



Spring 1999

Lux et Lex: Volume 6, Number 1

Bob Garrett
University of North Dakota

Sandy Slater
University of North Dakota

Janet Spaeth
University of North Dakota

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.und.edu/lux-et-lex>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Garrett, Bob; Slater, Sandy; and Spaeth, Janet, "Lux et Lex: Volume 6, Number 1" (1999). *Lux et Lex*. 8.
<https://commons.und.edu/lux-et-lex/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Elwyn B. Robinson Department of Special Collections at UND Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Lux et Lex by an authorized administrator of UND Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact zeinebyousif@library.und.edu.



Lux et Lex

"By the light of Knowledge we read the laws of life"

Volume 6 Number 1

Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota

Spring 1999

BACK TO THE TRENCHES WITH SPECIAL COLLECTIONS



Maj. Sereno Brett tests a tank in 1927. Brett was Patton's second-in-command during World War I.

*Oh, she's a slashing, crashing terror, day or night.
She's a raging, roaring demon full of fight.
Over the top in no man's land, bellowing doom on ev-'ry hand,
She's a roaring battering ram is the Tank.*

The above refrain appears in "Marching Song of the Tanks," a tune penned by two veterans of the World War I U.S. Army Tank Corps. While war ditties such as this might seem somewhat peculiar by today's standards (the song's graphically violent imagery and belligerent message contrast oddly with the peppy music), they were popular morale boosters at the time.

"Marching Song of the Tanks" is just one example of the unexpected treasures waiting to be mined by researchers of George S. Patton Papers, available in the Chester Fritz Library's Elwyn B. Robinson Department of Special Collections. Patton Papers were gathered by Major Sereno Brett, Patton's second-in-command during World War I. The collection documents Patton's first combat experiences, as well as the beginnings of tank warfare, his personal specialty.

George S. Patton Papers were purchased and then gifted to the Chester Fritz Library by Ralph Engelstad, a 1954 UND business graduate and former Fighting Sioux hockey goalie. Engelstad has a history of outstanding contributions to his alma mater. His gift of Patton Papers preceded his recent 100 million dollar donation, half of which will fund the construction of a new hockey arena. UND's current hockey arena is named after Engelstad, in appreciation of his generosity.

With his gift of Patton Papers, Engelstad further displays both his loyalty to UND and his passion for history. Willis Van Devanter and Allan J. Stypeck, two distinguished military historical document appraisers, referred to Patton Papers as "the most historically valuable collection relating to World War I that we have either seen or, in our researches, have been made aware of." They add that "to the best of our knowledge and as advised by those in a position to know, most of this material has never been reproduced." George S. Patton Papers contains some truly unique material, from the aforementioned sheet music to photographs, authentic World War I battlefield maps, personal accounts and war diaries.

Patton's World War I career is often neglected or glossed over by historians. Yet, it was his formidable years and studying it provides insight to his later activities in World War II. Some background is thus in order. The United States declared war on Germany in April 1917. General John J. Pershing was appointed commander in chief of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) and asked Patton to accompany him to France. Patton began taking an interest in tanks, which were then new and untried weapons. In November 1917, he became one of the first officers in the newly established United States Tank Corps and was soon ordered to direct a new tank school near Langres, France. Here, he organized and trained the 304th Tank Brigade. He led this brigade into battle at St. Mihiel in September 1918 and the Meuse-Argonne offensive later that month. World War I ended on November 11, 1918, which, interesting enough, was Patton's 33rd birthday.

Items dating from the first world war include personal accounts by Patton and others, correspondence, field operations reports, field orders and Army Liaison Office telegrams sent during the Battle of St. Mihiel and the Argonne Offensive. War diaries of the 304th Tank Brigade and maps used by Tank Corps officers are two items especially worth highlighting.

The war diaries are one of the collection's strongest and most exciting assets. Many entries are signed by Patton or written entirely in his hand. While Patton's personal diaries are housed in the Library of Congress, these war diaries were

previously unavailable. They provide intense detail of battlefield movements. An entry for September 12, 1918, the first day of the Battle of San Mihiel, provides an interesting example:

This was D Day. H Hour at 5:00 a.m. Brigade supported 4th Army Corps (1st Army) 344th Battalion operating with 1st Division; 345th Battalion operating with the 42nd Division. Two companies of each Battalion were in Battalion reserve. The Day's objectives were in every case attained, despite the bad muddy conditions.

Patton's personal diary contains only a brief account of that day's activities. Thus, the official war diary accounts fill a gap in the war's documentary history.

