
Native American Press in Wisconsin and the Nation, 1982 to the Present

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ABSTRACT

In late April 1982, James P. Danky organized a conference titled "Native American Press in Wisconsin and the Nation," an extension of the work Danky had been engaged in as newspapers and periodicals librarian at the Wisconsin Historical Society, which brought native editors and publishers together with academic historians. We were engaged in writing a historical reference guide to American Indian and Alaska native newspapers and periodicals, and we learned that Danky and colleague Maureen Hady were involved with a similar project. At the conference we all agreed to cooperate in our research and share information. Attendees reached consensus on a number of issues at that time: the Native press was under significant financial difficulty; press freedoms were often abused; a need existed for an association of native publishers and editors. Other issues came to light, including the need for a systematic, ongoing project to collect the products of the native press and report research on the subject as a means of documenting contemporary native life. Danky and Hady's work helped to lay the foundation for this project that continues to this day at the Sequoyah Research Center.

INTRODUCTION

In late April 1982, James P. Danky organized a conference titled "Native American Press in Wisconsin and the Nation." Sponsored by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin–Madison Library School, and University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication, the conference was an extension of work Danky had been engaged in as newspapers and periodicals librarian at the society.

It brought Native editors and publishers together with academic historians. From Wisconsin were Laurie Fish of the *Menominee Tribal News*, Paul DeMain of the *LCO Journal*, and Zoar Fulwilder of *Zoar's Weekly Information*. From the nation were publishers and editors Antony Stately of *The Circle*, Joan Willow of the *Wind River Journal*, and Richard LaCourse of *CERT Report*. Scholars who spoke were James Murphy, Sharon Murphy, Barbara Leubke, Richard Joseph Morris, and the two of us, Daniel Littlefield and James Parins.¹ Roger Philbrick was present but did not speak. We were not originally scheduled to speak, but were late add-ons to the program. Our being included had an element of "serendipity," to use Danky's term.

By a rather complicated chain of events, we learned that we, at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and the Newspapers and Periodicals unit of the Wisconsin Historical Society were working on similar projects aimed at documenting the Native press. Starting in the late 1970s, we had gone a circuitous route from a failed attempt to publish a historical anthology of Native writers, to a two-volume bibliography of Native writers, to the rather ambitious goal of writing a historical reference guide to American Indian and Alaska Native newspapers and periodicals. At the time we heard about Danky's project, our work was based on two steadily growing lists of titles of newspapers and periodicals established from 1828 to the present: one before 1924, one after 1924. In all, we had accumulated about one thousand titles, which we had already begun to circulate to both Indian and non-Indian scholars, inviting them to contribute publication histories for our projected reference guides. We had not reached the point in the project, however, that we needed to go to Madison to work in the massive collection of Native newspapers and periodicals that we knew the Historical Society held. Thus we did not know that Danky, with the assistance of project librarian Maureen Hady, was hard at work creating a descriptive bibliography and union list of Native newspapers and periodicals. Upon learning of one another, we were like Huck Finn discovering Jim's campfire on Jackson Island. We thought we were alone. The revelation that we were not was momentarily staggering.

Danky learned about our project before we learned of his. In early 1982, apparently concerned that we were working at the same task, he contacted us. He informed us that his working list contained about 500 titles and that he had organized a conference on the Native press in Wisconsin and the nation. Our response was that if 500 titles were all he had, he was not even in the ball park. On April 1, we sent him a list of 728 post-1924 titles and audaciously asked to be included in the conference. Our work clearly impressed Danky. On April 13 he responded, "The breadth of your work in this area is most impressive and the serendipity that brought us together is something that I am most grateful for." He enclosed an annotated copy of our list, correlating it to his. Of the 728 titles on the list, he had no information on 367. He asked our assistance in

locating those titles and invited us to the conference that we might meet and “compare notes and methods” (J. P. Danky, personal communication, April 13, 1982) A week later, we were in Madison.

