<td>1968-1969</td>
<td>Mrs. Edward Leary</td>
<td>420</td>
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<td>1969-1970</td>
<td>Mrs. J. K. Langfitt, Jr.</td>
<td>469</td>
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Note: Membership figures are often approximate since weeding out members who had not paid dues was not done annually.
APPENDIX II

PRESIDENTS OF THE INDIANA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS FROM INDIANAPOLIS

1922-1923 Mrs. Walter S. Greenough
1923-1924 Mrs. Thomas Mullins
1924-1925 Mrs. William T. Barnes
1926-1928 Mrs. Frank H. Streightoff
1928-1929 Mrs. Walter S. Greenough
1934-1938 Mrs. S. Neill Campbell
1938-1942 Mrs. Clarence F. Merrell
1942-1946 Mrs. John K. Goodwin
1946-1950 Mrs. John Fuller
1954-1959 Mrs. John Campbell
1959-1961 Mrs. W. Foster Montgomery
1961-1962 Mrs. W. A. McKinzie
1963-1965 Mrs. W. Foster Montgomery
1967-1969 Mrs. Robert S. Richey
BIBLIOGRAPHY
**SOURCES**

1. Manuscripts, correspondence and interviews

Clarke, Grace Julian Papers, Indiana Division, Indiana State Library. (miscellaneous correspondence, activities of Woman's Franchise League, peace organizations.)

League of Women Voters Collection, Indiana Division, Indiana State Library. Uncatalogued collections of subject matter files, convention programs, mimeographed studies, reports from local Leagues and correspondence.

League of Women Voters of Indianapolis.
  Board Minutes, 1927-1931; 1934-1969.
  Annual Reports, 1951-1969.
  Scrapbooks, 1931 . . . 1969, including correspondence.
  Subject matter files

Woman's Franchise League, Indianapolis Branch.
  Minutes, 1917-1920.

2. Oral interviews

Cox, Mrs. Frank, personal interview, Indianapolis, September, 1969, with the author.

Greenough, Mrs. Walter, personal interview, Lafayette (Indiana), May, 1969, with the author.

Lewis, Olive Belden, personal interviews, Indianapolis, May, June, September, 1969, with the author.

Smith, Mrs. Lester, personal interview, Indianapolis, September, 1969, with the author.
Thomas, Mrs. Lowell, personal interview, Indianapolis, September, 1969, with the author.

Wilson, Mrs. Walton, personal interview, Indianapolis, October, 1969, with the author.

3. Public documents

Commission to Study Overlapping of Functions of Public Officials and Governing Bodies in Indianapolis and Marion County, Report to the 1965 Indiana General Assembly.


Metropolitan Area Study Commission of Marion County, Report and Recommendations for the Eighty-eighth Session of the General Assembly, State of Indiana, Indianapolis, November 1, 1952.

4. Newspapers


The Indianapolis News, 1940-1969.

The Indianapolis Times, 1930-1964.

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5. Books, articles, unpublished studies, and pamphlets


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_____. *Survey of the City of Indianapolis*, Indianapolis, 1936.


