FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Digital Press at the University of North Dakota Revives a Prairie Classic

Clell Gannon’s rugged home in Bismarck appears to spring from the very fabric of the prairie. The prairie likewise informs Gannon's first book of poetry, *Songs of the Bunch Grass Acres*. First published in 1924 and now republished by The Digital Press at the University of North Dakota, this small volume opens a window onto a North Dakota landscape that is teaming with life and laced with personal memories and tragic histories.

Gannon is known for his art which adorns county courthouses, features in numerous state collections, and is the namesake of Bismarck State College’s art gallery. *Songs of the Bunch Grass Acres* faithfully reproduces his line-drawn sketches, courtesy of artist Brandy Duarte, which accompanied these poems. The republication also includes an article titled "A Short Account of a Rowboat Journey from Medora to Bismarck," which appeared in the first issue of *North Dakota History* in 1926. North Dakota historians Aaron Barth and Tom Isern offer contemporary perspectives of Gannon's life and legacy in a new introduction and foreword.

Aaron Barth shares: "Clell Gannon is a window into how we all shape the landscape we live in, and how that same landscape shapes us. Gannon explains this in philosophy, manifesto and his art of life by and for the Northern Plains. Clell Gannon, like Willa Cather and N. Scott Momaday, should be required reading for Great Plains Citizenship."

In her endorsement of the book, Molly Rozum, the Ronald R. Nelson Chair of Great Plains and South Dakota History at the University of South Dakota, remarks: "His vivid poetry about grasses perfumed by prairie roses and spicy breezes wandering through grasslands looking for scattered trees sings of an abiding love for plains ecology and landscapes."

The book’s colorful and evocative cover, designed by Max Patzner, breathes life into a classic. Patzner remarks: “I...tried to get the style of illustration Clell is into (which I love very much) - AND tried to just make it contemporary… It's digital mixed with physical media."

The book was made possible through a collaboration between The Digital Press, *North Dakota Quarterly*, Northern Plains Heritage Foundation, Fort Abraham Lincoln Foundation, and the Northern Plains Heritage Alliance.

Bill Caraher, director of The Digital Press, comments, "This book reflects our continued commitment to the past and present literary culture and history of the Northern Plains. It demonstrates how regional publishing can play a central role bringing together artists, writers, readers, and funders to keep our region's unique stories alive and thriving."

*Songs of the Bunch Grass Acres* is available as both a free download and in paperback from The Digital Press at the University of North Dakota.

Contact information:

Aaron Barth, editor: [aaron@northernplainsheritage.org](mailto:aaron@northernplainsheritage.org)

Bill Caraher, UND, Publisher: [william.caraher@und.edu](mailto:william.caraher@und.edu)

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Aaron Barth headshot: Courtesy of Aaron Barth.

Gannon\_and\_Will: Clell Gannon (r) and George Will (l) in their flatbottomed boat. Image courtesy of the State Historical Society of North Dakota