During the two-day conference, discussion was lively, and debate was stormy at times, but it proved to be a watershed event. It described in bold relief the state of the Native press in Wisconsin and the nation in 1982, anticipated future developments in Native publishing, created an increased interest in scholarship about the press, and had significant implications for the building of library and archives collections of Native publications, press history, and related matters. Danky’s conference clearly assessed the state of the Native press in Wisconsin and the nation in 1982 and identified issues that have been significant in Native publishing since then.

THE CONFERENCE

One major consensus of the conference participants was the uncertain financial status of most Native newspapers, whether urban or reservation based. Antony Stately was struggling to keep *The Circle* afloat in Minneapolis by revising his format and circulation practices to stretch his advertising and subscription dollars. The *Wind River Press* had struggled to survive on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming in 1976 and 1977, when it folded for lack of financial support. The future of its successor, Joan Willow’s *Wind River Journal*, begun later in 1977, was also uncertain because it was funded by a CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) grant, which was scheduled to run out. In 1982 the *Journal* staff was applying to the tribe to fill the financial void. The *Menominee Tribal News* at Keshena, Wisconsin, had also originally published using soft money and had suspended in 1979 for lack of funds. After that the tribe funded one half, and soft money provided the other. In 1982, Laurie Fish was attempting to make the paper self-sustaining through advertising, subscriptions, and sales, and she was under deadline to do so. Zoar Fulwilder’s little urban newsletter, *Zoar’s Weekly Information* in Milwaukee, had ceased publication for lack of money. And Paul DeMain, feeling restrained by tribal funding, had worked since 1978 to make the *Lac Courte Oreilles Journal* at Hayward, Wisconsin, self-sufficient; by 1982 he had reached 60 percent of his goal and had aspirations to make the paper independent (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982).

What the tribal editors described was not unusual, but was a common phenomenon that affected the survival rate of publications throughout Indian Country in 1982. What Paul DeMain described for the Great Lakes region is a good example. He estimated that there were twenty-eight thousand Indians in Wisconsin and some two hundred thousand in the Great Lakes area. “But there are basically only two publications left in Wisconsin to serve them,” DeMain said: “the *Menominee Tribal News* and the *Lac Courte Oreilles Journal*. . . . Zoar’s paper has been out of publication for a

while, Melanie Ellis, from *Kahliwisaks*, has had some problems with the council, and they shut the newspaper down” (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982, p. 93). The newspapers in other parts of the region were surviving, DeMain reported:

Nishnawbe News from Marquette, Michigan, which had a large circulation at one time, is down to 800 copies as a quarterly publication. *Circle News* is looking really good. There is also a newspaper from Sault Ste. Marie [*Win Awenen Nisitstam*], which is looking pretty self-sufficient, is regular, and has some good articles. So, we are making a lot of progress. Yet, at this particular time, there are fewer and fewer of us. (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982, p. 93)

For papers that survived, the limitations in funding clearly affected not only how much news the paper could publish but how the editors did it.

A major factor in the financial woes of some newspapers was a lack of editors trained in sound journalistic practices. The editors present at the 1982 conference were a fair representation of Native journalism at the time. Antony Stately felt inadequate to his task and sought out the assistance of mainstream editors. Joan Willow’s office had a copy typesetter that sat idle for a long period because neither she nor anyone else in the office knew how to use it. Laurie Fish was given the task of editing and producing a newspaper with little knowledge of how to do it. She had a darkroom and equipment, but no one knew how to use it (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982). Only Paul DeMain, who had studied journalism at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, and Richard La Course were what could be considered experienced journalists. While the others struggled to hang on financially, DeMain was working toward independence, and La Course was working on a prototype of a newspaper modeled after the *Wall Street Journal* and devoted to tribes with energy resources.

Writing later in 1982 Vine Deloria, Jr., recognized the need for sophistication in the Native press.² The foundation of most contemporary publications was the desire and need of the tribal communities for information, he argued. Although many began by simply reprinting information from other sources, numbers of them testified to Native editors’ abilities to tell the people what was happening. “One can only conclude that it has not been access to news that has been the deficiency,” he said. “Rather it has been the interpretation of the information that has been sadly lacking. Indians seem to know what’s happening. However, they seem to be badly handicapped in interpreting what events, policies, and personalities really mean in their lives” (Deloria, 1983, p. xiii). If the Native communities could produce “a generation of people who can *interpret the meaning* of events for their people, we will have made a very great stride toward determining our own futures” (p. xiii).

