

July 2021

Update to WPLC Board and Historical & Local Digital Collections Committee

New additions of historical newspaper content to the Archive of Wisconsin Newspapers in Badgerlink remain on hold due to pandemic-related closures and other factors, but work is continuing behind the scenes to develop a sustainable partnership for centralized online access to this high-demand content.

Continued progress:

- *Creation of preservation and access metadata for existing scans*
 - A 2019 LSTA grant is supporting the creation of METS/ALTO metadata files for each scanned newspaper page by a third-party vendor, Digital Divide Data (DDD). This is a key step because it converts existing content into a more portable and standardized form, allowing it to be migrated to an alternate access platform and enabling it to be ingested into a long-term preservation environment. WPLC Project Managers are working with DDD and Wisconsin Historical Society staff to coordinate file transfers and post-processing quality control. As of July 2021, DDD has completed processing 36% of the content (216,748 of approx. 600,000 pages).
- *Current upload to the Archive in progress*
 - Wisconsin Newspaper Association is currently processing a batch of approx. 90,000 pages digitized by the Wisconsin Historical Society prior to March 2020. This batch, which will be available in the Archive in Fall 2021, includes content funded by the Belleville Public Library and the Benton Public Library as well as 1850-1860s newspapers from several southeast Wisconsin communities, funded by a private donor.
- *Continued interest from libraries*
 - Since December 2020, WPLC Project Managers have received inquiries from 11 libraries that wish to add historical newspaper content from their communities to the Archive. Although no new content is being added at this time (see below), project managers are tracking these requests and will update these libraries as new information becomes available.

Remains on hold:

- *New digitization of microfilm*
 - Due to COVID-19, the Wisconsin Historical Society Microfilm Reproductions Lab was fully closed from March-August 2020. The microfilm lab reopened in Fall 2020 with minimal staffing and continues to work through a large backlog of scanning projects. The lab is not accepting new orders at this time.
- *Migration to new platform*
 - In late 2018, the WPLC Historical and Local Digital Collections Committee began to investigate alternative platforms for providing improved centralized access to digitized historical newspapers. WPLC Project Managers also began conversations with the Wisconsin Historical Society regarding potential collaboration around a shared access platform. Due to pandemic-related closures

and changes in leadership at WHS, these conversations have been put on hold and will remain so for the next several months.

- *New additions to the Archive of Wisconsin Newspapers*
 - Because no new content is being digitized and the partnership around an alternative platform continues to develop, no additional historical content will be uploaded to the Archive of Wisconsin Newspapers in BadgerLink until further notice.

Messaging to libraries:

If your member libraries have questions about historical newspaper digitization and access, we encourage you to share these points:

- Because no new content is being digitized and the partnership around an alternative platform continues to develop, no additional historical content will be uploaded to the Archive of Wisconsin Newspapers in BadgerLink until further notice.
- All of the historical newspaper content previously contributed to the Archive by Wisconsin libraries remains fully searchable through BadgerLink -- almost 600,000 pages from 40 different titles in 26 Wisconsin communities.
- Even more digitized historical newspaper content is available online through a variety of other sources. The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains a comprehensive list here: <https://wisconsinhistory.org/wisconsinnewspapers>
- We strongly recommend that libraries pursue centralized access for their community's historical newspapers through WPLC and WHS, rather than going it alone through an independent project or third-party vendor.
 - *Quality.* Scanning is done from microfilm negatives carefully created and preserved by experts at the Wisconsin Historical Society. Scanning from negatives yields clearer images and better searchability of text than scanning from microfilm user copies.
 - *Reduced siloing.* Bringing more full-text content together in one place makes it easier for users to find digitized newspapers and search across them.
- If you would like to be added to an interest list to receive further information as this project moves forward, please contact the WPLC Project Managers at wplc-info@wils.org.