

PASSING OF THE CRUZADING EDITOR IN KANSAS.

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## Introduction.

Crusading journalism is a Kansas tradition. As early as territorial days, the newspaper was a great influence in the life of the Kansas people. The newspaper came before schools, churches, banks, stores; even before the towns themselves. The editors of the early newspapers, pro-slavery and free state alike, in the territorial days, were crusading pioneers. Although they differed in their opinions on the tremendous question of slavery, they were kindred spirits in editorial courage and determination, and set a high standard for the editors who carried on in the profession after statehood.

It is the purpose of this thesis to show how the example set by the territorial editors was followed by a similar spirit of active participation in the affairs of the people on the part of later editors; how this crusading spirit became a characteristic of the Kansas editor and reached its high point during the eighties and the early nineties;

and how the Populist controversy of the nineties and the "boss busting" campaigns carried on by some papers between 1900 and 1905 proved to be the last of the old Kansas journalism.

An attempt is also made in this thesis to show that the crusading spirit is no longer characteristic of Kansas journalism, and that its place has been taken by a sprightly paragraphic badinage which is sociable but not social. The possibility of a return of the educational significance, the literary tone and the vigor of the editorial column in Kansas journalism, which has, to a great extent, been lost in the business of publishing newspapers, is not overlooked.

Material for this thesis is based almost entirely upon a study of the newspapers in the collection of the Kansas State Historical Society at Topeka. In this, the greatest newspaper collection in the world, can be found virtually every copy of every newspaper published in Kansas since 1875. The writer thanks Mr. Bacon of the historical society for his kind help in the study of these newspapers. Valuable information and aid was obtained also in interviews with Chas. F. Scott of the Iola Register, Henry Allen of the Wichita Beacon, and other Kansas editors.

PASSING OF THE CRUSADING EDITOR IN KANSAS.

Chapter I.

Territorial Days.

Promise of a strong, enthusiastic, vital force in the struggle of Kansas to climb to a prominent position on the stage of American history, a force which would do much to help the pioneer state in lifting itself boldly out of a hostile environment to proclaim its principles of freedom, was given in the founding of the first newspaper in Kansas. Near Leavenworth, under an old elm tree, September 15, 1854, was set up the first number of the Leavenworth Herald. The courage and conviction with which its founder and editor, William H. Adams, went about the task of bringing the first Kansas newspaper into a rough pioneer country is typical of the fighting spirit of the Kansas editors of the early days.

True enough, Adams established a strictly pro-slavery policy for his newspaper, and, it turned out, was "on the wrong side of the fence". In fact,

he was so vigorously opposed to the free state cause that he soon strayed from his original mission, that of assisting in the sale of real estate, and worked wholeheartedly for the cause of slavery. But although Adams erred in his policies, his spirit was strong and his convictions were probably much more sincere than has been generally admitted.

As with other newspapers which followed, the Leavenworth Herald was founded as a business enterprise rather than as a political organ. It was inevitable that, among the heated controversies which surged through the territory during the free state struggle, the newspapers should rapidly take sides and serve as outlets for the editors' views, whether those views came as the personal opinions of private individuals who were vitally interested in the welfare of the new country, or as the judgments of newspaper editors who felt themselves, in their public capacity, to be guardians of the public good.

The Leavenworth Herald was founded primarily as a town paper for the purpose of aiding in the sale of real estate in and near Leavenworth. Adams was a rather conservatively disposed editor. He was a member of the original town company and

used his paper principally as a means of advertising the good points of the new territory and urging settlers to take up their abode in the land of promise. He supported the rules of squatter sovereignty and desired to have them fairly administered. He was a vigorous pioneer in defying the rigors of a rugged country, but the crusading spirit of his business enterprise was not accompanied by a similar spirit for any partisan cause, although in the field of business enterprise he was most certainly a crusader. At this time, Adams did not consider slavery a partisan issue. Later editors injected the partisan spirit into the Herald.

