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August 2001: Volume 20, Number 2

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Archival Chronicle Marks 20 Years

April 1982 saw the publication of a modest, one-sheet mimeographed newsletter produced by the Center for Archival Collections. Intended to keep the public informed about recent acquisitions, services, and news about the CAC's activities, the *Archival Chronicle* expanded to three pages in January 1985 and by March of that year (volume 4, number 1) achieved its present four-page printed format. This year is volume 20 of the *Archival Chronicle*.

Since its fourth issue, the *Archival Chronicle* has featured articles on the preservation of documents, photographs, and books. Activities of the Local Government Records liaison and the Historic Preservation Office are found in its pages. The first Local History Conference was announced in the spring of 1985. Such on-going projects as the church records microfilming project, and indeed, all microfilming operations, the National Student Affairs Archives, the Women's Studies Archives, and the University Archives are all described in past issues.

In more recent years, the *Archival Chronicle* has added news and features about the Historical Collections of the Great Lakes and focused attention on some of the research subjects suggested by the manuscripts, newspapers, and government records in our collections. The Civil War, local politics, the automobile industry, agriculture, family history, law enforcement, the gas and oil boom, and the postal service have all been discussed in these pages. The list of potential topics is as boundless as history itself. Today, nearly one thousand readers receive this publication free of charge, and an online version is available to everyone with access to the internet.

--Lee N. McLaird

Famous Fakes

Famous Fakes 2: *New York Herald*, April 15, 1865

Almost everyone saves mementos of important events in their lives, and nearly everyone saves issues of newspapers or magazines describing catastrophic national events. As anniversaries approach or the event looms ever larger in our collective consciousness, such newspapers are often reprinted as windows into the past. Such an event was Abraham Lincoln's assassination, and the newspaper account most frequently reprinted is that of the *New York Herald*. In fact, it was this newspaper's extensive coverage of the assassination and possibly the paper's own notoriety that made this document such a popular reprint.

In 1860 *The New York Herald*, with a circulation of 77,000, was the most widely read daily newspaper in the country. With no broadcast media competition, the *New York Herald* covered the "breaking news" of the assassination story by issuing at least four editions printed throughout the early morning and afternoon hours of April 15, 1865. The 2:00 a.m. regular edition, the 3:00 a.m. special edition and the 2:00 p.m. Andrew Johnson inaugural edition were all eight pages in length. A 10:00 a.m. special edition had only four pages but did include for the first time heavy column lines indicative of mourning on the fifth column only of page one. It is believed that a 10:00 a.m. reward edition and a 3:30 p.m. special edition were also printed. All of these originals share the same six-column format and were printed on rag paper of light color.

Probably by 1890, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Lincoln's assassination, reprints began to appear in some quantity. Over sixty-one thousand versions were produced by the mid-1950s, with thousands of these still in existence. Most are easily distinguished from the original editions by four pages of product advertising consuming much of the space inside. Reprints continue to be produced as souvenirs today.

Your *New York Herald* April 15, 1865 edition might be an original if it meets the following criteria:

- The paper should be a sturdy, light colored rag paper, not the brittle, brown wood pulp paper frequently seen with reprints.
- All but one of the original editions were eight pages in length. Collectors prefer the entire paper, uncut, rather than just a front page.
- There should be no portrait engraving of Lincoln on the first page.
- Pages two and three should *not* have any engravings or advertisements for such products as: "Grain-O-Coffee," "Kitchel's Liniment," "Smith's Buchu Lythia Pills," "MA-LE-NA," or "Dr. Archambault Co. Paris Vital Sparks."

For Further Reading

Gavit, Joseph. *A List of American Newspaper Reprints*. New York: New York Public Library, 1931.

Rapport, Leonard. "Fakes and Facsimiles: Problems of Identification," in *American Archivist* v. 42 1979.

Reed, Robert. "Treasured Newspapers of the Civil War," *Collectors News-Internet Edition*, [2001].

Abraham Lincoln Online, "Lincoln Assassination Newspapers,"
<http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/resource/nyherald.htm>

--Eric Honneffer

Because people often contact the CAC wishing to authenticate documents, this article is the first of a series devoted to historic document reprints and the characteristics that distinguish them from the originals.

--Lee N. McLaird