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EDWARD HOFER
OF THE LENNOX INDEPENDENT

By
Mary Beth Haan

[Handwritten signature]
Feb 5, 1986

[Handwritten signature]
Feb 5, 1986

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Science
Major in Journalism
South Dakota State University
1986

EDWARD HOFER

OF THE LENNOX INDEPENDENT

Acknowledgments...

Chapter

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusion of the major department.

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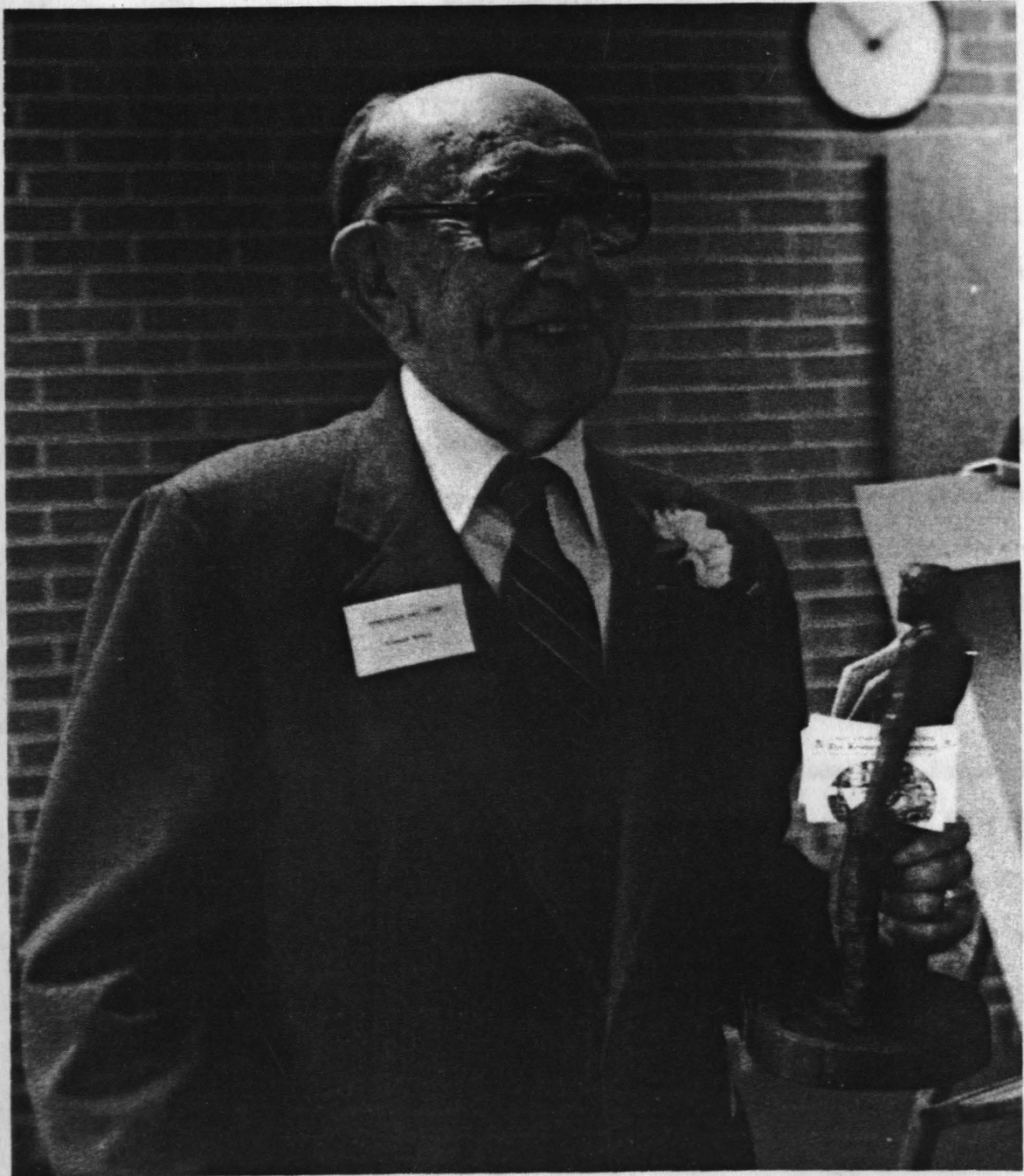
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Mrs. F. and HBJ, this book/paper is for you.

MBH



Picture 1 - EDWARD HOFER

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1913 a 14-year-old South Dakota native walked into the local weekly newspaper office and applied for the position of "printer's devil." The teenager was hired.¹ The job was just the beginning of what was to become a long career in South Dakota weekly newspaper journalism. Edward Hofer's career, which has spanned more than 70 years, touched four southeastern South Dakota communities and included the responsibilities of editor/publisher at The Lennox Independent for more than 50 years. The journalist worked through two world wars, the 1930s depression, periods of prosperity, and great changes and advances in technology.

Hofer decided not to work in his father's furniture and funeral business in Bridgewater, South Dakota. Instead, the young Hofer started working at the Bridgewater Tribune as a "printer's devil" hand-setting type and performing a variety of clean-up duties.² Hofer's career included a brief period of employment at The Lennox Independent in 1921 before working for the Canton Sioux Valley News for almost three years.

In 1924 Hofer and his wife, Cora Ulberg, formerly of Lennox, made a personal and financial commitment to South Dakota weekly newspaper journalism: they purchased The Davis Eagle. Mr. and Mrs. Hofer worked hard during the next four and one-half years to purchase a Linotype and make other improvements in the Davis printing shop. The

Hofers' lives were dramatically altered on September 13, 1928, when a tornado destroyed most of the town of Davis. Included in the path of the tornado was The Davis Eagle shop and the Hofer house. Both buildings were destroyed with only a mirror and the bases of a sewing machine and Linotype surviving. "Seeing no future in the newspaper field at Davis, Mr. Hofer mustered all his resources, insurance money and borrowed capital, and purchased the newspaper at Lennox."³ In Hofer's first issue of The Lennox Independent on October 18, 1928, he told the readers about the change of newspaper ownership in Lennox and called on the community to serve as one of his resources to make the newspaper succeed.

It shall always be our aim to boost for Lennox, for the business houses and institutions of this fair little city. In return we ask the cooperation of our readers as well⁴ as the support of the business firms of Lennox.

During Hofer's tenure at Lennox, he updated equipment, moved the newspaper office to a new location, developed and built up the commercial printing department, supported civic projects and activities, compiled a history of the Lennox community and turned the newspaper into a family business.

Hofer's years as editor in Lennox demonstrated continual support of numerous civic and city projects. But, one project was a favorite:

Edward Hofer has been unswervingly dedicated to the promotion of one civic organization, in particular, the Lennox Municipal Band. He has been an active member of this group for over 50 years and was the most happy and proud of two band-related occasions--the completion of the park bandshell and the centennial observance of the band last year.⁵

Hofer also worked on recording the history of Lennox, South Dakota. Newspaper files from 1888 to 1907 are missing from the Lennox collection. Hofer said he realized that with those newspapers missing much of Lennox's early history could be lost.⁶ As a result, Hofer made a conscious effort to interview pioneers and publish their memories of Lennox and the community. He assisted with, edited or contributed to numerous community anniversary books, newspaper tabloids and columns about Lennox and its residents, institutions and organizations.

While Hofer was still active in 1986 with the newspaper and commercial printing business, his son, Verlyn, assumed the sole ownership of The Lennox Independent in 1983.⁷ Verlyn Hofer started learning the newspaper business as a youth through hands-on experience under his father's editorship.

Edward Hofer's wife, his children Vivian and Verlyn, their spouses and his grandchildren have been involved at various times in the Lennox newspaper business.

To understand Edward Hofer and his contributions to Lennox, one needs to look at the newspaper, its role as a business in the community and Hofer's background and journalism training.

Purpose and Methodology

The focus of this paper will be on a journalist/businessman supplying a community service--newspaper and job printing--for more than half a century in the same community.

This thesis should give a better understanding of the role of a South Dakota weekly newspaper editor in the 20th century. The story of

Hofer's life and work in the field of printing and journalism is representative of a small town editor's struggle to exist and succeed. His story shows the work of one editor maintaining the only formal channel of communication in the area and keeping a community informed about news and events for more than a half century.

Thomas F. Barnhart described a typical weekly editor in his 1936 book, Weekly Newspaper Management. The description could have been Hofer.

The editor usually confines himself to his field--the trade area of the town of publication. He concerns himself primarily with the constructive side of community activities, reporting significant and insignificant news reliably, fairly, and interestingly. He turns out a paper which mirrors the lives of small town and rural folk. His paper thrives because of the curiosity of its readers which may be explained as a desire⁸ to know more about the lives of neighbors and friends.

Hofer was a publisher recording news when South Dakota was entering its 35th year of statehood. As South Dakota approached the centennial mark of statehood, Hofer was still active in the printing and news business. His career paralleled much of South Dakota's state history.

The study of Hofer's career will provide an historical overview of printing and journalism in rural mid-America. Hofer's story spans nearly three-fourths of a century. The paper will also provide the author with a better understanding of journalism in her hometown and will provide the historians in Lennox and Lincoln County with a carefully researched biography of a long-time resident and newspaper editor.

This paper will provide a summary of the history of The Lennox Independent and a biography of Edward Hofer. The paper will examine Hofer's efforts to make the newspaper a profitable business through the supplement of income from the commercial printing business, especially the commercial carnival job business. The paper will also record how Edward Hofer used The Lennox Independent to promote the Lennox Municipal Band.

A complete biography of Edward Hofer and his contributions to journalism have not been recorded. Excerpts of Hofer's story have been published in The Lennox Independent, anniversary books published by The Lennox Independent and in The History of Lincoln County. Hofer was featured in a Sioux Falls Argus Leader story on June 12, 1983, reporting the 100th anniversary of the Lennox Municipal Band. Mr. and Mrs. Hofer were recognized for 50 years at The Lennox Independent in a feature and an editorial published in the Argus Leader on Oct. 8, 1978.

Only two other biographical studies of South Dakota rural journalists were found. They are both master's theses at South Dakota State University. Kenneth Schaack wrote George W. Hopp: Brookings County Press 1879-1890 in 1969 and Dale Blegen wrote Aubrey Sherwood of the DeSmet News in 1979.

Information for this paper was collected through interviews with Edward Hofer, his children, Lennox residents and others Hofer has encountered during his career as a journalist. File copies of newspapers published by Edward Hofer were viewed, especially issues dealing with the Lennox Municipal Band and The Lennox Independent

history. Hofer's anniversary books published in 1939, 1954 and 1979 were read. Books and other published material on Lennox, Lincoln County and printing were consulted.

The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1939, p. 7.

The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1954, p. 7.

The Lennox Independent, October 22, 1955, pp. 4 and 7.

The Lennox Independent, October 28, 1956, p. 7.

The Lennox Independent, October 13, 1958, p. 7.

The Lennox Independent, October 13, 1958, p. 7.

The Lennox Independent, October 25, 1958, p. 7.

Hofer, J. W. *Hofer's Anniversary Books*. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1939, 1954, 1979.)

ENDNOTES

- 1 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 7.
- 2 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 7.
- 3 The Lennox Independent, October 22, 1953, pp. 4 and 7.
- 4 The Lennox Independent, October 18, 1928, p. 1.
- 5 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 7.
- 6 Interview with Edward Hofer, March 14, 1986.
- 7 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 3.
- 8 Thomas F. Barnhart, Weekly Newspaper Management (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1936), p. 5.

CHAPTER II

THE NEWSPAPER

The Lennox Independent was published in the year 1984 under the volume number of 100. A special 100th anniversary issue of the Lennox newspaper was published on October 11, 1984, marking the century milestone. More than half of the newspaper's history occurred while Edward Hofer was associated with the publication. However, the story of the Lennox newspaper started approximately 20 years before Hofer was even born.

Founding of The Independent

The town of Lennox, Lincoln County, South Dakota, was founded in 1879. Within a couple of years, attempts at establishing a newspaper in the town named for a railroad executive's private secretary, Ben Lennox, were made. A struggling start and a lapse of publishing for approximately two years provided the foundation for a small weekly newspaper in southeastern South Dakota. The newspaper resulting from the struggling beginning, The Lennox Independent, has since celebrated its 100th anniversary.

The first newspaper in Lennox was published on October 6, 1880. Will Clark was the publisher and called the newspaper the Dakota Democrat. This was the third newspaper in the state to appear under the name of Dakota Democrat.¹ After a few issues, Clark sold the business to M. A. Fuller and on December 1, 1880, publication ceased.²

The following spring Peter F. Haas took over the newspaper and started publication under the title of The Lincoln County Independent. Haas, who had a real estate and abstract office in Lennox beginning in 1880, is recognized as the founder of the Lennox newspaper still publishing today.³

Frank Noahr, Haas' nephew and an editor of the Lennox newspaper at the turn of the century, said that his uncle had started the newspaper in Lennox more for what the publication of final land proof notices and other legals brought in financially than for anything else.⁴

J. E. Hazlitt bought part interest in the newspaper soon after Haas started publishing, but that partnership was short-lived.⁵

George L. Conklin, formerly publisher of The Watertown Independent, moved to Lennox and started a competing newspaper called The Lennox Weekly Star.⁶ The exact date of the appearance of the Star is not agreed upon by records. Sources suggest that the newspaper was started some time between 1881 and 1883. What is agreed on in all accounts of the story is that Haas closed The Lincoln County Independent shop when the Star appeared. Haas moved to Marion (Junction) and in a short time the Star folded. For approximately two years Lennox was without a locally published newspaper.⁷

On January 29, 1886, Haas was back in Lennox with his old Army press and was again publishing The Lincoln County Independent. "When Haas resumed publication of the Independent in 1886, he printed 'Volume 3' on the nameplate, apparently considering the publication to be a resumption of the same paper he suspended two years earlier."⁸

Haas, a lawyer, real estate agent and editor, published a four-page newspaper with pages 2 and 3 being ready-print and pages 1 and 4 containing local news which was published at Lennox and called home-print.⁹ The ready-print, newspaper pages printed at another location and distributed to various newspapers, came from Sioux City, the Western Newspaper Union which has evolved into the Mid-West Paper Company.¹⁰

Haas did not spare words when he became upset or encountered people with differing views. "He had more than a few local adversaries and was known to keep his cane handy on Thursdays after the paper was issued. Threatening the local editor with physical violence was not unusual in those days."¹¹ Robert Karolevitz in With A Shirt Tail Full of Type, a history of South Dakota newspapers, printed a column by Haas that was published on June 3, 1887.

A dastardly coward . . . made an attack upon our frame when we least expected it, and took us at disadvantage as we never associate with the scum of society. Several cowardly accomplices were on hand to assist in a manly fray of three to one. This is the second time this cowardly cur has seen fit to stick his nose into our business and if he ever attempts it again, we would advise the thing¹² to order a wooden overcoat as he will surely need it.

Once Haas revived his newspaper in Lennox, he published the newspaper even when others might have been willing to skip an issue. One such occasion was during the storms of 1888. The Independent had run out of its supply of newsprint during one blizzard. Haas went next door to a dry goods store and purchased a quantity of unbleached muslin to print the news on. The paper became a collector's item.¹³ The

Lennox Independent office currently has a facsimile of the "blizzard paper" mounted on a backroom wall.

File copies of The Lennox Independent are missing from the years of 1888 to 1907. In spite of numerous and varied attempts by the local newspaper staff to locate the newspapers or even parts of the newspapers, no issues from those years have been located other than the "blizzard paper."¹⁴ Sometime during the years when the newspaper files are missing, the Lennox newspaper had a name change. The newspaper had been originally called The Lincoln County Independent and was renamed The Lennox Independent.¹⁵

Change of Ownership

Haas, an ardent Republican, was owner and publisher of the Lennox newspaper until 1891 when some businessmen decided to purchase the newspaper to establish a Democratic party organ in Lennox. The businessmen included A. A. Freseman, Evert Curtis and Wallace H. Curtis. This ownership lasted only a few weeks with Wallace H. Curtis serving as editor-in-chief and Frank Noahr working as a printer. The newspaper was then sold to Noahr.

Noahr recalled that the Democrats soon tired of the venture and encouraged him to purchase the newspaper. B. C. Jacobs, a Lennox pioneer and financier, lent Noahr money and in 1892, the newspaper was no longer the Democratic party organ in Lennox.¹⁶

Noahr, Haas' nephew, came to Lennox in 1888 at the age of 19 to go to "school and that winter learn the cases in the office (Independent)."¹⁷

In a book on the history of Lincoln County, South Dakota, the following was said about Noahr's tenure as editor:

Circulation, no doubt, increased as Lennox grew, but the format of the Independent remained the same. Noahr didn't seem to have any strong political views, nor did it appear that he had any strong desire to be a driving force in the community, but he¹⁸ was fairly active in local affairs and organizations.

