

University of Nebraska's Center for Digital Research in the Humanities Projects and Publications

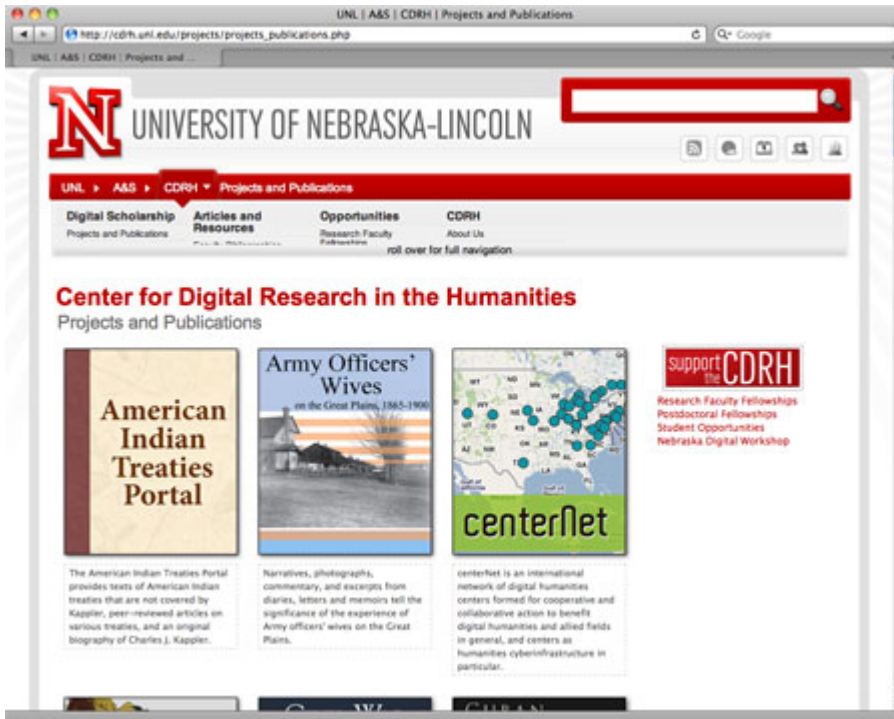


The Common-place Web Library reviews and lists online resources and Websites likely to be of interest to our viewers. Each quarterly issue will feature one or more brief site reviews. The library itself will be an ongoing enterprise with regular new additions and amendments. So we encourage you to check it frequently. At the moment, the library is small, but with your help we expect it to grow rapidly. If you have suggestions for the Web Library, or for site reviews, please forward them to the [Administrative Editor](#).

http://cdrh.unl.edu/projects/projects_publications.php.

Although the Center for Digital Research hosts nearly thirty different Website projects, this review focuses on two of those particular projects. One is titled "American Indian Treaties Portal," and the other is titled "Omaha Indian Heritage." Each provides valuable services to a wide range of parties in terms of content. However, the delivery of that content is not as accessible or effectively organized as one might like.

The "American Indian Treaties Portal" appears to be the creation of Dr. Charles D. Bernholz, the Government Documents librarian at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Clicking on the title link brings the reader to a page that lists eight different topics related to American Indian treaties. The diverse topics range from nine early agreements not included in Charles Kappler's famous published collection of treaties to a textual analysis of all 375 acknowledged Indian treaties using software known as TokenX. Similarly, the method of presentation includes everything from a brief biography of Charles Kappler to a list of links to articles written primarily by Bernholz about treaties mentioned in federal court cases. In that respect it would first appear that there is something for everyone on this site. Civil War aficionados may very well be intrigued by the link to all of the treaties negotiated by the Confederate States of America with the Indian nations residing west of the Mississippi River in Indian Territory in 1861. For specialists in American Indian history, the in-depth analysis of the variations of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 is both informative and comprehensive.



Yet even as the breadth of information presented is wonderful to see, the organization of the material needs improvement. In short, it is not clear if there is a specific target audience for the site. More than anything, the collection at the moment appears to reflect the particular interest and focus of Dr. Bernholz more than it does the demands of any specific audience. For example, while a comprehensive textual analysis of all the Indian treaties recorded in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is enlightening, the information is presented within a technical discussion that makes most of the important conclusions too difficult to find.

By clicking on the project description found on the “Omaha Indian Heritage” site, the reader sees that it is “an effort to make Omaha artifacts and photographic images more available.” This effort is represented by four categories of materials. First, the online texts section contains links to twenty-one articles written since 1881 on Omaha life and history. The second and third categories are photographs from the 1850s to the 1930s, and artifacts from a host of domestic and international museums and historical societies. The fourth and final section provides links to additional online cultural and historical resources for those interested in learning more about the Omaha people.

As with the Indian treaties portal, the intended audience for this site is not altogether clear. Perhaps the goal is simply to create a platform for further investigation by anyone who wants to learn more about the Omahas. If that is the case, however, more direction is necessary. The photographs, while interesting, have very brief captions that at times identify the individuals in the image and provide nothing more. And while the collection of artifacts is impressive, the descriptors given for each image appear to be only the cataloguing information crafted by each holding institution.

Each of these two Websites contains important information for anyone interested in the respective histories of treaties and the Omaha Indians. Both are easy to navigate, and the overall presentation of the material is straightforward. At the same time, however, the sites themselves do not contain the structure and direction necessary to make all of that information as accessible and valuable as it could be.

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