Spring 2007

Lux et Lex: Volume 13, Number 1

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Recommended Citation
Lieberman, Victor; Stolt, Wilbur; Hanson, Curt; and Pederson, Randy, "Lux et Lex: Volume 13, Number 1" (2007). Lux et Lex. 10.
https://commons.und.edu/lux-et-lex/10

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NORTH DAKOTA NEWSPAPERS

The Chester Fritz Library maintains perhaps the largest collection of North Dakota newspapers outside of the State Historical Society. Its collection spans from 1870 to the present, and includes all regions of the state. Library holdings also include foreign language newspapers in Danish, German, Norwegian, Swedish, and the Dano-Norwegian dialect, and several student newspapers from area colleges. UND’s Dakota Student exists from 1888 to the present.

The Library’s historical state newspaper collection is held almost entirely on microfilm and is available at the Periodicals desk. Most newspapers are listed in the online catalog (ODIN), and a printed finding aid may be obtained from the Library’s Reference & Research Services desk.

The “Golden Age” of North Dakota Newspapers

Newspaper publishing thrived during North Dakota’s homesteading period and early statehood days. Dakota Territory afforded a productive environment for newspapers to flourish, beginning with the earliest recorded territorial newspaper, The Frontier Scout (not held by UND). The Scout was published from June to October 1865, at Fort Union near Williston and then Fort Rice, just south of Bismarck.

A mitigating factor in the success of many early Great Plains newspapers was the signing of the Homestead Act into law in 1862. One feature of this Act required homesteaders to “prove up” their land claims and run “proof notices” in a local newspaper. The great rush of homesteaders after the Civil War guaranteed a boost for even very small town newspapers. As Paul Schmidt writes in his article “The Press in North Dakota,” whatever else these eager land seekers may have lacked, they did not want for local newspapers. And the newspapers, at least during the period when most homesteaders were “proving up” their claims, did not lack for revenue. Publication of the “proof notice” ran for five consecutive weeks and cost the homesteader from $5 to $10.

(North Dakota History. vol. 31, no. 4. Oct. 1964. p. 218)

The Bad Lands Cow Boy

The Rocky Road to Statehood

“The Dakota delegates at Washington are doing nothing besides making consummate asses of themselves.”

The Bad Lands Cow Boy (Feb. 21, 1884, page 1)

Politics and journalism were apparently full-contact sports back on the 19th century prairie. The Bad Lands Cow Boy was published for only two years during the mid 1880s in Little Missouri, a frontier town just west of present-day Medora. Its page one article by an unnamed correspondent (or perhaps the newspaper’s editor, A. T. Packard) suggests nefarious plots and schemes in our nation’s capital meant to work against the then hoped-for admission to statehood. The Cow Boy hints, “We very much suspect that it is a deep-laid Democratic scheme to help along this discord as much as possible so that a Republican State may be kept out of the Union as long as possible.” The delegates are offered this bit of advice:

It is disgraceful to Dakota that the delegates are all so pig-headed that they cannot reconcile minor differences and agree on at least one point. Come back home and hide your diminished heads in shame.

Plain Spoken

A. T. Packard was hardly the only newspaper editor who knew how to express his opinions on the printed page. Shelby Smith, publisher of the Lidgerwood Broadaxe, clearly lived by his masthead motto: “Hew to the Line, Let the Chips Fall Where They May.” He candidly wrote on the front page of the paper’s March 1, 1888, edition about certain questionable statements published in some lesser Wahpeton chronicle.

The windbag that furnishes the Brandenburg items for the Wahpeton Times writes three columns of rot endeavoring to get back at the Broadaxe for showing up his glaring errors and falsehoods two or three weeks ago. By reading his effusion over two or three times we find there is something good even in his cant.

Smith, evidently having the good fortune to have printed his critique long before libel and slander statutes had either existence or force in the new state, goes on at some length condemning the “windbag’s” assessment of pauper aid administered to a farm family in Lidgerwood who endured great calamity the previous winter. The family had suffered multiple cases of diphtheria, apparently killing four of the children. The county stepped in and arranged for a physician to care for the remainder of the family, paid for funeral expenses, and ordered merchants to contribute goods to help the family through the harsh winter. “And for this humane action the windbag loosens its puckering string and omits a blast calculated to give the impression that the affairs of the county are going to the damnation bow-wows at lightning speed.” Opinions about welfare and social justice on the prairie were clearly contentious.

News of a Sort Comes of Age

Eventually newspapers would focus nearly as much attention on news as their editorials. The question of what constituted news would become clearer, although publishers and readers alike would continue to maintain persistent ideas about what was really newsworthy.

The September 12, 1901, front page of the Ward County Reporter, published in Minot, carried a report on the proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners, the return of Misses Georgie and Larrain Walthen “to their respective schools, after visiting their parents and enjoying a pleasant outing here [in Berthold],” as well as a typical array of ads touting the latest watches, blackberry “cordials” to relieve bowel troubles, and the like.

Inside on page three of that issue are stories about seemingly less critical events around the nation and world—such as the assassination (still then an unsuccessful attempt) of President William McKinley. An “Anarchist’s Foul Deed” describes the shooting by deranged anarchist, Leon Czolgosz, who put two bullets in the
President on September 6 while McKinley was attending a reception in the Temple of Music at the Buffalo Pan American Exposition. His condition, considered front page news today, was still as serious as the newspaper's access to graphics improved beyond the ability of turn-of-the-century medical procedures and techniques. The surgery, which would be decades later, following Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin in 1928, that medicines would be developed that could fight back bacterial infections. The operation was carried out in the early morning hours of September 14th.