Noahr was connected with the Independent for 22 years with approximately 19 years being spent as editor. In the fall of 1910, Noahr sold the Lennox newspaper to M. Travallie. The Noahrs moved to Craig, Iowa, where he published the Craig Independent for more than 25 years and was postmaster for several years.¹⁹

Travallie brought newspaper experience to the job in Lennox. He was the former editor of the Worthing Enterprise, a newspaper published in a small town just east and south of Lennox.²⁰ During 1910 and 1911 Travallie published an eight-page newspaper with four pages being home-print and four pages being ready-print. "Travallie published post office hours, train time cards, lists of unclaimed mail, and a great deal of local news."²¹

Noahr recalled that in 1910 the Lennox newspaper plant had "three cases of 9-point type, a meager supply of job type, an Army press, a 10x12 Star jobber and a small subscription list."²² However, in 1912 under the ownership of Travallie, the inventory began to increase. The newspaper plant was moved to the basement of a new building.

In 1913, Wesley Smith, a Lennox school teacher, became a part owner of the newspaper plant. A four-page Potter press was purchased

and printed the Independent which then had a circulation of 1,000. The press was used by the plant for the next 27 years.²³

Smith became the sole owner, editor and publisher of the newspaper in 1917. Three years later ownership of the newspaper went to William Berens, a former publisher of the Worthing Enterprise. During Berens' term as editor, "The front page was devoted mostly to news, and well-composed, one- and two-column heads were used. The display advertising was also greatly improved in appearance," according to a story published October 11, 1984, in The Lennox Independent.²⁴

Thomas H. Medley, after suspending publication of the Harrisburg North Central Herald in 1922, purchased the Lennox newspaper. An accomplishment of Medley's which is still influencing the Lennox newspaper today is the addition of a concentrated section of Lennox High School news.

Since 1924, Lennox High School news has been printed under the heading of Pep-A-Graph, but it was not until 1928 that the departmental paper took on any semblance of newspaper make-up. This school publication has won several²⁵ State superior ratings and an All-America rating.

Medley owned the Lennox plant until October of 1928. His ownership resulted in mixed reviews. The Lincoln County history book stated:

It was in 1925 that Mr. Medley, and the independent made a real leap into the modern world of newspaper publishing. He purchased and installed the plant's first successful typesetting machine, a Model "8" Linotype which continued to be used by the local newspaper until 1971 and was then sold to the publisher at Hurley.²⁶

The Lincoln County history book also noted that "Mr. Medley, it seems,

did not meet with a great deal of business success in Lennox."²⁷ The Independent was not receiving the community support through advertising that Medley thought it should. Medley published an average of one editorial a week pertaining to advertising during the year of 1927.²⁸ During Medley's tenure, the plant was moved from its basement location to a building on North Main.²⁹

Hofer's Ownership Starts

A tornado in a nearby community on September 18, 1928, affected the future of journalism in Lennox. A tornado that lasted about 12 minutes started cutting a path through Davis, a Turner County town 11 miles southwest of Lennox, at 4:20 p.m. that day. The tornado's path included the town's newspaper plant and the editor's, Edward Hofer's, home. The loss to the editor was complete according to a news story about the tornado published the following week in the Lennox newspaper.

There is nothing left except two presses which are unfit for use without generous repair. The machine is a complete wreck, type is scattered along with cases and other furniture to the four winds. . . . Of the office building there is not in sight a single board but what has been totally ground up. Mr. Hofer loses in the smash his entire property together with his residence and every article of family wearing apparel and household furniture.³⁰

The editor of The Davis Eagle brought his family to his wife's hometown of Lennox following the tornado. On the Thursday after the tornado, The Lennox Independent contained several articles and pictures showing the damage caused by the tornado at Davis. The Lennox newspaper carried a front page headline on September 20, 1928, stating: "Davis Eagle Will Be/Printed In Lennox/For The Time Being"³¹

The story under the headline provided a few more details.

The Davis Eagle, for the time being will be printed in the office of The Lennox Independent. The equipment and force is at Editor Hofer's disposal and we'll keep the Eagle going on schedule time to the subscribers.

Mr. Hofer is very grateful to the Turner County newspaper offices who had offered assistance in the matter of keeping the Eagle before the people. Dad Drake of The Chancellor News furnished the Turner County Commissioner's proceedings for this issue, and The Parker New Era also supplied some material, all of which came in mighty handy.

The Eagle building and office equipment was swept away in the tornado last Thursday. Fortunately Mr. Hofer and family had departed for Huron that morning to attend the State Fair.

The Eagle editor and the Independent force will certainly appreciate the courtesy of those who will send news and other matter for publication to the Independent.³²

On September 27, 1928, The Lennox Independent carried a half column of copy on the front page reporting on the cleanup after the tornado and that Davis would be rebuilt. The article was credited to The Davis Eagle.³³

The next week The Lennox Independent carried an article on the right top column of the front page reporting that the Davis newspaper had changed hands.

Last Monday The Davis Eagle was taken over by W. J. Drake, of The Chancellor News, who will consolidate the Eagle with the News. The readers of the Eagle will receive The Chancellor News which will continue a Davis department of two or more pages devoted to Davis and community.

Mr. Edw. Hofer, the former publisher who has been at the helm of the Eagle for the last four years, gave to the people of Davis and community one of the newsiest and best little papers in this section of the state.

Mr. Hofer, whose printing plant and home were destroyed in the tornado that swept Davis has moved to Lennox, having rented the Louise McFarland house. For the present time Mr. Hofer is undecided as to his future

plans. At the present time he is assisting on the Independent force.³⁴

Hofer's time of indecision was either short lived or the Lennox newspaper was not entirely truthful because the very next week The Lennox Independent subscribers read that the Lennox newspaper was also in the process of changing hands of ownership. Edward Hofer was purchasing the Lennox newspaper. The change of ownership was explained in a front page story in The Lennox Independent on October 11, 1928.

Editor Edward Hofer has purchased The Lennox Independent and took possession today, Thursday, October 11. Mr. Hofer is an editor and printer second to none, and is a straight-forward young man of exemplary habits, and a very likeable man to meet and do business with. His experience in the printing businesses covers a period of 18 years, the past eight years of this time having been spent in Lennox, Canton and Davis. During the past four and one-half years he had edited The Davis Eagle, and without the slightest exaggeration, he gave Davis and vicinity a wonderfully clean and newsy publication, and he will continue to do likewise for Lennox and vicinity.

While associated with The Sioux Valley News of Canton, Mr. Hofer was united in marriage with Miss Cora Ulberg, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ole Ulberg of this city, so of course the new editor and family of two children have been "at home" in Lennox for some time.

Further comment on the change is not necessary so far as Mr. Hofer is concerned for we know without doubt that we have placed the future destinies of The Lennox Independent into good hands, and our readers are going to be more than satisfied.

We regret the fact that we are leaving Lennor [sic], for during the six years that we have resided here it goes without saying that Lennox has been a real "home," and right here we want to thank the business institutions and the people of the vicinity for the liberal business accorded us, and we wish all of you the liberal share of success and happiness which always comes to a thrifty and honest class of folks such as you find in Lennox and community.

We have felt the need of a change for some time, and as a result, we have decided to locate on a farm near Timber Lake and will move there as soon as possible. --T. H. Medley.³⁵

Fifty years later the Sioux Falls Argus Leader carried a feature on Hofer's half-century at Lennox. The October 8, 1978, article carried this version of the transaction:

The disaster may have been a blessing in disguise. Hofer had been considering a move from Davis ("The town was just too small for a newspaper.") and had investigated the possibility of purchasing the Lennox paper. The tornado gave him the impetus to act.

"I think I signed the papers the next day," he recalls.

After cleanup and moving from Davis, ³⁶ the Hofers were relocated by the second week of October.

Verlyn Hofer, Edward's son, published an article in the Lennox newspaper on October 22, 1953, recording the history of the local newspaper. The article reported that Edward Hofer saw no future in rebuilding the newspaper in Davis, so he pulled together his resources and insurance money and borrowed capital to purchase The Lennox Independent. The newspaper plant was in a building approximately 25 feet by 40 feet. Out of these cramped quarters, Hofer issued his first newspaper of many consisting of eight pages of home-print. The 1953 history claimed that Hofer never published late or missed a mail train.³⁷

Although Hofer became owner of the Lennox newspaper and plant on October 11, 1928, his first issue did not come out until the following week on October 18. Hofer wished the former editor and his family every possible success in a front page article. Hofer then went on to introduce himself and outline the future of the newspaper.

The fact that we were employed on the Independent for some 7-1/2 years ago under Wm. Berens, the publisher at that time, and marrying a Lennox girl, does not altogether make us a stranger in this community. We are well acquainted with most of the

businessmen of Lennox and therefore feel very much at home already.

The new publisher shall make every effort possible to continue giving Lennox and community a high quality newspaper such as they have had the opportunity to enjoy in the past. It shall always be our aim to boost for Lennox, for the business houses and institutions of this fair little city. In return we ask the cooperation of our readers as well as the support of the business firms of Lennox.³⁸

Hofer continued on the same theme in an editorial on page two of the same issue.

This week's Independent comes to you the first time under the new management. While it will be somewhat difficult for us to get out a real newsy paper for a few weeks on account of the field being new to us, we hope soon to get lined up and be in a position to give our patrons the very best possible. With the cooperation of a group of live wire correspondents, we hope to cover this section as far as news is concerned. And with the hearty cooperation of the business interests of Lennox we know that with the equipment we have we can give this section a newspaper that will merit the reader interest. During the week we have installed some new equipment, a large job press, an autocaster, cabinets, etc., which will enable us to give better service to our patrons.³⁹

Advertising Support

Hofer had to depend upon the support of the Lennox businessmen through advertising to earn income for the plant. He must have gone after the advertising because a front page notice in the November 7, 1929, newspaper reported that because of an increase in advertising the Independent was 12 pages of all home-print.⁴⁰ Hofer often ran reminders like the one on the front page of the April 17, 1930, issue which said, "The steady advertiser knows that it pays."⁴¹

However, Hofer was also aware that advertising depended on more than just the merchant. Reminders appeared in the newspaper at various times encouraging people to buy their products in Lennox.

The Independent urges its readers to read the many advertisements in this week's issue. Compare items and prices and visit our local business establishments for good, honest buys. No one store can possibly carry all the items that everyone desires to purchase during the holiday season and you may not be able to find an imported handmade sweater for your poodle in Lennox, but there is a wide variety of gift items to be had right here at home and we urge you to take a look.

Remember, the only business firms in the world that pay local taxes are local firms. In order to stay in business and provide jobs for their employees, they need your consideration. Also remember--the job saved may be your own.⁴²

The History Story

Edward Hofer regretted missing one major story during the first year he was in Lennox. In 1929 he did not realize that the city of Lennox was 50 years old. He has always been interested in history. Newspapers from the years of 1888 to 1907 were missing. These missing files took away much of the early recorded history of Lennox. Almost as if to make up for the oversight of missing the 50th anniversary of Lennox, Hofer has since published numerous special editions of the newspaper marking historical milestones and anniversary books marking the 60th, 75th and 100th anniversaries of the town's founding.

In 1933 Hofer made sure the 50th anniversary of the town's band did not go unnoticed.

A golden-colored special issue was published one week before the event containing a history of the band, a brief history of the town, the school, and various other organizations.

Endeavoring to publicize all local undertakings, the Independent helped to make this celebration one of the biggest affairs in the history of the town. Mr. Hofer, like editors Haas, and Mr. Noahr before him, is a member of the city band.⁴³

The following year the Lennox newspaper was publishing its 50th volume and that milestone was noted with another special edition, this one being published October 25, 1934. In a house advertisement appearing a week before the special edition, which Hofer called the Pioneer's Edition, readers were told:

We're designating this special issue "A PIONEER'S EDITION" because it will deal mainly with pioneer times, peoples and events in this city, community and county. This is further⁴⁴ supplemented with brief stories of early day Dakota.

The special edition came in three sections. The first section was 12 pages long and contained stories of the town's history and early pioneers. The second section was eight pages in length. The front page story was written by former Editor Frank Noahr. The remainder of the section consisted of stories from other parts of the county and state and more local pioneer stories. The final section of the edition was smaller in size and printed on a light blue sheet. This section contained news from Worthing and Davis, advertising, two state history items and a story on the local high school 4-H girls.⁴⁵

The special editions in 1933 and 1934 were just warm-ups for the special publishing that would be done in 1939. Hofer purchased and installed a large Miehle cylinder press in the newspaper plant in the spring of 1939. With the new press and help from a tramp printer who

happened through town, Hofer published a comprehensive history of the area. Hofer had obtained a copy of a history book from Ashley, North Dakota. After trips to the county seat, Canton, help from staff writers and others in the county and state, and after convincing businessmen that an 8- or 24-page book was not complete enough, the anniversary book was published.⁴⁶

A 200-page book was published by Mr. Hofer in 1939, in connection with the 60th anniversary of the founding of Lennox and the 50th year of statehood. This edition contained complete histories of Lennox, Lincoln County, all settlements within the county, and South Dakota. Also to be found in this publication are the histories of all the past and present organizations in Lennox, the churches of the entire community, and biographical sketches of the pioneers and their families who settled here. Some 200 pictures were used and 2,000 copies printed. Of great historical value, the "Anniversary⁴⁷ Edition" was, nevertheless, a financial failure.

Two supplements have since been added to the 1939 publication. The supplements were printed in 1954 and 1979 in honor of the town's 75th and 100th anniversaries. Customers were able to purchase the anniversary book and supplements separately or bound together in an edition nearly 500 pages in length and covering the entire 100-year history of the area.⁴⁸

Space and Equipment

The Lennox Independent quarters were getting cramped. In 1938 a balcony was built because more floor space and storage room was needed.⁴⁹ This addition did not go by unnoticed by Lennox residents and in the March 3, 1938, newspaper, Hofer reported receiving a letter asking, "Has Ed gone Shakespearian? Is he about to enact the scene

from Romeo and Juliet? Or has he had the balcony built so that he could sit above the aides and view their efforts and hard labor? Why not explain?" Hofer replied that it was nothing Shakespearian in nature.

We wanted more room for practical uses without enlarging the size of the building. We needed more floor space without using more floor space already occupied to the limit. It was thus a matter of using some of the overhead space. In other words, some of the vacant space between the floor and the ceiling for storage room.⁵⁰

Early in 1943 the Independent started carrying stories on another change in the newspaper that was in the future. Hofer had purchased the former W. B. Smith building at 114 S. Main and the Independent plant would be moving.

Smith established the Smith Clothing Store in 1895. Smith built the two-story brick building in 1904. The clothing store was housed in the two-story building until 1943 when Hofer purchased the building and the clothing store was moved to the west side of the street.⁵¹

Extensive work was done to the interior of the 25 by 80 foot W. B. Smith building prior to the moving of the newspaper plant. The remodeling included work on plumbing and electrical wires, and alterations to the front part of the building. The alterations to the lower front part of the store included remodeling and replacement of windows and a door to make suitable office arrangements. The remodeling work went from the roof to the basement. The Lennox newspaper reported on May 6, 1943, that the improvements were steadily being done, but the progress was slow due to shortage of material and

labor. The move was made during the years of World War II when items were rationed and men were fighting overseas.⁵²

As the move of the newspaper neared, Hofer published a story in the April 1, 1943, newspaper which included a list of the locations of the newspaper plant since the newspaper was founded.

The first shop established by Peter Haas was located in a small frame building just east of the present Council Oak store. From there the plant was later moved to a frame building on the corner where now stands the N. Smith building occupied by Bailin's store. During the proprietorship of the late Frank Noahr, the Independent shop was again removed to the east side and occupied a small building near the site of the Council Oak store. From there the late M. Travallie moved the printing plant to the basement of a new two-story brick building on the east side Main street. This building was erected by Mr. Travallie in 1912 with the first and second floors occupied by a restaurant and hotel establishment. From there the late Thos. Medley removed the Independent to its present location in 1927.⁵³ [See map of locations in Appendix A.]

