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From the Director of Libraries

Last year was a very busy time for the Chester Fritz Library. Our records indicate that more than 180,000 items were circulated, or 70,000 more items than the year before. During September, our turnstiles recorded traffic counts of 40,000 people passing through our doors. In October, the figure increased to 50,000 and during the first two weeks of November, an average of 3,000 individuals a day went through the turnstiles.

This fall, the Library expanded the number of hours it is open to 86 which represents a 4% increase in our operating hours. Beginning spring semester, the hours of operation will again increase. The Library will remain open until midnight, Sunday through Thursday, rather than close at 11:00 p.m. as it does now. The Student Senate is providing the funds to cover the midnight closing on a trial basis. Should traffic warrant, the Library may extend the hours permanently.

Last year saw a modest increase in the number of donations made in support of the Library. In an era of increasing costs and static book budgets, contributions from Alumni and friends have become critical to Library operations. The average price of an academic journal title has increased almost 60% over the last 5 years, $116 in 1987 to $184 in 1991. Although the annual increase in book prices is not as dramatic, comparison of average 1990 prices for hardcovers ($41.95) to those of 1977 ($19.22) are most startling. Such factors obviously restrict our ability to meet the needs of our users.

It’s no chess set

The United States Civil War produced some remarkable contributions to American historiography. One of the most interesting items to come out of that bloody conflict was a documentary series that sought to make available to any reader some of the key documents generated by both sides during the fighting. At a time when professional historical editing hardly existed and the historical profession itself was in its infancy, army officers and civilian clerks combined to produce what is properly cited as U.S. War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. 70 vols. in 128 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901).

The volumes contain almost 140,000 pages, including maps in an accompanying atlas (not cited), and are arranged in four series. Series I, which comprises a large majority of the set, pertains to military correspondence, returns, reports, orders, and messages of both sides. Series 2, which is eight volumes, pertains to prisons and prisoners on both sides. Series 3 consists of five volumes of Union miscellaneous correspondence, much of it political in nature, and Series 4 includes three volumes of the same sort of Confederate material. The last volume is a general index, but it only refers the user to the appropriate series and volume. The user must then refer to the index of the relevant volume for specific page numbers. Many volumes are so long that they had to be printed in two or three parts, each part in a separate book, hence the cryptic “70 vols. in 128” in the citation.

Although a tired researcher may conclude that surely most of the records of the Civil War must have found their way into this series, that is not the case. Only a very small percentage of war records were reprinted, and in the national Archives in Washington, D.C., these are indicated by an identifying stamp. Many other important documents could not be

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Early North Dakota registered patents

Early North Dakota registered patents

If a man can write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better machine than his predecessor, he may build his house in the woods, the world will make a beater path to his door.― Ralph Waldo Emerson's oft quoted reality is a truth seen in a glance at some of the patents registered from 1890 to 1896 to residents in that part of Dakota Territory which was soon to become the state of North Dakota. The first two patents registered to residents of the newly formed state of North Dakota reflected the economic base of the state. Andrew Drengsen of Thompson, was granted patent #415,449, November 19, 1899 for a "Car-Clienting railroad cars. The importance of agriculture in seen in patent #415,662 also granted November 19, 1899 to Thaddeus R. Wilds of Scovill (Ransom County) for a "Dra-Cinch-Equalizer." While most patents are of a practical nature, reflecting advancement in arts and哦ld age that necessity is the mother of invention, some patentee are artists and craftsman, illustrating the creativity of man. In the 1890's, as the community of Grand Forks was growing and became more prosperous, the frivolity of patented inventions reflected a new found leisure in Grand Forks. In 1896, Roy L. Boulter, manager of the Western Union telegraph office in Grand Forks, received a patent for his "Beer Bottle of better position", was in step with the bicycle craze sweeping through the Northern Plains at the time. According to an April 9th, 1896 article in the Grand Forks Herald, "The bottle is made of canvas on wooden frame and is very light. The motive power is supplied through a bicycle operating two small propeller wheels. The craft is said to speed through the water like a rocket for instance. Mr. Boulter has been making numerous improvements during the winter and has a big thing on improvements." From the bootlegger, Captain Earnest W. Brenner, inventor of the first North Dakota patent to the business man and public servant, General William H. Brown, inventor of the first Grand Forks patent, are inventors with names long forgotten, who held patents both simple and complex for items to ease their burden of work. While it is true that some inventors realized any commercial success from their ideas, an examination of the official Gazette of the Patent Office, 1880-1890, provides a glimpse into the inventive spirit of early North Dakota settlers. This short analysis of the patents granted to residents of North Dakota in the 1890-1890s, suggests that though they built their homes on the prairie, the world did make a beaten path to their door. Additional information on patents and trademarks of current or historical interest may be obtained at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Library located on the first floor of the Chester Fritz Library at the University of North Dakota. By Nancy Mulhern and Joan Ruelle

