SOME UNIQUE LAW LIBRARY RESOURCES

By: George Butterfield

The Klutznick Law Library at the Creighton University School of Law has most of the resources that attorneys expect to find in an academic law library. There is a full range of secondary resources, primary authorities, and practice materials. There are treatises, loose-leaf services, forms, and many different types of materials available in print and electronic media. There are also some unique materials that attorneys may find of interest as they conduct their legal research. This article sets forth some of those materials and describes how the attorney can gain access to them.

Nebraska Advance Sheets: It should come as no surprise that the Creighton Law Library has the advance sheets sent out by the Nebraska Supreme Court. The Nebraska Reports generally have three to four years of advance sheets after the last bound volume. Creighton’s most current bound volume is number 270 dated as of February, 2006. If you are in the library and need to look at one of the advance sheets published since then, they are on reserve and available at the Circulation Desk. The Nebraska Supreme Court also posts pdf files of the past three months of cases on their website. Each case is published as a separate file. They can be accessed at http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov/opinions/index.shtml?sub1. This is a convenient way to access the cases for someone who does not use electronic access to the cases through a service and does not want to come to the library to look at the advance sheets. The problem with the Supreme Court site is that the cases are not archived so anything older than three months is not available. Although the Creighton Law Library does not have all of the cases in pdf format going back to volume 270, an effort to save these files began several years ago. A few cases from what will be volume 274 of the Nebraska Reports and then all of the files from volumes 275-279 are available. If you have a citation for a case and want that pdf file, a request can be made and the file will be emailed to you. If you do not have a citation but know the name of the case, the files are easily searched and the email can still be sent with the appropriate file. Send requests for files to GeorgeButterfield@creighton.edu.

Nebraska Supreme Court and Appellate Court Briefs: The Klutznick Law Library currently has briefs from the early 1900’s until March, 2009. The library does not have the briefs for the past nine months because there is a lag time between when the briefs are submitted to the court and when they are made available to the library. Many of the older briefs are in bound volumes but the newer ones are simply 8 1/2 by 11 inch sheets of paper stapled together. They are organized by docket number. The briefs are available to the public in the library. Copies can be made by the library for

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a charge or by the researcher on the public access copy machines which are coin operated. Although the briefs themselves are not available online, information is available as to what briefs are in the library's collection at http://lawlibrary.creighton.edu/?nebriefsearch. The database for the briefs is searchable by case number, case name, case citation, type of brief, and notes. An attorney who needs a copy of a brief can search the database for availability and then contact the library to arrange for delivery of a copy of the brief. Because of the number of briefs, all of the available briefs are not yet included in the database. This database is an ongoing project. Thus, an attorney should contact a reference librarian if they cannot find the brief they are looking for in the database.

Superseded Nebraska Statutes:
Several annotated versions of the Revised Statutes of Nebraska are now available. Recently, West came out with their version to go alongside those by the State of Nebraska and LexisNexis. Annotated codes include a wealth of information on the background and history of the various statutes. Yet, there are occasions when an attorney needs to know the exact wording of a statute from an earlier period that has since been revised. There have been attorneys who came to the library to discover the form of a statute that had been revised since the action that they were currently adjudicating. This information is generally not included in a revised code, even the annotated ones, and is also not available in electronic media online. Even if the information is available in an annotated code, it can frequently be fairly hard to decipher. Many firms do not have the space to keep older versions of the code and may have even come to rely primarily on electronic services to access the statutes. So, how can you access this information and be certain of its authenticity? The Klutznick Law Library has copies of all of the previous Nebraska codes, including the supplements that fill in the gaps between the dates of the volumes. The exact form of a statute for, say, 1949, can be discovered through a process of elimination using the older print volumes and their supplements. Reference librarians are available to assist the patron with this search. Older statutes can also be converted into pdf files and emailed to the patron, for a charge.

Finding Information on Former Attorneys: Have you ever needed to find information on someone who used to practice in Nebraska? Over the years the Library has had patrons who wanted to discover where a person practiced, the dates of their practice, etc. This information is generally not available in current print attorney directories such as the Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory or online at http://www.martindale.com/. The Klutznick Law Library has the up-to-date attorney directories but also never discards the older volumes. The library has the Martindale-Hubbell volumes that include Nebraska back to 1939 and these are available to patrons doing research. In fact, the Klutznick Law Library generally does not discard Nebraska legal materials. Before concluding that the information you need is long gone, check with a reference librarian at the library.

The Klutznick Law Library at Creighton School of Law has a wealth of materials that can assist the attorneys in their work. Most of these are what one expects to find in an academic law library. In addition to these, there are some unique materials that are also available. Come and browse in the library, ask for assistance from the professional reference librarian who is at the reference desk, or call for reference assistance at 402-280-5541.