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ABSTRACT

Throughout its history, the press in the United States has been dominated by whites and directed toward the interests and well-being of white readers, often ignoring or distorting news and events within and about nonwhite communities. As a result, minority groups have established their own press systems. One of these systems, with a 148-year history, is the native American press. The first Indian paper, half in English and half in the Cherokee alphabet, was the "Cherokee Phoenix," established in 1828. Like many other native American papers, it did not long survive the pressures and open harrassment by white society and government. Although of varying degrees of journalistic sophistication, today's native American press carries on the tradition of investigative watchdog journalism, continues its role as educator, and functions as a preserver of heritage, carrying tales from the past and accounts of living native American leaders. Increasing numbers of papers also attempt to reintroduce the native American languages of their readers. (Author/JM)

Native American Newspapers: Selected Vignettes

by Sharon Murphy, UWM Department of Mass Communication

INTRODUCTION

Throughout their history, U.S. Native American newspapers have played the roles of watchdog, teacher and advocate, promoting literacy, reporting on encroachments by white civilization and commending the heritage and accomplishments of Indians. As treaties were broken and Indian territories invaded and stolen, Indians were forced to make continual migrations and uprootings. And their papers gradually died away with the dwindling of the tribes, to realize a new life only in the second half of the 20th Century.

This paper looks at selected currently publishing Native American newspapers in the context of their historical background and the current efforts of the tribes and inter-tribal groups publishing them. By definition, borrowing from that developed by Roland Wolseley in his study of the black press in the United States[1] -- Native American newspapers, as studied here are owned and managed by, intended for, and fighting and speaking for Native American communities. The definition thus excludes publications produced solely by religious or governmental groups.[2]

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originally given as a paper before the Association for Education in Journalism, College Park, August, 1976.

This paper describes characteristics of these papers by focusing briefly on selected papers representative of various forms currently used in this country. A more extensive treatment is currently in process. For purposes of the present discussion, newspapers can be divided into the following categories: national publications, tribal publications, intertribal publications (published by and serving several tribes in a given city or geographic location) and agency publications (particularly with educational ties.) This paper, while it acknowledges the great value of periodicals and magazines, does not deal with those publications.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The first Native American newspaper began publishing February 21, 1828, just one year after the first black newspaper appeared. The Cherokee Phoenix, a bilingual paper, was printed part in English and part in Cherokee, using a special alphabet of eighty-three characters developed by a half-breed Cherokee silversmith, George Guess, better known to history as Sequoyah.[3] This first newspaper, printed at New Echota, Georgia, had a very special purpose, one similar to that of many Native American newspapers today. Sequoyah recognized the power of the written word and saw this power as indispensable to the growth and prosperity of the Cherokee Nation. The development of Sequoyah's alphabet led to the spread of literacy among the Cherokees.[4] The newspaper it spawned opened the way for newspapers in at least three Indian languages (Cherokee, Creek and Sioux) and many English language papers.

A Sioux-language paper, the Shawnee Sun (Siwinowe Kesibwi), lived only a few years before the Sioux nation was driven from its lands in Kansas. The Cherokee Phoenix died in 1832 under government harassment and pressure.[5] When the Cherokee Advocate appeared September 26, 1844, it was undoubtedly the successor to the Cherokee Phoenix. Using the Sequoyah alphabet, it was edited by William R. Ross and carried the motto, "Our Rights, Our Country, Our Race."[6] The Cherokee National Council, in establishing the paper, set for its objectives the diffusion of important news among the Cherokee people, the advancement of their general interests, and defense of Indian rights." It published all laws currently enacted by

the Cherokee National Council and other valuable data, in addition to daily news.

Women made their mark early in the history of Native American journalism. Students in the Park Hill Female Seminary (or college) at Tahlequah, the Cherokee national capital in Oklahoma, established a magazine, the Cherokee Rose Bud, in 1848. Only later, August 2, 1855, was the Male Seminary newspaper, The Sequoyah Memorial, established.[7] This paper carried the motto: "Truth, Justice, Freedom of Speech and Cherokee Improvement." Like other Indian papers of those early decades, it was a worthy model for today's Native American press. Its excellence and that of the Cherokee Rose Bud, can probably be attributed to the career preparation the seminaries offered future journalists.

The first daily Native American paper, the Daily Indian Chieftain, began publishing in 1899. It had been in business as the Indian Chieftain since 1882 and was part of a healthy publishing system. But prosperity was as short-lived as government respect for treaties and property rights. The Daily Indian Chieftain, like the powerful Cherokee Advocate, had to contend with government pressures as well as with the intrusion and readership demands of increasing numbers of white settlers. On March 3, 1905, by order of the United States Government, the last, and perhaps the greatest of the Native American frontier newspapers was ordered closed. The Cherokee Advocate has served its nation well, as a clipping from a white newspaper of the time indicates:

With the passing today of all that remains of the Old Advocate, there passes an institution that perhaps did as much as any single thing toward the uplifting of the Cherokees. It has boasted some of the brightest Indian scholars known to history as its editors. It has preserved peace and it might have declared war. No newspaper ever printed with success, had a policy that was built on as high a plane as was the policy of the Advocate...[8]

CURRENT STATUS

Today's Native American press is almost entirely an English language press, although as ensuing discussion will indicate, growing numbers of papers are being used to teach tribal languages. The American Indian Press Association's (AIPA) 1974 Media Directory lists 324 newspapers publishing in 34 states including two national papers.[9] In addition, 27 federal Indian high schools and 26 colleges (8 of them exclusively Indian colleges) publish newspapers. 15 prison culture group publications, 8 major magazines, 4 print or broadcast news services and 7 Indian printing firms serve news and advocacy functions.