Moving the newspaper was delayed because repair work and remodeling was necessary before the heavy equipment could be brought into the building. ". . . but when all was completed, the Independent was housed in one of the most modern country shops in South Dakota," according to the Independent on June 17, 1954.⁵⁴

The May 20, 1943, issue of The Lennox Independent carried a banner headline informing readers the INDEPENDENT ESTABLISHED AT NEW QUARTERS. The move took four days and was done the previous weekend beginning the Thursday before as soon as the last issue of the paper had been mailed. George G. Gruner, foreman mechanic of the C. I. Johnson Mfg. Co. of St. Paul, arrived Friday morning to supervise the moving of the Miehle newspaper and book press. Everything was hauled

on a 3- by 6-foot band truck which was capable of handling three tons. By Monday morning all of the shop equipment was in place and jobs were being printed. In the same article, Hofer admitted, "While there are many details to be adjusted before we get settled into a smooth working order, we felt considerable relief when we got started on the makeup of the present issue of the Independent."⁵⁵

The newspaper office was still located at 114 S. Main in 1986.

Hofer kept adding to and improving his newspaper plant. In 1946 a second new Kluge automatic platen press was installed. A 30-foot addition to the 80-foot newspaper building was constructed in 1948 and a Miehle automatic cylinder press was added. A new Baum automatically fed folder was the addition for 1949. By this time Hofer had replaced all the equipment which came with the shop in 1928 with the exception of a Model 8 Linotype. Hofer had, however, added a second Linotype, a Model 32 Linotype, to the operation and in 1986 that machine was still in the plant.⁵⁶

The move to offset printing was made first in the commercial printing part of the business and then in 1975 the newspaper was switched to offset.⁵⁷ The switch to offset meant the purchase of electronic, computerized typesetting equipment and the need to have the newspaper printed at a press outside of the local plant. The change also meant getting rid of some now obsolete equipment.

When the Independent "went offset" a number of years ago, there was no longer any use for the old Miehle flatbed cylinder press which had been used to print the local newspaper for over 35 years. Believed to be over 75 years old, the old No. 2 Miehle was dismantled and sold for junk--all 10 tons of it. This

was somewhat of a traumatic experience, the selling of an "old and faithful friend" for junk conjuring up many memories.⁵⁸

The Independent was once again expanded in 1978 when the building to the south of the newspaper was acquired. The added space was used for expanding the printing operations, storage and moving equipment down from upstairs to increase efficiency.⁵⁹

Ownership Change

The Lennox Independent, like many of the South Dakota small community news and printing operations, was a family business. This fact was noted in the newspaper's history printed in 1954. "Like most small town newspapermen's wives, Mrs. Hofer has shared with him the trials and tribulations of 'getting out a paper.'"⁶⁰

Mrs. Hofer worked in both the Davis and the Lennox newspaper plants. She would spend a few hours each week working on the subscription list. She also helped with gathering job work, proofreading jobs and newsprint, getting local news, cleaning and many other odd jobs, according to Mrs. Hofer.⁶¹

The Hofers' two children grew up in the newspaper plant learning their parents' trade. They were editors of the high school newspaper and worked at the Lennox newspaper. Daughter Vivian was a fulltime writer/bookkeeper for many years. Her husband, Carl Renz, was a printer at the plant for a year and assisted other times with late work on press night. Their sons are Evan and Ryan.

Son Verlyn worked in the shop as a teenager and rejoined the newspaper staff after serving in the Army and attending school.⁶²

Verlyn, working with his father for years, acquired a half interest in the newspaper in 1962 and in 1983 he became the sole owner of the operation.⁶³ He has written the editorials for the Lennox newspaper for the past 25 years and has written much of the news until recently when Fred Courey joined the news department. Verlyn's wife, Mary Ann (Ness), has been the bookkeeper for 25 years and has more recently handled much of the local news and classified ads. Their children, Doug, Bill, Dave and Becky, all worked in the plant during their high school days. Becky currently works in the plant during her summer breaks from Northwestern College.⁶⁴

Although Edward Hofer no longer has ownership of the Lennox newspaper and plant, he is still actively involved in the day-to-day operations. He may be found any weekday in The Lennox Independent office running machines, making suggestions or talking with and assisting customers.

⁶³ The Lennox Independent, p. 10.

⁶⁴ The Lennox Independent, December 11, 1984, p. 12.

⁶⁵ The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 1.

⁶⁶ The Lennox Independent, October 23, 1984, section 2, p. 1.

⁶⁷ The Lennox Independent, October 23, 1984, section 2, p. 1.

⁶⁸ The History of Lennox, Illinois, p. 101.

⁶⁹ Lennox, With Reminiscences of the Lennox Community, The Lennox Independent, 1987, p. 10.

⁷⁰ The Lennox Independent, October 23, 1984, p. 1.

⁷¹ The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 1.

ENDNOTES

1 Ruth Elizabeth Bergman, "Printing in South Dakota During the Territorial Period With a Check List of Newspapers and Periodicals from the Beginning Through 1889" (Unpublished master's thesis, University of Illinois, 1936), p. 45.

2 Bergman, p. 45.

3 The History of Lincoln County South Dakota (Freeman: Pine Hill Press, 1985), pp. 412-414.

4 The Lennox Independent, October 25, 1934, section 2, p. 1.

5 The History of Lincoln County, p. 100.

6 Bergman, p. 46.

7 The History of Lincoln County, p. 414.

8 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 1.

9 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 1.

10 Interview with Verlyn Hofer, September 26, 1986.

11 The History of Lincoln County, p. 100.

12 Robert F. Karolevitz, With a Shirt Tail Full of Type (South Dakota Press Association, 1982), p. 33.

13 Karolevitz, p. 29.

14 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 1.

15 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 1.

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18 The History of Lincoln County, p. 100.

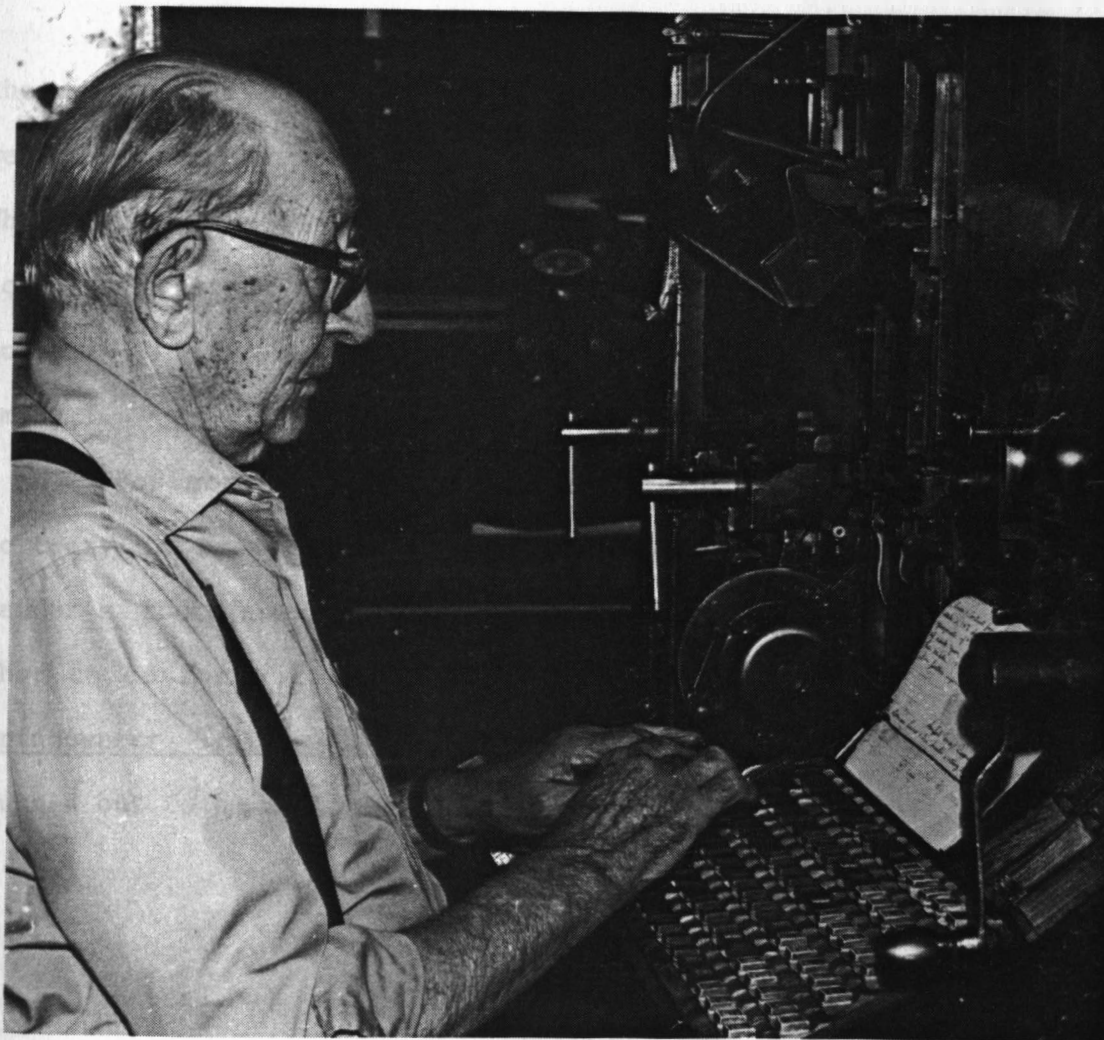
19 Lennox 60th Anniversary Edition (Lennox: The Lennox Independent, 1939), p. 134.

20 The Lennox Independent, October 25, 1934, p. 1.

21 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 1.

- 22 The Lennox Independent, October 25, 1934, p. 1.
- 23 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 1.
- 24 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 2.
- 25 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 2.
- 26 The History of Lincoln County, p. 101.
- 27 The History of Lincoln County, p. 101.
- 28 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 2.
- 29 The History of Lincoln County, p. 101.
- 30 The Lennox Independent, September 20, 1928, p. 5.
- 31 The Lennox Independent, September 20, 1928, p. 1.
- 32 The Lennox Independent, September 20, 1928, p. 1.
- 33 The Lennox Independent, September 27, 1928, p. 1.
- 34 The Lennox Independent, October 4, 1928, p. 1.
- 35 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1928, p. 1.
- 36 Tom Hasner, "Through Wars, Inflation and Twisters, the Lennox Independent Goes On," Argus Leader, October 8, 1978, p. 5E.
- 37 The Lennox Independent, October 22, 1953, p. 4.
- 38 The Lennox Independent, October 18, 1928, p. 1.
- 39 The Lennox Independent, October 18, 1928, p. 2.
- 40 The Lennox Independent, November 7, 1929, p. 1.
- 41 The Lennox Independent, April 17, 1930, p. 1.
- 42 The Lennox Independent, December 6, 1962, p. 2.
- 43 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 2.
- 44 The Lennox Independent, October 18, 1934, p. 6.
- 45 The Lennox Independent, October 25, 1934.
- 46 Interview with Edward Hofer, March 14, 1986.

- 47 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 2.
- 48 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 2.
- 49 The Lennox Independent, March 3, 1938, p. 1.
- 50 The Lennox Independent, March 3, 1938, pp. 1, 5.
- 51 The Lennox Independent, April 1, 1943, p. 1.
- 52 The Lennox Independent, May 6, 1943, p. 1.
- 53 The Lennox Independent, April 1, 1943, pp. 1, 8.
- 54 The Lennox Independent, June 17, 1954, p. 2.
- 55 The Lennox Independent, May 20, 1934, p. 1.
- 56 The Lennox Independent, June 17, 1954, p. 2.
- 57 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 2.
- 58 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 3.
- 59 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 2.
- 60 The Lennox Independent, June 17, 1954, p. 2.
- 61 Interview with Edward Hofer, September 26, 1986.
- 62 The Lennox Independent, September 17, 1959, p. 4.
- 63 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 3.
- 64 Interview with Verlyn Hofer, October 25, 1986.



Picture 2 - Edward Hofer and Model 32 Linotype

Edward Hofer spent many hours setting type on his Model 32 Linotype in Lennox.

CHAPTER III

EDWARD HOFER

David and Anna Hofer came to the United States from Russia with their parents. David arrived in 1874 and Anna arrived on 1879. They were both of German descent. They were married September 22, 1898. While they were living in Freeman, South Dakota, a son, Edward, was born on August 31, 1899.¹ Between 1899 and 1904 when the Hofer family moved to Bridgewater, South Dakota, the family also lived in Marion and Emery.²

For more than 40 years, David Hofer had a furniture store and mortuary in Bridgewater.³ However, Edward was not to follow in his father's footsteps. Edward recalled that his father never told him what to do for a living. It was another business in Bridgewater--The Bridgewater Tribune--that provided Edward with a job that actually turned out to be a career and a way of life.

Hofer's Siblings

Edward was one of 10 children born to David and Anna Hofer. Edward was the oldest of the children and one of the three children still living in 1986. Also living are the next two eldest children: Anna, who was born November 14, 1901, and Jacob, who was born December 29, 1903.

The other children included Joseph (Joe), Albert, Emil, Ottwin, Mary, Elmer and John who died as a little boy. Of the children, only

Joe and Albert followed in the family business for a portion of their lives. Joe helped in the mortuary/furniture store and Albert was a mortician in Freeman for a few years.⁴

It was Edward's younger brother Ottwin who followed Edward's career choice. Ottwin was born June 20, 1909. When Ottwin was 15 years old, he moved to Davis to work with his brother in the newspaper there. Ottwin moved with Edward's family to Lennox in 1928 after the Davis plant was destroyed by the tornado. Ottwin continued working with his brother in Lennox until 1941 when Ottwin entered military service and was subsequently wounded in action. Following the war, Ottwin worked at The Lennox Independent for a brief time before going into the road construction business and later serving as a rural mail carrier in Bridgewater. Ottwin died in 1977.⁵

The Beginnings of a Career

As a young boy in Bridgewater, South Dakota, Edward would walk by the newspaper office just so he could peer into the print shop window and watch the newspaper press in operation. He found it fascinating to watch the fly of the press as the newspapers were printed. Hofer was 14 years old when he looked for employment at the newspaper office. He applied for and was hired as a "printer's devil" at The Bridgewater Tribune. Years later he said that the job in Bridgewater had been just that at the beginning, a job. He had not entered the office with the idea of making a career choice. For four years Edward worked at the newspaper plant after school. He earned \$2.50 a week.⁶

Hofer received his formal education through the public schools in Bridgewater; he never attended a journalism or print school. He did attend Mankato Commercial College, Mankato, Minnesota, during the winter months of 1917 to 1919 to study business.⁷ For nine months of the year, Hofer would be at the Bridgewater print shop setting type and once in a while running the press. The other three months of the year he was in Mankato.

Leaving Bridgewater

Hofer first moved to Lennox in the spring of 1921 to work at The Lennox Independent which was then owned by Bill Berens. Hofer worked in Lennox for two or three months and then the decision was made to cut back on staff and he returned to Bridgewater.⁸ In the fall of 1921, Hofer joined the staff of The Sioux Valley News in Canton. He worked as a printer and he hand set type. However, hand setting type was something Hofer apparently decided he did not want to do forever. During the evenings Hofer worked with the Model 14 Linotype and taught himself how to set type on the Linotype. He became a Linotype operator in about a year.⁹

Hofer married Cora Ulberg on February 12, 1922. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ole Ulberg, Norwegian immigrants who lived in Lennox.¹⁰

The First Newspaper

In the spring of 1924, Hofer left the Canton plant and started looking at other newspapers. He bought The Davis Eagle from Bill Drake

of Chancellor. The Davis newspaper was hand set type, no Linotype. Even though Bill Drake Jr. would help set type and some things were set in Sioux Falls, Hofer said he bought a Linotype before his first year ended.¹¹

The Hofers had two children. Vivian was born October 28, 1922, and Verlyn was born June 6, 1925.¹²

For the Hofer family, the date of September 13, 1928, brings back many memories--life-changing memories. The Hofers were planning to go to the South Dakota State Fair that day. The day began with a flat tire on the car which had to be repaired. The family drove to Hooker, South Dakota, to catch a train to Huron, South Dakota, and the fair. Since the train was five minutes late, the family made its connections.

While at the fair the Hofers heard an announcement that Davis had been hit by a tornado. They got back on the train and this time got off at Hurley, South Dakota, and caught a ride from there with another family. Their first view of Davis came about midnight. To this day Hofer marvels, "I can't see how we got through the streets in Davis."¹³ The Hofers stayed with people east of town that night. Mr. Hofer walked to Davis the next morning. After getting past the National Guard who watched the town, Hofer discovered that the tornado had destroyed the family business and home. A mirror and the base of a sewing machine were all that was saved from their home. He found his two-ton Linotype six feet from where it should have been. While parts of the Linotype were salvaged, the machine had set its last type. The Linotype base was sold to the blacksmith to be used as an anvil.¹⁴

Policies and Priorities at Lennox

The Hofers moved to Lennox after cleaning up the wreckage in Davis. They stayed temporarily with Mrs. Hofer's family before setting up their home in Lennox. Soon after Hofer's move to Lennox, he purchased the Lennox newspaper where he had worked in 1921.

