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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
 Charleston, Illinois

news

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FILE COPY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU'S SCISM AUTHORIZING A BOOK ON THE HISTORY OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

CHARLESTON, IL.--Dr. Thomas Scism, associate professor of Political Science at Eastern Illinois University, is in the process of writing a book on the history of the Illinois Democratic Party.

He, along with co-author Dr. Laurence Thorsen, also a professor of political science at Eastern, have accumulated all of the information they need to complete the history to 1930. The authors are still seeking information for the post Franklin Roosevelt era.

The first chapter of The History of the Illinois Democratic Party, the books working title, will cover the period from 1778, when Virginia created a separate county and named it Illinois, to 1835, when the Democratic Party was founded in the state. The next year saw candidates running for the first time under the label "Democrat."

Scism says Chapter Two of the book explores the convention system, which he believes is the cement, along with patronage, that held the party together.

However, the political science scholar believes the single factor that made the Democratic Party work was Abraham Lincoln's old rival, Steven Douglas.

Chapter three of the book addresses Douglas, his death and the Civil War through 1892, when Illinois elected its first Democratic Governor in 40 years, Peter Altgeld.

The period from Altgeld to FDR is examined in Chapter four. Subsequent chapters of the estimated 200 page, 9x11.5 hardbound book are still in the works.

Along with two-hundred pages of humorous and tragic anecdotes, the book will consist of several hundred old photographs and illustrations, along with captions explaining their content, and will sell for around \$20.00.

Scism travels around the state giving 25 minute talks on several of the book's anecdotes. He also cautions people that the book is not a propaganda piece for the Democrats, but a scholarly, historical study.

Anyone with information on the history of the Democratic Party after 1930, or who would like to engage Scism to speak in front of their group, should contact him at 581-2523, or 345-6463.