Thirty-six contemporary World War I maps of various sizes depict the theatres of operation. Officers drew lines and wrote annotations on the maps to denote troop movements and other pertinent battlefield information. Viewing the maps easily evokes images of Patton and his fellow officers poring over the same materials in a strategy session.

Personal accounts and correspondence provide fascinating views of combat. Patton's own written account includes a description of a meeting between Patton and Douglas MacArthur, long before either was a household name:

We found General MacArthur and his aid with four or five Infantry soldiers. Our party took about ten Germans who seemed very anxious to surrender. We then asked General MacArthur if we could move our tanks forward across the bridge at Essey, which, contrary to expectations, was found intact. He gave his consent in [sic] the bridge was not mined. We walked over the bridge in a most cat-like manner, expecting to be blown to heaven any moment but to our great relief found that the Bridge had not been tampered with.

The collection is especially rich in providing information on the development of tanks and tank warfare. In World War I, the tank was a new and terrible weapon. An armored and mobile artillery, it represented the cutting edge of military technology. Tanks brought the battle across No Man's Land (the area between the trenches) while still affording protection to the men inside.

Contemporary reactions to the tank are often fascinating to examine. The collection includes a report entitled "The Moral Effects of Tanks Upon the Enemy," written by F.T. Murphy, a Lieutenant in the A.E.F. Tank Corps. Murphy examines the first use of tanks in the war, noting that "their moral effect on the enemy appears to have been considerable." As an example, he cites an instance where "a tank was broken down in the mud, yet the derelict's moral effect was such as to compel the enemy to come out and surrender en masse."

Imagine the challenges faced by Patton in beginning a Tank School from the ground up! A manual entitled "Instructions for the Training of the U.S. Tank Corps in France," signed by Patton with his initials, reveals the mixture of old and new in the

tank school curriculum: "The subjects mainly dealt with in this publication are those which are essential for a Tank Unit. Beyond these, there lies, however, the whole range of military training common to all arms. These subjects must be studied, because without knowledge of the other arms and the system of the service, co-operation is not possible." Among the subjects beneficial to tank soldiers, we find machine gunnery, mechanics, driving instructions and reconnaissance.

Several other military reports reflect contemporary views of the then-modern weapon. "Tanks as Time and Man Savers," an official report of the British Army, cites the advantages of the still largely-untried weapon, including low casualty rates, savings in ammunition and less damage to surrounding French property. There are items reporting on specific tank models - including those of foreign countries. German viewpoints are represented in the English translations of two works - "Employment of Tanks in the World War" by R. Kruger Von Ingenieur and "Mechanized Warfare" by Von Eimannsberger. General S.D. Rockenbach, Patton's commanding officer and Chief of the A.E.F. Tanks Corps, and Major Sereno Brett, a tank expert in his own right, also provide important accounts.

After the war, the U.S. Army continued to experiment with tanks and debate their appropriate role within the military. 329 photographs, spanning World War I to the eve of World War II, document the evolution of tank development. Various tank models, including British, French, German, Swedish and Italian, as well as American, models are depicted. The tanks are shown both idle and being operated in war games and other experimental tests.

Textual records complement the photographs and bring many contemporary issues to light. What is the future of the tank in the post-World War I era? Should the Army have more tanks? Should it have less? How can the United States defend itself against an armored attack? Such questions weighed heavily on the minds of Army officials, as revealed through reports, War College lectures, newspapers and correspondence. An interesting piece of correspondence to Major Sereno Brett in 1930 argues against the formation of a proposed Army Tank Division. The letter writer argues that such a division would be "too large for proper control...This is, in effect, an army corps. Something about half this size seems more reasonable. The greater the mobility the greater the difficulty to control." The letter is signed by "Assistant Commandant G. C. Marshall, Jr."

Two tank divisions, collectively dubbed the "Armored Force," were finally formed in 1940 by, ironically enough, Chief of Staff George Catlett Marshall, Jr. Patton was placed in command of the Second Armored Division, located in Fort Benning, Georgia. Newspapers of the two armored divisions in Fort Benning and Fort Knox complete the journey began by George S. Patton Papers, leaving us at the verge of the United States entry to World War II.

Bob Garrett, Assistant Archivist
r Garrett@badlands.nodak.edu

USHER BURDICK'S LEGACY COMES FULL CIRCLE

Judge Eugene Burdick bestowed upon the University of North Dakota perhaps the last paper legacy of his father, U.S. Representative Usher L. Burdick, in August 1998. Judge Burdick felt that the "Burdick Book Collection" was an appropriate name for his gift of nearly 500 books, a high percentage of which were actually acquired by his father and passed on to him.