A pro-slavery newspaper was, therefore, the first newspaper in Kansas. And the early editors of this paper were vigorous crusaders. Undoubtedly, the editors of the Herald, as well as the editors of the Atchison Squatter Sovereign, the Doniphan Constitutionalist, the Kickapoo Kansas Pioneer, the Leavenworth Weekly Journal, the Lecompton National Democrat, the Lecompton Union, and other pro-slavery newspapers, had their shortcomings, but they had their good points

which should not be overlooked. They were fighting for a cause which they no doubt thought to be just. Some of them were impetuous and fiery in their partisanship, but it was a critical period in which they were writing their newspapers, one which called for quick action. Hence, their decisions were often reckless and their motives frequently were bitterly assailed by the friends of the free state cause. It is quite probable that, as Herbert Flint writes in his *Journalism in Territorial Kansas*, "the story of the pro-slavery and Democratic editors of territorial Kansas, like that of the correspondents of the Southern press, will never be sympathetically told. They lost; when Kansas became free most of them left the territory. The victors have written the history of Kansas, and in so doing have never taxed themselves to give the losers the benefit of many doubts; and consequently the pro-slavery journalists have received but scant mention. Nevertheless, these men were a bright and vigorous lot, although they were considerably outclassed by the free-soil editors, who drew upon the fresh blood of the North. As George



W. Martin has said, "the pro-slavery writer was burdened with the sentiments of a decaying institution, while the free-state journalists had behind them a mighty inspiration to write and fight. In spite of these handicaps, however, the Southern scribes made it quite generally known that they could write as fiercely and shoot as straight as any free-state editor; and they were a great deal more eager to do so than the representatives of the Lawrence and Topeka press." (1)

Looking back on the history of those territorial days one is inclined to view with alarm the policies of the pro-slavery editors, but at the same time to admire their zeal and enthusiasm in their fight for what was to be a lost cause. Flint writes further of the territorial editors:

"They were, too, mostly young men, these pro-slavery writers, though probably a little more mature than the majority of the free-soil editors owing to the presence among them of greater numbers of broken down politicians; and, like the Northern recruits, most of the Southerners came to Kansas primarily to make money rather than to propagate any political belief.

"It has been said that the editor played a leading role in all activities in the territory, including even those of crime and lawlessness. The pro-slavery writers were not

(1) Flint, Herbert: Journalism in Territorial Kansas, pp. 498-499.

alone in their outlawry, but apparently they were more eager for mortal combat than the free-state editors, and not so temperate. The Southern heart, inflamed by bad border whiskey, responded readily to appeals for settling matters with the shooting-iron, in keeping with the time-honored pride of the South. Out of this hot-blooded propensity doubtless grew many of the violent deeds that the pro-slavery journalist pre-eminently abetted if not participated in. The border was blackened the records of many men who should have confined their efforts to the pen." (2)

William H. Adams, then, setting up his printing press under an elm tree, cleared the arena for the fighting Kansas editors who were to carry on crusades of many kinds for many years to come. The Leavenworth Herald, in its first issue, carried an item which described some of the editor's difficulties:

"We have no apologies to make for the appearance of our paper, as we flatter ourselves that it needs none. We are certainly fortunate in that respect, commencing as we have done with new material, new press, and without access to any other printing office. All the type of the present number of the Herald has been set under an elm tree in the city of Leavenworth. Ourselves and our compositors have been, like the Patriarchs of old, 'dwellers in tents' for the last two weeks. During that time we have had almost every variety of weather, heat and cold, rain and dazzling sunshine, mists, fogs, and thunder storms. In addition to these duties and difficulties, we have packed wood, built fires, cooked for ourselves, fought mosquitoes, and slept on prairie hay on the ground. We have at the same time superintended the building of a substantial office, which is now nearly completed, and done our best to entertain and give information to the crowds of visitors who have thronged our young city. Our

(2) Flint, Herbert: Journalism in Territorial Kansas, pp. 499-500.

selections have been made, our editorials written, our proof read, sitting on the ground with a big shingle on our knee for a table. Think of this, ye editors, in your easy chairs and well furnished sanctums, and cease to crumble." (3)

This first editorial of a Kansas editor, though conservative in tone, shows an independent spirit. The editor makes no apologies to his readers. That, in itself, is remarkable, when one considers that most of the Herald's circulation list at that time must have been merely prospective. Another streak of independence running through this first editorial is that in which the editor complains of the inclement weather which he was forced to endure. It would seem that, since the Herald was founded chiefly to promote the sale of real estate, the editor would "soft pedal" any news except of sunshine and roses. But it was typical of the early Kansas editor to write just as he felt---and sometimes he felt very miserable, indeed.

