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**Documenting immigrant experiences:  
A study of the Chinese-language newspapers published in  
North America**

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**Abstract**

*The intensifying competition among Chinese-language newspapers in North America was recently brought to spotlight by mainstream media. For well over a century, North America based Chinese newspapers have been informing generations of immigrants and documenting their collective and personal experiences. The steady flow of Chinese speaking population into the U.S. and Canada over the last several decades has created opportunities for this type of publication to expand and proliferate, which in turn poses challenges to library community in respect to collection development and preservation.*

*After giving a brief outline of the history of Chinese-language press in both Canada and U.S., this paper will discuss the identity of this type of press, which is a particularly acute question in the context of U.S. A researcher who conducted two surveys in the U.S. in 1987 and 1997 concludes that it is Chinese American, while a campaign aid for Senator Hilary Clinton reportedly declared that it is “foreign media” when trying to prevent reporters from entering Clinton’s fundraiser in San Francisco in early 2007. By contrast, this author tends to believe that the identity of Chinese press has changed over time and is more fluid today.*

*The next focus of this paper is the current status of Chinese newspapers in North America. Using information from this author's own investigation and media reports, the paper will provide an account of Chinese newspapers in two regions with largest Chinese communities—Toronto and New York-New Jersey. Both the prominent daily newspapers and small weeklies distributed in the supermarkets will be discussed in terms of their editorial policies, circulation numbers, distribution channels, web presences, and availability (or the lack of) in the libraries.*

*For different types of libraries, the challenges for collecting and preserving North America-based Chinese newspapers are somewhat different. A state library may have public mandate to do so, but may lack the language expertise required. Even though an academic library may possess such expertise, it may be restricted by its current curriculum focus. Therefore, a state-wide or even nation-wide collaboration needs to be developed in order to collect these newspapers and ultimately preserve a unique portion of human experience.*

## **Introduction**

“At the entrance to the Princeton branch of the Asian Food Market, half a dozen free Chinese-language newspapers are stacked next to the usual supermarket offerings...” With a descriptive account of the Chinese-language newspapers circulating in Princeton, New Jersey, Kwong and Miscevic began their final chapters in a highly acclaimed book on Chinese American history. They continued to describe in details the papers available in this market and concluded that “the papers serve as focal points for Chinese speakers in the geographic areas they cover, and by dispensing information about the needs of their readers and the services and opportunities offered them, they make the otherwise disconnected Chinese immigrants feel that they in fact belong to a community”(Kwong & Miscevic, 2005, p401-402)

Today, it is a common scene in central New Jersey that a number of Chinese newspapers are stacked at or near the entrance of Asian stores. This can be traced back to as early as in 1990s, when New York Times first reported that a “press war” was happening among Chinese newspapers in New Jersey (D. W. Chen, 1995). I first encountered this scene in the fall of 2007 when I was in the process of relocating to New Jersey and since then I have had the opportunity to look at these newspapers from the perspectives of both consumer and information professional. At the personal level, my interest in this type of non-mainstream press may have started with my previous research on the historical English serials from China (Yang, 2005). The current institutional context--Rutgers is one of the eight national newspapers repositories in the U.S.--also plays a role in my research.

Central New Jersey is far from unique in terms of seeing the proliferation of Chinese-language newspapers. As a matter of fact, it is a phenomenon in both the old Chinatowns and the suburbs that have concentration of Chinese speakers in North America. Correspondingly, there is also a burgeoning interest from scholars, both social scientists (Zhou, W. Chen, & Cai, 2006, Lin & Song, 2006) and historians (Lai, 1987 , 1990). In relation to these newspapers, the library community has made significant contribution in the areas of information access, preservation, and even digitization, but in light of an increasing number of new publications, there seems to be an absence of a comprehensive strategy to select, collect, and preserve these documents of immigrant experiences.

In the following, I will first provide some general observations about the Chinese-language press in relation to the community they serve, which will provide a social context of these newspapers. Then I will outline the development of the Chinese-language press in North America, with references to important publications in the past as well as details about the current newspapers in two metropolitan areas with a large Chinese population: New York-New Jersey (U.S.) and Toronto (Canada). At the end I will summarize the issues pertinent to the library community.