Any reverence for a small-town, local newspaper that runs throughout North Dakota history will not find it surprising that, less than ten years after the events recounted above, McKinley’s assassination, a newspaper staff would find herself invited to give a talk at a Minnwecher Hall in Bismarck on June 8, 1910. While goldman was questioned about surviving出任er's duties, McKinley’s assassination, she was not implicated in any way.

Medical Progress on the Prairie

Whether it was a “One School Girl’s Battle” or a “Suddenly Prostrated Woman,” it seemed as though they could not escape the sorrows of disease without recourse to the wonders of the latest pharmaceutical advances. Advertisements and newspaper articles hailed the latest colored pill or syrups guaranteed to cure the user of all manner of relief from their suffering and guaranteed physical and mental discomforts.

While ads such as those quoted above would continue for some time, a report produced by the Carnegie Foundation, the University of North Dakota School of Medicine, and other colleges in particular, for their poor training and licensing of medical professionals.

"The 'flexner report,' as it is later to be known, was a call to college officials and the American Medical Association to strengthen the rigor of medical education and apply greater resources and funds to the institutions which trained physicians. Dr. Henry Prichard, President of the Carnegie Foundation, contributed an introduction in particular, for their poor training and licensing of medical professionals.

According to Dr. Flexner's report and subsequent reforms, the physician of the day made clear that the critique was being taken very seriously.

Newspaper Research at the Chester Fritz Library

The North Dakota Newspaper Association's online catalog, the Newshome. It is listed in its online catalog (ODIN). A quick way to locate the newspapers held locally is to use the "newspaper" name is simply to do a keyword search and add the word "newspaper" to the town or county name, for instance, "Moorhead newspaper" or "Bismarck newspaper." Because the newspaper provides a wealth of information, there are many significant costs associated in acquiring them. Publications in science, medicine, and U.S. history are all key sources in understanding a community's past. Because there is no large market for some of this information, the cost of acquiring, indexing, and making it available on the Internet.

The first three bound volumes of the minutes of meetings of the library, recognized the need and opportunity to begin digitizing its collections. Before undertaking such a ambitious project, it was understood as it was in 1999, that a great deal of planning was required to make the project successful, the project would be a truly collaborative one, requiring several library departments to be involved.

The Department of Special Collections identified two collections that would be ideal first projects. Both were free of copyright restrictions, and researchers are able to use them to search and describe the political cartoons of Stuart B. Pritchard, President of the Carnegie Foundation, contributed an introduction in particular, for their poor training and licensing of medical professionals.

The first project involved scanning and describing the political cartoons of Stuart B. Pritchard, President of the Carnegie Foundation, contributed an introduction in particular, for their poor training and licensing of medical professionals.

The second was the "Chester Fritz Library's Digital Cartoon and Editorial Cartoons" collection of 1,000 photographs which depict the entire 125-year history of the University.

In addition, the first three bound volumes of the minutes of meetings of the Library Board of Regents have been scanned and will be made available, although because of its size, complete scans were not considered feasible. Scanning, was also recorded. The latter will allow for easy access and retrieval of information.

The projects offered by these previous two projects have laid the groundwork for the large-scale digitization project. The first project involved scanning and describing the political cartoons of Stuart B. Pritchard, President of the Carnegie Foundation, contributed an introduction in particular, for their poor training and licensing of medical professionals.

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The metadata created by Special Collections, adding University of Library of Congress subject headings, while Library Services and Systems would provide the required hardware. Library Administration fully supported the project, including hardware and software purchased to design and create an attractive "front end" for the database.

This particular program is affiliated with OCLC, a computer library consortium and research organization with which the Library has been involved for many years, which means that the materials will be both exceptionally easy to learn and customizable. The software was ready to go. The "Chester Fritz Library" to the ground run. Hardware included a state-of-the-art flat bed scanner and one server.

The title of each image or document, a detailed description, and a key word indexing of the significant items were created. Other information about the original document was also noted, such as size and date. Metadata about the digital image itself, the most important and challenging part of the scanning, was also recorded. The latter will allow for easy access and retrieval of information.

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Students and faculty using the Library’s e-resources now have another tool to help them locate articles and books. A new service, called FindIt@UND, quickly helps the user track down research material and can reduce the time spent doing research by making it easier to find journals. FindIt@UND quickly leads a user to the online full text of an article or, if not available online, to the library catalog to check for print holdings, or to an interlibrary loan form to request a photocopy.

How does it work?

The library purchases many different online packages and bundled journal subscriptions that contain thousands of online journals. FindIt@UND contains information about all of the library’s electronic journal holdings. It uses that information to present a list of all the full text options available to the user. Clicking on the FindIt@UND button creates a menu of services relevant to the particular article beginning with any full text options.

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- LexisNexis
- Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts
- MLA Bibliography
- MasterFILE Premier
- MathSciNet
- Meteorological & Geoastronomical Abstracts
- Music Index
- Philosopher’s Index
- PsycINFO
- RILM Abstracts of Music Literature
- Scopus
- Social Work Abstracts
- Sociological Abstracts
- SPORT Discus
- Ulrich’s Periodical Directory

FindIt@UND link in the Scopus database:

Otome goror, Usa e doffs, Scotum (in), allosystema (Mammalia), lech (as, 1975), and wood frogs (Rana sylvatica) De Goffin, E. L. (1975). Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, 24(3), 1523-1527

FindIt@UND in Academic Search Premier:


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Lux et Lex

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