A comment in one newspaper called the AIPA listing into question. A review of Index to Bibliographies and Resource Materials, published in 1974 by the National Indian Education Association, called it the best index to source materials thus far published on Indian sources. "A listing of 87 Indian newspapers is given, including a few Canadian papers, much more factual than that asserted by some people, who claim there are 450 Indian newspapers."[10]

One editor recently described the role of communication and the communication media in Native American communities. Calling communication "the most powerful and essential tool with which to protect all which can so easily be buried by the plow of progress," she pointed out mass media neglect of Indian concerns.[11] Investigative reporting of

these concerns requires money and journalistic skills, unavailable to many small Indian communities, she said, and well-heeled media corporations have done superficial, at most, coverage of Indian problems.

> "Because it is primarily a business -- and secondarily a means of communications -- American journalism has developed most fully in areas which affect, or are of interest to most people. However lamentable to isolated minorities this is basically a healthy fact of journalism, enabling it to remain free of outside influences.
>
> Indian population is scattered mostly in sparsely populated areas. Indians are not therefore a significant market for newspaper sales or for advertisers in the more powerful and competent media of this country.
>
> Coverage of news affecting and about Indians has been sporadic, over-all incompetent and does not hold promise for much future improvement by the general media. Many areas of government...have had a fairly free rein in actions relating to Indian tribes, without most of the checks and balances normally provided by a vigilant press."[12]

Dismal as is the picture painted by this editor, other Indian journalists are optimistic. Frank Ray Harjo, addressing the American Indian Press Association annual meeting in 1974 said:

> I think that...there's a new confidence and a new desire to speak the truth in a very comprehensive fashion with the confidence that today it will actually be heard.[13]

Some general patterns are observable in Native American newspapers, and will be discernable to varying degrees in all of them, as exemplified in the individual papers discussed here.

By and large, Native American newspapers are not intended to be money-making business ventures. They usually get their start and often continue to exist through forms of tribal, educational or governmental subsidy. However, as will be seen, some are financially independent.

Limited funding is a major problem, a characteristic with corollaries in short life spans, erratic publication and size patterns, and extremely limited staffs. The papers are often crudely (or at least inexpensively) published, sometimes appearing as mimeographed, legal sized sheets stapled together. Owing in many instances to the determination to remain unbought, many papers carry no advertising. Those that do frequently limit ads to job-related notices or to Indian-owned or operated businesses.

Another characteristic of the papers is that they promote the welfare and self-pride of Native Americans. They often function as alternatives to the white-oriented press. Just as often however, they are the only papers read by their communities. The papers are also and consequently, cause-oriented, with frequent gutsy, irreverent reports of investigations into situations affecting (adversely) Indians and their interface with Anglo society and power structures.

Journalistic traditions are often ignored by the papers. Many editors are untrained or inexperienced in journalism, although some few have worked for other newspapers or held various other media related

positions.

About half of the 33 editors personally interviewd by this author in the past 12 months were non-Indian, and at least half of the Indian editors had had no journalistic experience or preparation prior to assuming responsibility for the newspapers they edited. Most said they sorely needed staff and training. Almost all admitted there were simply no visible incentives for young Native Americans to pursue journalism as a career.[14] There were few role models these young people could look to, and too little interest was exhibited by white-dominated media and educational institutions in the US in young, prospective Indian journalists, or even in the needs and problems of Native Americans.

Another general characteristic pattern is that objective news reporting, as the established Anglo press purports to practice it, is often lacking in Indian newspapers. Stories are written from the Indian point of view usually laced throughout the reporters' opinions. In addition, no-holds-barred editorials and reader input columns as well as editorial cartoon leave no doubt as to the writers' anger or the papers' stands on issues.

The papers function as mirrors of their small, specialized communities and readerships. Like community and and special interest papers all over, many of them carry "small town gossip" and goings-on, recipes, youth activities, weddings, anniversaries and birthdays, graduations and accounts of visits by and to relatives.

Heritage is another characteristic of the newspapers. Increasingly, they print photographs and stories from tribal traditions, tribal legends, accounts of Council meetings and efforts to re-establish awareness of and pride in native heritage. Growing numbers of papers act as preservers and teachers of tribal languages, languages in some cases only recently developed into written form.

NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

Turning to consideration of specific newspapers, we focus first on the two national Native American newspapers, Wassaja, published in San Francisco, and Akwesasne Notes, published in Rooseveltown, New York.[15] Wassaja, a monthly publication with a circulation of 80,000, promotes self-determination, education, and Indian rights. It is owned, published and edited by the American Indian Historical Society. Because it is a national paper it deals with such major national news affecting Native Americans as water rights, land rights, assorted Indian legal matters, education of youth and adults and activities of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Wassaja's first issue urged Indians to "inform yourselves about your water rights."[16] It called on urban Indians to "mount a campaign of information to the public, to the press, radio, television".

In an advertisement in its Jan-Feb, 1975 issue, the editors described the purposes of the paper:

> Current news with an understanding of historic and cultural background. Know about education, economy, legislation, the arts, health, the beauty and literature of the Indian world. The Indian learns about Indian life through Wassaja. He learns how to cope with modern life by reading how other tribes manage... through Wassaja.[17]

Since its inception in January 1973, Wassaja has lived up to its name, which translated means "signalling" or "the signal". It is dedica-

ted to Carlos Montezume, who early in the century fought for Indian rights and is held responsible for eventually winning Indian suffrage, which came about in 1924. Montezume had started a short-lived paper, also called Wassaja, which called for Indian unity in the suffrage cause. The original paper carried the slogan "Let My People Go." Today's Wassaja has a slightly altered version, "Let My People Know."