A second consensus reached by the conference was that the lack of financial independence resulted in a lack of free press guarantees. Stately

answered to an advisory board with censorship authority at the Indian Center in Minneapolis. They scrutinized items he intended to print and, without authority, he claimed, pulled those they thought harmful to the center or the Indian community. Laurie Fish submitted her material to the Menominee tribal chairman or someone else high in administrative circles for review, but did so willingly, she claimed (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982). As Michael Chapman said to Laurie Fish about her paper, "But until it is independent of the Tribal government, you cannot be critical of that program that supports you" (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982, p. 84). Paul DeMain reported similar oversight of his paper by the Lac Courte Oreilles tribal council, his resistance to that pressure costing him his job at one point (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982). Consensus of conference members was that Native editors should be able to print whatever stories they chose.

The conference had a strong advocate for free press in Richard La Course, veteran Yakama journalist. La Course had worked in recent years at defining freedom of the press in Indian Country under the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 and had developed a proposed freedom of information policy for the Colorado River Tribes, for whom he had edited *Manataba Messenger* at Parker, Arizona (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982). He reported that 54 percent of tribal constitutions guaranteed freedom of the press, a fact that he found heartening: "There can be no oppression, no prior restraint, no censorship, no attempt or success at limiting data on those reservations where there are such constitutional guarantees," he noted. "Freedom of the press is a burgeoning actuality within the legal documents of Indian tribes and it is proliferating at a very interesting rate up to today. I could not take more comfort in something if I had to" (Danky, Hady & Morris, 1982, p. 105). La Course urged his fellow journalists to use their freedom of information power against their own tribal governments if necessary.

A third consensus of the conference was the need for an association of Native publishers and editors. A void had been left by the demise of the American Indian Press Association, which had been active from 1970 to 1976 through the efforts of La Course, Charles Trimble, Rose Robinson, and others. There had been failed attempts to create and sustain regional associations throughout the 1970s. Paul DeMain believed that the solution to some financial woes rested in cooperation. In 1981, he had established the Great Lakes Indian News Bureau that served both non-Native and Native news outlets in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, and Iowa (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982). "It is hard working in an urban setting," Antony Stately said:

I'm sure it's hard working in a reservation setting, where there's hardly any money. Dollars are tight; we have to pull together. One thing I see as being important is that we all have to pull together in order to

survive. Urban newspapers and reservation newspapers are going to have to form a link, an association where we can give information back and forth. (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982, p. 43)

He continued, "I just can't do all of it. I'm going to be working in the future to start a news association between reservations and urban newspapers, because it is important" (p. 43).

The generalizations that emerged from the conference regarding the need for financial independence, the struggle for freedom of the press, the need for an association of journalists bordered on prophetic.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NATIVE PRESS AFTER 1982

Between 1970 and 1985 perhaps more than a thousand Native publications came into existence. The great volume of titles established in the 1970s was due to federal money pumped into Indian programs. As federal funds began to decrease in the late seventies and were slowly withdrawn from social programs in the eighties, the number of new titles decreased, and some existing titles went out of print. The impact of the reduction in federal spending on editors who attended Danky's 1982 conference was clear. Large numbers of publications were short lived.

Still, the Native press remained strong. As Paul DeMain noted, there was a growing sophistication in the products of the press. Technical aspects of publishing changed significantly with the advent of the computer age. And in the 1980s more trained journalists began to work in the Native press. Though one national monthly newspaper, *Wassaja*, ceased in 1980, it was succeeded in 1981 by a weekly, *The Lakota Times*, which as of this writing is published as *Indian Country Today*. Paul DeMain reached his goal of making the *LCO Journal* a financially independent bimonthly paper that he now publishes as *News from Indian Country*. In fact, among the active papers whose editors were at the 1982 conference, only Richard La Course's *CERT Report* failed. The others remain healthy as this essay goes to press.

