

The Woodhull Sentinel Digitization and Preservation Project

Final Report

Adam Smith
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Project Overview

Newspapers were donated to **The Town of Woodhull New York** by Steve and Amy Farrand after they were discovered in the attic of a West Main Street home they owned at the time. The collection is comprised mostly of **The Woodhull Sentinel** in the 1930's, including its very first issue on June 5, 1930, which promised a "bang-up good paper" to serve the "folks of Woodhull, Jasper and the vicinity". Leslie Smith, Woodhull Community Historian collected these newspapers, adding a few dozen more issues previously donated from multiple sources, and along with Adam Smith, oversaw their digitization and preservation by Backstage Library Works in Bethlehem PA in 2025.

397 total issues, typically 8 pages per issue, 3,144 total pages:

| Issue Count | Publication | Dates |
|-------------|--|----------------------|
| 320 | The Woodhull Sentinel | 6/5/1930 - 8/4/1938 |
| 73 | The Addison Advertiser & The Woodhull Sentinel | 8/3/1939 - 4/26/1967 |
| 2 | The Canisteo Times | 6/9/1933, 12/17/1959 |
| 1 | The Evening Leader | 6/2/1938 |
| 1 | Southern Steuben Republican | 12/19/1895 |

Known publishing information for **The Woodhull Sentinel**:

- Published: weekly
- Publisher: Southern Tier News Inc., Addison NY
- First Issue: June 5, 1930
- Last Issue: exact date unknown
- By August 3, 1939, **The Woodhull Sentinel** had been subsumed under **The Addison Advertiser** to become **The Addison Advertiser and The Woodhull Sentinel**. That issue is volume 80 ("LXXX"), indicating that **The Addison Advertiser** began publication in 1860.

Project Goals

1. Preserve the physical collection in archival storage boxes.
2. Digitize the entire collection.
3. Distribute the digitized files to newspaper services, local historical societies, etc.
4. Preserve the digital collection.

Goal 1: Preserve the Physical Collection

Most of the newspapers were folded twice, creating deep creases, and stored in a cardboard box in an attic for many years. They were very brittle.

In preparation for digitizing, the newspapers were ironed and mended with filmoplast tape. After digitizing, the newspapers were rehoused into flat Hollinger boxes with interleaving tissue paper between each issue. The boxes include an envelope of large fragments that had broken free and were not photographed.

All physical materials have been returned and re-inventoried.

Goal 2: Digitize the Entire Collection

Full color, 400 DPI images of each page were saved in several formats, reflected in the following directory structure and total file sizes:

- TIFFs (original scan files) 530GB
- JPEGs (derived from TIFFS) 31GB
- PDFs (OCR backed derivative images) 15GB
- Issue-PDFs (OCR backed derivative images) 15GB
- TXTs (uncorrected OCR text) 79MB

These were delivered to us on a 1TB external hard drive. This hard drive is stored with the archival boxes, and a copy of the hard drive will be kept with the Steuben County Historical Society.

Goal 3: Distribute the Digitized Collection

The goal is to get this data into the hands of as many local residents and researchers as possible, primarily leveraging existing services and venues where people are already looking for this type of content.

The digitized images, OCR text and metadata are by default distributed under a **Creative Commons license** that allows users to "copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially" (so they can be included in services like newspapers.com) as long as they "give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made." We specify that credit must be given to **The Town of Woodhull New York**. (See: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

The following summarizes our distribution strategy.

Distribution Group 1: Online historical archives

Goal: maximize discoverability for family and local history research.

The digitized newspaper collection is now available through the following services:

- NYSHistoricNewspapers.org (**primary online distribution target**)
 - NYSHistoricNewspapers.org **charged a one-time fee** for importing our newspapers, which were at the time of this project:
 - \$50.00 import fee
 - \$0.02 per page fee
 - \$63.04 total for our project
 - They have included these donations in their promotional emails.
- Newspapers.com (**commercial service owned by [Ancestry.com](#)**)
 - Newspapers.com asked the Town of Woodhull to **sign a separate release**. At this writing, people have already created several dozen “clippings” of these newspapers.
- FultonHistory.com

Additionally, Adam has built a **hosted newspaper archive website** to serve as a free, community-owned access point to these newspapers. The website focuses on core capabilities: search, browse, view, zoom, and download, using the JPG derivatives and OCR text delivered by Backstage. For most research needs, the larger external services will offer a better experience with superior search tools, enhanced viewing features, and easier navigation, and we should encourage their use as the primary access method for these materials. The website Adam created exists as a long-term baseline, controlled by the community and freely available to all, ensuring these materials remain accessible regardless of changes in external platforms or business models. Adam has given Leslie a plan with estimates for domain name and website hosting costs. The website source code itself is freely available under an open source (MIT) license at <https://github.com/ajsmith607/woodhull-sentinel-website>.

Distribution Group 2: Local historical archives and libraries

Goal: engage with the most relevant local stakeholders.

Adam has contacted, and made available the digital files, to the following local distribution targets:

- Middletown Historical Society, Addison NY (**primary local distribution target**)
- Jasper Historical Society/The Wigwags Historical Museum
- Kanestio Historical Society, Canisteo NY
- Greenwood NY Historical Society
- Steuben County Historical Society

Goal 4: Preserve the Digital Collection

The **Steuben County Historical Society** has agreed to store a remote copy of our external hard drive from Backstage Library works. Because this drive had significant unused storage capacity, we are planning to also store 11GB of data from a past digitization project completed by the **Middletown Historical Society of Steuben County**, in Addison.