The paper's first issue set the tone of aggressive reporting with its major story headlined "Indians Face Genocide," an article about water rights. An editorial in that innaugural issue underlined Wassaja's philosophy:

> We want, we need, and we must have decision-making power on all levels: planning, training, organization, direction, and evaluation of our government, our programs, our funds, and our lives...today, and in the future. Wassaja is dedicated to this goal."[18]

The intent to share information with other papers and to promote communication among Indians across the country is evident in a policy spelled out in the papers fourth issue:

> Indian newspapers and periodicals are welcome to reprint materials and information from Wassaja. We ask only that you credit this paper.[19]

The attractive tabloid is not funded by federal or foundation moneys, but is self-supporting. Income is shared with reporters.[20] Nor does the paper have a traditional advertising program. Almost all ads are job-related, most carrying announcements of specific job openings. It has a news-stand price of 50¢ and an annual subscription rate

of $10, with reduced rates for poor Indians.

In 1974, the American Indian Press Association gave it the Marie Potts Journalism Achievement Award for its investigative reporting of a California organization gathering money in the name of Indian newspapers without any apparent benefit to those papers. The AIPA said of Wassaja that its investigative reporting:

> "laid bare an area of exploitation little known and never before examined by an Indian news paper, and received wide reprinting by other Indian editors thereby widening the impact and influence of the investigation."21

Another national newspaper, Akwesasne Notes, was established in 1968 as the official publication of the Mohawk Nation, the People of the Longhouse. The paper started as a few pages telling of the International Bridge Blockade by 48 Mohawks and has grown into the largest Indian paper in the country. The paper is, like Wassaja, a member of the American Indian Press Association and claims an international as well as national circulation and readership of over 8/,000. In the United States, Notes is sponsored for mailing purposes by the Program in American Studies of the State University of New York at Buffalo. Editorial offices are located on the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne near Hogansburg, New York, and also on the north side of the Reservation at Cornwall, Ontario. High journalistic quality earned Notes the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation Journalism Award Citation in 1972, as well as the AIPA Marie Potts Award. Again in 1974 it was nominated for the Marie Potts award on the basis of its work in

covering the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, and the social and economic conditions with which led up to it.

The tabloid, which averages 48 pages each edition, publishes 8 times annually, and calls itself "A Journal for Native and Natural Peoples." Its editions are designated, instead of January, April, etc., "Early Spring,""Early Autumn," etc., relating to the calendar in terms of harvest times. Notes, wishing to maintain an independent voice, carries no advertising except for products manufactured by the Notes staff for the financing of the paper. The paper gets financial help through reader contributions, and is not supported through government grants or foundation funds. In addition, the subscription rate is informal:

> "There is no fixed subscription price. That does not mean that this paper is free...Some people have lots of money, others have none. If you want the paper, we'll be glad to send it to you. If you want to help with the costs, we will appreciate that -- that's the Indian way. Make it work."[22]

Regular features in Notes include centerfold posters of famous Indians or Indian scenes, poetry, original art, calendars of historic events, lists of upcoming Indian meetings and conferences around the county, country, letters and guides to resource materials. Many articles in each issue are simply collections of bits and pieces from articles in established papers. Often entire pages are filled with stories lifted with acknowledgement from other papers around the country. The paper is openli biased in favor of the rights of the American Indian, supports of AIM and, to some extent, the use of force in advancing Indian causes. It editorializes within news stories and in headlines.[23] Stories often con-

clude by suggesting steps readers can take to protest an action or to help solve Indian problems. Unity and specific actions are often called for.

Reader contributions play an important part in the paper. Notes gets its news material through staff activity, through soliciting reader contributions and through reprints, as described above. Readers contribute articles, essays, book reviews, editorials, letters, poems, artwork, some in finished form, others as notes or on audio tape.

The staff of 12 fulltime and many volunteer part time individuals is a close knit group that lives together in a home donated to the group. In Early Autumn of 1974, 27 staff members were listed, from such varying backgrounds as Cheyenne, Navaho and German, The staff, all unpaid, subsists on food, clothing and shelter donated by the Mohawk Nation or readers. Many parttime volunteers come to Notes from around the country, staying varying lengths of time to help with newspaper production, answering mail, and doing other tasks.[24] Staff members cooperate in all facets of publication, from typing to bundling copies for mail.

Tundra Times, a weekly newspaper owned and edited by Alaska Natives, might also be called a national newspaper. The paper is distributed throughout the U.S. It is 14 years old and has a circulation of over 3,000 making it the largest native newspaper in Alaska.

The American Indian Press Association named the paper the most outstanding Indian newspaper in 1973.

The paper has had a rather erratic and sometimes precarious existence, owing to many factors shared with other newspapers in this report.[25] It was initially financed by a donation from a retired Massachusetts physician, who pledged $35,000 in 1962 to start the operation. The need was for an information medium that would bring before the public the dangers to environment and heritage threatened by Atomic Energy Commission developments in the Northwest Arctic. The founding editor, Howard Rock, an Eskimo graduate of the University of Washington, had had a frustrating experience on the Fairbanks News-Miner. He had tried to do an investigative piece on the ramifications of the atomic project in Alaska, and found the AEC reporting through the Associated Press that there was no danger involved in blasting. In point of fact, scientists at the same time had already found radiation in the food chain, directly linked to the blasting. The AEC tried to stop his investigative efforts and his paper failed to support him.

Approached by Native Alaskans to stay and begin a paper, he did so, working out of primitive offices and was harrassed with threats, unusually high utility bills, telephone company service cutoffs, and so on. But the AEC bowed to the pressure of exposure by his vigilant newspaper.