The Burdick Book Collection reflects the interests and career of Usher Burdick, who served as a North Dakota Congressman from 1935 to 1945 and from 1949 to 1958. Usher Burdick was also an attorney, state lawmaker, rancher, historian and author.

Born at Owatonna, Minnesota, February 21, 1879, Usher was the youngest of six children. He moved with his parents, Ozias and Lucy (Farnum) Burdick, to Carrington, Dakota Territory when he was three. In 1884, Ozias purchased a relinquishment to farm near his two oldest sons, Orland and George, on Graham's Island six miles east of Minnewauken, near neighboring Ft. Totten.

Graham's Island School District Number 1 provided Usher's early education. He graduated from Mayville State Normal School with a Ph.D. degree in 1900, along with Emma Cecelia Robertson whom he married the following year. They both entered the University of Minnesota in 1902, which was unusual for the time. Two years later, Emma completed her Bachelor of Arts degree and Usher graduated with both a bachelor's and a law degree. He also had enjoyed two conference winning football seasons as right end.

Burdick opened his first law office in Munich, North Dakota and began his political career in 1906 representing Cavalier County in the North Dakota House of Representatives. He became the youngest Speaker of the House in 1909 and Lieutenant Governor in 1910, the same year he established his ranch near Williston.

After two unsuccessful attempts for the governorship as a Progressive Republican in 1914 and 1916, Burdick aligned himself with the Nonpartisan League, sympathizing with the plight of North Dakota farmers and their efforts to control market forces. In the 1920's Burdick promoted cooperatives and worked actively with several farm organizations, especially the North Dakota Farmers Union.

He continued his public career as Williams County States Attorney and Special Prosecutor, and then as Assistant U.S. District Attorney in Fargo from 1929 until 1932 when he ran for the U.S. House as an Independent Republican. After losing that election, Burdick became president of the North Dakota Holiday Association, organized to prevent farm foreclosures and the eviction of farm families caused by the drought years and low prices of the 1930's.

Burdick was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1934, due in large part to his activities on behalf of North Dakota farmers. He supported FDR's New Deal programs and was an

advocate for Native Americans, serving until 1944 when he was defeated in his run for the U.S. Senate. In 1949, he was elected again to the U.S. House where he remained for another ten years until retirement.

During all those years Burdick maintained his Williston ranching operations and also wrote twenty books, most focusing on Native Americans and North Dakota history, in addition to writing the introductions for several others. One of his earliest works was *The Last Battle of the Sioux Nation* published in 1929. Two years later, Burdick commissioned Chief Joseph White Bull, nephew of Chief Sitting Bull, to record the important events of his life. The ledger book, *Sioux History in Pictures*, contains 39 pictographs that include White Bull's account of the Battle of the Little Big Horn and his killing of Custer. The Library is privileged to house this significant example of ledger art.

Not surprisingly, the "Burdick Book Collection" contains a number of volumes of late eighteenth, early nineteenth century English and American law books. The most notable is a three volume set, *The Laws of the United States of America*, published by Richard Folwell in Philadelphia in 1796. The set also includes published treaties with other countries and Indian nations.

Western Americana and early North Dakota books and pamphlets form a significant portion of the collection. Many are first or signed editions, or are out of print and either extremely rare, or found only in private collections.

One engaging example is J. Frank Dobie's published address, "The Seven Mustangs," delivered at the 1948 unveiling of Alec Phimister Proctor's sculpture at the University of Texas at Austin. Dobie inscribed the pamphlet with, "Usher L. Burdick - This is to say thank-you for the autobiography of Henry Steehl - with fond wishes, J. Frank Dobie 4/16/52."

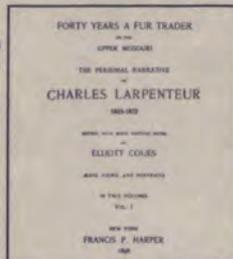
The rarest book in the collection as far as age is the second volume of the second edition of Giovanni Batista Bernardi's *Seminarium totius philosophiae Aristotelicae et Platonicae*. Jacobi Stoer & Franc. Fabri published two editions in 1599, the first edition three volume set in Venice, and the corrected second edition two volume set in Lyon, France. Johns Hopkins University holds both editions and the University of Barcelona, Spain holds only the first.