Adams probably did not expect to make his paper self-supporting in a short time; he meant to profit from his support of the town company which was organized for the handling of town sites and farm claims. He and other members

(3) Leavenworth Herald, September 15, 1854.

of the Leavenworth Town Company saw big business ahead in the increase of the value of land as the stream of immigration flowed in from all parts of the United States. Parties of prospective settlers from the North and the East had been coming in with increasing regularity. Squatters had met near Leavenworth June 10, 1854, and had laid down rules for land claims. They had also served notice that the institution of slavery was already in existence in Kansas, and that no Northern abolitionists would be allowed to settle in the territory.

With the sentiment of the squatters Adams was in accord, and he asserted this policy in his newspaper. In fact, the Herald's "Prospectus" had shown the editor's intentions. The prospectus of territorial journalism, used by all newspapers of the period, was an announcement of certain facts which the editor of a forthcoming newspaper desired to give out in advance of the founding of the publication. The prospectus was inserted usually as an advertisement in some other newspaper and gave certain information concerning the policies of the coming newspaper,

time and place of publication, and subscription terms. It often featured the editor's "politics".

The first issue of the Leavenworth Herald reprinted the information which had been given in its prospectus. It was the first prospectus in Kansas journalism, and is especially important because it was a form used regularly by later territorial editors in making definite announcements of their editorial policies. The Herald's prospectus follows:

#### "INTRODUCTORY

"The establishment of the first press in a Territory is always an important and interesting event; and this we feel to be particularly so, in the establishment of one in the Territory of Kansas.

"We commence our efforts under a combination of circumstances peculiarly interesting and exciting, and therefore great wisdom, prudence, and moderation are indispensable in conducting a press at this time and in this place; more, indeed, of these qualities are needed than we profess to have. At the same time, the qualities of truth, honesty, and firmness were never more requisite on the part of journalists than at this time.

"Our course shall be straight-forward, open, undisguised, repudiating alike, on the one hand, violence and ultraism, in the defence and advocacy of our principles; and on the other, every form and species of Machiavelian policy that substitutes craft, cunning, duplicity and falsehood for truth, honesty, and manly fairness and integrity--a policy as crooked as the course of the serpent, and whose principles are as poisonous as the virus of its fangs.

"As honest journalists we deem it necessary to define our positions and declare our political creed. We are Democrats, and will advocate

and defend the well established and long tried principles of that democracy, which has conducted our country to the elevated station she holds among the nations of the world, and the dread of tyrants.

"We shall also defend to the utmost of our abilities the constitution, the laws and the institutions of our country, firmly believing, that with the preservation of the same is identified the preservation of our union and our liberties. We will, therefore, oppose all fanatical and factious movements, in every quarter---of every name and every pretext, that opposes itself to that constitution, those laws and institutions,

"Subscribing with all our hearts to the true and safe democratic doctrine, that the majority shall rule, that its will and decisions shall be the supreme law of the land---we shall oppose steadfastly all endeavors to counteract the same, and count those as enemies, who will not submit thereto, when legally and constitutionally declared.

"As pioneers of the press in this new and beautiful Territory, we will carefully watch over her interests, defend her rights, advocate her claims and endeavor to promote her interests and welfare. Believing that an intelligent and moral press is a powerful agent in elevating the character of a people, in correcting and purifying public sentiment, we will do our utmost to make our paper an efficient instrument in that behalf. We look for favor and assistance in our labors, to the friends of virtue, law and order, and to the lovers of our country and her glorious constitution. Osborn & Adams." (4)

More warlike editors followed Adams on the Leavenworth Herald. W. H. Osborn had been a silent partner with Adams in the publishing of the Herald. From these two men the ownership of the newspaper went to Lucien J. Eastin, who bought it for an investment in

(4) Leavenworth Herald, September 15, 1854.

October, 1854. The Herald later changed ownership many times, but Eastin was undoubtedly its outstanding editor. When Eastin took charge of the paper the bitter strife between pro-slavery and free-state men had begun. He made of the newspaper a fire-eating sheet. His policy was entirely pro-slavery. He jumped headlong into the battle. He voiced his sentiments in his paper but, not content with that alone, he took an active part in the border troubles and in the free-state and pro-slavery controversies in general. He raised the cry of insurrection against the free-state element, led troops against Lawrence, sat in the bogus legislature at Shawnee Mission in July, 1855, and was always ready to leave his desk to take up arms for the pro-slavery cause. He was anxious to exterminate the free-state organization and distributed much propaganda to arouse the pro-slavery forces.