Many more accomplishments can be attributed to the Tundra Times crusades, such as bringing about a freeze on filing land claim settlements when white firms were claiming the settlements on Alaskan lands already claimed by natives. The Bureau of Commercial Fisheries labelled the Tundra Times editors as communists when the paper exposed the plight of people living on Pribilof Island. These native hunters had to exchange their seal skins for goods at the government store, at government rates, and as a result were reduced to semi-servitude existence. Eventually Tundra Times, by exposing the Native American plight, led some white newspapers to cover the Indian and Eskimo plight, and positive news about the peoples as well.

Tundra Times' motto is taken from Voltaire:

> "I may not agree with a word you say, but I will defend unto death your right to say it."

The paper carries advertising in full page and smaller ads, from local companies, airline firms, and out of state organizations. The Fairbanks office of the Eskimo, Indian, Aleut Printing Company is operated by a staff of five people, under the editorial direction of the Times editor.

According to a "History of the Tundra Times", the bulk of subscribers are Native leaders, government agencies and other newspapers as well as interested whites.[26]

Rather than carrying social and local news, the paper concentrates on government agency activities and meetings, business transactions affecting the environment and the native people of Alaska, and reports on discriminatory practices against Alaska Native Americans. Very little interpreting is done although in cases of significant events like law changes, complicated announcements, and proceedings are fully reported, and the Tundra Times maintains its roles as environmental, governmental watchdog.

TRIBAL PAPERS

Tribal newspapers are localized to the particular tribal groups they serve. They act as small, community newspapers, promoting understandings of the workings of tribal councils, focusing on local education, health and welfare conditions, and functioning as a letter-from-home for tribal members living elsewhere in urban areas, at universities, etc. The tribal newspapers are more intimate than national publications and carry much about the everyday life and doings of their small communities.

Ni-mi-Kwa-Zoo-Min (Speaking of Ourselves) is the monthly paper of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. Published at Cass Lake, Minnesota, the 8-12 page tabloid was launched as an "experiment in communication -- to let Minnesota Chippewa Tribal people know what programs, opportunities, and plans are available through their Tribal organization." It was conceived "in response to requests from Tribal people, from organizations and agencies with which the Tribe is in contact, and from departments within the Tribe itself."[27]

Edited by a non-Indian, Betty Blue, a veteran journalist, the paper is tightly written in traditional journalistic style. Its stated editorial policy reads in part:

> We are seeking contributions from individuals of the six member reservations of the Minnesota Chippewa tribe ... letters for publication should deal with issues and conditions, not personalities. We will grind no axes.[28]

The paper, which carries local commercial advertising, includes such regular features as news items, household hints "At Home -- At the Range", items of organizational interest, legal briefs ("Legislation to Watch For"), tax information, job openings, a Powwow calendar, and an elementary course in the Chippewa language ("Here's How to Say It.") "Other Voices" is a periodic column of items summarized from other papers. "Silver Notes" carries accounts of accomplishments and anniversaries of older tribal members.

Like most Native American newspapers, Ni-Mi-Kwa-Zoo-Min concentrates heavily on education and the welfare of young people. Articles on schools and school athletics programs appear regularly. Attention is focused on alternative education and self-determination for Indians. The paper's "Self-Determination".

A recent editorial column titled "Win some...lose a few" discussed the general precarious financial status of Native American Newspapers. Listing papers which recently folded and some which are "having problems" the editor stressed the role of the press in the Indian community. She quoted Wassaja:

> An effective system of communication is the most serious need of the Indian people. Most of us believe we had better communications before the Europeans came than we have now with all the sophisiticated technological developments of newspapers, radio, and television. Misinformation is regularly disseminated. Misinformation and misrepresentation can begularly be found in the mass media. We still don't know the truth of current events, their underlying causes, their effects on the people and the true situation of the Indian people themselves.

Ms. Blue went on:

> In order to best take advantage of the opportunities available -- college, adult vocational training, economic development, local business development -- Indians have to know what is going on. But most Indians cannot yet afford to subscribe to a paper of their own. So provisions have to be made to keep the news-oriented, Indian-edited papers going into the Indian community.[29]

The paper, though the official organ of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, is frequently pinched financially. Free distribution is the rule but the paper, like other Native American publications, often publishes appeals for financial contributions.

Another tribal newspaper, A'tome, published by the Northern Cheyennes out of Lame Deer, Montana, is a crusading bi-weekly paper which has taken on religion, traditional education, and government land deals.

Established February 14, 1974, A'tome was begun as a free-circulation publication with a Teacher Corps grant. The then publisher had had previous publishing experience with two Montana dailies and a shopper in North Dakota.[30] The paper is currently tribally funded, with press run costs covered by revenues from an apparently well rounded assortment of advertising including classified ads, job announcements, full page grocery displays, and other ads. The paper is sold in stores in ten towns on and around the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

The editor, another non-Indian, is likewise a veteran journalist who previously worked 20 years in various white newspapers. She sees A'tome

as a survival and self-protective medium for the Northern Cheyennes, and as a journalistic training ground for young persons.