Hofer had his ideas about the purpose of the Independent and what guidelines would be followed in determining the newspaper's content. Soon after Hofer took over the Lennox newspaper, he published a list of 10 policy items that his newspaper would follow. The list was published on page 2, the editorial page, of the April 11, 1929, Independent.

1. To serve the purpose of a non-partisan independent, progressive newspaper.

2. To stand aloof from all fractional and partisan strifes of all forms.

3. To give to the people of this community a free, open forum wherein any citizen may feel free to express his opinion on all public affairs, reserving the right to bar from our columns any article by anyone that is plainly scurrilous or defamatory in intent and characters, and contrary to truth and public welfare.

4. The Independent does not assume any responsibility for opinions expressed by anyone using our columns for the purpose of discussing questions of public affairs. Any opinion expressed by any citizen of this community are his own opinions and not that of the Independent. The Independent has reserved the editorial column for the expressions of its own opinions on all matters whatsoever the nature of such.

5. The Independent has no axe to grind. No group of petty politicians of any kind will find any favors with the Independent.

6. The news and advertising columns of the Independent are devoted to boost the best interest of this community. The spirit of the Independent towards

the business and farming interest of this community is a friendly one.

7. The Independent appreciates the good will and patronage of its many local advertisers. Likewise do we appreciate the good will of our hundreds of readers in this and neighboring communities.

8. The Independent is a friend of progress. Our own community will be what we make it. We must recognize in a community the fundamental factors that build for prosperity. The two main factors in community progress and prosperity are the business and farming interests. Wherever these two main groups are organized for effective cooperation in any and all practical community projects there is progress.

9. The Independent stands for and aims to promote the ideals of sound Americanism.

10. The Independent recognizes in the home, the school, and the church, the bed-rock foundations of our American civilization and progress. The Independent believes in the high and worthy purpose of the country press of America. Our advertising columns are open to all the business enterprises of this community and to all the people who want to use them. But our soul, our ideals, our honest opinions and convictions are not for sale at the commercial bargain counters where values are measured in silver and gold.

This paper is a friend of all the people. Our aim is to make this paper worthy of its name, The Lennox Independent.¹⁵

Hofer's policies made it clear that he believed in the importance of community progress and that his newspaper would support community development and pride. One of the themes that has appeared repeatedly in the Lennox newspaper is the need for pride in the community's continued cleanliness. Starting with a newspaper in April 1929, Hofer encouraged the citizens of Lennox to participate in the Clean-Up, Paint-Up, Fix-Up campaign.

The Lennox Independent will assist in sponsoring and promoting a city and community wide spring clean-up, paint-up and beautifying campaign. . . . Let us all do our little mite to help make our town¹⁶ and community more beautiful and attractive. Let's go.

Hofer encouraged readers to keep Lennox clean. Nearly every spring stories, editorials or advertising appeared in the newspaper telling residents to clean lawns, buildings and alleys. On February 20, 1930, there was a front page story announcing that it was time to paint up, clean up and clean house.¹⁷ A copy of a clean-up, paint-up, fix-up proclamation by the city's mayor was reprinted on page four of the April 27, 1933, Lennox newspaper.¹⁸

In 1953 a city clean-up drive week was April 27 to May 2. On April 30, 1953, several merchants purchased advertising space promoting the clean-up theme. Hofer wrote on the topic in an April 9, 1953, editorial on page 2. "The city of Lennox has an excellent opportunity to show its civic pride by making such improvements just as we all have the same opportunity by taking the necessary steps to put our own yard in order."¹⁹

The on-going community clean-up project was recognized in the early 1960s. Lennox Mayor Fred Courey entered Lennox in the 1961 National Cleanest Town Contest. Lennox was the only South Dakota town listed among the winners of the Achievement Award in the 1961 contest. "Many local residents and the Independent had a part in the effort, with the contest entry prepared and submitted by Mayor Courey."²⁰

Not only did Hofer use the newspaper to support community projects and activities like the community clean-up campaign, he also was involved in the community as a member of several organizations. He served as president of the local Commercial Club and the district press association. He was a member of the First English Lutheran Church and served on the church board. He was a member of the local Boy Scout

troop committee and a long time member of the city band. He actively promoted sporting events in the town for the youth, especially the baseball program.²¹

In 1929, Hofer first published his list of policies. In 1984 when the newspaper celebrated 100 years of publishing, Hofer's son, Verlyn, the current owner and publisher, echoed his father's thoughts from many years past.

Hopefully, no matter who may publish the Independent in the years ahead, the basic policies and goals of this newspaper will remain the same--to provide a worthwhile service to the community and to preserve and strengthen the precepts of freedom on which this nation is founded.

Members of the Independent staff remain convinced that the American hometown newspaper is important to survival of our democratic way of life. A firm stand on issues, local, statewide and national, remains in the forefront of this newspaper's purpose for existing.

A solid faith in the future of the progressive small town and an abiding confidence that made America great is what made the Independent and many other hometown newspapers tick.

So as we observe the 100th year of publication of the Independent, our hope and prayer is that this newspaper will remain faithful to the task of disseminating the news in an honest and fair manner, and to serving its community and nation so as to preserve liberty and promote the general welfare of all men.²²

Recording History

Edward Hofer combined his belief in community pride and his love of history. This combination resulted in careful, complete recordings of thousands of stories in his newspapers, special editions and special anniversary books. Fred Courey, a former Lennox mayor and a news editor/writer for the Independent, said Hofer was devoted to

community history and Hofer always tried to be quite thorough when writing an article about a person, especially when the article was an obituary.²³

While in Lennox, Hofer published and sometimes reprinted numerous articles by others telling about memories of early Lennox. A. A. Freseman, an early pioneer and charter city band member, wrote several historical articles which were published in the early 1930s.

Hofer's concern for recording history and being thorough with reporting current news items was also evident while he was editor at Davis. The Turner County Pioneer History written by W. H. Stoddard contains at least three articles reprinted from The Davis Eagle when it was under Hofer's editorship. All of the articles had been originally written by Stoddard. On January 26, 1928, Stoddard wrote:

To the Editor of the Davis Eagle,
Dear Sir--

Your obituary of the late Jackson Allen Davis was very good and quite complete. I feel sure it was read by the very few remaining early pioneers with much interest. Another class that have read it²⁴ with interest are the children of the first pioneers.

The rest of the letter was written primarily to grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the pioneers. Stoddard described the life and hardships of the first settlers in Turner County.

Music Happenings

Not only was Bridgewater the site of Hofer's first step into printing and journalism, the town was also the place where he began another life-long interest: band. His first instrument was a clarinet which he learned to play at the age of 15.²⁵ The first parade he

remembers marching in was a preparedness parade in Sioux Falls in 1917 before the war was declared.²⁶

Hofer played his clarinet and later a saxophone in the Bridgewater band which did a considerable amount of traveling. The band traveled to Hot Springs, South Dakota, in 1920. "There he not only played in the band, but ran with the firemen's track team from Bridgewater which won the state crown that year."²⁷

When Hofer lived in Davis, he was a member of the Davis city band. He joined the Lennox band in 1930 and in 1986 was still an active member. "Mr. Hofer seldom misses a rehearsal and no one can recall when he last missed a concert."²⁸ Hofer was honored as one of the five oldest members when the Lennox Municipal Band celebrated its 75th anniversary. The honorees were Hofer, William Simon, Jacob VanderPloeg, Fred Kamolz and Selmer "Sam" Stubsten. Twenty-five years later, at the 100th year celebration, Hofer was the only person of the five still living.²⁹

Hofer printed several historical stories about the band in his newspaper and wrote many articles about upcoming events and concerts. However, the project that he worked hard for was the construction of a permanent bandshell. Hofer obtained blueprints from a Minnesota architect and later pushed for a larger shell over the platform than in the original plans. The shell was constructed in 1963. For all of his efforts in the band, he has never accepted a dime.³⁰

Recognition

In 1983 Edward Hofer's son, Verlyn, became the sole owner of the Lennox newspaper. However, Edward Hofer is still active in the daily workings of the office. Hofer has been recognized by both local and state residents for his work in journalism. The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at South Dakota State University presented Hofer with the Master Editor-Publisher Award on October 26, 1968.

Hometown people and newspaper friends honored Hofer at The Lennox Independent office October 8, 1978, marking his 50th year at the Lennox newspaper. The 50th anniversary was also recognized by colleagues at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader. On October 8, 1978, the Sioux Falls editors published the following tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Hofer:

A half century is a long business association for anyone. For both the Hofers and Lennox that tie has been fortunate and mutually advantageous. The Hofers have performed vital community service in addition to their roles with the newspaper. Their 50 years association with the paper has seen them make a contribution in hard times (the Thirties), in wartime and in more recent years when Lennox and other South Dakota communities have prospered in the exciting modern era.

Hofer's ties with the newspaper go back over 65 years to the time he learned the printing trade as a boy in Bridgewater. He has seen change in his own business and in the community he has served for 50 years.

We wish both Mr. and Mrs. Hofer well--and congratulate them on that half century in Lennox. We hope many friends will stop to see them today. Happily, their son Verlyn is the owner and publisher with his father of the Independent.

For many years the senior Mr. Hofer has been the messenger for the community. Today's a good time for the Lennox community to express appreciation to that messenger and for their fine weekly paper.³¹

The South Dakota Press Association presented Hofer the 50-Year Service Award on April 17, 1982. Hofer was recognized for his contributions to South Dakota journalism on October 25, 1986, when he was inducted into the South Dakota Newspaper Hall of Fame on the South Dakota State University campus.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The History of Lincoln County South Dakota (Freeman: Pine Hill Press, 1985), p. 441.
- 2 Lennox Thru 75 Years (Lennox: The Lennox Independent, 1954), p. 81.
- 3 Lennox Thru 75 Years, p. 81.
- 4 Interview with Vivian Renz, September 8, 1986.
- 5 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, pp. 8, 9.
- 6 Interview with Edward Hofer, March 14, 1986.
- 7 Interview with Edward Hofer, March 14, 1986.
- 8 Interview with Edward Hofer, March 14, 1986.
- 9 Interview with Edward Hofer, March 14, 1986.
- 10 The History of Lincoln County, p. 441.
- 11 Interview with Edward Hofer, March 14, 1986.
- 12 The History of Lincoln County, pp. 441, 633.
- 13 Interview with Edward Hofer, March 14, 1986.
- 14 Interview with Edward Hofer, March 14, 1986.
- 15 The Lennox Independent, April 11, 1929, p. 2.
- 16 The Lennox Independent, April 11, 1929, p. 2.
- 17 The Lennox Independent, February 20, 1930, p. 1.
- 18 The Lennox Independent, April 27, 1933, p. 4.
- 19 The Lennox Independent, April 9, 1953, p. 2.
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CHAPTER IV

THE LENNOX MUNICIPAL BAND

In Lennox, South Dakota, the names Edward Hofer and The Lennox Independent have been almost synonymous for many years. If people said they were going to see Hofer, they may have meant they had something for the newspaper. Generations of high school journalists knew Hofer as the local editor. High schoolers saw him at their activities and worked with him in publishing an award-winning departmental high school newspaper.

However, when it was learned Hofer's story was being written, it was not the local newspaper most Lennoxites first referred to when talking about Hofer. Hofer's relatives and others in the community quickly stated, "You can't write about Ed without mentioning the city band." Hofer became editor of the Lennox newspaper in 1928; by 1930 he was a member of the city band. In 1986, he no longer owned The Lennox Independent, but he was still active in the band.

The City, Band, Newspaper

As three cords twine together to make a braid, three organizations have woven together to form the Lennox community. In 1879, the town of Lennox was founded. Within a year, Peter Haas made the first attempt at founding a newspaper. The local band had its beginnings in a cornet band founded in 1883. One of the charter band members was Publisher Haas.

The city provided the band with some financial support. The band presented weekly outdoor concerts each summer and played for special events like Memorial Day services. The newspaper's contribution to the "braid" has been to report on the weekly band concerts and special events, to publish anniversary editions saluting the history of the band and to praise the band editorially. The newspaper has also been represented in the band. Following the example set by Haas, Editor Noahr and several members of the Hofer family have played in the band.

Band History

The Lennox Municipal Band grew out of a cornet band organized in May of 1883. Eight men of the community decided to purchase secondhand instruments and form the band. The charter members were F. H. Treat, W. B. Smith, P. F. Haas, G. Groeneveld, J. F. Ferguson, Thomas Sly, L. Butzer and A. A. Freseman.¹

The Lennox band made its first out-of-town appearance on Memorial Day, 1887. The band traveled to Centerville, a town 19 miles southwest of Lennox. The band had a new bandwagon large enough to carry 20 musicians and a driver. The band members also had uniforms for such appearances. The Independent described the uniforms in an historical piece published June 2, 1983.

Attired in colorful splendor, their uniforms included the large helmets, set off with large red feathers over the top, described as weighing 2-1/2 pounds. Additionally, a socket was attached to these and inserted with the heavy Bulls Eye kerosene lamp which increased the weight of the headgear still more.²

The Lennox band was recognized as the best in the southeast Dakota territory. For years it was known for its marching, countermarching and drill formations.³

The band began a tradition of playing for Lennox businesses on Thanksgiving Day in 1888. The custom continued for almost 50 years. The organization provided music at the first Lincoln County Old Settlers' Picnic on June 21, 1893. In 1907, the band serenaded visiting Minnesotans touring the Milwaukee Railroad towns. The golden anniversary of the band was celebrated June 28 and 29, 1933. The group played at the South Dakota State Fair grandstand in 1955 and 1956. It played for Lennox's 75th anniversary in 1954 and the band's own 75th anniversary in 1958. In 1963, a permanent bandshell was built in the city park. Besides playing concerts each summer, giving concerts in other towns and performing for numerous civic programs, the band also appeared at the Lennox 1976 United States bicentennial celebration, the 1979 city centennial and the band's own centennial in 1983.⁴

Pride of the Community

"The nicest thing a community can have is a city band."

That's Ed Hofer talking, and he should know. He's been a member of the Lennox Municipal Band for 51 years.

Hofer is 83, part owner of The Lennox Independent, and the man credited with promoting the construction of the new bandshell in 1963. He plays alto sax and says he started playing back about 1914, long before he moved to Lennox.

Hofer says he figures a band keeps a community alive: "If you have something the people like, they're interested in it and they want to help you."

--June 12, 1982, Argus Leader

For more than a century, Lennox has been home for a city band. Lennox's pride in having the band and the band members' pride in belonging has been put into words and printed and reprinted numerous times in The Lennox Independent. However, in 1986, Hofer claimed the band received less coverage in the newspaper than some other organizations. Hofer said that when it came to the band, he "tried to hold it down" on the amount of coverage and space it got in the newspaper.⁶

Even if the amount of space given to the band was held down, the newspaper under the editorship of Edward Hofer still carried numerous stories about the band and its history. One of the earliest comments by Hofer about the band appeared in an editorial printed June 5, 1930, following the town's Memorial Day observance.

There is, however, a permanent "something else" that enables Lennox to observe Memorial Day just a little better with less expense than most towns. That little "something" is our Band. Lennox differs from other towns as all towns and individuals differ but it excels mostly in its band. And what a band it has! An organization dating back some forty years, including in its membership several men of better than thirty years of continued service. This organization has stood on its own year in and year out, seldom missing its two rehearsals each week while other towns which have spent many times as much money for a band, have nothing. This has all been made possible because a few citizens had the sticktoittiveness to acquire a pretty fair understanding of music in their youth and possessing an unselfish disposition are willing to spend much of their time passing their acquired knowledge along to the younger generation. Lennox may outshine or be outshined by other towns in a small degree but it excels all other dollar for dollar in bands. People differ. Each can only be himself. So long as he remains himself and makes the best of God's gifts, all is well but the moment he forsakes he fails. So it is with towns. Canton, Sioux Falls or Chicago is not like Lennox, nor is Lennox like them. Lennox would not be

Lennox without a band. The two have associated together too long for healthy separation. The band is a party to the surprising trade-drawing power Lennox enjoys. The loss of this band may not mean a complete fall. It will, however, mean a tendency toward slipping backwards. In these times of give and take, with emphasis on the "take," it is much easier for a town situated as Lennox is, to slip than to go ahead. Backward is but a short road to oblivion. Our band is a much bigger party to the future welfare of Lennox than generally concede and Lennox cannot give it too much support morally or financially.

Some of the other earlier accounts were written for the 50th anniversary of the band in 1933 and republished by the Lennox newspaper for the 100th anniversary of the band in 1983. A former school teacher, Mrs. Mary Schriener Wiggin, recalled coming in from the Henry Buus farm south of Lennox where she was boarding to hear the band.