On December 1, 1855, during the Waka-rusa War, he sent an appeal to the friends of slavery in the border counties of Missouri:

"To Arms !! To Arms !!

"It is expected that every lover of Law and Order will rally at Leavenworth on Saturday, December 1, prepared to march at

once to the scene of the rebellion, to put down the outlaws of Douglas county, who are committing depredations upon persons and property, burning down houses and declaring open hostility to the laws, and have forcibly rescued a prisoner from the Sheriff. Come one, come all! The laws must be executed. The outlaws, it is said, are armed to the teeth, and number 1,000 men. Every man should bring his rifle and ammunition, and it would be well to bring two or three days' provisions. Every man to his post, and to his duty. Many Citizens." (5)

An editorial assistant of Eastin's, H. Rives Pollard, was as individualistic as the editor himself in voicing his opinions. And not infrequently he struck as vigorously at a pro-slavery man as at the free-state man, depending on where his pride was hurt most:

"The low, silly, garrulous numbskull of the Squatter Sovereign, yclept Kelley, the contemptible, whining, blind puppy of Atchison, that answers to the name of 'Bob', continues to pour forth his tirade of abuse upon us with unrelenting fury.....The Sovereign, in speaking of our 'low-flung language', says, 'He can assail no one but in the language of the dog-gery'. It is to be presumed that when we assail a dog, it will be in language intelligible to him. We look upon Kelley as a dog, and consequently thought the 'language of the doggery' suitable to the occasion....."

"In the peroration of the Sovereign's article Kelley becomes exceedingly bellicose, and gives us to understand that he 'will fight'. This does not frighten us; if Kelley wishes to fight, and will designate some time and place for that purpose, we will meet him....." (6)

The most violently pro-slavery newspaper was the Atchison Squatter Sovereign, a

(5) Leavenworth Herald, December 1, 1855.

(6) Ibid., June 1, 1855.



town paper founded February 3, 1855, by Dr. John H. Stringfellow and Robert S. Kelley. It began as a town company publication; but it soon became the most rabidly partisan of the pro-slavery newspapers of Kansas. The editors went after the free-state element with hammer and tongs. They spared nothing in their bloodthirsty editorials. Stringfellow was a reckless writer who inflamed the pro-slavery faction as effectively with his editorials as did whiskey and incendiary oratory. Undoubtedly his pen brought about much of the bloodshed and destruction which was prevalent during the territorial days. Kelley wrote in a similar vein, and the editorials of these two men made the Atchison Squatter Sovereign the "real red-blooded, murder-seeking, Abolitionist-hanging, murder-condoning, bloodthirsty pro-slavery paper of all Kansas journalism." (7)

Although the paper was founded as a town company organ, and although the two editors were much interested in the town site of Atchison as a business proposition, there was no hesitancy on the part of the paper in taking a stand politically soon after it was founded. The two editors were of extremely pugnacious nature in their

(7) Flint: Journalism in Territorial Kansas, p.140.

views on the slavery question. They had no qualms; they were willing to fight through, and accepted readily any blame thrust upon them for the "last outrage perpetrated".

In fact, even when they could see no particular connection between their editorial efforts and the ravages of the pro-slavery element, they seemed to be eager to accept a full share of the responsibility and to take pride in assuming it. They unquestionably gloried in every act of the pro-slavery forces. It is difficult to say just how sincere were their motives. The Squatter Sovereign said:

"We do not claim the honor of suggesting the numerous plans adopted by our friends for the riddance of freesoilers from this Territory, but we do endorse every act that has been done, from the submerging of the Perkeville Luminary to the 'last outrage perpetrated'. We go in for a war of extermination against the lawless nullifiers and negro-stealers now infesting this Territory, and when occasion offers we will show our love for Northern blood by causing it to flow in profusion to enrich our soil." (8)

The editors of the Squatter Sovereign believed in action. They urged force in their editorial columns and were never backward about advising the pro-slavery men to go after the free-state advocates and to "hang the leaders and give their blind and bigoted followers a stated time to leave,

(8) Herald of Freedom, reprint, March 22, 1856.