## **People and Press: A Few Observations**

Before proceeding to the Chinese newspapers, I would like to address the definition of ethnic press in order to clarify the scope of this paper. In her introduction to a historical handbook on the ethnic press in the U.S., Sally Miller provided a definition of ethnic press: “the press is basically defined as newspapers of general circulation rather than special interest publications for the various language groups.... the overall emphasis is on those newspapers

which sought to circulate as widely as possible throughout an ethnic group. The newspapers treated are those by and for individuals of a particular group” (Miller, 1987, page xii). So in order to decide if a particular publication to be an ethnic press or not, we need to look at content (general circulation instead of special interest), readership (throughout the ethnic group), and ownership (community members vs. foreign entities), which seems to be well-founded. However, there are some difficulties applying this definition in this paper. First, applying this definition requires looking at publications on title-by-title basis, which is almost impossible to do for many Chinese-language newspapers because the information about them is so scarce. Second, as I am going to discuss later, a newspaper does not always stay the same all the time: under the same name, its ownership and/or content may change over time and possibly brings about change of readership.

Outside of the academia, applying the ethnic label to a publication (or failing to acknowledge it) sometimes can be risky. There is an interesting case in point: in early 2007 when the U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton was in San Francisco to raise money for her presidential campaign, her campaign staff excluded reporters from three largest Chinese-language dailies from entering the fund-raising event. When a journalist from *World Journal*, one of the three papers, complained, a Clinton staffer responded that the *World Journal* was considered to be one of the “foreign media”, which was only given a very limited number of admissions. In return, *World Journal* publicized the story and protested to the Clinton campaign. The campaign then apologized and promised to update its media list (Hua, 2007).

Therefore, this paper will not apply a strict definition of ethnic press to Chinese-language press in North America. As long as a newspaper meets two straightforward criterion: published in Chinese and in Canada and the United States, it is included. I will also point out that ethnic Chinese newspapers are not limited to the ones in Chinese language; there may well be ethnic Chinese press in English in the past, at present, and/or in the future, but those publications will be a topic at some other time.

When we talk about the Chinese people in North America, we have to remind ourselves that this is a diverse group in terms of spoken language, educational background, economic status, geographic origin, and political affiliation; therefore, their relationships with Chinese-language newspapers vary. Many Chinese Americans or Chinese Canadians who were born in North America may not be able to speak or read Chinese, so to them Chinese-language newspapers may not be a significant source of information, but those who work in businesses or professional fields may sponsor advertisements on these papers to reach out to potential customers.

Due to the continuous waves of immigration during the last several decades, the first-generation immigrants still make up the majority of Chinese population in North America. The new immigrants arrive in different tracks. Professional workers enter the workforce in the U.S. and Canada after finishing college and more often postgraduate training and to them Chinese newspapers may be only a supplementary information source. Unskilled workers and seniors usually come under the sponsorship of relatives and they may rely on Chinese newspapers exclusively. Increasingly, affluent people seek permanent residence through their business investments and the Chinese newspapers present an opportunity of advertisement.

Chinese speakers who came from different geographic areas often develop subgroups that are separate from each other, due to linguistic and political barriers. People who came from Hong Kong, a British colony until 1997, often prefer to talk in Cantonese, which is next

to impossible for Mandarin speakers to understand. People from the mainland China and Taiwan can communicate with each other via Mandarin, but the hostility between mainland and Taiwan since 1949 is an obstacle that takes time to overcome. Ethnic Chinese who lived in Southeast Asia before migrating to North America is another group with a distinctive culture. Reading Chinese may be one of the few common characteristics that these subgroups share, but even that is problematic: people from mainland China prefer to read simplified Chinese characters, while people from other areas usually read the traditional characters. The differences between subgroups have an impact on the content and format of Chinese newspapers since most newspapers tend to cater to a particular subgroup, at least initially.

The above is a very generalized analysis of the various relationships a diversified contemporary Chinese population might have with the newspapers. This serves as a guide when we consider the development of these newspapers as a genre, from its beginning in 1850s to today.

### **Chinese-language Newspapers in North America: Beginning to 1960s**

Available evidence suggests that the first Chinese newspapers in North America appeared in 1850s, shortly after the initial wave of Chinese labors entered California during the California Gold Rush. There had been several hypotheses as to the exact title and year of the very first newspaper, but today most scholars agree that the *Golden Hills' News* is the first Chinese-language newspaper in North America, which started in San Francisco in 1854, probably on April 22, as Karl Lo concluded in a painstakingly detailed analysis (Lo, 1971). In the April 29 issue of the newspaper, a note in English, supposedly from the publisher Howard, indicated that the *Golden Hills' News* was created for a new Chinese Mission Chapel and “The influence of chapel and press is intended to relieve the pressure of religious ignorance, settle and explain our laws, assist the Chinese to provide their wants and soften, dignify and improve their general characters” (Lai, 1977).