Well, we were in town at last and the band was practicing somewhere for very shortly here it came swinging gracefully down Main Street, a magnificent display of music makers with their bright new instruments glistening in the mellow glow of a setting sun. They stopped shortly, and formed a ring directly in front of our position.

The tall, imposing figure of the leader, whom I believe was a Mr. Treat (although we're not quite sure on this point!), towered gracefully in the center of the circle, and how they did play! Lennox was foremost in music in the old days, and for years the Lennox band was considered the best in the state, and this position we believe, it still holds for every son of Lennox and vicinity was born with a musical talent handed down for generations, we dare venture. After this first observation of the new band, we heard it frequently and always were we justly proud of it, and of that fact that we, too, were a part of the community sponsoring the band.

A former editor of The Lennox Independent and a former member of the band, Frank Noahr, was asked to record some of his memories concerning the band. Noahr's memories were first published in the

Independent commemorating the golden anniversary of the band and then again in 1983.

The Lennox Band, almost as old as the town itself, is and always has been the town's best advertising medium, outside of the local paper. It has for years maintained the reputation of being one of the best bands in the state of South Dakota and its services have lent pleasure to such functions as the Grain Palace at Plankinton, Old Settlers' picnic at Canton, Fourth of July celebrations at different towns tributary to Lennox, and pep and enthusiasm to many a political rally at Sioux Falls and other places. And the weekly street concerts at home were the delight of the home folks. For years it was the custom of the band to give a minstrel show or play in concert once or twice each winter, and such were always the events of the years. Lennox was always proud of her band and she had just reason to be, for where is there another similar organization that gave so much for so little? We can remember back in the early years when if there was a wedding, the boys would gather up their instruments and walk to the scene of the festivities to furnish the wedding music and play practically all night for nothing more than the treats. The organization was always self-sustaining, except in the past few years when a small municipal tax was levied for band support.

The June 22, 1933, issue of The Lennox Independent edited and published by Hofer contained several items recalling the early history of the band and memories associated with those 50 years of band history. One of the other writers submitting an article was Dr. Dan Quigley, a three-year band member and a member of a pioneering family in Lennox. He also commented that the band was considered the best in the state of South Dakota. Dr. Quigley remembered that the band had commitments from families and the community on the whole. "Since the Lennox band was organized in the early days, nearly every boy who has subsequently grown up in Lennox has put in his period of service in the band."¹⁰ Quigley recalled trips to other towns to provide music for

various celebrations. It was with pride he remembered the effect of the band's fancy uniforms. "This gold, blue and scarlet ensemble gave the band much prestige over the other bands and the boys who wore these uniforms aroused much jealousy in the hearts of the other young men wherever the band performed."¹¹

The fact the Lennox band was formed in 1883 and has provided concerts for the town yearly has been a point that the Lennox newspaper has always stressed and boasted about. On June 9, 1932, the Lennox newspaper responded editorially to a comment in The Centerville Journal that another community band was the oldest musical organization in South Dakota. The Journal carried the comment one week and the next week the Independent was ready to set the record straight.

The Centerville Journal of last week carried an interesting story of the Dalesburg community band with two fine pictures of the band, one as it appeared in 1887, the other showing the band as it appears today. The band was organized in a farming community, 15 miles north of Vermillion in 1887 and is claimed to be the oldest musical organization in South Dakota.

While the Independent wishes to give due credit to the Dalesburg band as one of the pioneer organizations of its kind in the state, the credit of being the oldest musical organization in South Dakota is claimed by the Lennox municipal band.

The Lennox band was organized in the month of May 1883. A detailed story of the local band written by A. A. Freseman of this city was published in the Independent on Feb. 12, 1931. Back in 1887 the Lennox band appeared at Centerville in a Memorial Day celebration there. The late A. B. Jacobs was a leader of the local band for nearly 36 years. This year marks the 49th anniversary of the Lennox band, the oldest musical organization in our state.¹²

The fact that the Lennox band was one of the first formed in the state was mentioned often in The Lennox Independent. On any mention of the band in the newspaper, the readers were often reminded

that the Lennox band was a pioneer in the state. When the band members presented band leader Henry Jacob a cornet in January of 1930, Hofer recorded the event in the newspaper and concluded with:

The Lennox band is not only one of the oldest in the state but also one of the best. Lennox and community is proud of their band and much credit is due its present leader as well as the older members in keeping this organization going all these years.¹³

In 1949 it was in a report of an annual meeting of the city band that its long history was again put before the Independent readers. "The local City Band, recognized as the oldest band in South Dakota in regard to years of continuous service, is formulating plans for a big membership drive during the current year."¹⁴ When the band officers were reelected in 1954, the Lennox newspaper again reminded the readers of the band's heritage.

The Lennox band, the oldest organization of its kind in the state from a point of continuous service, is now entering upon its 71st year, being organized in 1883. New members are sought constantly, and anyone interested in playing in the band is invited to attend the weekly rehearsals held every Thursday night.¹⁵

Each summer the Lennox Municipal Band has provided free concerts. Hofer printed reports of the concerts and concert programs in the newspaper. Even on these occasions the Lennox newspaper took column space to review the long tradition of the musical organization. In 1963, it was with the announcement of the first concert that readers were told how long the band has been playing.

Summer concerts by the Lennox Municipal Band are scheduled to begin next Tuesday evening, June 12. This will be the seventy-ninth consecutive concert season by the local band, it being the oldest organization of its kind in the state.¹⁶

At the conclusion of the 1959 summer concert season, The Lennox Independent reminded readers:

Lennox is one of the very few small towns in the state to have a city band, and the local organization is now in its 76th year of continuous service. Of significance is the fact that its oldest member (Sam Stubsten) recently passed his 81st milestone and in his over 50 years of active participation¹⁷ in the band has missed very few rehearsals or concerts.

The opening paragraph of the story reporting the final concert in the 1985 band concert season in Lennox stated: "The Lennox Municipal Band will present its final concert of the summer season tonight (Thursday). This will complete the band's 102nd year of continuous existence which dates back to 1883."¹⁸

The Lennox Independent, under Hofer's guidance, published words of praise of the Lennox Band. The community was encouraged to be proud of the band and to let the pride show. However, Hofer was not only proud of the city band from the perspective of being a Lennox resident; he also demonstrated and wrote about the pride of being a band member. In a booklet published by the Independent marking the band's diamond anniversary in 1958, his son Verlyn gave an insider's view of playing in the band.

An amateur musical group, such as the Lennox band, could well be called both a spectator and a player "sport." The player receives satisfaction and relaxation while helping to produce the music to which many enjoy listening. For this reason, the Lennox city band still occupies a place of importance in our community. Although Lennox can well be proud of their high school band, it should be kept in mind that the older organization provides this activity for citizens of all ages while serving the community.

The local band members do not imagine themselves to be professional musicians but welcome all persons of this area with any musical inclination to join their

ranks. Two things motivate the Lennox Municipal Band today, just as has been the case for 75 years--love of music and a desire to serve the community.

Those words were basically repeated again 25 years later when The Lennox Independent published a special edition of the newspaper honoring the city band's 100 years of existence. "As has been the case for a hundred years, the Lennox Municipal Band is always in search of members--those who have a love of music and desire to serve the community."²⁰

Thanksgiving

The Lennox Municipal Band Thanksgiving tradition was described in the band's Diamond Jubilee booklet as "unique among traditions of bands throughout our state and nation."²¹ That may have been an understatement when it came to the Thanksgiving concerts in Lennox. The tradition lasted until after World War II or for about 50 years. Shortly before his death in 1931, charter member A. A. Freseman wrote about how the Thanksgiving tradition began. The article was printed and reprinted by The Lennox Independent.

This annual serenade of the Lennox band brings back to my memory the inauguration and adoption of their annual expression of good cheer to all the businessmen of the city of Lennox. In 1888 we had a republican rally. Celebrating the election of president Harrison, the band was engaged to furnish music and, believe me, we could make the noise. This celebration was to be held the day after Thanksgiving but the band got out Thanksgiving Day in the afternoon to practice marching, countermarching and forming circles and perform other stunts which we decided to put on the next evening.

We were marching up and down Main Street forming a circle at the intersection of Main and Second Street. We played an old German tune. At the finish N. Smith,

the prominent merchant at that time, brought out a box of cigars which he distributed among the band boys. Adolph Engelkes was running a pool hall on the corner where Courey's store is now located. We were just going to put our instruments away when he came out and asked us to play one more selection. We were getting quite chilly, having been out most of the afternoon in the month of November. We told him it was too cold, but Mr. Engelkes invited us to come in the pool hall and, before starting to play, we warmed up our instruments and Mr. Engelkes fixed up some hot drinks. I don't remember what the label or perscription of this mixture called for, but it warmed us up. Of course, I know it was not intoxicating, because the constitutional laws did not permit to sell or give away any intoxicating beverage in Dakota Territory.

After we played a tune or two for Mr. Engelkes, we were ready to disband when some other businessman invited us to honor him with a selection. I think, but I am not certain, that his party was George Barclay. We responded to his request. After that we played at a few more business places and everybody gave us cigars, and a few of them donated a little cash. This was the beginning of the annual Thanksgiving serenade performed by the Lennox band for the past 55 years, without any interruption to my knowledge.

The tradition died out in the late 1940s, but it was a tradition which brings back memories--good and bad--for those who participated in the annual "early winter" event. Albert Reiner "Oppie" Stroman played with the Lennox band as early as 1914. When the city band prepared for its 100th anniversary, the Thanksgiving concerts came to Stroman's mind.

One of his fondest memories of the good old days of the band, says Oppie, was that of playing every Thanksgiving Day in front of each business establishment, the band being given a donation by the various businessmen at the time.

In 1983, the practice of marching up and down Main Street of Lennox on wintery, cold Thanksgiving Days was long since history, so maybe with the passing of time only the better memories of the

experience came to mind. However, in 1933 when the 50th anniversary of the band was being celebrated, the harsh reality of the cold weather was still being felt each Thanksgiving when the band played. Former Editor Frank Noahr recalled his memories of being a band member on Thanksgiving Day in Lennox.

And Thanksgiving Day. Concerts at every business place in town, taking all day. Instruments froze up and had to be thawed out in various ways. The boys were treated with everything from beer to wieners and sauerkraut, and a²⁴ sizeable donation was gathered for the band treasury.

One of the various ways the band members apparently thawed the instruments was to be invited to step into the different business establishments and warm the instruments and themselves. Four years after Hofer took over the Lennox newspaper, he carried a front page story telling about the tradition and the 1932 concert.

LENNOX BAND FOLLOWS OLD UNIQUE CUSTOM

In line with an old custom, the local band was out Thanksgiving day and serenaded every business place in the city. This custom was established over 50 years ago, and has since its early day inauguration been continued up to the present time.

There are years when getting out on a Thanksgiving day to play a band instrument is rather a great inconvenience. The day may be a cold one. We recall that such was the case a year ago. Nevertheless the band kept up their serenading up and down Main Street, until they had completed the tour. When they arrived in front of the Independent office they were invited inside. So the band crowded in, and there wasn't even hardly standing room. Henry Jacobs, the band master struck out for the first number, while Pauly hit the bass drum with a resounding whack and the music filled the Independent shop until the old press trembled on its base, and the linotype machine jingled in response to the rhythm of the music.

This year the day proved a more pleasant one for the boys²⁵ on their tour of the city's business section.

The band members appeared on Lennox's Main Street many cold November days throughout the almost 60 years the tradition was followed. But there was at least one exception and The Lennox Independent was quick to comment on the missing band. The newspaper carried an article December 5, 1939, on page one which spilled over to page eight about the serenade that wasn't.

THE BAND DIDN'T PLAY ON THANKSGIVING DAY

There is the chance of some local song writer or rhymers to compose something along that line based on a local occurrence. It was the absence of our band on Main Street Thanksgiving Day.

The caption at the head of this story may serve as a cue, or it is possible that the following lines may give further promptings.

The cold blast from the north was too much for comfort. On the other hand, perhaps it was the sweet aroma and thought of the Thanksgiving dinner which was awaiting to be served in a few hours. In the latter case the following lines may inspire some poetic mind.

The roasting duck
Or the steaming goose,
Tempted our band men's pluck
And failed to invoke the muse.

If perchance some local talent should succeed in producing something along the line suggest, it might be that some second person of musical inclination could succeed in setting the rhyming to music--and thus our band would have a selection of local origins.

Imagine the band marching down the street next Thanksgiving playing a selection of local origin.

Hurrah! Hurrah! Here goes the band
That wasn't on hand to play
On our last Thanksgiving Day.
Hurrah! Hurrah! The band's on hand.

It may be recorded in this connection that the Lennox band for the past 50 years has followed the custom of appearing on Main Street Thanksgiving Day and serenading each business place.

It is claimed by some of the oldest members of the organization that this custom originated with the local band and according to their best recollections it has been an unbroken practice down thru the years.

They tell us that a news story is occasioned by something that happened. Here is a news feature about something that didn't happen. For if the customary had

occurred there would have been no occasion for this story.

This is written to remind our readers that the Lennox band, this year, has completed 52 years of continuous service to this community. One of the oldest members has a record of nearly 45 years with the band. Others among the oldest members have a record of 40 years. This is along and distinguished service. It is to be hoped that the younger generation will join up and carry on in the traditional spirit of this pioneer band.

In this connection the Independent would suggest that this city together with its business and other civic groups, plan a testimonial dinner and banquet some time this coming year, as a token of honor to our local band and particularly the pioneer members. On such an occasion the younger musical talents in our community could furnish the musical entertainment.²⁶

Although the band did not appear for the 1935 Thanksgiving serenade, the tradition did continue on in Lennox for several more years. The November 17, 1949, Independent ran a front page notice that businesses in Lennox would be closed on Thanksgiving, a legal holiday. However, it was promised that the city band was planning to continue its tradition of serenading the local businesses Thanksgiving morning--weather permitting.²⁷

Special Editions

The Lennox Municipal Band was mentioned in The Lennox Independent on many occasions. If the band was performing in Lennox or in another community, Hofer reported it in the newspaper. If the band was having its annual business meeting and election of officers, it was in the newspaper. When the band was practicing, it was in the newspaper and new members were always being invited to attend the

rehearsals. However, Hofer insisted that the band received no more coverage than any other organization in Lennox.²⁸

The band received other recognition from the local newspaper and editor. Hofer published special editions of The Lennox Independent on anniversaries of the band. The city band was included in the 1939 60th anniversary of the city book published by the Lennox newspaper shop and in the two supplements to the book published in 1954 and 1979. A special 48-page booklet was published in 1958 commemorating the 75th anniversary of the band. The booklet included a history of the band, a list of the current band members, biographies of the five oldest band members and of the past and present band leaders, and information on the music program at Lennox High School.

The first special anniversary issue Hofer published appeared on June 22, 1933. The issue honored the 50th anniversary of the city band. The newspaper consisted of two sections, each eight pages in length. The first section was printed on a golden color paper and the second section on the standard white paper.

Hofer's style of recording history and showing the importance of the community and organization within the community was evident in the editorial published June 22, 1933.

The edition of the Independent is largely dedicated to the Lennox band, recalling persons, events and times inter-woven with fifty years of progress in Lennox and community.

It seems fitting that we do this. The Independent is the second local institution that can look back over an unbroken record of service going back over a span of fifty years.

It is fitting that our city has planned a celebration in honor of this anniversary event. It was in the infant years of this city that the Lennox band

came into existence. Its history is nearly co-existent with that of Lennox. The Independent is not going to record here any early history of the Lennox band. Others, and those better informed than we, have been more than willing to contribute interesting stories of earlier days. It is for us rather to record here the larger services that the Lennox band has contributed to this community.

It is a service that cannot be measured in material value alone but transcends material boundaries and enters the higher realms of human life and values. Lennox owes much of its civic progress to this pioneer organization. Hard work and much sacrifice has been expended by those who have carried on its work and services up through the past half century. May the coming golden anniversary event stand as a bright star and a happy occasion at the close of so many long years of memorable services. May the event remain a cherished memory in the ²⁹minds of all the present members of the Lennox band.

Bandshell

A final project which Mr. Hofer promoted for many years and finally saw it come to fruition in 1963, was the construction of a suitable bandshell in the Lennox park. Through his efforts, along with those of a few other interested persons, this facility became a reality and has served the band well the ³⁰past 20 years.
 --The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1983.

The existence of the Jacob Memorial Bandshell in the Lennox City Park has been credited to the work and persistence of Edward Hofer. For years he wanted a permanent bandshell and finally in 1963, after having blueprints drawn to meet the needs of the band, the facility was built.