Issue-level PDF files have also been uploaded to **Archive.org (Internet Archive)**. Adam also explored other repositories like Google Books, Library of Congress and HathiTrust among several others. However, he found these repositories were primarily oriented toward publishers and academic institutions, and that for private individuals and organisations like the Town of Woodhull, they only allow uploads one at a time, making it impractical for this project.

Budget

Leslie reports that the Town of Woodhull was directly invoiced by Backstage Library Works and NYSHistoricNewspapers.org (Northern New York Library Network) at or below the budgeted estimates. All invoices have been paid in full.

Project Close-out

Adam will continue to facilitate storing the backup drive, that includes the Middletown HS files, with the Steuben County HS.

Adam is prepared to do the following at the direction of the Town of Woodhull:

1. Domain and website hosting: purchase, set-up, and documentation for the custom Woodhull Sentinel website..
2. Send out a press release. (Follows.)

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Historic Woodhull Sentinel Newspaper Collection Digitized and Preserved

Nearly 400 issues spanning over 70 years of local history now freely available to the public

WOODHULL, NY — A collection of nearly 400 historic newspaper issues, anchored by The Woodhull Sentinel, has been professionally digitized and preserved thanks to a community-driven effort led by Leslie Smith, Woodhull Community Historian, and the Town of Woodhull, New York.

The collection originated from newspapers discovered in the attic of a West Main Street home and donated to the Town of Woodhull by Steve and Amy Farrand. Smith gathered these along with additional issues from multiple sources, assembling a total of 397 issues and 3,144 pages. The collection is composed primarily of issues of The Woodhull Sentinel from the 1930's, but also includes issues of The Addison Advertiser & The Woodhull Sentinel, The Canisteo Times, The Evening Leader, and the Southern Steuben Republican, with dates ranging from 1895 to 1967.

The Woodhull Sentinel began publication on June 5, 1930, with the promise of delivering a "bang-up good paper" to serve the "folks of Woodhull, Jasper and the vicinity." The newspaper was published weekly by Southern Tier News Inc. of Addison, NY. By 1939, The Woodhull Sentinel had been incorporated into The Addison Advertiser, to become "The Addison Advertiser & The Woodhull Sentinel" a publication with roots reaching back to 1860, and known to us today as The Addison Post.

The collection represents a rich primary source for genealogists, local historians, students, and anyone interested in the everyday life of Steuben County communities during the early-to-mid twentieth century.

The digitized collection is being made widely available through major online historical newspaper archives including NYS Historic Newspapers (NYSHistoricNewspapers.org), Newspapers.com, and FultonHistory.com. In addition, the project team has built a free, community-owned website to ensure ongoing public access to the collection, independent of any commercial platform at WoodhullSentinel.org. The website's source code is also freely available as open source software.

Locally, copies of the digital collection are being shared with regional historical societies and libraries, including the Middletown Historical Society in Addison, the Jasper Historical Society and Wigwams Historical Museum, the Kanestio Historical Society in Canisteo, the Greenwood Historical Society, and the Steuben County Historical Society. The Steuben County Historical Society has also agreed to serve as a remote backup site for the digital archive.

The digitization and archival preservation work was performed by Backstage Library Works of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 2025, at the general direction of former Woodhull resident Adam Smith. Every page was scanned in full color at 400 DPI and processed with optical character recognition (OCR) to make the text searchable. The original newspapers, many of which were extremely brittle after decades of storage, were carefully ironed, mended, and rehoused in archival-quality flat storage boxes with interleaving tissue paper for long-term preservation.

Media Contact:

Leslie Smith, Woodhull Community Historian, Town of Woodhull New York
(607) 368-9699 / lsmithinsurance@gmail.com

Local Media Contacts for Press Release Distribution

- The Addison Post**
 - o Email: addisonpost@gmail.com
 - o Website: addisonpost.net
- The Leader / Star-Gazette** (both owned by USA Today/Gannett, same contact info)
 - o Email: Jsmith1@gannett.com (Jeff Smith)
 - o Website: the-leader.com
- The Evening Tribune**
 - o Email: johnfrungillo@eveningtribune.com (General Manager)
 - o Website: eveningtribune.com
- WETM-TV (NBC, Channel 18) — "18 News"**
 - o Email: WETMNewsWriters@wetmtv.com
 - o Website: mytwintiers.com
- WENY-TV (ABC/CBS, Channel 36) — "WENY News"on**
 - o Email: news36@weny.com
 - o Website: weny.com
- FingerLakes1.com**
 - o Email: news@fingerlakes1.com
 - o Website: fingerlakes1.com
- The Hornell Sun** (online/print community newspaper)
 - o Website: hornellsun.com
- WKPQ 105.3 FM — "Froggy 105.3"**
 - o Phone: (607) 968-8133
 - o Website: lovemyfroggy.com
- WLEA 1480 AM / 106.9 FM**
 - o Email: newsroom@wlea.net
 - o Website: wlea.net