A digitized copy of the May 27, 1854 issue of the *Golden Hills' News* is available online in California Digital Library (original copy in the collection of the California Historical Society), so we are able to look into the full content of this issue. It has four pages, with one sheet folded in the middle. On the first page of this issue, there is a small piece written in English titled “Chinese Exodus”, in which the author called the “Merchants, Manufacturers, Miners, and Agriculturists” to come forward as the friends of Chinese, “so that they may mingle in the march of the world, and help to open for America an endless vista of future commerce”(Anonymous, 1854) Similarly, the first Chinese piece written by an author Li suggested that this newspaper can provide some small help to Chinese through facilitating business, providing knowledge, conveying popular opinions, and communicating governmental issues (Li, 1854). The other pieces, all written in Chinese, are different types of news items, including ship arrival or departure dates, prices of commodities, local news, and news related to U.S., China, and other parts of East Asia.

The *Golden Hills' News* probably only existed for a few months, but it has the same significance as the first newspaper of other ethnic groups (Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003). Lai also believed that the *Golden Hills' News* established a technical standard for Chinese newspapers that was in use until the turn of the century (Lai, 1990). Shortly after the demise of *Golden Hills' News*, another missionary publication, *The Oriental*, started publishing in January 1855 by Reverend William Speer, who happened to be of the same Chinese Mission Chapel mentioned above. *The Oriental* included an English section and ceased publishing at

the end of 1856. The first Chinese-run Chinese newspaper, *Chinese Daily News*, began publication in 1856 in Sacramento, California and continued until 1858, even though not much else is known about it (Lo & Lai, 1977). Several papers published in 1870s and 1880s were sampled by William E. Huntzicker (Huntzicker, 1995) and the contents are remarkably similar. Taking *San Francisco China News* (1874-1875), a weekly, as an example: it covered prices of commodities, shipping news, statistics of imports and exports, advertisements, editorials, tabloid-type stories, and China-related news (Huntzicker, 1995).

The end of 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the increase of interest in China politics in the Chinese newspapers in North America, when the various political factions in China sought to compete for the influence over and the support of overseas Chinese through publishing. Actually the first Chinese-language newspaper in Canada, *China Reform Gazette* (Vancouver 1903-1911), belongs to this category; it was established by the Chinese Reform Association, which had pursued the goal of reforming China while preserving the Manchu monarchy, until the revolution of 1911 overthrew the Manchu government. The revolution of 1911 was led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his revolutionary party. Dr. Sun Yat-sen built a large following among the Chinese living in North America and might have direct influence over the revolutionary organ *The Youth* (later *Young China*) in San Francisco (Wen, 2005). Both the reformists and the revolutionaries developed various newspapers to promote their own agenda and debate against each other.

In 1927, the Chinese Nationalist Party, the successor of the Revolutionary Party, established a national government in Nanjing that ruled China until 1949. During this period, most Chinese newspapers in North America previously favoring the opponents of Nationalists either ceased publishing or transferred control to various Nationalist factions. The most notable exception was the *Chinese Times* in Canada, which was controlled by the Chinese Free Masons and stayed in business from 1914 to 1992, which makes it one of the longest running Chinese newspapers in North America. In late 1940s, the Nationalists engaged in the civil war with the Chinese Communists. When the defeat of the Nationalists seemed inevitable, the pro-communist voices started to surface in the Chinatown newspapers, but they were subsequently suppressed and prosecuted by the Nationalists and the U.S. government who supported the Nationalists (Lai, 1990).