Success of the Native American press since the 1980s has been due in part to the establishment of an association, called for by "Native American Press in Wisconsin and the Nation" in 1982. The Native American Journalists Association was established in 1984, and throughout the next two decades it invested heavily in training sessions for practicing journalists, workshops for high school and college journalism students, and scholarships and internships for students and practicing journalists. The association's efforts have resulted in a stronger Native press. They have also led to a shift away from almost exclusive emphasis on print to include other news media which, through the years, have gained favor among young Native American journalists.

One major issue that fostered the establishment of the Native American Journalists Association was freedom of the press. Despite Richard

La Course's optimism at the 1982 conference, the reality of a free press in Indian Country was, and still is, elusive. For example, *Pueblo News* was suppressed in 1984 for publishing a negative piece about the All-Pueblo Indian Council, *Chickasaw Times* was suspended in 1986 for what the tribal legislature considered one-sided reporting, and *Navajo Times Today* was shut down by tribal police in 1987 on orders of the newly elected tribal chairman, whom the paper had not supported (Newell, 1988). In 1987, Leslie Newell, in association with the American Native Press Archives at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, conducted the first major survey of Native editors regarding free press. Her results (1987, 1988) became the standard study of the state of free press in Indian Country for more than a decade. The struggle for press freedom continued throughout the 1990s. The editor of the *Cherokee Advocate* was fired in 1997 for reporting issues unpopular with the sitting chief (Agent, 1998), and *Navajo Times* came under fire again (Arviso, 1998) for publishing articles critical of the tribal government. Because of the controversy stirred by these two events, a major development occurred in 2000 when the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma passed an independent press act ("Cherokee Independent," 2001). Then followed action by the Navajo National Council in 2003 to make *Navajo Times* an independent publication ("Native Press," 2003). These developments testify to the growing sophistication of the Native press that grew out of its huge burst of publishing energy in the 1970s and 1980s and of the efforts of the Native American Journalists Association throughout the 1990s. The explosion of Native publishing in the 1970s and 1980s proved to be fruitful grounds for scholars, although their work would get off to a slow start.

SCHOLARS AND THE NATIVE PRESS

In the late 1960s and early 1970s the proliferation of Native newspapers and periodicals that accompanied the American Indian nationalist movement reflected an increase in Indian awareness and brought attention to the potential research value of Native newspapers and periodicals. However, much of the scholarly energy before 1982 had focused on the *Cherokee Phoenix*, the first tribally owned and published newspaper. Scholars Beckett (1934), Gabriel (1941), Martin (1947), Malone (1950), Holland (1956), Perdue (1977), Leubke (1972, 1979, 1981), and Riley (1976, 1979) provided exhaustive studies of the *Phoenix* and its famous editor, Elias Boudinot. Two other Cherokee editors, John Rollin Ridge and Edward Bushyhead, had received modest treatment (Dale, 1926; Foreman, 1936). Meanwhile, the Native press elsewhere had not received much attention. Vizenor (1965) had studied White Earth Reservation newspapers, Scullin (1969) had analyzed the *Rosebud Sioux Herald*, and Fogerino (1981) had studied the *Tundra Times*. Christensen (1974) had studied the American Indian Press Association. However, the Native press as an important

scholarly resource had not been recognized by most scholars. Only Murphy (1974), La Course (1979), and Murphy and Murphy (1981) had attempted to study the Native press systematically and present an overview of its history. Although the latter work was flawed, especially in its treatment of publications established before 1970, it was the first academic press publication of a book on the subject.

In 1982 Danky explained, in part, why scholarship relating to the Native press had been developing slowly when he said that a bibliography should be the foundation of analysis. He said, "Without an existing, high quality bibliography scholars are left with a random sampling of materials and a greater chance at a flawed sampling" (Danky & Hady, 1983, p. xviii). His statement explained why some scholarship, like the only book on the subject at the time, was riddled with errors. Murphy and Murphy, like other scholars, worked without sufficient bibliographic tools.