Although the idea of a permanent bandshell in the park was probably not even thought of yet, in 1930 Hofer's paper ran a news story reporting the traffic problems on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in downtown Lennox while the band was playing concerts.

There appears to be those who make it a practice of driving up and down Main Street continually which annoys the players and those who enjoy the concerts. Last Thursday ropes were stretched so that traffic could not pass by the band stand from either direction. Since then some unfavorable comments have been heard, and it is doubted if roping off the streets the nights the stores are open will pan out so well.³¹

The newspaper suggested that the businessmen and band officials meet and attempt to work out some solution.

The band would move from various locations downtown and to the park before the permanent bandshell was built in 1963. A front page article in The Lennox Independent on June 24, 1943, reported that the Lennox Band would be playing its concerts in the city park that year. The article suggested that the shady lawns and trees would make for a restful hour during the band concerts.³²

The solution of having the band play in the city park lasted for a few years. However, the Diamond Jubilee booklet on the Lennox Municipal Band contained a paragraph indicating that things were not working out and that a permanent bandshell would be ideal.

The old octagon-shaped bandstand on wheels was dismantled in 1951 and rebuilt into a bandshell. This served as a place to play summer concerts for four years but was damaged by vandals to some extent and proved to be in a somewhat unsatisfactory location. For the past three years the band has played in different downtown locations but none of these have proven to be entirely satisfactory either. A modern bandshell in an ideal location remains a dream of all those in the community who see its possibilities. Not only could such a structure be used for band concerts, but for many other civic and school activities.³³

The Diamond Jubilee for the Lennox Municipal Band was in 1958. However, the dream of a bandshell was to remain just that--a dream--for five more years.

The band performed from portable facilities put in place for each concert. Concerts were given in the park, in a lot just north of the Independent office and in front of the theater, but nothing was quite right. In 1960, Hofer got the idea of a permanent bandshell in the unimproved section of the city park. From the idea stage to the bandshell dedication stage, the bandshell project took about three years.

Hofer talked to band members for ideas, advice and help, but no formal committee was formed. Hofer was the committee behind the promotion of the bandshell. He talked with a Lennox lumberyard/construction company and had an architect draw blueprints to match Hofer's ideas for the facility. However, Hofer said he had the blueprints changed so that the shell would be enlarged. The shell was built out one rafter larger than the original plans. He had this change made for two reasons: weather protection and better acoustics. The SAC military band from Omaha, Nebraska, has performed in the bandshell various times. Hofer said Lt. Col. Loren Johnson, who is in charge of the SAC band, told Hofer the bandshell was one of the best when it comes to acoustics.³⁴

In May of 1963 the Lennox City Council approved the plans for construction of a bandshell in the city park. Work was started immediately on the bandshell and was under way by the time the Independent reported that the council had given its approval.³⁵

The bandshell was put on a little hill in the southwest corner of the city park. At the time of the bandshell's construction, most of the town of Lennox was situated north and east of the bandshell. So

the bandshell was built on an angle facing the northeast so that Lennox residents could hear the band's music throughout the city. It was Hofer's decision just where the bandshell should be located. In 1986, he affirmed that he chose the bandshell location. "I decided on the spot. You bet I did."³⁶

Construction on the bandshell went on for much of the summer band concert season. Volunteers would haul in rock, gravel and dirt when they found time to help with the project. Hofer was at the bandshell site often to supervise the work being done. However, the drainage of the platform wasn't completed according to his specifications and later he had to make some improvements to get water to drain properly.³⁷

By the middle of August, work was completed and preparations were being made for the dedication program on August 30. The completed bandshell cost approximately \$3,500. The bandshell measured 32 feet by 40 feet with the stage area being 40 feet wide and 26 feet at the deepest point. The facility included a storage area at the rear of the shell for storing chairs, instruments and other equipment and supplies. The bandshell was equipped with a lighting system and a public address system.³⁸

The bandshell was dedicated on August 30, 1963. The Sioux Falls Municipal Band provided the program for the evening. One of the speakers at the ceremony was Mayor Fred Courey.

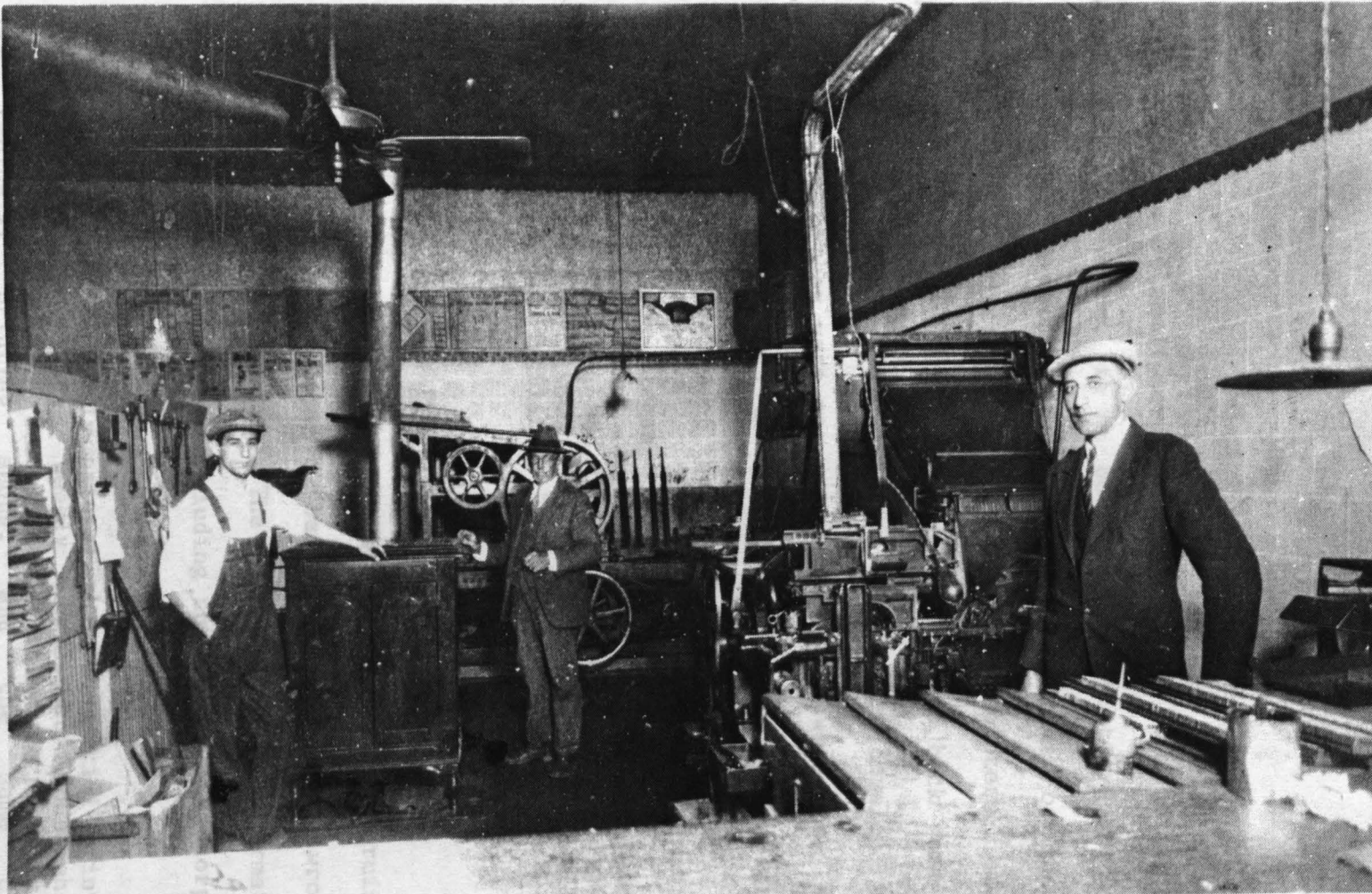
The speaker also reminded the audience that the dedication of the bandshell marked the climax of a long desire to get such a facility for the Lennox community and that as early as 1954 those instrumental in securing the bandshell were making plans for it.³⁹

The bandshell was named the Jacob Memorial Bandshell in honor of the Jacob brothers. The Jacobs, Lennox bankers and members of a pioneer family in Lennox, played a prominent part in making a city band a permanent part of Lennox. The brothers were members and leaders of the city band.⁴⁰

ENDNOTES

- 1 The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1983, p. 1.
- 2 The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1983, p. 1.
- 3 The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1983, p. 1.
- 4 The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1983, p. 2.
- 5 Ann Grauvogl, "Lennox Notes Band's 100th Birthday," Argus Leader, June 12, 1983, p. C1.
- 6 Interview with Edward Hofer, September 26, 1986.
- 7 The Lennox Independent, June 5, 1930, p. 2.
- 8 The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1983, p. 4.
- 9 The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1983, p. 3.
- 10 The Lennox Independent, June 22, 1933, p. 2, section 2.
- 11 The Lennox Independent, June 22, 1933, p. 2, section 2.
- 12 The Lennox Independent, June 9, 1932, p. 2.
- 13 The Lennox Independent, January 9, 1930, p. 1.
- 14 The Lennox Independent, January 6, 1949, p. 1.
- 15 The Lennox Independent, January 21, 1954, p. 1.
- 16 The Lennox Independent, June 7, 1962, p. 1.
- 17 The Lennox Independent, August 27, 1959, p. 1.
- 18 The Lennox Independent, August 22, 1985, p. 1.
- 19 Lennox Municipal Band Diamond Jubilee (Lennox: The Lennox Independent, 1958), p. 23.
- 20 The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1983, p. 2.
- 21 Lennox Municipal Band Diamond Jubilee, p. 11.
- 22 The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1983, p. 4.
- 23 The Lennox Independent, May 19, 1983, p. 1.
- 24 The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1983, p. 3.

- 25 The Lennox Independent, December 1, 1932, p. 1.
- 26 The Lennox Independent, December 5, 1935, pp. 1, 8.
- 27 The Lennox Independent, November 17, 1949, p. 1.
- 28 Interview with Edward Hofer, September 26, 1986.
- 29 The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1933, p. 2.
- 30 The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1983, p. 6.
- 31 The Lennox Independent, June 26, 1930, p. 2.
- 32 The Lennox Independent, June 24, 1943, p. 1.
- 33 Diamond Jubilee, p. 18.
- 34 Interview with Edward Hofer, September 26, 1986.
- 35 The Lennox Independent, May 9, 1963, p. 1.
- 36 Interview with Edward Hofer, September 26, 1986.
- 37 Interview with Edward Hofer, September 26, 1986.
- 38 The Lennox Independent, August 22, 1963, p. 1.
- 39 The Lennox Independent, September 5, 1963, p. 1.
- 40 The Lennox Independent, June 2, 1983, p. 2.



Picture 3 - **Edward Hofer and his 1929 Shop**

Edward Hofer owned The Lennox Independent shop on North Main, Lennox, South Dakota. Hofer (right) took a few minutes to pose for a picture in 1929. His brother, Ottwin Hofer (left), and H. B. Day, Northern States Power representative, joined Hofer in the back shop for the picture. Behind Day was the Potter single revolution, flatbed, cylinder press. Edward stood in front of his Model 8 Linotype.

CHAPTER V

JOB PRINTING

Editors of small-town newspapers often wore more than one hat. Robert F. Karolevitz, in a book on the history of South Dakota journalism, wrote about editors who also had other occupations. Some were lawyers, politicians, real estate promoters, ministers or postmasters.¹ Other editors looked to their own back yard or shop for additional revenue. These editors decided to develop job printing businesses when they were not printing their newspapers. Edward Hofer was in the second group of editors; the group specializing in job printing in between issues of the newspaper.

Using the slogan "Job Printing A Specialty," Mr. Hofer combined the operation of the newspaper plant with job printing and together with his son, steadily increased the capabilities of the back shop, as well as the newspaper facilities.²

Printing and the Shop

The association of a newspaper and a commercial printing business was noted by Thomas F. Barnhart in a book he wrote in 1936, Weekly Newspaper Management. The book contained information on all phases of weekly journalism, including the wisdom of incorporating job printing into the business.

It is perfectly natural that commercial printing is linked with weekly newspaper publishing. Historically, our early newspapers were products of colonial printing shops, and the same close relationship exists today because the factors of

production are essentially the same. From the business viewpoint, commercial printing is the companion business of the newspaper because it takes up the slack in the working time of printers and machines and because it₃ supplies a necessary business service to the community.

Hofer was familiar with both businesses. He owned and operated both businesses in Davis and Lennox. Hofer, like many of his contemporaries, learned the art of newspapering and journalism through the back shop. He started out as a printer's devil, typesetter and printer before he owned his own plant and started writing in Davis. "Many of the pioneer newsmen were relatively young, having been printing apprentices or 'devils' in their early 'teens."⁴

Combining tasks of publishing a newspaper and conducting a commercial printing business demanded long hours to get everything done. Hofer had to carefully divide his time during the week to get everything published and printed. He said that on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, there "was absolutely no job work."⁵

The newspaper would be printed Wednesday night. If Hofer was lucky the paper would be off the press by midnight. Thursday morning the newspaper would be mailed and then the office had to be cleaned. That left Friday and Saturday for job work. Hofer said he worked Saturdays to get the job work in. In fact, he is still in the habit of working on Saturdays. However, putting in six days a week did not make it an eight to five job, he recalled. His days at the office started at 7 or 7:30 a.m. and many nights continued to midnight. "I know I put in at least 10 hours a day and sometimes 14 hours," Hofer said.⁶

Although newspaper publishing work took most of the week, Hofer said job work kept the business going. If the presses were running more often, more money was coming in. However, job work income was skimpy at times. Hofer said he could not count on a fixed amount of money coming in from job printing. In the early 1930s when times were rough, Hofer said \$100 of job work in a month was good. Overall, Hofer said approximately 20 to 25 percent of his income came from the commercial printing part of the business and the remaining 75 or 80 percent came from the newspaper part of the business.⁷

Hofer's estimates of the revenue percentage breakdown are very similar to figures published by Barnhart in a 1936 book for newspaper managers.

The volume of commercial printing done by weekly plants varies so greatly, because of such factors as emphasis by the owner, location of plant, competition, equipment, and personnel, that it is difficult to isolate a typical plant. Yet one may ascertain from the Moore-Roe survey that in towns in the 1,000 to 2,000 population groups, the commercial printing constitutes an average income of \$3,904.97 or 28.9 percent of the total annual business.⁸

Printing Equipment

Hofer started his career in the back shop of a newspaper plant and he brought that experience to his own newspaper plants in Davis and Lennox. Hofer's career of nearly 75 years has spanned from hand-setting type to modern computers. Hofer, however, said he did not know much about offset nor had he much to do with the computer system.⁹

With a Shirt Tail Full of Type, a history of South Dakota newspapers by Karolevitz, contains a description of the equipment Hofer

would have encountered at his first job as a printer's devil in Bridgewater.

In Mainz, Germany, Johann Gutenberg (1399-1468) revolutionized written communication when he perfected moveable metal type in the middle of the fifteenth century. More than four hundred years later, in territorial Dakota, the basic printing process had not changed much. Type was still being set one letter at a time, with forms hand-inked and each impression made by human muscle-power.¹⁰

Hofer started at 14 years of age learning how to set type by hand in Bridgewater. He would stand by the cases for eight hours putting letter by letter into the stick to form a column or columns of print. Hofer said a stick of type was actually one column wide and two inches deep. He said a good typesetter could set one stick in 15 minutes, but could not set more than a column in three hours. Approximately two columns or a little better could be set in a day of working.¹¹ Hofer would hold the stick in his left hand, using his thumb to hold the letters in place. The letters were picked up from type cases by the right hand. Each line of type had to be tightened and spaced correctly.¹²

Being able to spell correctly was a necessity for doing a good job hand-setting type. Hofer said he had a particularly hard time with one word while he was at Bridgewater. After Hofer misspelled the word Presbyterian one time too many, his boss sent Hofer back to the type cases with the order to fill one stick--the whole stick--with the word Presbyterian. "That is where I learned how to spell the word Presbyterian," Hofer said. "Believe me, after I got done I knew how to spell Presbyterian."¹³

The work was only partially done after the columns of the page were filled. When the printing was finished, the type had to be cleaned with lye water and a stiff brush. Hofer said the type would be scrubbed and then a few cups of clean water would be used to rinse the type while it was still in the form.¹⁴

The next step would be putting the individual letters back into the proper cases. Hofer said he could throw back about 10 letters at a time by keeping in mind what the words were and respelling them to toss the letters into the cases. This process was faster than setting type.¹⁵

Karolevitz wrote about the step of returning letters to the cases in his book on community newspapers in America, From Quill to Computer.