Ironically, during the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century when the political forces in China dominated the Chinatown newspapers in North America, one of the most popular newspapers during this period was *Chung Sai Yat Po*, a newspaper that was unaffiliated with any Chinese political party for most of its life. The early success of *Chung Sai Yat Po* may be attributed to its focus on community issues and its promotion of the integration of Chinese immigrants into the American society (Sun, 1998). Later, *Chinese Pacific Weekly* (San Francisco, 1946-1979), another influential community press, adopted similar non-partisan stances (Zhao, 2006). It is also worth noting that Chinese-language dailies such as *Chung Sai Yat Po* and *Mong Hing Yat Po* (San Francisco, 1891-1969) also published quality literary works written by immigrants; these literary works, when rediscovered in 1960s and 1970s, became important sources for studying the early Chinese American literature (Kwong & Miscevic, 2005).

Generally speaking, the Chinese-language press was in decline from the end of World War II through the 1960s, for both political and demographic reasons. The hostility between the Communist China and the West and the anti-communist sentiment in North America (particularly the anti-communist McCarthyism of 1950s in the U.S.), might have silenced a

generation of Chinese people living in North America. In terms of demography, many younger generation of Chinese born in North America were unable to read Chinese, while the number of new immigrants coming in was very limited in this period. At that time, the Chinese newspapers appeared to be “doomed to eventual distinction”, as observed by Lai (1977).

### Chinese-language Newspapers in North America: 1960s to present

In 1960s, at the same time as the established Chinatown newspapers were in decline, a new type of Chinese newspapers entered North America and gradually achieved nationwide prominence in both Canada and the U.S. These newspapers were established by the media companies in Hong Kong and Taiwan, as a way to expand into North American market. One of the most successful newspapers in this group is *Sing Tao Daily's* North American editions (Leung, 2007) . *Sing Tao Daily* was based in Hong Kong and in 1961, it began distribution in San Francisco through airmail on daily basis and two years later started printing the paper in San Francisco. In the following years, *Sing Tao* became one of the few Chinese newspapers distributed nationwide in both Canada and the U.S., with local editions in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Toronto, and Vancouver. This business model, an international media company plus its numerous local offices, certainly has economic advantages over smaller presses with limited resources.

As a matter of fact, all of the other leading Chinese-language dailies in North America, *World Journal*, *China Press*, and *Ming Pao*, are either formally affiliated with media organizations in Taiwan (*World Journal*) or Hong Kong (*Ming Pao*) or have maintained close ties with the authority in mainland China (*China Press*). This apparently has caused some concern in the Chinese community and most of these newspapers address these concerns through increasing the coverage of local community issues and adopting the non-partisan or moderate political stances.

Table 1: Major Chinese-language Newspapers in North America

	Circulation in United States	Circulation in Canada	International Affiliation
<i>World Journal</i>	298,500	25,000	Affiliated with United Daily in Taiwan
<i>Sing Tao Daily</i>	181,000	40,000	Affiliated with Sing Tao Group in Hong Kong
<i>China Press</i>	120,000	35,000	Maintaining close ties with mainland China
<i>Ming Pao Daily News</i>	100,000		Affiliated with the Ming Pao Group in Hong Kong

(adapted from Zhou et al., 2006)

At the same time when the major Chinese newspapers are achieving nationwide prominence, the community newspapers who had seen a decline in earlier decades have started to see a revival, especially from 1990s. This has happened in both old Chinatowns and new ethnic suburbs where Chinese speakers moved into in large numbers. The following two tables with information about the current Chinese newspapers from the New York-New

Jersey area and the Toronto area help illustrate the point—most of these newspapers were started in 1990s and later. Please note that only the local or regional publications are listed here, but the nationwide newspapers mentioned above are available in both areas.

Table 2: Regional Chinese-Language Newspapers and Periodicals Available in New York and New Jersey Metropolitan Area

Title	Frequency	Distribution Method	Year Founded	Circulation	Office	Source
Asian American Times	Weekly	Free	1987	20,000	Flushing, NY	a
Brooklyn Chinese Monthly	Monthly	Free	1999	35,000	Brooklyn, NY	a
Chinese Consumer Weekly	Weekly	Free	1991?-		Edison, NJ	b
Chinese News Weekly	Weekly	Free		15,000	Metuchen, NJ	a
Duowei Times	Weekly	Free	1999		Edison, NJ	a & b
The Epoch Times	Weekly	Free			Edison, NJ	b
Global Chinese Times	Weekly	Free	1991?-		Edison, NJ	b
Herald Monthly	Monthly	Free	1988		NYC	b&c
Liberty Times	Daily	Free in NYC, Newsstand in NJ, Subscription	1990	30,000	Flushing, NY	a
M-Weekly	Weekly	Free, Newsstand			NYC	a
NJ Chinese Living	Weekly	Free			South Plainfield, NJ	b
Sino Monthly	Monthly	Free, Subscription	1991	10,000	Edison, NJ	a
The SinoAmerican Times	Weekly	Free		30,000 (NYC)	NYC	a&b

(Sources:

- a. Many Voices, One City: the IPA Guide to the Ethnic Press of New York and New Jersey Metropolitan Area, 2004.
- b. Author's direct observations in Central New Jersey
- c. Web site of the corresponding newspaper.)