There had been a number of earlier attempts to create bibliographies of Native newspapers and periodicals. Those who attempted to list titles nationwide included Olson (1968); American Indian Historical Society (1972a, 1972b, 1974); Murphy (1974); American Indian Press Association (1974); Philbrick (1975); and Lehde-White, Murphy and Murphy (1978). Their lists focused primarily on current publications. Others such as Nottingham (1976) had created lists of titles from states, and others such as Bush and Frazer (1970) and Bullock (1977) had described holdings in collections. Comprehensive bibliographical coverage of the Native press from its beginnings to the present remained to be done.

The 1982 conference brought together the most active scholars, among a handful in Wisconsin and the nation, who recognized the value of the Native press: Danky, Sharon Murphy, James Murphy, Barbara Luebke, and the two of us. It occurred at a turning point in scholarship on the subject. It was an outgrowth of Danky's developing scholarship on specialized periodical publications and a defining moment in ours. It helped push our combined comprehensive bibliographic work forward.

By 1982 Danky was a seasoned scholar in the field of specialized or alternative periodical publications. The Newspapers and Periodicals unit of the Wisconsin Historical Society had created bibliographies of underground publications (Danky, 1974), Asian American periodicals and newspapers (Hady & Danky, 1979), Hispanic periodicals and newspapers (Strache & Danky, 1979), and women's periodicals and newspapers (Danky, Hady, Strache, & Noonan, 1982).

In 1981, Danky's Newspapers and Periodicals unit received a grant from the state of Wisconsin for a project called "Native Americans: Library Resources in Wisconsin," which Danky proposed to carry out in three phases: a conference on the Native American press in Wisconsin and the nation, a series of workshops for librarians and archivists in Wisconsin, and creation of an index of personal names in Native periodicals published

in Wisconsin (Danky & Hady, 1983). For Danky's as well as our own scholarship in the field, the conference was the most important phase of the three. There emerged from it an informal but lasting cooperation between Danky's project and ours in which we assisted each other's efforts in identifying publications, locating copies, and gaining access to them.

Three important publications by Danky appeared during the next two years. *Native American Press in Wisconsin and the Nation*, proceedings of the watershed conference, appeared in the summer of 1982 (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982). Scholarly journals noted the significance of its contents (Danky & Hady, 1983; Wrone, 1985; Laird, 1985). In 1984 followed Danky and Hady's *Native American Periodicals and Newspapers, 1828-1982*, a union list of American and Canadian titles, compiled from the collections in the Wisconsin Historical Society, questionnaires to libraries in the United States and Canada, and visits to repositories. Containing 1,164 titles, it was the first, and remains the only, comprehensive bibliography and union list of Native American periodicals and newspapers, which no scholars have chosen to supplement. Finally, in 1984, Danky and Barry Noonan published their *Index to Wisconsin Native American Periodicals, 1897-1981* in microform, which contained over forty-four thousand entries from thirty-one periodicals.

The Danky and Hady bibliography was the culmination of the project we had learned about in the early days of 1982. Vine Deloria Jr. had reluctantly agreed to write a foreword for the work, but after examining the bibliography, he praised its completeness and the efforts of the Wisconsin Historical Society to collect Native newspapers and periodicals (Danky & Hady, 1983). The bibliography was a signal publication for not only scholars of the Native press but of Native studies in general. They now had access to the vast repository of Native thought that rested in newspapers and periodicals in a way that they had not had access before. Danky kindly acknowledged our hand in its making through the close working relationship that had emerged between the Periodicals and Newspaper unit and us in the wake of the 1982 meeting by telling how we "provided assistance in identifying and locating titles" while working on our own scholarship. "Many materials were exchanged during the course of the project; but, beyond that, we reaped the benefits of both their scholarship and professionalism," he said (Danky & Hady, 1983, p. xxii). We could say the same about Danky and his unit. He generously supplied a copy of the bibliography during its preparation stages, and during our research trips to the Historical Society, one of his staff members often dropped what he or she was doing to help us locate materials that were hard to find. This cooperative relationship greatly enhanced the quality of our work and made it go more smoothly.