In a recently drafted rationale to support funding requests, she spelled out the paper's objectives:

> 1. To meet the threat of strip mining with communications.
> 2. To encourage in all ways the retaining of tribal cultural values. To strengthen the human individualism inherent in such traditionally stable social systems.
>
> Auxiliary objectives include the following:
> 1. Establishing a viable business for the economic benefit of 12 reservations -- both in profits of the business and jobs it will provide.
> 2. Training of Indian people for jobs in specialized communication fields ....
> 3. Improving personal communication ability for people being trained professionally, was well as among the general Indian leadership.
> 4. Information is a powerful weapon ... to provide as much of this as possible in any field affecting the well-being of people...
> 5. Improving the future lot of Indian people by interceding and promoting greater understanding and sympathy among the general public.[31]

Among the paper's major investigative concerns are alcoholism, the inadequacy of penal and rehabilitative systems, stock grazing rights, violations of Indian civil rights and ecological damage threatened by pending coal and water rights decisions. In 1975 the editor wrote:

> Some estimates project an influx of 400,000 people on and around the now-isolated Northern Cheyenne reservation. Cheyenne population is

> now under 3,000. What will happen ... to the chokecherries women still pick to make pudding ... Where will a man go to pray at sunrise?
>
> Applying standardized yardsticks to such a areas as sanitation, for example, will mean the end of dried meat and Indians know it. And yet, for hundreds of years, the Cheyennes have been curing meat in this way (thinly sliced, air dried) using it as a dietary staple, while enjoying physical well being.[32]

A'tome focuses heavily on the welfare and activities of young Indians and on the quality of education. Profiles of teachers and accounts of school athletic events are carried in each issue. Readers are also informed of curriculum and program developments at the schools, of who is attending what college and individual students' achievements. The paper was actively involved in discussions about propriety of begging letters sent by the religious order running the St. Labre Indian School, and over who should control the school.

The attractive tabloid makes judicious use of photographs, letters, poetry, recipes ("Granny Gives New Twist to Eating"), directions for drying foods and using other traditional practices, and frequent articles on history and tradition. Also included are short lessons in the Cheyenne language, news from other tribes, accounts of birthdays and anniversaries, and information on upcoming important tribal affairs like elections.

A third tribal newspaper, also edited by a non-Indian woman, is Rawhide Press, published by the Spokane tribe in Wellpinit, Washing-

ton. The monthly tabloid was nominated for the AIPA Marie Potts Award in 1974 and won several news reporting and writing awards from the Washington Press Women in 1975.

Regular features include Tribal Briefs and Tribal Council Notes, on schools, a column called "From the Superintendent's Desk", a community calendar, a column on state politics called Captiol Scout, and a collection of information and news from and about Indians from many regions called Bits and Pieces. Selected Spokane legends (From the Past) and reprints of treasured photos, usually under the headline "Do You Remember?", serve to preserve and reconstruct history and heritage.

The editor has been carrying on an active campaign among the Spokanes to preserve tribal legends by getting the tellers of these tales to put their stories on tape using a recorder available through the paper's office.

Another aspect of heritage is language and the Rawhide Press, like other papers mentioned above, carries brief lessons in the Spokane language, only recently developed in written form by scholars from the University of British Columbia.

Other regular features include question-and-answer columns on social security, court records and probation hearings, obituaries (under a standing Obituaries head), and news on extension and school programs.

The paper's editor, Barbara Reutlinger, writes few editorials. She commented in one issue:

> Seldom do I impose my ideas on Rawhide Press readers. I feel it is enough to report the facts and let people form their own opinions...[33]

INTERTRIBAL NEWSPAPERS

The term intertribal newspaper refers to publications which include news and information about several tribes, and are directed by representatives of various tribal councils. Although one person functions as editor of the publication, he/she is in effect employed jointly by the tribes, and usually through intertribal cooperative governing procedures. Some intertribal papers serve reservation Indians. Others serve urban populations, independent of tribal councils.

Char-Koosta, the bi-weekly newspaper of the Salish, Pend'd Oreilles, and Kootenai tribes of the Flathead Reservation is six years old and claims a circulation of 2,300. An earlier short-lived version with the same name was founded in 1954, revised briefly in 1962. Headquartered in Dixon, Montana, it is edited by a non-Indian journalist who formerly worked for UPI and was hired by the tribal council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai [illegible] of the Flathead reservation. The paper's main function is to carry tribal news, including the full minutes of all council meetings, and the viewpoints of council leaders on current issues.

But more than being merely a mouthpiece for tribal government, Char-Koosta offers an alternative to the Anglo press, which ignores or is neutral to Indian problems. It acts as an educational recourse. In one issue, for example, it explains the potential effects of various pending forestry and land management proposals. In others

it carried a series by the tribal economic development planner on buying a home and/or property, reported on issues and candidates before the voters in reservation school board elections, and discussed eligibility and voting procedures.

A health and hygiene column ("Good Medicine") carried home phone numbers of community health representatives, articles on alcoholism and related problems, accidental poisonings, safety belts, and vaccinations and TB skin tests. A series by a botanist teaching on the reservation focused on uses and medicinal values of native plants. Similar articles told how to tan hides and smoke salmon. Regular features include a monthly reservation highway death count, reminders on openings and closing of various game seasons, listings of new tribal members, tales from Kootenai tradition, and brief lessons in the Salish language.

Investigative pieces in Char-Koosta in the past year focused on land and mineral rights and dangers those resources from outside encroachments and from tribal mismanagement. A major article in the February 1, 1975, issue was headlined "Can Tribe Play Market with Saw Timber" and looked at alternatives for preserving and yet profiting from tribal forest lands.

Another issue reviewd a 119-year-old government treaty which, in effect, signed away vast acres of tribal rangeland. Following a brief account of that treaty signing, the editor introduced a full copy of the treaty document with:

> It has cost you, the people of these tribes, plenty over the years, but it might still come in handy sometime. Remove this section and save it in case there is ever "any talk of land" again.[35]

The editor, Richard Eggert, rarely writes editorials because he said, he is the editor, but the paper belongs to the tribe. The masthead carries only the listing of the editorial and production staff, without specifically identifying the editor. Eggert sais this was to avoid "problems caused by do-gooders or trouble-makers." He is hopeful that his editorship will soon culminate in a Native American who knows law and resources assuming that position. But, like other editors, he is not greatly encouraged.[36]

Subscriptions are paid by the tribes and yearly subscriptions for non-members are $3.60. The 8 1/2 x 11 paper is printed on tribal offset presses and usually runs 16 pages.[37] Photographs and line drawings by a skilled Navaho artist in the area are used extensively throughout and the magazine format is kept informal through use of ragged right margins. Ads are for Indian businesses only.