and then let the law and order men stay upon the ground until the last hound is outside the bounds of Kansas. It is the only course that will insure peace and quiet in the Territory." (9)

In the opinion of the editors of the Squatter Sovereign, every free-state man was crooked, contemptible, and unfit to be allowed in the territory. The editors were especially displeased at the fact that eastern and northern men were coming into the territory in great numbers and were taking the liberty of imposing their free-state views upon the many southern men who had come into the territory to settle and had hoped to bring the institution of slavery along with them. This is, perhaps, the best explanation of the rabid character of the editorial sentiment expressed by Kelley and Stringfellow. They wanted to make short work of the "Abolition rascals", so that the territory might be left to southern gentlemen who were ready to abide by the dictates of "law and order."

The abolitionists were the continual prey of the Squatter Sovereign editors:

"Pardee Butler.----This contemptible tool of the Abolitionists who a short time ago was shipped from this place on a raft, had the audacity to visit

(9) Atchison Squatter Sovereign, May 6, 1856.

again this town. As our citizens were not willing to allow an Abolitionist spy to visit them with impunity, they politely treated him to a coat of tar and feathers, and escorted him out of town, promising him, in the event of another visit, a hepp rope. The time is past when such cowardly and contemptible Abolition rascals can hold up their heads in Atchison and we promise all of like stamp who may visit this place a severer punishment..  
....A word to the wise is sufficient." (10)

In the meantime, the Leavenworth Herald had been developing along partisen lines and was working overtime in an effort to measure up to the qualifications of a full-fledged pro-slavery organ. Its sentiments and activities had become positive and unreserved. It was afterwards regarded as the most humane of the pro-slavery newspapers, but even within this circumscription it had plenty of room. It regarded all abolitionists as "nigger-stealers", hired voters or general crooks; it supported the bogus legislature and its activities; it took an active part in the border ravages.

Its claim to a prominent place among pro-slavery journals was soon supported by editorials of which the following is a typical extract:

"The lazy, lousy, worthless, negro-stealing, members of the Boston Emigrant Society----the mean, dirty, contemptible scrapings of the gutters who come west as the hired emissaries of such despicable traitors as Eli Thayer, Amos Lawrence, and others and the interested abolitionists worse if possible from the better means of information

(10) Atchison Squatter Sovereign, May 6, 1856.

than the hirelings of Thayer & Co., who have taken up their residence at the delectable town of Lawrence for the avowed purpose of stealing, running off and hiding the runaway negroes from Missouri----among them, the wives of Reverend gentlemen (excuse me for the misnomer) are----rotten." (11)

The pro-slavery editors took a pleasing interest in the quarrel which two free-state editors were having at Lawrence. The battle of words going on between Miller of Lawrence Free State and Brown of the Herald of Freedom naturally gave the pro-slavery editors something to point at. The Leavenworth Herald took full advantage of the opportunity.

"When Rogues Fall Out, etc.---That the abolitionist papers at Lawrence were bought up and sustained by private funds in the way of a bonus we have never entertained a doubt, but now they begin to leak out the fact themselves. The Herald of Freedom, trying to throw off as much of the odium as possible upon its contemporary, charges the Free State editor with receiving a bonus of several hundred dollars from pro-slavery men. This the Free State denies, and then charges upon Brown, of the Herald of Freedom, in this wise: 'The man who could drive his poor old father from his house and place him upon the charities of the community, is fit only to publish such lies', alluding to the charges made against the Free State.

"The Herald of Freedom charges the Free State editor with being a lying, drunken sot, and threatens him with further exposure about being bought up.

"From this mess we can glean something of the men who aspire to lead in making Kansas a free state." (12)

This comment by the Leavenworth Herald

(11) Herald of Freedom, March 30, 1855.

(12) Leavenworth Herald, November 3, 1855.

indicates a situation which was, in fact, typical of the activities of the free-state papers,---the tendency to spend a great deal of editorial energy in attacking each other rather than in tirades against the pro-slavery cause. This was particularly true of the two outstanding free-state newspapers, the Lawrence Free State and the Herald of Freedom. It was true, of course, that the pro-slavery editors had plenty of fights between themselves also, but not so frequently or at such length as did Miller of the Free State and Brown of the Herald of Freedom.