Although the conference members in 1982 reached consensus about several issues, the proceedings were at times stormy, and the exchanges

reached a high pitch. The editors, especially Richard La Course, differed with the scholars on matters of definition, such as what qualified as a Native publication, particularly those devoted to religion and reform, those edited by Natives but aimed at mainstream audiences, and those published by Native organizations but edited by non-Natives (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982). We had pondered most of the questions raised as we had assembled lists of publications in the planning stages of our ambitious project to write a reference guide to American Indian and Alaska Native newspapers and periodicals. Although we at times disagreed with the editors, sometimes intensely, we came away from the conference with a clearer understanding of what we wanted to do.

We shared a common goal with Danky and Hady: to identify as many Native publications as possible within the time allowed for our study. Their bibliography, which they supplied to us in the draft stage, was critical to our work. We adopted for our project the criterion they used, newspapers and periodicals published by and for Native Americans, to determine which titles we would study. By limiting our study to American Indian and Alaska Native titles, however, we differed from them. We included not only the United States titles in their bibliography but hundreds more because our study lasted four years, making it possible for us to visit more repositories and to include titles established between 1982, when theirs ended, and 1985. We chose to involve other scholars, whose tasks were to ferret out titles that we had not listed, research titles of their choice, and write publication histories of those titles. Ultimately, forty-one Native and non-Native scholars from fields such as library, archives, history, literature, and anthropology engaged in the work. In addition to their work, we spent four years visiting repositories in all parts of the country, studying periodicals, and writing the vast majority of the publication histories. The result was three volumes of historical reference guides to American Indian and Alaska Native newspapers and periodicals that included publication histories of about 1,800 titles in the periods 1826–1924 (Littlefield & Parins, 1984), 1925–1970 (Littlefield & Parins, 1986a), and 1971–1985 (Littlefield & Parins, 1986b). Along with the Danky and Hady bibliography, the Littlefield and Parins reference guides remain the most comprehensive reference works on the Native press.

By 1985, we believed that opportunity existed to advance scholarship related to the Native press. The Danky and Hady bibliography was in print, one of our reference guides had been published, and the other two were in press. In addition, the Native press was receiving new attention because of the establishment, in 1984, of the Native American Press Association, later the Native American Journalists Association. Having established a network of scholars in the field during our recent project, we also established the American Native Press Research Association (ANPRA) in 1984 and held our first meeting as a session of the Mid-America American

Studies Association meeting that year in Urbana, Illinois. Barbara Leubke from the 1982 conference spoke at the first ANPRA meeting, and Paul DeMain at the second. After Illinois, meetings were held in Arkansas, Alaska, Mississippi, and Wisconsin before the organization went defunct.

We also sought to foster research through the establishment of a scholarly journal devoted to the study of the Native press. We began *Native Press Research Journal* on a shoestring budget in the spring of 1986, and during the next four years we published eleven issues containing twenty-eight articles. Among the editorial consultants for the *Journal* were DeMain and Leubke. Though short-lived, the *Journal* proved a useful tool in ferreting out dead titles that we had not seen and informing us of new publications as they were established, and it became a vehicle for continuing our work of writing publication histories for another four years. By the time the *Journal* was established, however, our attention had already turned from producing scholarship about the Native press to following the Wisconsin Historical Society's lead in collecting press resources for other scholars to use. Our belief was that there could never be too many archives and libraries.

CREATION OF LIBRARY AND ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

Vine Deloria Jr. had been reluctant to write the foreword to Danky and Hady's 1982 bibliography of Native American periodicals and newspapers. He was certain, he said, "that this effort would be another ill-prepared and incomplete listing—the kind that is done so often today in the name of communication and information" (Deloria, 1983, p. xii). His doubts came from first-hand knowledge of failed attempts by institutions to build representative, much less comprehensive, collections of Native newspapers and periodicals. He wrote:

Sometime during the late sixties several universities began to collect copies of the extant Indian newspapers with the ideal of establishing a national Indian archives for the use by future scholars. Many of the universities that had entered the field of Indian newspapers so energetically suddenly and silently faded from the scene. Whether these institutions continue to add to their collections or have moved on to other fields now that the interest in American Indians has waned remains to be seen. (p. xi)

Indian organizations had tried it as well, but archiving or microfilming was too cost prohibitive. Some universities microfilmed what materials they had and stopped collecting. "Consequently," Deloria said, "there are few places in the United States where one can find a collection sufficiently large to be useful to the student of contemporary Indian affairs" (p. xi). Deloria was correct. As the universities withdrew, the challenge was taken up by other institutions, the foremost of which was the Wisconsin Historical Society.