Another intertribal paper is The Voice, published at Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin. The Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC) established The Voice in 1967-68 as a news letter to acquaint reservation Indians with the programs and policies of the council. As with many other papers, the major problems facing the paper are funding and staffing. The paper carries no paid display ads but will accept classifieds.

1200-1400 copies are distributed free to tribal members and to reservations throughout the United States. Only 95 subscriptions are paid. Due to this funding problems, Voice has had a rather erratic life patterns, since the editorship is non-paid and so is generally assumed by someone in the GLITC administration. In early 1975 the then editor confided:

> "As the normal work load of an administrator becomes heavier and heavier, the job of editing the Voice becomes more and more of a burden."[38]

The community is responsive to the paper, and individuals write up news and comments for the paper, possibly in response to occasional pleas for more articles.

A front page announcement in the April-May 1975 issue read in part:

> "We cannot continue to publish the Voice without input from the areas...without your news it becomes very difficult to put together an interesting paper. We accept any items of interest."

The editor said people really complain when an issue doesn't come out, or is late. Unfortunately there is little financial support for the Voice. The Voice appears to take an active role in the community development. A problem arises, however, because the paper covers such a large geographic area. The aim, according to the editor is unity, not controversy. Content, though crusading in terms of promoting self-help, is far from militant. Campaigns are for education, drug and

liquor control and greater participation in community organization. The Voice, whose slogan is "Working together independently for the betterment of all," seldom speaks out against the white community unless it is hindering a specific GLITC program or effort.

The paper is controlled by the board of directors of the Corporation, and according to the editor, "When it comes to leading strong campaigns we must tread very carefully."

The Voice is a 4-8 page tabloid with ragged right margins. It includes very few photographs but frequently uses line drawings.

The United Tribes News, a bi-weekly tabloid begun in September, 1974, serves the five tribal groups belonging to the United Tribes of North Dakota Development Corporation. These tribes are the Standing Rock Sioux, the Lake Travers Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux, Turtle Mountain Chippewa Cree, Fort Totten Devil's Lake Sioux and the Fort Berthold Three Affiliated Tribes.

Edited by Harriet Skye, 1975 president of the American Indian Press Association, News is published at Bismarck, by the United Tribes Employment Center. It carries news from all the tribes and tribal sessions, focusing on education, curriculum and control of the schools. Environmental concerns are also central, with in-depth and interpretive reporting on hunting and fishing rights and legislation affecting those rights.

Tribal leadership, while not openly criticized in News, is carefully watched, In December, 1974, an editorial commented in part:

> It is not the function of this newspaper to bad-mouth our Indian leadership individually or collectively, nor do we want to be severely critical of our tribal leaders because it is common knowledge that much of this leadership is carried out under difficult circumstances.[39]

Like many Indian papers, News concentrates on health issues such as alcoholism and drug addiction, preventive practices and documentation on the dangers and effects of addiction. Indian business successes are chronicled as are athletic and sports achievements.

Concerned about the employment practices of area broadcast media, the News took a survey in late 1974 of selected television stations throughout North and South Dakota and Montana. Findings reveale that of the 15 stations surveyed, 7 had Native American representation on their staffs and that Native Americans held 10 of 560 full time positions with 6 of those in various lower levels of decision-making.[40]

The editor also hosts a talk show, "Indian Country," on KFYR-TV Bismarck. In January, 1975, Ms. Skye's guest was Sarah Bad Heart Bull, arrested and imprisoned following a demonstration to protest the acquittal of a white man charged with manslaughter in the death of Mrs. Bad Heart Bull's son. United Tribes News had focused attention on the case and considered itself instrumental in obtaining her release from prison. Editorials in the News had supported her and news stories written about the

incident and her trial attempted to put the situation in a more accurate light than the versions given in the white oriented press. Mrs. Bull's letters from prison were printed. One editorial contraster her sentence with the treatment given Richard Nixon following Watergate:

> These crimes of Watergate are of a magnitude that surpasses anything so far in our national history, yet Sarah Bad Heart Bull went to prison because she wanted the killer(s) of her son arrested and tried.41

The News follows the pattern of community papers in such regular features such as the "Student of the Month" column, accounts of graduation honors and speakers, an occasional literary page, vignettes on local artists and businessmen, News Briefs, items of interest from the various tribal groups, including weddings, anniversaries and other celebrations.

The 8-page tabloid makes good use of photographs and skillful cartooning. It uses the AIPA news service and reprints (with acknowledgement) articles from other papers.

Another inter-tribal paper, the Northwest Indian News, serves a multi-tribal readership that is predominantly urban as well. The paper has a circulation of about 4,000. It was founded in 1960 as Indian Center News, and is published monthly by Indians Into Communications, Inc., and carries the slogan "Largest Indian Newspaper in the Northwest." Edited in

Seattle, it was founded as a community newspaper and changed three years ago to promote Indian journalism careers. It currently employs college-age Indian students as reporters and serves as a laboratory training tool in addition to being a vehicle of information and communication for a diversified urban community.

> "The result has been placement of 5 trained Indian college students on the staff of our newspaper and the subsequent rise in the quality of reporting in general,"

The publications director confided.[42]

Northwest Indian News may well be the only regional publication achieving this sort of recruitment and training success in the United States. There has been little or no interest expressed by foundations or government for funding training programs of this type.

