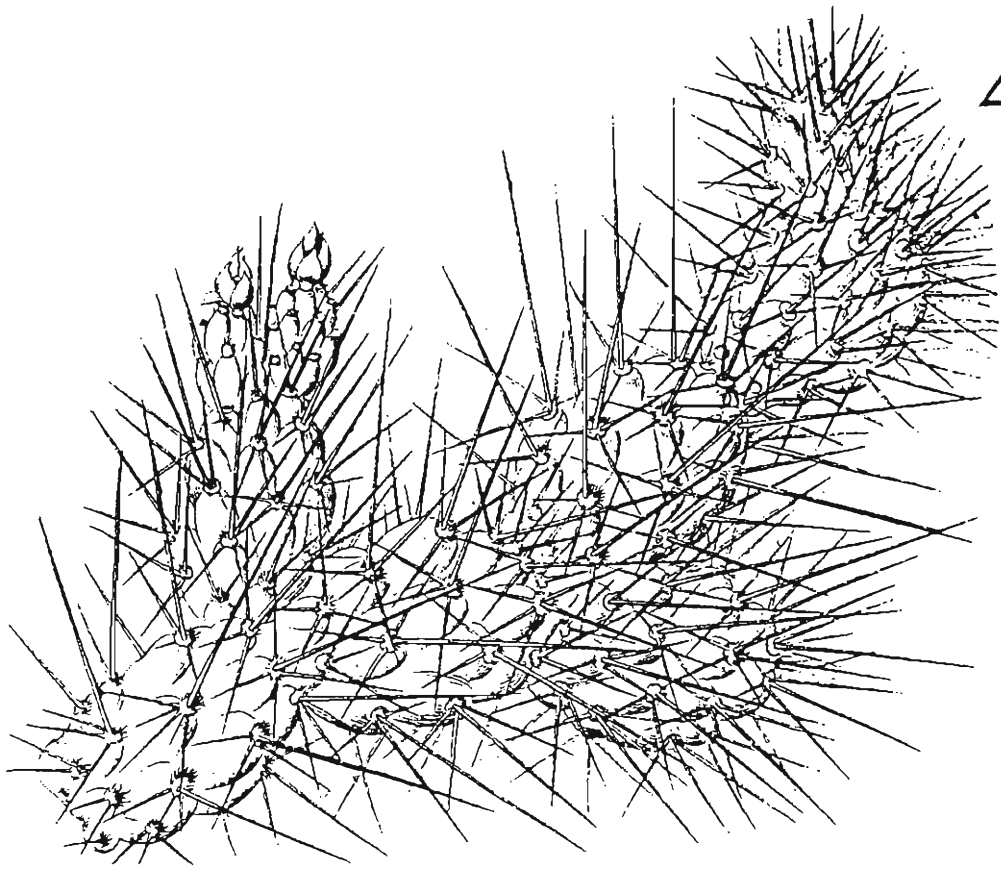


OPUNTIA

40.2



OPUNTIA is published by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2E7. Available for \$3 cash for a one-time sample copy, zine trade, or letter of comment on a previous issue. Whole-numbered issues are sercon, .1 issues are reviewzines, .2 issues are indexes, and .5 issues are perzines.

ART CREDIT: The cover is by an unknown artist from Volume 4 of the 1853-4 railroad survey from Mississippi to Pacific Ocean, 33rd Congress, 2nd Session. It depicts Opuntia brachyarthra.

EDITORIAL: The more I work at indexing, the greater is my respect for that type of unsung drudgery. I am not only keeping a cumulative index for OPUNTIA, but also am working on a Cumulative Subject Index Of Canadian Zines, a monster that threatens to take over my life. It is said that all knowledge is found in zines, but without an index to quickly locate it, the knowledge cannot be found. I would encourage every zine publisher to keep a cumulative subject index of their zine. Subject, not author or title. The latter two types of indexes are quick and easy to prepare, but are useless to someone trying to remember where they saw that article on how to fix your furnace. The biggest problem with subject indexes is trying to get a consistent set of subject headings. What seems logical when you first start out soon becomes a tangle of cross-references and missing keywords. It is not as easy as it looks!

PITY THE POOR INDEX WRITER!

by Anonymous

[reprinted from PUNCH, 1848, volume 15, page 274]

Only consider the everlasting industry, the indomitable patience, the curious talent it requires to constitute a great index writer. Oblivion is his fate, silent contempt his only reward. His work is referred to probably more than any other in the book. He is always a friend in need when you are in search of a good article. He is ready at a moment's notice to point out some particular subject you long to cry or laugh over, and still his work is uncared for, his serried columns of interesting figures are looked over with dry indifference, and not one person in a hundred thousand who takes a valuable volume such as the ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA or PUNCH, is actually aware there is such a person employed upon it as the index writer.

It is too bad. Talents like his deserve a higher recognition. Think of the coolness of head, the firmness of hand, which his work requires. Consider the mischief he might cause if he inadvertently put a 9 instead of a 6. The index writer gets blamed, and many are the bitter denunciations vented sometimes upon his anonymous head, but he never gets praised. He is thought nothing of when he is right, and yet when by the strangest accident he happens to be wrong, Gracious! what an outcry there is, and nothing is too bad for him.

Man is allowed to err at times, and is forgiven, but an index writer must be without a fault. He must be perfection itself. He is the virtual President of the Republic of Letters, and universal suffrage is the only return he gets.

But wait a little longer. The position of the index writer must one day be appreciated; the contempt has lasted too long.

CUMULATIVE SUBJECT INDEX TO OPUNTIA #1 TO #40.1
compiled by Dale Speirs

References are to issue number:pages. For example, 12.5:3-6,9 means issue #12.5, pages 3 to 6 and page 9.

Whole-numbered issues are sercon, x.1 issues are reviewzines, x.2 issues are indexes, and x.5 issues are perzines.

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