In 1982, Princeton University was the only university with what might be called a notable collection of Native newspapers and periodicals. Recognizing the ephemeral quality of many publications, librarians realized the need to preserve "contemporary, first-hand accounts written from the native point of view of an important era in their history" (Bush & Fraser, 1970, p. 3). In 1967 the Princeton University Library began collecting. In their guide to the collection three years later, Bush and Fraser said that when they began, "no library could be found which had taken upon itself the responsibility for preserving the entire range of these publications" (p. 3). Although the Princeton collection remains one of the country's most significant, it has been eclipsed during the past two decades. As Deloria noted in 1982, interest had flagged in many universities; Princeton was one of those. Interest had waned considerably by the time we visited there in the early eighties. However, Princeton had made much of its collection accessible to researchers through its arrangement with Clearwater Publishing to reproduce many of the titles in microform.

As the universities withdrew from the field, regional collections developed in historical societies and other state entities. By 1982, institutions such as the California State Library, Arizona State Library, Arizona State Museum, Oklahoma Historical Society, and Alaska State Library had created modest to fairly comprehensive collections for their states. The work of the Wisconsin Historical Society, however, eclipsed all efforts. It was, in fact, the only institution in the country that had undertaken the task of systematically collecting the products of the Native press published throughout the United States and Canada. Under James Danky's leadership, the Newspapers and Periodicals unit had built what was the premier collection of the Native press. Of the 1,164 titles Danky and Hady had described in their 1982 bibliography, the Society held slightly over 700.

Collecting contemporary Native newspapers and periodicals had become a part of the long-range plan of the Wisconsin Historical Society. Considering the society's long history of newspaper collecting, Danky told the 1982 conference members:

Today I hope the Society is making another step in the maturation process, that is, by trying to move from the antiquarian interest that has been a part of our work and to develop a sense of continuity with the past by documenting contemporary Native American life. The conference will, as it seems, create additional documentation through the speakers who will provide primary evidence about current publications. (Danky, Hady, & Morris, 1982, p. 10)

Since 1982, the Newspapers and Periodical unit of the society has continued to build its collection of Native publications so that today, in microform and hard copy combined, it is probably the nation's largest. It is rivaled only by the collection of the American Native Press Archives in the Sequoyah Research Center at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

By the time Deloria's comments about the desire for a national Indian repository appeared in 1983, the idea of such an institution had already begun to form in our minds. Completion of the Danky and Hady bibliographic project in 1982 contributed greatly to the thoroughness of our reference guide project as did the excellent collection of publications at the Society. After we had exhausted the holdings there, we traveled to repositories all around the country, ferreting out copies of titles we had not seen and additional issues of titles we had already studied. We meticulously recorded which issues of each title we examined in each repository.

What we encountered caused us to pause and look beyond our present project. Certain realities became clear very quickly. Most libraries held only scattered issues, those issues were not catalogued, and they were kept in vertical files or stacked in closets and only occasionally in library stacks. The significance of the efforts of the Wisconsin Historical Society to collect the Native press from throughout Indian Country loomed larger in our minds. Because collections were not catalogued, we frequently had to ask a series of questions before we were directed to vertical files or "Indian" files. After two years of such experiences, we thought that it might be helpful to create a clearinghouse of information on the Native press as a service to scholars and librarians. Because of our meticulous note taking, we could supply location information on hundreds of titles. Thus in 1983, we began the American Indian and Alaska Native Periodicals Clearinghouse.