What the historians and story-tellers usually overlook in the process was the "undoing" of every edition. Few newspapers had enough type to permit the luxury of standing pages (unless they were ready-print castings). After the press run was completed, the long columns of brevier or long primer had to be distributed back into the cases. It was a non-productive drudgery which took almost as much time as the original setting. It had to be done with the same meticulousness, too, or the next edition would be full of errors or require many corrections in each stickful of type. Minding the look-alike p's and q's was a time-honored caution to devils and apprentices learning the case. The b's and d's could be mixed up as easily.¹⁶

The first typesetting machine Hofer saw was a circular one approximately 12 inches high. He said it could not go very fast, but it was faster than by hand. The machine required two people to operate it. One person would set the type and the other person would have to space the line by hand. Hofer never worked on this type of machine.¹⁷

It was not until 1921 in Canton that Hofer saw a Linotype for the first time. He had started working in Canton that year. He set type by hand and helped with the printing. However, it was the Model 14 Linotype that caught Hofer's eye and many of his evening hours. He spent his evenings in the newspaper office learning to use the Linotype. He taught himself how to use the keyboard and to deal with the gasoline that kept the metal pot hot to make the slugs. He said sometimes the pots would plug up or the fire would go out. Hofer kept firing up the pots and finding more copy to practice setting. He worked up speed over several months and in a year taught himself how to be a Linotype operator.¹⁸

Hofer learned more about Linotypes, especially when he started owning the machines himself. He bought a Model 1 Linotype for his plant in Davis and had Linotypes in his Lennox shop. The Lennox Independent plant currently has a Model 32 Linotype in the backshop. It is rarely used.

Hofer learned how to repair Linotypes. "You had to do everything you could--it cost too much to get a man out [to do repairs]."¹⁹ Hofer would call a friend in Sioux Falls for ideas and help in repairing the Linotypes. Between talking to the friend on the telephone and using his "little black book," he was sometimes able to figure out the problem. The "little black book" was printed in 1922 and written by John S. Thompson, The Mechanism of the Linotype.²⁰ The book with ink-smudged fingerprints was kept in a top drawer of a cabinet near the Model 32 Linotype in Lennox. Even in 1986, nearly

everyone in the plant knew where to find the book on caring for and repairing a Linotype.

Not only have the methods for setting type changed during Hofer's career, presses have changed. When Hofer started in the business, all of the presses in his area were hand fed. He did not know of any automatic ones being used in small southeastern South Dakota shops at that time.²¹

Hofer saw a Washington Hand Press and a Cotrell press in Bridgewater. After watching a slender man run the hand press, Hofer decided to try it one day. He discovered that running the hand press was not that easy; he couldn't get it to budge.²²

The other press in the Bridgewater plant was the one that captured Hofer's attention and sparked his interest in the printing business. As a school child, Hofer would make sure his path home from school included a stop in front of the printing shop window. Hofer would watch the four-page, hand fed, Cotrell press as it threw off newspapers.²³

Besides working on the Linotype in Canton, Hofer would help out by feeding the four-page Campbell press in the plant.²⁴

Hofer had a couple of presses in his plant in Davis. He had a two-page Von Acme press. It was a flatbed cylinder press which had to be hand fed. Hofer said he would be lucky to get 250 copies of a four-page newspaper off the press in an hour. The other press at Davis was a 13-inch by 19-inch platen press for jobs. Hofer said that press was considered a big press because the standard size was 12 inches by 18 inches.²⁵

The first step toward automation in presses at The Lennox Independent was a 12-inch by 18-inch Chandler and Price platen press with a Kluge feeder purchased in 1931. This was a time when few such automatic presses were found in weekly newspaper shops, according to Verlyn Hofer. A No. 2 Miehle flatbed, four-page newspaper press was added in 1939 and in 1948 a Miehle horizontal automatically fed commercial printing press was purchased. The bulk of commercial printing produced at the Independent today is printed on two offset presses: an 11-inch by 17-inch Chief 17 and a 17-1/2-inch by 22-1/2-inch Harris LTV. "Both have been in use for many years, but they continue to do quality work," according to Verlyn Hofer.²⁶

An article published in the October 11, 1984, issue of The Lennox Independent explained some of the changes in the back shop of the Lennox plant. The article was published in the 100th anniversary newspaper of The Lennox Independent.

Mechanical improvements in the production of small newspapers, including the Independent, were rather gradual for the most part, but there were some periods when changes were revolutionary rather than evolutionary.

For the Independent, the first such change came in their early 1920s when the newspaper acquired a successful typesetting machine--a Model 8 Linotype. Records show that a rather primitive typesetting machine was tried a number of years earlier, but it never did get into a satisfactory operation and the staff continued to set type by hand until the Linotype was purchased. This machine continued in use at the Independent for about 50 years and then was sold to another newspaper when replaced by another Linotype.

The first step automating and printing process at the Independent came in 1931 when a platen press with an automatic feeder was purchased. This really didn't affect the newspaper part of the business for this was used strictly for commercial printing. However, it

freed the printer from the monotonous task of feeding paper into the press so he could do other work.

The period directly after World War II saw many mechanical advances and improvements in the newspaper and printing business. The Independent added new presses and a book folder for commercial printing but continued to use the old sheet-fed, flat-bed cylinder press on which to print the newspaper. This required many hours of arduous work each week. Type was still set on the Linotype and page forms made up for the printing process.

By the 1960s some weekly newspaper were converting to the "offset" process for printing their publications. Ironically, smaller weeklies were way ahead of large dailies, in general, in adopting this new process. Although the Independent had purchased offset equipment for commercial printing, the change was not made for printing the newspaper until 1975.²⁷

Hofer said printing the newspaper in the Lennox shop used to take two hours for every four pages or six hours to print a 12-page newspaper. When the newspaper went offset, the newspaper had to be printed in another plant. Even with the newspaper currently being printed in Vermillion, the travel time to Vermillion and back and the printing time is much less than just the printing time used to be, according to Hofer.²⁸

Types of Jobs

Commercial printing or job work covers a large range of printing. Hofer would find it difficult to give a comprehensive list of things he has printed throughout the years. He did say that every week and every year there was something different. "You would see a job you didn't see before."²⁹

Barnhart made an attempt at listing some of the things a printing plant would turn out. The list was recorded in Barnhart's

1936 book, Weekly Newspaper Management.

The average small-town printing plant is equipped to turn out creditable commercial work ranging from a simple visiting card to a high school annual. Between these two extremes are included such commonly known jobs as social and business announcements, ballots, berry tickets, bill heads, blotters, booklets, business forms, butter wrappers, brochures, candidates' cards, circulars, circular letters, constitutions and by-laws, counter checks, deposit slips, dodgers, directories, envelopes, folders, handbills, invitations, labels, laundry lists, letterheads, license blanks, meal tickets, menus, pamphlets, placards, posters, prescription blanks, premium lists, proceedings, programs, ribbon badges, sales bills, store sales bills, theater programs, warrants and window cards. Orders for these make up the bulk of the business.

Moreover, the average weekly plant is also equipped to do a number of related printing and bindery operations. These include imprinting, numbering, perforating, scoring, padding, stapling, bronzing, punching, and folding, three or four of which may be necessary to the production of a single order.³⁰

Many of these types of jobs were done by Hofer and his shop through the years. Old posters line a back corner of the Lennox print shop. Other samples of printing hang on the walls and sit on shelves throughout the Lennox office.

Hofer said there were always new and different things to be printed. However, he only listed a couple of printing needs no longer being requested. He printed several sales bills for stores in the 1930s. He said competition was high between businesses. About every month or six weeks the stores would have him print sales bills for boxholders. He said the last ones he printed were in about 1935.³¹

In the 1920s, the demand for farm sale handbills was high. Hofer said for some farm sales he would print up to 1,000 handbills. Other sales might only require a couple of hundred. The handbills

would be printed on various colors of lightweight poster paper. Hofer said the farm sale handbills were used by only a few people in the 1960s and are not used today. The only exception might be a specialty sale at a store, he said. The store owners may have handbills printed and sent to the few interested buyers instead of purchasing an advertisement.³²

Hofer undertook a few projects in the print shop that took a great deal of time and effort. One of the projects was in 1939 when he and the people in his shop wrote, printed and published the Lennox 60th Anniversary book. The book was 192 pages long and contained many pictures of Lennox individuals, organizations and buildings. The Lennox print shop also published supplements to the book in 1954 and 1979.³³

Hofer said the most complicated project the shop took on may have been a more recent printing job. When the city of Beresford celebrated its centennial, a 500-page history book was printed. The book was set, printed and folded in Lennox. The pages were assembled and bound in Freeman. Hofer said there were 2,000 copies of the book printed in the Lennox shop.³⁴

The job work orders pretty much just came to him. Hofer said he never did much soliciting for job work because he had friends and connections who provided the job work through the years. He did bid for state printing three times and did go after a major printing job with Rich Brothers Fireworks. Hofer started with Rich Brothers Fireworks in 1946. The work with Rich Brothers slowed up for a while, but the shop is again doing considerable printing for the fireworks

company. The printing includes circulars listing the fireworks for sale and four-color posters.³⁵

Carnival Printing

Sometimes the connections for getting job work is the newspaper. Often times advertisers in the newspaper also had various printing needs for their businesses or offices. In the fall of 1928 after Hofer purchased the Lennox newspaper, he was in the right place and was a friend with the right person. Hofer started a printing specialty and association which the Lennox printing plant still holds today. Hofer entered the field of printing for carnivals and shows.

Art B. Thomas of Lennox had one ride in 1928 and had that ride traveled with another carnival. Thomas also had the Lennox theater. Thomas came to the newspaper to talk with Hofer about advertising for the theater in the fall of 1928. After talking a while, Thomas also asked about the possibility of the Lennox printing shop doing printing if he started his own carnival. Thomas decided to go ahead with the carnival idea. Hofer was in the carnival and show printing business by that winter and early spring.³⁶

Hofer said he had no second thoughts about taking on the carnival printing business, even though it meant long hours to get the work done.³⁷ The work was generally seasonal. It would start about in April and go through August with the "tail end" stuff being done for September and October shows.³⁸

The Lennox shop printed office supplies, envelopes, forms, letterheads, route cards, signs for stands and concessions and whatever

else the carnival needed. The whatever else category included the window cards each town displayed telling residents about the coming carnival and show. The posters were run through the Harris LTV offset press for each color used in the design. The individual town names and date of the show would be spotted on the cards later by the letterpress process using the old Miehle horizontal press. After the town name and show dates were printed on the cards, the cards were mailed by the Independent staff to each town.³⁹

The Lennox plant is still printing window cards for the Thomas Shows. However, the number going off the press are fewer than before. Hofer said in past years the shop might print up to 500 cards for one town. Now it is generally between 25 to 150 cards per town. Hofer said the increasing cost of shipping and postage forced the cutback. Dale Johnson, a former Lennox businessman, also credited the decrease of cards to a change in advertising techniques. Johnson said television and radio are used more for advertising with less advertising of the shows being done in newspaper and with cards.⁴⁰

The window cards used by Thomas Shows are still printed primarily by the Lennox shop. Hofer said the only cards not printed in Lennox are the ones used in Canada. "We don't print anything for Canada. The duties and postage are too high."⁴¹

During the 1930s, the Thomas Shows used a couple of advertising and promoting tools which are no longer being used today. One tool was a four-page edition of THE SHOW NEWS which was printed on newspaper-size paper. Hofer printed advertisements and news about the carnival on pages one and four. The inside pages, pages two and three, were

left blank for the towns where the Thomas Shows visited to fill with their own local announcements and advertising related to the show's visit.⁴³ An example of THE SHOW NEWS is bound with the September 29, 1938, issue of The Lennox Independent.⁴³

The Art B. Thomas Bombshell Shows had Hofer and the Lennox printing shop publish yearbooks for the show's employees and for use as promotional tools. The yearbooks were first published in 1935. The tradition continued until at least 1939. The books contained information about the show, letters from people who saw it, pictures of the various acts and stories about the owner and employees. The books were 36 pages in length, 40 pages with the cover.

Hofer said the book had to be reset each year. The yearbook would be worked on a little at a time and the information would not come in all at one time. When four pages would be ready to be printed, those pages would be sent to the press. Some part of the yearbooks might be printed a month before other parts.⁴⁴

The yearbooks had a circulation of 5,000, but Hofer said, in 1986, they probably only printed 1,000 copies a year.⁴⁵ All of the printing was done in the Lennox shop, including the cover. Since the book was printed on enamel stock paper, the ink had to be watched to keep it from offsetting and Hofer said the shop had a flame to help dry the papers where they came off the press.⁴⁶

Charles Bechtold of the South Dakota State University Printing Laboratory said any print shop in South Dakota had the equipment to print a yearbook like Hofer did for the Thomas Shows, but that the

finished product was real good for a shop that size and demonstrated the efforts of painstaking work.⁴⁷

The only step of producing the yearbooks not done in the Lennox shop was that of engraving the plates for the pictures. Hofer hired South Dakota Engravers in Sioux Falls to do all of his engraving and art work.⁴⁸

The back cover of the yearbooks contained this message or advertisement from the Independent Print Shop.

We do first class printing and can save you money on your printing needs.

We execute the finest workmanship in the production of Letterheads, Billheads, Envelopes, Statements, Price Lists, Sale Bills, Circulars, Booklets, Pamphlets, Show Bills, Etc.

Our small overhead, together with a well equipped plant, makes our cost low. We execute all kinds of printing on short notice. Send us your order for lowest estimates on your printing requirements.

All printing and advertising material⁴⁹ for the Art B. Thomas Shows is produced by this office.

John Hanschen, business manager of the Thomas Carnival in 1986, carried two of the yearbooks in his mobile office while on the road.

The Thomas Shows is now based in Austin, Texas, not Lennox. Bernard Thomas purchased the carnival from his uncle Art B. Thomas in 1951. Bernard Thomas has continued working with The Lennox Independent for printing supplies. Thomas said The Lennox Independent was the only shop he knew that combined a weekly newspaper with a printing business and at the same time handled carnival/show printing. Thomas spoke very highly of Edward Hofer. Thomas said he continued working with Hofer because he respected Hofer and Hofer was dependable and very gentlemanly.⁵⁰

Hofer's comment about friends and connections bringing him most of his job work definitely applies to carnival printing. Hofer first started in the specialized field when he worked with Art B. Thomas. Hofer and the print shop have since printed supplies for numerous carnivals and shows.

Art B. Thomas would recommend the Hofer shop to people starting carnivals and would recommend the people to Hofer. Hofer said Thomas stood behind the people he recommended and told Hofer if any of them failed to pay their bills, Thomas would settle the bill.⁵¹

The Lennox print shop currently prints for the following shows: Thomas Carnival, Schoeppner Shows, Schnetter Amusements, Serie Fun Shows (both units), Minn-No-So-Dak Shows, Blue's Amusements, D. C. Lynch Shows, Klein Amusements, Merriam Amusements and Action Thrill Shows. The shop has also printed for: Royal United Shows, Wm. Collins Shows, Murphy Brothers Shows, Rich's Amusements, American Eagle Shows, Dobson Shows, Steelman Rides, A & B Amusements, Kettleborough Amusements, Strong's Amusements, Baumann Shows, Ray Cammack Shows, Schmidt's Shows, R & L Shows, T. A.G. Amusements and Sioux Valley Shows.⁵²

ENDNOTES

¹ Robert F. Karolevitz, With a Shirt Tail Full of Type (South Dakota Press Association, 1982), p. 33.

² The History of Lincoln County South Dakota (Freeman: Pine Hill Press, 1985), p. 441.

³ Thomas F. Barnhart, Weekly Newspaper Management (New York: Appleton-Century, Inc., 1936), p. 357.

⁴ Karolevitz, p. 34.

⁵ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

⁶ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

⁷ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

⁸ Barnhart, p. 357.

⁹ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

¹⁰ Karolevitz, p. 63.

¹¹ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

¹² Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

¹³ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

¹⁴ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

¹⁵ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

¹⁶ Robert F. Karolevitz, From Quill to Computer (National Newspaper Foundation, 1985), p. 97.

¹⁷ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

¹⁸ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

¹⁹ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

²⁰ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

²¹ Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

²² Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

- 23 Interview with Edward Hofer, March 14, 1986.
- 24 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 25 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 26 Interview with Verlyn Hofer, November 3, 1986.
- 27 The Lennox Independent, October 11, 1984, p. 11.
- 28 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 29 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 30 Barnhart, pp. 357-358.
- 31 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 32 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 33 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 34 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 35 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 36 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 37 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 38 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 39 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 40 Interview with Dale Johnson, September 26, 1986.
- 41 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 42 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 43 The Lennox Independent, September 29, 1938.
- 44 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 45 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 46 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.
- 47 Interview with Charles Bechtold, October 15, 1986.
- 48 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

49 Art B. Thomas Bombshell Shows, 1938 Yearbook (Lennox: The Lennox Independent, 1938), back cover.

50 Interview with Bernard Thomas, September 26, 1986.

51 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

52 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

Edward Hofer's long career in South Dakota journalism was recognized, honored and celebrated by his colleagues in the South Dakota Press Association during the fall of 1986. Hofer was inducted into the South Dakota Newspaper Hall of Fame on Newspaper Day, October 25, 1986. The Newspaper Day brochure summarized Hofer's journalism career.