Table 3: Regional Chinese-language Newspapers in Toronto Metropolitan Area

Title	Frequency	Distribution Method	Year Founded	Circulation	Source
New Star Weekly	Weekly	Free	2002		Web site
Chinese Canadian Times	Weekly	Free	2002	13,000	Web site
Very Good News	Weekly	Free	2004	11,000	Web site
Global Chinese Press	Twice a week	Free	2000	60,000	Web site
Chinese News	Three times a week	Free	1993		Web site
Today Daily News	Daily	Subscription & Newsstand	2005		Web site
Canadian Chinese News	Weekly		1995		Web site (Not updated since 2006)
Herald Monthly	Monthly		1988		Web site

### Issues for Libraries

The above information about the historical and contemporary Chinese-language newspapers in North America can help us address the issues facing the library community, particularly in the areas of information access, collection and preservation, and digitization. In the following I will address these three issues separately, focusing on both what the library community has done and what we should do in the future.

#### Information Access

To access the newspapers, a researcher needs to know what newspapers are available and where they can be found. One of the traditional ways for the library community to provide access is to compile a union list of newspapers. Karl Lo, a well respected East Asian studies librarian in the United States, started to collect information on these newspapers in the mid 1960s in Kansas, almost at the same time when Him Mark Lai, a pioneer scholar in the field of Chinese American studies, began a similar endeavor in California. The two of them did not know about each other's work until they met in Seattle, Washington in early 1970s, and then they started to collaborate on compiling a union list of Chinese newspapers in North America. Altogether, they found 252 Chinese-language newspapers and periodicals from North America in the period from 1850s to 1975 (Lo & Lai, 1977). More recently, the Overseas Chinese Documentation Center at Ohio University in the United States created a database for overseas Chinese newspapers and journals (Shao Center), which includes over 400 titles published in North America (342 in U.S. And 60 in Canada).

In order to keep track of the development of contemporary Chinese newspapers, Yan Ma, a librarian turned library science professor, conducted two surveys in 1987, 1995/96 and 2001 (Ma, 1989, 1999, 2003). She reported results from 38 newspapers and periodicals from



the 1987 survey, 40 from 1995/96, and 40 from 2001. It is worth mentioning that there were a variety of titles included in her surveys, from daily newspapers to general interest periodicals to academic journals, both in Chinese and in English. Given the numbers of titles I found being published in New York-New Jersey and Toronto, Ma probably only covered a small percentage of the Chinese-language press in her last two surveys. Nonetheless, in each survey, Ma identified the newspaper's title, location, editor, starting date, circulation number, frequency, and distribution method, so her surveys captured and preserved important snapshots of these Chinese-language publications in the period from 1987 to 2001. Based on her 2001 survey, Ma also tried to examine the web presence of these newspapers (Ma, 2003).

In the area of information access, there appear to be two problems in spite of the accomplishments of the library community aforementioned. The first problem is the lack of a mechanism to keep track of local newspapers that have been constantly popping up since 1970s. I have only given examples in two areas: New York-New Jersey and Toronto, but other areas with large Chinese population, such as the West Coast of Canada and United States, also produce a number of local papers. We probably cannot collect all of them, but having a full picture of what have been published can definitely help us decide what to collect. To cope with this problem, we may need to employ a variety of methods, such as searching newspaper directory, observing directly, and conducting surveys. I personally feel that direct access to these newspapers is key to gain accurate information, so the ideal situation will be to have librarians working in each metropolitan area and then pool the information together.

The other problem facing the libraries is the lack of cross references in library catalogs to variant names of newspapers. Normally, a Chinese-language newspaper published in North America will have at least two titles, the Chinese title and the English title, which may or may not be the exact translation of the Chinese title. Sometimes, the newspaper will also print a transliterated version of the Chinese title on the newspaper, and to make matter worse, the transliteration from earlier periods is always different from the romanization system the library is using today.