The Burdick Book Collection complements the Usher L. Burdick Papers in preserving the myriad facets of Usher's life. The Usher L. Burdick Papers, housed in Special Collections, contain the manuscripts and historical research for some of Burdick's writing; personal, business, and legislative correspondence; and subject files of his second ten years in office.

Special Collections also holds the papers of Usher's two sons, Quentin Northrup and Eugene Allen, who followed their father's legal and political footsteps. As the Democratic-NPL candidate in 1958, Quentin was elected to fill Usher's House seat and then served in the Senate from 1960 until his death in 1992. Eugene practiced law in Williston and served as Judge of the Fifth Judicial District from 1953 until 1979.

Sandy Slater, Head, Special Collections
slater@plains.nodak.edu

Patton's signature. Excerpted from a war diary.



PORTRAIT OF A SCHOLAR



A photo of Joseph Smeall, Professor of English

It could be said that scholars never truly die. They live in the memories of those who knew them, but also leave a more permanent legacy through the written word. People come alive not only through the words they write but also through the words they collect, as a book lover's personality is reflected in his or her personal library. English Professor Joseph Smeall provides a case in point.

Prof. Smeall began his career at UND in 1957, when he started teaching English as an instructor. He retired in 1981. Smeall was a foremost expert on American literature and wrote the English Department's centennial history, which was completed in 1983. He passed away on April 25, 1987 and his loss is still keenly felt.

An avid reader and researcher, Prof. Smeall spent much time at the Chester Fritz Library. Special Collections was a favorite spot. Sandy Slater, Head of Special Collections, knew him as one of the Department's regulars. Each day, Smeall would sign Special Collections' visitor registration book as the first patron. He would then join the Department's staff, including Dan Rylance and Colleen Oihus, for a cup of morning coffee. His fellow English professor Sheryl O'Donnell remembers seeing Smeall in Special Collections when she was working on a project there. She valued his comments and suggestions and fondly recalls his "voracious reading habits and... visionary wit."

Robert Lewis, current English Department Chair, notes that Smeall would occasionally get so caught up in his writing or reading that he would forget--temporarily--his teaching duties. Students didn't complain, recognizing the outstanding resource they had in Smeall. In Lewis' words, "Even if he sometime missed class he was still outstanding--stimulating, challenging, full of energy, sometimes acerbic, sometimes funny."

Smeall was much beloved as a teacher. Professor Elizabeth Hampsten recalls his approach to teaching Freshman Composition. When his students found the idea of writing daunting, he would remind them that writing is a natural language, no more alien or foreign than their spoken words.

Smeall's lively personality quickly emerges through conversations with his colleagues in the English Department. Michael Beard notes Smeall's keen eye and uncanny ability to verbalize thoughts. David Marshall, Smeall's officemate,

describes Smeall as "very quiet and constantly humorous" and as a person who enjoyed the exchange of ideas. Marshall also notes that Smeall was very widely read, and his academic endeavors were diverse, from a study of the interworkings of poetry and linguistics to a history of the upper Midwest.

These interests were reflected in Joseph Smeall's personal library, a collection filled with books on American and English literature, especially poetry, but also rich in its diversity. The Chester Fritz Library is indebted to Enid Smeall, Joseph's widow, for donating these items. Thanks to Enid Smeall's generosity, her late husband may now share his interests with UND's academic community and with researchers throughout the region. We can't help but think that Joseph Smeall himself would be quite pleased.

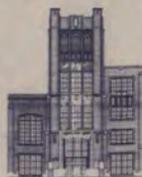
Janet Spaeth, Reference and Research Services Librarian
jsapaeth@badlands.nodak.edu

DISCOVER THE CORPS OF DISCOVERY!

Lewis and Clark's "Corps of Discovery" reached North Dakota in 1804. Bicentennial observances of this event are thus a short five years away. The Chester Fritz Library is already preparing for the occasion. Current and out of print books relating to the Lewis and Clark expedition are being purchased for the Elwyn B. Robinson Department of Special Collections. Special Collections will serve as a valuable resource for anyone seeking information on Lewis and Clark. Look for further announcements of Lewis and Clark events and activities at the Chester Fritz Library as the bicentennial approaches.

Lux et Lex

Chester Fritz Library
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND 58202
(701) 777-2189
Fax: (701) 777-3319



Frank A. D'Andraia, Director of Libraries
Editors: Sandy Slater, Head, Special Collections
E-mail: slater@plains.nodak.edu

Bob Garrett, Assistant Archivist, Special Collections
E-mail: rgarrett@badlands.nodak.edu

Contributors: Sandy Slater, Bob Garrett, Janet Spaeth