Edward Hofer, 87, long-time editor and publisher of The Lennox Independent, began his newspaper career sticking type and pulling pages on a Washington handpress at The Bridgewater Tribune. He was 14 years old. He attended Mankato Business College from 1917 to 1919 and then was a printer at the Independent and at The Sioux Valley News in Canton before purchasing The Davis Eagle in 1924.

The tornado of 1928 obliterated Davis, the Eagle and the Hofer's home. They moved to nearby Lennox and Hofer purchased the Independent. Mr. Hofer was instrumental in preserving community history. He developed a specialization in printing for carnivals. And he served as promoter and saxophonist for the Lennox Municipal Band.

Nine members of Hofer's family were with him when he was honored at the Hall of Fame luncheon. At the luncheon, slides of his life and work were shown and he was given a newsman sculpture holding miniature centennial issues of The Lennox Independent. The newsman sculpture has now taken up residency on a filing cabinet next to the customer counter in the Lennox newspaper front office. It is appropriate for the newsman to join the other memorabilia of Hofer's career on display and in use in the Lennox shop.

In the corner behind the counter is a manual typewriter on a wooden desk. The desk is covered with papers, news releases and miscellaneous materials including the Lennox anniversary books and a dictionary. From beside the desk, the 87-year-old Hofer looks up through his thick-lensed glasses to see who has come into the shop. It is now by choice and habit, not necessity, that Hofer is in the newspaper office six days a week. Although Hofer's son has had sole ownership of the newspaper since 1983, the elder Hofer still has a personal commitment to the everyday functions and operations of the newspaper shop.

Sometimes Hofer takes news items at the customer counter. Other times he may answer queries or deliver some completed job work projects from the back shop. On the way to the back shop, Hofer has to pass certificates for journalism achievement, two offices where others write copy for the newspaper, and pictures of the newspaper plant, family members and friends.

In the large backshop room is a combination of the past with the modern. On the left side of the aisle is the new copying machine and the computer system. The large, black Model 32 Linotype sets across the aisle. Behind the paste-up table and typesetting equipment are the presses used for job work--commercial printing. One cabinet in the middle of the room contains the larger wooden type used on the show window cards. The back left corner of the shop is lined with samples of carnival window cards printed through the years.

Bound file copies of the newspaper and Lennox Municipal Band memorabilia Hofer has collected are stored in rooms above the offices and printing plant.

Hofer's life and career story have some similarities to other South Dakota pioneer editors and publishers of the early to mid-1900s. As Robert F. Karolevitz has noted, many of the South Dakota pioneer newsmen started out as printing apprentices or devils as young teenagers.² Hofer's career in journalism had similar beginnings as a young boy in the back shop of the Bridgewater newspaper. He first learned the skills of setting type and printing. Hofer's school room for journalism was the newspaper shop and his teacher was the publisher or himself. Hofer taught himself how to use the Linotype. Hofer added writing to his skills when he purchased the Davis newspaper and was the newspaper's editor and publisher.

Hofer, like other publishers, used his newspaper equipment to develop a profitable commercial printing business. Thomas Barnhart wrote that combining the weekly newspaper business and a job work business was logical because both businesses made use of similar skills and equipment. Also, the job work business would keep employees and machines busy each week after the newspaper was published.³ But, unlike his peers in publishing, Hofer developed his own specialized field of printing--carnival printing. Carnival owner Bernard Thomas said this specialization has set Hofer apart from other publishers and printers. Hofer, to Thomas' knowledge, was the only person who printed supplies for carnivals and at the same time published a weekly newspaper.⁴ The Lennox newspaper plant, under the ownership of Verlyn

Hofer, has continued printing for several carnivals and shows. The Lennox Independent in the past year has carried house advertisements boasting of the tradition the plant has in the specialization of carnival printing.

While many publishers did start out as young people in the back shop of someone else's newspaper, their achievements, areas of specializations and interests were as different and individual as the publishers were. Most of the publishers used their newspapers to promote their interests and to stress what they thought was important to the community. Aubrey Sherwood, former editor of The DeSmet News, used his newspaper to promote Harvey Dunn's paintings and Laura Ingalls Wilder's writings, according to Dale Blegen.⁵

One of Hofer's main interests outside of the newspaper was the Lennox Municipal Band. He believed the band was important to the community both economically and socially. Hofer used his newspaper to boast about and to boost the Lennox Municipal Band. Hofer kept the community informed on the band's rehearsals, trips, concerts and meetings. He also used every opportunity possible in the newspaper to remind the community about the uniqueness of having a city band and of having the oldest band in the state. Hofer went beyond the newspaper when it came to the band. He gave many hours of his own time to the band. Hofer has been an active band member for 56 years. He has been responsible for contacting potential band members in order to keep the band alive and performing in Lennox. Hofer is recognized as the individual responsible for the permanent bandshell in the Lennox park. He used his interest in the band and his influence in the community to

organize the efforts and monies needed to get the bandshell approved, designed and built.

It is another one of Hofer's interests for which historians of this and future generations in Lennox will remember Hofer. He spent time, effort, money and newspaper column space to preserve history. Through Hofer's work and conscientious efforts, the early history of Lennox and its organizations was recorded. One way he did this was through the complete obituaries he routinely published in the newspaper. He also recruited others from the community to write stories about Lennox pioneer history. Hofer printed these stories as regular columns in his newspaper. A. A. Freseman contributed numerous articles of historical importance to Hofer's newspaper. Hofer took a financial loss in 1939 to publish a book about the early history of Lennox. The book contained information about pioneer settlers in the Lennox community and organizations in the area. Since copies of the Lennox newspaper from 1888 to 1907 are missing and incomplete records were kept at that time of births, weddings and deaths, the 192-page book Hofer published in 1939 provides information sought by genealogists. In some cases, Hofer's book might be the only published material containing the needed data to trace family members. The biographies of the pioneers in the book are complete and include lists of important dates, birth places and family members' names. The information in the 1939 publication has been supplemented by other books and special editions of the newspaper, all published by The Lennox Independent.

For more than 50 years Hofer published The Lennox Independent and special editions, promoted the city band and printed supplies for carnivals. He took a business he bought as a 29-year-old man and turned it into a family business, a source of livelihood. The newspaper business Hofer conducted in Lennox succeeded through difficult times, perhaps because he was willing to take risks. He purchased the Lennox newspaper immediately after suffering a complete business loss in Davis when his home and business were destroyed. He purchased the Lennox newspaper approximately one year prior to the stock market crash on Wall Street. Hofer supported a family and built up his business while the country was going through the Thirties Depression. When the United States was in the middle of World War II and materials and labor were scarce, Hofer bought and remodeled a larger building for his newspaper operation. He succeeded not only because he was willing to take these risks amidst adversity, but also because he was willing to work hard, to put in 60-plus hours a week at the office. Hofer said, in general, whatever job work came his way he accepted and found time to do because the work and the money were needed.⁶

Edward Hofer's biography tells the story of one pioneer editor/publisher in South Dakota during the early and mid-20th century. It is the story of one man taking a career and combining it with personal interests and hobbies to supply a community with a newspaper that has been read and has met the needs of the surrounding area. The paper serves as an historical piece of literature. Hofer lived and worked with community journalism at a time when

editors/publishers/owners did everything in the newspaper shop. He wrote and worked with advertisers. He knew how to do basic repairs on his machinery, how to run presses and how to make a business last several decades. His story is unique due to his interest in the community band, his dedication to preserving history and his specialization in carnival printing.

Interview with Bernard Thoms, September 26, 1986.

Billie Benge, Thoms, Director of the "Bible House,"
Campground, Highway 7, Haines, South Dakota State Fairgrounds, 1970's

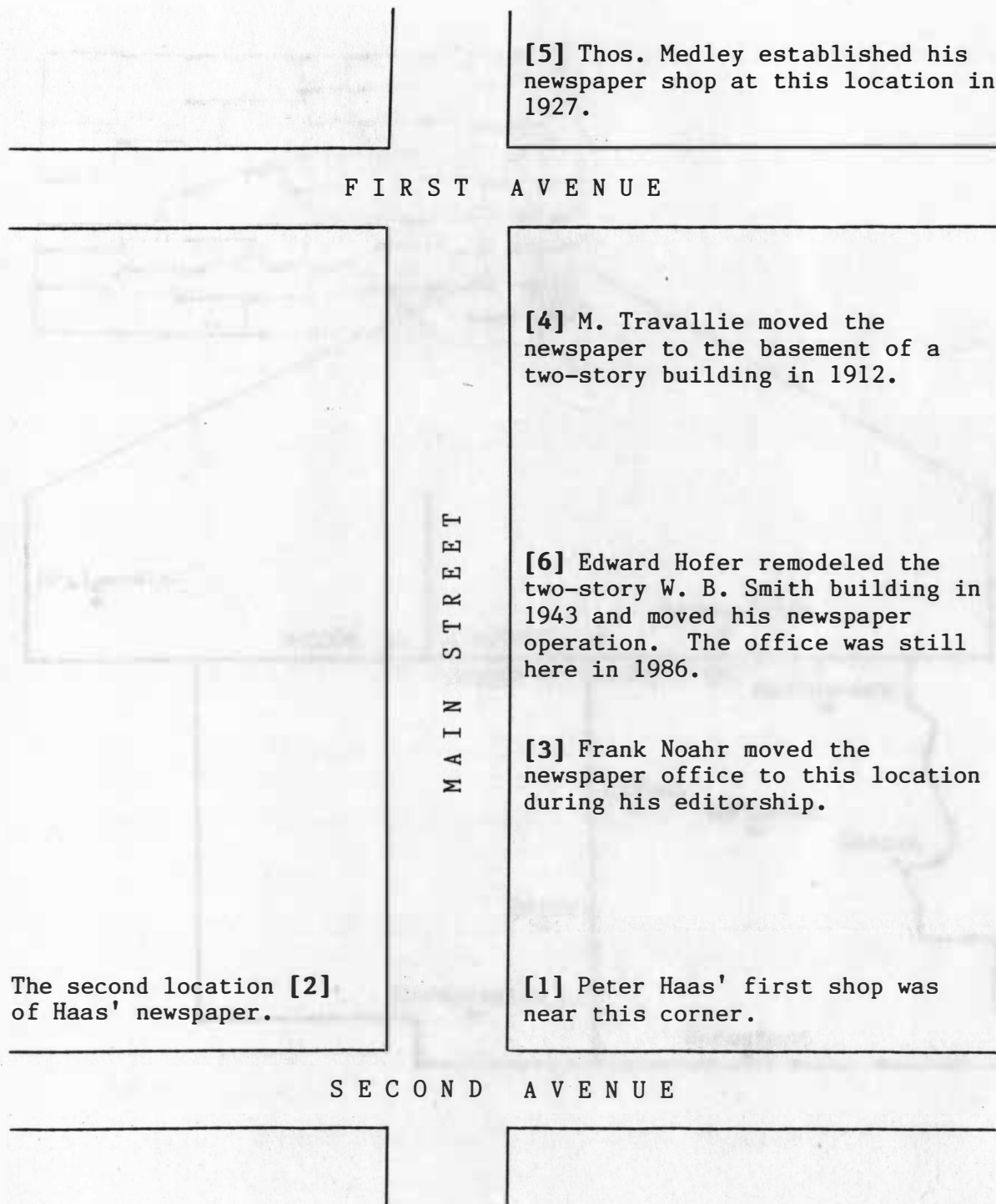
Interview with Bernard Thoms, October 11, 1986.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Newspaper Day brochure, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, South Dakota State University, October 25, 1986.
- 2 Robert F. Karolevitz, With a Shirt Tail Full of Type (South Dakota Press Association, 1982), p. 34.
- 3 Thomas Barnhart, Weekly Newspaper Management (New York: Appleton-Century, Inc., 1936), p. 15.
- 4 Interview with Bernard Thomas, September 26, 1986.
- 5 Dale Blegen, "Aubrey Sherwood of the DeSmet News," (Unpublished master's thesis, South Dakota State University, 1979), p. 1.
- 6 Interview with Edward Hofer, October 17, 1986.

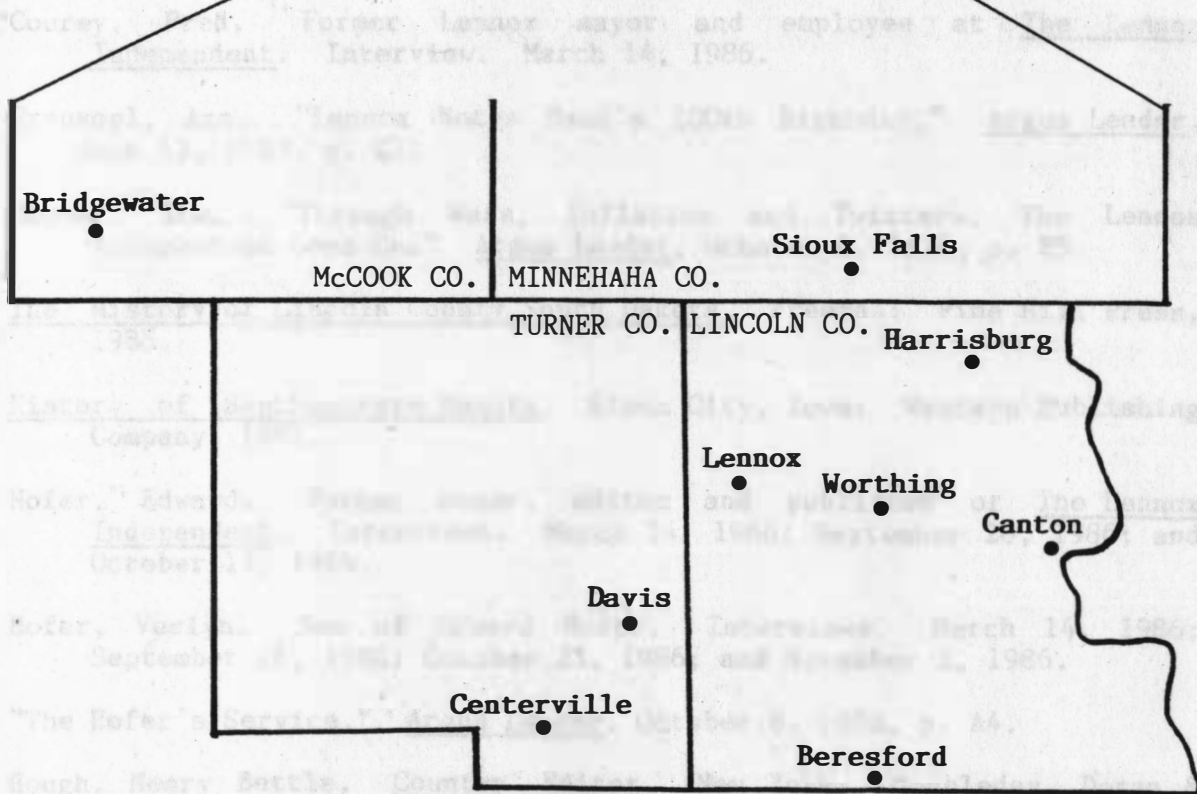
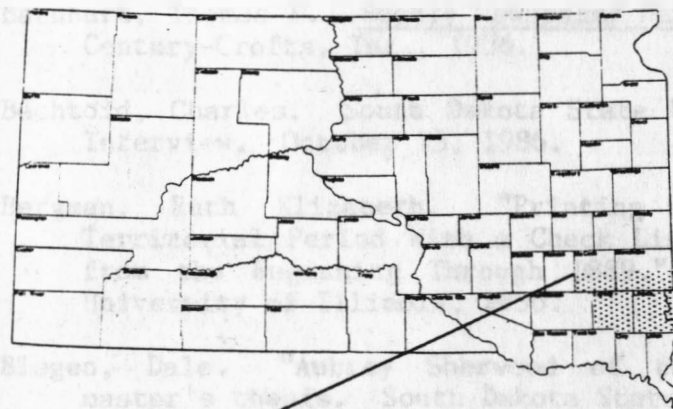
Appendix A

LOCATIONS OF THE LENNOX INDEPENDENT



Appendix B

LENNOX AND SURROUNDING AREA



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