A case in point is the Chinese Times, published in Vancouver from 1914 to 1992. It has three titles printed on its earlier issues: 大漢公報 (the Chinese title), *The Chinese Times* (the English title), and *Tai Hong Kong Bo* (the transliterated title). It is very likely that *Tai Hong Kong Bo* was mentioned in historical sources, but should a researcher try to find it in library catalogs such as OCLC WorldCat, he or she would not be able to find it, because the current standard transliteration is “Da han gong bao” and this is the one used in the WorldCat. My experience is that this may not be a unique case. Therefore, adding cross references to variant titles is necessary in order to facilitate access.

### Collection and Preservation

In the U.S., on the preservation front, most significant efforts were undertaken as part of the United States Newspaper Program (USNP), funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (“United States Newspaper Program”). California, given its large number of Chinese newspapers, had microfilmed many historical titles through the USNP program (Chiu, 1997). Other states might also have also microfilmed some Chinese newspapers. Certainly individual institutions will take action to preserve newspapers in their own collection when the need arises. Because the original copies of these historical newspapers

are very rare, purchasing the microfilms appear to be the only way to build a comprehensive collection.

The main challenge in the area of collection and preservation seems to come from the newspapers appearing after 1970s. I have not seen a systematic effort to collect and preserve these newspapers in the libraries I have been to. Usually the libraries, even some local public libraries, may subscribe to the *World Journal* for people to read, but I do not think any library keep it permanently. My institution and quite a few other libraries in New Jersey subscribe to the *Sino Monthly* (Edison, NJ); because it is a monthly in magazine format, it is relatively easy to keep as part of the permanent collection. But this is certainly insufficient given the number of titles that are currently in print, so what should we do?

As I have observed, since 1970s, the Chinese-language press has developed a two-tiered system: nationwide newspapers and regional/local ones. The nationwide newspapers usually represent different subgroups with different geographic origins: Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China. So each of these nationwide newspapers is quite unique in a significant way and all of them need to be collected and preserved. On the other hand, the regional and local newspapers that cover the same area tend to have a lot of overlap in terms of both community news coverage and advertisements, so it may not be so cost effective if we try to preserve them all.

Based on these observations, I recommend a two-level system for collecting and preserving contemporary Chinese-language newspapers in North America. The national libraries (Library of Congress and The National Library and Archives of Canada) and research libraries of national prominence need to take responsibility for the nationwide newspapers, while the state libraries and research libraries in the states need to take care of the regional newspapers. For the regional/local newspapers, we need carefully examine each title in terms of its content. Usually in each community, one or two newspapers may be more reputable than others, so those titles should be given higher priority.

### Digitization

Major Chinese-language press is taking steps to provide digital version of their content on their web site. In my view, the *World Journal* is leading the pack. On its web site ([worldjournal.com](http://worldjournal.com)), users can browse the content from the last seven days, and significant amount of previous contents are archives and can be found via search engines. Recently, users can also read the e-paper on its web site, which is exactly the same as the paper copy, but only the current day's content is available via e-paper. In the case of the *World Journal*, preserving its digital content may be one thing that the library community and the company can collaborate on.

Libraries in both Canada and the United States have taken steps to digitize historical Chinese-language newspapers. In Canada, Simon Fraser University, in collaboration with the University of British Columbia Libraries, digitized a significant portion of *The Chinese Times* (Minkus, 2004). In the United States, libraries in the University of California system digitized the 1900-1904 issues of the *Chung Sai Yat Po* (“Guide to the *Chung Sai Yat Po* Newspaper Collection”). Sporadic issues of other titles may have also been digitized, such as the *Golden Hills' News* mentioned before. Hopefully in the case of the United States, the recently launched National Digital Newspaper Program (“National Digital Newspaper Program”) will also cover the historical Chinese-language newspapers.

Text recognition is one of the biggest technical challenges for digitizing historical newspapers. The two Chinese newspaper digitization projects mentioned above have not overcome the obstacle of text recognition; all the pages are just scanned images and users cannot conduct full text search, which limits the utility of the digital version. Understandably, the text recognition technology for Chinese is most advanced in China, where Chinese is the native language. Therefore, an international collaboration may be necessary in order to convert the scanned images into searchable texts.

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