State Document of the Month: Report of the Board of State Charities

The Board of State Charities was appointed by the Governor, by authority of an act of the State Legislature February 28, 1889. These reports offer an historic and insightful look into Indiana’s various institutions and prisons. Included in the annual reports are individual reports on institutions such as the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ and Orphans’ Home, the Institution for Feeble-Minded Youth, the Institution for the Blind, and others. The Board Secretary’s jail visits are also recorded by county. These recordings provide insight into county jail structures, upkeep, and recommendations for improvement. The Board Report of 1890 includes the Laws of Indiana Relating to County Jails and County Poor Asylums. Later reports changed title as the department changed names – to reports of “Department of Public Welfare.” They provide rosters of the Boards, statistics for the institutions, and brief descriptions and histories. These provide historians and curious patrons about Indiana’s Institutions and care of the poor and indigent. The Board Reports can be found in the Indiana Collection under I 360 I385ar for the years 1890 through 2000.