The paper focuses on local news and issues and aims at top quality, professional coverage of Indian points of view. But it goes beyond local boundaries to cover issues pertinent to all Indians. For example, ine issue carried comprehensive listings of Native American artists and crafts persons who work or have lived in the Pacific Northwest.[43]

The paper was among the top ten American Indian Newspapers nominated for the American Indian Press Association's 1974 Marie Potts award. It was cited for its in-depth coverage of the recent fishing rights controversy in Washington State.

The paper itself has had some initial financial support from churches, as well as VISTA volunteer assistance in 1973.

Actual contents of the paper vary from interviews with Buffy St. Marie and other Indian personalities to articles on national political figures like John Ehrlichman, who requested that he be allowed to serve his Watergate sentence working with Pueblos in New Mexico. Indian fishing rights and other environmental and resource issues are reported on, as are activists at colleges and universities as these relate to Indians. A regular column, "For Your Health," discusses such topics as alcoholism, child health, and the programs available through the Seattle Indian Health Board. An accompanying regular feature, "Health Schedule," indicates when and where public health services like clinics, family planning, alcoholism, counseling and dental clinics are available to community members.

The effort is to inform Indian and non-Indian audiences. As one of the staff members said, News has a duty to Indians, "not just as a fact sheet for organizations, and not so much to crucify as to expose."[44]

Most importantly, and apparently successfully, the News offers needed role models for Indians in communication.

Some News staff members also work on the half hour weekly Indian news program aired each Tuesday on KRAB-FM. In cooperation with the Seattle Indian Center, out of which News staffers work, and the Indian Women's Ser-

vice League, the program covers local, regional and national Indian news, including special guest interviews and some on-the-scene reports from across the country. Audience participation is encouraged with listeners invited to send their announcements of community interest to the station. The News carries a prominent ad promoting the program.

AGENCY PUBLICATIONS

Newspapers are also published through the leadership and sponsorship of special agencies. As mentioned earlier, church groups have sponsored papers. Educational groups and institutions are also influential in supporting Native American Newspapers. As noted early in this report, college and high school students have some very successful papers. In this last section, we will look at just two regular and high quality publications, one sponsored in part by a university extension agency and another published at a prominent Indian college.

The Camp Crier is a weekly published at the Ft. Belknap agency in Harlem, Montana by the Tribal Council of Assiniboine and GrosVentre in cooperation with the Extension Service of Montana State College. Founded in 1969, it has a current circulation of 700 (350 paid) which means, in the words of its editor, close to 7000 readers, since each copy of the paper supposedly passes to at least ten people. This theme was repeated by many editors, who acknowledged that not every member of the tribe nor every household on a reservation or agency can afford a subscription. According to the editor, Angele Shaw, the Camp Crier is, for many residents of the Ft. Belknap Agency, the only newspaper.

The Camp Crier is governed by a Board of Directors who are closely involved with the policy and business of the paper. Office management is under supervision of an extension agent for the Fort Belknap Reservation.

The main idea of the paper, according to the editor, Angie Shawl, is "to improve communication on Fort Belknap: between various agencies, between agencies and the Indian people, between Fort Belknap agencies and people and Indian people off the reservation." Most of the news in the paper is brought in voluntarily by various persons and agencies.

Until early 1976 the Camp Crier was a mimeographed, legal sized, stapled publication. Now, all typesetting and printing for the 4-8 page tabloid are done locally, due to the recent purchase by the Fort Belknap Tribal Council of production equipment for the paper.

For the most part the paper's content resembles a series of notices and unconnected little stories of events in various areas on the reservation. There is an informal, chatty atmosphere throughout the paper, evidenced in the Tribal News accounts of who visited wh. , who was "seen dancing in the Frontier Club," where the potluck dinners will be held, the hospital patient list and other accounts of illnesses. Practical suggestions on how to keep carpets clean, how to repair furniture, and how to successfully start garden plants indoors are also regularly run, as are extensive listings of job openings, educational opportunities and achievements for reservation members, and local ads. Sports reports appear each issue, as does the prominently displayed Cooks Corner.

The paper also keeps tribal members informed about legislative issues. Full texts of pertinent documents are run, including a tribal housing ordinance, education amendments affecting Native Americans, re-classifications of state highways, and civil rights of former drug abusers.

In short, Camp Crier serves an informational as well as a companion function. The only element missing from the publication is an editorial column, The controversial tone of the paper, however, is partly interspersed with advice and suggestions, and this in some sense replaced editorials.

A final publication, the Indian Leader, typifies another agency-related group of newspapers, those published by Indian college students. In some cases the papers function as minority voices on predominantly white campuses. In this case, the publication reflects the student body, and serves as the only newspaper for the campus. Like the Northwest Indian News, discussed earlier, it also serves as a journalistic lab for prospective Native American journalists.

The Indian Leader is the bi-monthly student publication of the Haskell Indian Junior College, a government-operated college for American Indians in Lawrence, Kansas.

Haskell's enrollment averages about 1,000, but the Indian Leader publishes 3,500 copies per issue. Besides sending free copies to graduates in the military service, alumni from around the country subscribe for $1.00 a year.

The Indian Leader accepts no advertising and 100% of its budget comes from the college. It publishes 15-16 issues per school year. All of the layout, printing and bindery processing is done by Haskell graphic arts and printing students under the supervision of their instructors.

The Indian Leader is more than a collegiate newspaper. It reflects not just the life of the current student body on campus, but focuses on important information for Native Americans in general as well.

For example, in the March 7, 1975 issue, the lead story covered a request by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for an increase of $48 million for Indian programs over the fiscal year 1975 budget.

Another story that same issue was about a statement released by the Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton concerning Indian culture and religious use of migratory bird feathers and parts.