The tendency of the free-state papers as a whole was toward a more conservative policy than that adopted by the pro-slavery editors. The explanations for this are not difficult to find. Although the free-state editors did make announcements of their stand on the slavery question, they undoubtedly felt that it would be wiser and safer to follow a somewhat conservative path, since they were in close proximity to strictly enemy territory and did not, consequently, enjoy the comparative security which was felt by the pro-slavery editors, who looked with no little satisfaction on the

Missouri border country.

G. W. Brown, who founded the Herald of Freedom at Lawrence, January 3, 1855, asserted his support of the free-state cause. His newspaper was an organ of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company, and Brown, on the whole, was more intent upon advertising Lawrence as a town site than upon settling the slavery question. Nevertheless, he did come out with a statement of his views on the subject and on the intention of his newspaper to oppose the introduction of the institution of slavery into Kansas. Brown's motives have been questioned, but from an examination of the files of his paper one finds little ground for accusing him of being a traitor to the free-state cause. The truth of the matter probably is that, although he was against slavery in Kansas, he was willing to be friendly to the neighbors in Missouri until such time as the issue could be definitely and more handily settled. He was satisfied, in the meantime, to draw the attention of prospective settlers to this new land which was full of promise.

Brown, in his opening editorial announcing "an independent weekly newspaper devoted to freedom and the Interests of Kansas Territory", declared

his policy of a "defensive warfare for the Right":

"To the Reader

"Our great object is to make Kansas a free state; and to that end we shall labor by encouraging emigration. It is not our purpose to engage in a crusade against our southern brethren, nor upon their institutions, so long as confined within their legitimate sphere. Our field is Kansas and here we shall labor and here erect the altar of Liberty. ---with the Declaration of American Independence in one hand and the Constitution of the Republic in the other we engage in a defensive warfare for the Right. We firmly believe that victory will crown the efforts of the Sons of Freedom; but the struggle will be long and arduous. We may be stricken down at first but not defeated.

"With this simple declaration we launch our humble barge on the wide sea of public opinion, and trust that propitious winds and favorable currents may glide us swiftly to our destined port...."(13)

Brown, in his attitude of watchful waiting, was careful, in most cases, to avoid censure from the pro-slavery men on the Missouri side. He urged the readers of his newspaper to show by example and by increasing prosperity that freedom was preferable to slavery. He announced in his editorial columns that he was of the opinion that this would be the most effective means that possibly could be employed to induce the pro-slavery men to emancipate their slaves and to abandon their campaign to bring the institution of slavery into Kansas. "Aggression only begets aggression," he said, "and it is

(13) Herald of Freedom, October 21, 1854.



for this we enter our solemn protest against the outrages so recently practiced upon this community, with an ardent hope that they will never be repeated." (14)

Two weeks later Brown was more confident in tone. He was beginning to feel more the spirit of the free-state cause. Convinced, by definite assertions of sentiment in the territory, that the slavery forces were losing ground and that passive resistance was no longer necessary, he began to write of "the nation drenched in fraternal blood", and to assert boldly a demand for "Kansas a Free State":

".....But Kansas can never be a slave State. The north has spoken through the ballotbox, and her language cannot be misunderstood.

" 'No more slave States, no more slave Territory,' is the emphatic resolve,----They may drive the representatives of the people from Washington, but they cannot drive the north into the support of their measures. They have driven the north into the support of their measures. They have driven the north too far already. 'The last straw breaks the camel's back', and the last great outrage upon Kansas has settled the question of freedom in all the new territories forever. 'No more compromises with slavery' has become a fixed law with northern freemen. The aspirant for office, who shall any where in the north bow the knee to the slave power, or show a truckling spirit, will be sacrificed upon the altar of public opinion.

"Missourians may bluster as much as they please; but every step they take to resist the onward strides of free institutions, every free

(14) Herald of Freedom, April 7, 1855.

press they demolish, and every act of personal violence will sink them deeper and deeper in the quagmires from which there is no extrication. The destruction of the Parkville Luminary. What have they accomplished? Merely given its publishers a notoriety, and driven them to the free States armed with missiles a thousand times more potent for effect against an institution which opposes free discussions....." (15)

True to the spirit of the territorial editor, Brown was quick to assert his independence. Although his newspaper was founded under the patronage of a town company, there is little evidence of any control over the editor's policies. He did encourage immigration, and this was an asset to the town company, but a campaign to bring settlers into a new country can hardly be considered a sinister motive on the part of an editor who is not himself afraid of facing the rigors of frontier life.