No sooner had we done that than librarians changed the course of our thinking once more. Finding Indian newspapers and periodicals generally a cataloguer's nightmare, librarians had frequently kept them in loose files. They were at times glad to weed them and, at times, give them to us. The first windfall came at the Arizona State Museum in 1983, when the librarian gave us, literally, a pickup truck load of weeded newspapers and periodicals to take back to Arkansas. Then came a similar shipment from the American Indian Studies Center Library at the University of California at Los Angeles. By 1985 we were calling ourselves an archive. Once we established the American Native Press Archives, other major weeded collections followed. In recent years such donations have come from Haskell Indian Nations University, the University of Tulsa, and the National Indian Law Library. In the 1980s, the Wisconsin Historical Society began to send us the hard copies after completing microfilming, and the Society has routinely sent its duplicate copies to us through the years. The Oklahoma Historical Society has a similar arrangement with the American Native Press Archives. The result is that the American Native Press Archives houses the world's largest hard-copy collection of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Canadian Aboriginal newspapers and periodicals.

We took Danky's new mission statement in 1982—"documenting contemporary Native American life"—and expanded it into the mission of the American Native Press Archives: to document contemporary tribal

communities through the words of the tribal peoples themselves. Thus we have not limited our collection to newspapers and periodicals but have included other materials related to the Native press. We archive the records of the Native American Journalists Association, which constitute a massive collection, and we have major collections for organizations such as MIGIZI Communications as well as for writers, editors, reporters, producers, and others associated with the Native press.

CONCLUSION

It is difficult for us to work long at the Sequoyah Research Center, which houses the American Native Press Archives, without being reminded in some way of James Danky and the conference "Native American Press in Wisconsin and the Nation" in 1982. We might see the familiar stamp of the Wisconsin Historical Society on a newspaper the Society has discarded and sent to us. We might have occasion to refer to the Danky and Hady bibliography or one of our own reference guides for answers to a patron's question. We might have need to search for something in our massive Press History Collection, the Richard V. La Course Collection, the Paul DeMain Collection, or the *News from Indian Country* Collection. We might simply print a letter on letterhead for the Center, which bears DeMain's name as one of our stalwart Advisory Board members, and causes us to remember that shortly before his death La Course had also agreed to serve.³ Everywhere are reminders of that meeting in 1982 that resulted in a cooperative relationship that led to the most complete bibliographic documentation and history of the Native press written to date and that contributed directly to the development of the nation's two largest library and archives collections of Native press materials. To us it was a watershed event, of which we, Wisconsin, and the nation are still reaping the benefits.

NOTES

1. In a personal communication (January 5, 2007), James Danky brought us up to date on these participants as follows. James Murphy died in 1983. Sharon Murphy left Southern Illinois University and went to Marquette University, where she served as dean before moving to Bradley University, from which she retired. Richard LaCourse returned to his home reservation, where he was assistant editor of *Yakama Nation Review* for a number of years before his death in 2001. Zoar Fulwilder, a member of the Salt River Tribe near Phoenix, Arizona, is a consultant in computer technology and economic development. Dr. Antony Stately is at the University of Washington, where he directs the Honor Project, a six-city health survey of Native gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and two-spirited men and women. Barbara Leubke taught for a number of years at the University of Hartford and, since 1999, has been professor of journalism at the University of Rhode Island. Richard Joseph Morris is professor of communication studies at Arizona State University. Paul DeMain is CEO of Indian Country Communications, publisher of *News from Indian Country*. Laurie Fish Reiter went to serve in the Menominee Tribal Legislature and is now director of the Woodland Boys and Girls Club in Neopit, Wisconsin. Maureen Hady, who was librarian for the Native American Press project at the Wisconsin Historical Society is a catalog librarian at the Library of Virginia in Richmond. No information about Joan Willow is available.

2. Vine Deloria Jr., a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, died in 2006. He was a well-known activist and spokesman for American Indian causes. In 1982, he was recognized as one of the leading voices for Indian Country and, as indicated later, he was often quite skeptical about mainstream academic projects relating to Indians and resources about them.
3. The 1982 conference had obviously been a memorable event for LaCourse. Only a few days before his death in March, 2001, he accepted our invitation to become a member of the advisory board for the American Native Press Archives. He wrote, "Your invitation concerning an ANPA board seat indicates one thing to me: Final forgiveness for my resistance in Madison in 1982. Accepted with deep pleasure" (R. V. LaCourse, personal communication, February 27, 2001). He referred to his intense, at times stormy, debate with us at the conference.

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