Besides the typical college news about campus activities, the Indian Leader attempts to showcase Indian history, culture and opinion. Some examples of this are found regularly in the paper. An "Indian History Calendar" is a regular monthly feature which highlights events, many tragic, such as Indian massacres by U.S. Army troops, and also more contemporary happenings, such as Buffy Sainte-Marie's insistence that only Indians play Indian roles on television programs.

Another regular feature is "Haskell Pacesetters" which appears in every issue and spotlights two or more Haskell students, with informa-

tion such as from which tribes they come, hometown, and informal biographical data which seems to serve as a friendly introduction of the students to the student body.

The Indian Leader also functions to keep alumni a vital part of the present college life, and to provide a forum for Indian students and alumni to release frustrated feelings in its editorials and letters columns.

A printer's filler in the March 7 issue appears to capture the attitude of the collegiate publication, The Indian Leader:

> "I want to win! But, if I don't win, let them know I tried."

SUMMARY

The American Indian press is alive, unique, and serving a function needed among the press systems operating in the United States today. The many newspapers serving the American Indian communities in this country are individual and independent, while at the same time cooperating to meet communication and information needs unmet by a white-dominated mass media system unable or unwilling to take account of American's Indian minority.

It is not a wealthy and powerful press, and so has sometimes erratic publication patterns. By and large, the work of the individual news staffs is accomplished by hard overwork, often by persons working for no pay and after hours at another job. But is is proud and a crusading press, and it deserves to take its place in any serious study of the press in this country, both in terms of its remarkable history and its current, irreplacable contributions.

The American Indian Press serves also to document the life and history of native people, and to fight for their rights and the preservation of their heritage. In introducing its Media Directory, the American Indian Press Association wrote:

> A communication explosion among American Indians and Alaska Natives is occurring paralell to an Indian renaissance of the mind and the spirit. Like all major occurrences within a society, the Indian communications explosion will have consequences impossible to determine at the present moment. But surely the fate and future of the American Indian and Alaska Native will be faithfully reflected — and caught for all time — by this developing phenomenon.[45]

FOOTNOTES

1. Roland Wolseley, The Black Press, U.S.A., Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1971, pp. 3-4.

2. However some of these publications are listed in the American Indiam Press Association Media Directory.

3. Grant Foreman, Sequoyah, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1938, p.3.

4. "This was the only case of the adoption of a system of writing by a tribe without white assistance in American Indian history." (Terrell, John Upton, American Indian Almanac, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, Apollo Edition, 1974, p. 448.

5. Carolyn Foreman, Oklahoma Imprints, 1835-1907: A History of Printing Before Statehood, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936, p. 77.

6. ibid, p. 76

7. Robert F. Karolevitz, Newspapering in the Old West, Seattle: Superior Pub. Co., 1965, p. 122.

8. Daily Oklahoman, December, 1911.

9. Several other directories have also been published and listings vary, owing to brevity of publication, change of address and other factors. Such directories include "Tribal & Indian Interest Publications" in Marquis, Arnold, A Guide to America's Indians, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974.

10. Wassaja, Jan-Feb., 1975, p. 9. The author's own research for the present study has found inaccuracies in the AIPA directory, but would place the number of existing newspapers well above 87.

11. Beverly Geary, in an unpublished rationale for support for an Indian newspaper on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Lame Deer, Montana.

12. ibid

13. Frank Ray Harjo, American Indian Press Association, in Airtime, Jan. 1974, p. 3.

14. This point was underlined in discussions at the Sept., 1974 Great Plains Indian Media Seminar in, and in comments by editors interviewed throughout Summer 1975.

15. Tundra Times, considered later on under Intertribal Publications, might also be considered national in scope, for reasons which will be discussed.

16. Wassaja, January 1973, p. 5.

17. Wassaja, Jan-Feb., 1975, p. 12.

FOOTNOTES-2

18. Wassaja, January 1973, p. 5

19. Wassaja, June, 1974, p. 1

20. Wassaja, Aug., 1974, p. 2

21. AIPA release printed in Wassaja, Nov.-Dec., 1974, p. 2

22. Akwesasne Notes, Early Summer, 1973, p. 3

23. The participatory bent of the Notes staff is seen, for example, in the fact that members were at the siege of Wounded Knee and participated in the events there.

24. From correspondence from Notes editors, 1975.

25. "History of the Tundra Times," Lael Morgan (under fellowship with the Alicia Patterson Foundation, 1972): monograph printed by the Eskimo, Indian, Aleut Printing Co., undated, p. 3.

26. ibid, p. 4

27. Ni-Mi-Kwa-Zoo-Min, May, 1975, p. 7 and repeated in subsequent issues. This was a theme repeated by editors across the country interviewed in Summer 1975.

28. Ni-Mi-Kwa-Zoo-Min, February, 1976, p. 2

29. Ni-Mi-Kwa-Zoo-Min, December, 1975, p. 2

30. A'Tome, February 14, 1974, p. 2

31. Beverly Geary, op. cit.

32. ibid

33. Char-Koosta editor, Richard Eggert, in in-person interviews

34. Char-Koosta, July 15, 1974, p. 8. Summer, 1975

35. Richard Eggert, in remarks during an in-person interview in Summer 1975.

36. The presses also print books on reservations and Indians for Indian school use an for fund raising purposes.

37. Eggert, in interview, Summer 1975.

38. In a personal interview in July, 1975, with editor, non-Indian Corky West.

39. ibid

40. United Tribes News, December, 1974, p. 5

41. United Tribes News, September 1974, p. 2.

FOOTNOTES-3

42. In a letter to the author, March 3, 1975, and in followup conversations July, 1975.

43. Northwest Indian News, February, 1975, p. 4

44. Terry Tafoya, education reporter for Northwest Indian News, in an interview in July, 1975.

45. American Indian Media Directory 1975 edition, Washington, D.C.: American Indian Press Association, p. vi.