Humans are by nature storytellers. Throughout the ages they have recorded their history, lives, and endeavors. Before spoken language had completely developed, markings on cave walls told of hunts and journeys. Before written language evolved, oral storytelling flourished. Even before the world has used or used oral storytelling to pass on its own uniqueness, values and history. Through centuries, stories became refined and developed into specific forms to suit different purposes. Myths search for meaning in human struggles and natural phenomena. Fables and parables tell short structured moral stories about human behavior and folklore. Fairy tales pass along values, dreams, hopes and truths for living. The "storyteller" was often a person who held an honored position within the community. Traditionally the storyteller was an elderly, perhaps an orphaned, child, resident within a tribe who inherited the position, along with his dreams, hopes and truths for living. Stories were told to entertain, inspire, admonish, and give people a sense of who they were and how their lives connected with the past. As long as stories are told orally, they are dynamic, ever changing within the framework of the teller's experience and interpretation. As human society has been, so too have cultures, allowing for mass production of the written word, a had major impact on oral storytelling in industrial countries. As literacy increased, oral storytelling was replaced by the printed word. Fortunately, there have always been humanists, traditionalists, and scholars devoted to preserving the past. They realized that not only the stories, but also wisdom, culture, language, and much more were being lost forever. Each time a literary storyteller recounts a story from its more original text, alterations also occur. Even though stories once recorded are static, they are static only on the printed page. The recorder gives us only one version of that story, each do so as all storytellers have done - make it their own or her own. Often the collector edited, revised, or altered the story for publishing purposes. Charles Perrault (France), in the 1690's, recorded his stories Tales From Mother Goose with children in mind. His version of "Cinderella" is the version on which Walt Disney based his feature length cartoon. In comparing the Perrault to Perrault's story, we see that Disney altered the story and gave us still another version. The Grimm brothers were philologists and in an effort to record regional forms and patterns of speaking, collected stories during the 1880's from old story tellers in Germany. Thus, the Grimm tales were not originally recorded for literature but to preserve them for the most part were told in early cultures as adult stories. Folktales for the most part were told in early cultures as adult stories.

Folktales Collection Donated

Folk Tales Collection Donated

Those who choose to develop their skills as storytellers research the many volumes of books looking for stories that recite well and that please them enough to make them a part of their repertoire. One such modern storyteller, a 1913 UND alumnus, is Margaret Anderson Roberts-Howell who recently donated to the Chester Fritz Library a large portion of her private library. This donation includes stories from all over the world including cultures which no longer exist. The collection shows a true love of traditional literature. Margaret Roberts-Howell grew up in California but at one time lived and worked in North Dakota. For a number of years she drove a bookmobile throughout North Dakota counties for the North Dakota State Library Commission. Later she left North Dakota and became the district librarian for the Rutherford Valley School District where she set up the elementary school library. She has been a storyteller and lover of books for many years. Besides the wide variety of folk tales, the collection includes some interesting volumes, such as a reproduction of Alice's Adventures Underground, a collection of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, and reissues of books written by early illustrators Walter Crane and Randolph Caldecott. This collection of books was housed in the Evelyn B. Robinson Department of Special Collections at the Chester Fritz Library where it will be available for research and study.
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printed for lack of space. The Union documents had to be selected from a mass that filled a four-story warehouse and parts of other buildings besides. Many Confederate materials were accidentally or purposely destroyed at the end of the war, or found their way into the hands of Union or Confederate souvenir hunters. Even so, enough southern documents survived the war to fill a three-story building.

In the early years of the project, former Confederates were highly suspicious of this Yankee enterprise, and because many Confederate records were then in private hands, there was a possibility that southern documentation would be lacking. However, a former Confederate general was appointed to the project in 1878 for the purpose of collecting Confederate records. He was remarkably successful, considering the number of records that had been dispersed or destroyed, and he managed to obtain many southern documents by purchase, gift, or copying. In the end, most Confederate participants agreed that the series was useful and unbiased, although there were strong objections to the title. To them, it was not "rebellion."

The documents were collected and edited during the period when many veterans were still active. Some were pursuing political careers or were otherwise eager to appear as favorably as they could before the light of history, their neighbors, or their children and grandchildren. As the early volumes came out, therefore, many officers sought to update or revise their wartime reports for insertion into the Office Records. Fortunately these efforts were defeated, and whether the information in the documents was correct or not, they were reproduced exactly as originally written; although some errors in transcription were made, they are remarkably few considering that the project was begun and many documents copied in the days before the invention of the typewriter.

The number of copies of each volume to be printed varied, but generally was about 10,000. These were distributed by members of Congress and the Executive branch, many getting into the hands of recipients who did not particularly desire to have them. One former member of the Confederate House of Representatives confessed in 1888 that he could not even bear to look at them. "The have got the same effect on me," he revealed, "that Poe's 'Raven' would have. They are a constant reminder of disaster and defeat." In another instance the set was used instead of stone or brick to support the corners of a small house. This and other abuses led to the loss of countless sets.

The interested librarian, Civil War buff, student, or curious scholar should also consult U.S. Naval War Records Office, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion, ser. 1, v. 1-27; ser. 2, v. 1-3 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894-1927), and U.S. Surgeon-General's Office, The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion (1861-1865), 3 vols. in 6 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875-1882). The Chester Fritz Library owns all three of these sets in the ultrarare format utilized by the Microbook Library of American Civilization, and is available in the periodicals department on floor one of the library. (The publication dates of all three sources are not exact; even the Library of Congress cards are not consistent.) The War of the Rebellion is also available in original hardcopy in the Government Documents section of the library, although many volumes are in poor condition. The series was unfortunately produced shortly after the development of cheap paper, which had a high acid content, with the result that the pages and bindings are rapidly deteriorating on library shelves. It is rare to find an original set in top condition, although occasional volumes may be picked up on the used book market and one of the high-priced reprint houses has put out a facsimile edition. The University has only a part of the Naval Records and the Medical and Surgical History in original hardbound copy. For further information see Dallas D. Irvine, "The Genesis of the Official Records." Mississippi Valley Historical Review 24 (September 1937): 221-29, and Joseph L. Eisendrath, Jr., "The Official Records — Sixty-three Years in the Making," Civil War History 1 (March 1955): 89-94.

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