With those who found fault with his policies Brown was somewhat impatient, but with those who hinted that he was subservient to a power behind him he was particularly irritated. Hence, it was not long before his editorial comment dealt heavily with the matter of declaring his independence:

".....Our paper is the organ of no party or person, save ourself. No person is responsible for a single thought or word expressed by us, and we wish all the world to understand. We always have and always expect to publish an independent journal, and when we cease to be able to do this we shall

(15) Herald of Freedom, April 21, 1855.

abandon the business, and engage in some other pursuit where we shall not be enslaved. Our opinions are our own. Those wishing them can have them, as expressed in our journal, at \$2 a year. Those not wanting them are desired to seek some other market and buy a different commodity.

"Those who are finding fault with the tone of the Herald of Freedom are not its patrons, and most of them never were. If they have read the paper at all, it has been in the characters of borrowers. Such persons, all men know, are not qualified to form a correct opinion of any paper; and for us to change the tone or character of ours to suit the caprice of such persons would be showing a subserviency to the demands of insolence which we shall never submit to. Besides this, we have no political weather cock by which to shape our course....." (16)

Little encouragement was given by free-state editors to the pro-slavery publications which were springing up in the territory. There was not a great deal of space given over to fights between editors of the two sides, but now and then there did exist open friction. Brown commented on the founding of the Kansas Pioneer, a pro-slavery paper of Kickapoo City, in this fashion:

"The Kansas Pioneer.

"Such is the title of a paper published at Kickapoo City, Kansas Territory. It is of respectable size, and looks very well. The editor claims that it is the first pro-slavery paper published in the Territory. We hope it will be the last." (17)

Territorial editors did not bow obeisance to their subscribers. They had a sort of a "Take it or leave it" attitude toward the reader, in many

(16) Herald of Freedom, March 1, 1856.

(17) Ibid., January 6, 1855.

instances, and, instead of being apologetic for a late edition or for typographical errors or errors of fact, were inclined to insist that "to err is human" and that publishing a newspaper in a pioneer country was no mean job. It is not unlikely that the reader mentioned in the following comment merely swallowed his medicine and kept right on taking his paper:

"The man who imagines himself wise because he detected some typographical errors in a newspaper, is about like going East to get a perpendicular view of the rainbow." (18)

Other free-state papers were also vigilant and tireless in their campaign against slavery. They kept the Kansas question before the public. The free-state papers, particularly those in Lawrence, were more influential than any other single factor in championing the cause of Kansas. During the seven years of strife, they kept alert in the campaign, some, like the Herald of Freedom, using immigration as the chief topic of discussion, but all of them working toward one end.

The Lawrence Free State, founded about Jan. 10, 1855, by R. G. Elliott and Josiah Miller, was another specially active free-state paper. Speer's Kansas Tribune, Lawrence, The Kansas Freeman, Topeka, and other free-state papers were less effective than

(18) Herald of Freedom, February 3, 1855.

the Herald of Freedom and the Lawrence Free State.

The Free State set forth its policy in its first issue, announcing itself as uncompromisingly opposed to the introduction of slavery in Kansas. Miller, who was the real force on the Free State, denounced slavery as "tending to impoverish the soil, to stifle all energy and enterprize, to paralyze the hand of industry, and to weaken intellectual effort. It (the Free State) shall regard it as the 'Upas of the moral world, under whose pestiferous influence all intellect languishes, and all virtue dies.'" (19)

Miller of the Free State was not as cautious as Brown in proclaiming his stand on the slavery question. Neither was he backward about criticising the policies and activities of the editor of the Herald of Freedom. He accused Brown continually of being a traitor to the Free State cause, and took every opportunity to denounce or ridicule him. In fact, he spent more space attacking Brown than he did in attacking any pro-slavery editor.

The Emigrant Aid Company was attacked by Miller, who maintained that it was doing more harm than good in Kansas. This showed an independent spirit on the part of the editor, since it would have

(19) Lawrence Free State, January 10, 1855.

been a much more convenient thing to support the town company movements which were considered legitimate enterprises in the territorial period. The fact that Brown of the Herald of Freedom actively supported the efforts of the Emigrant Aid Company in bringing settlers to Kansas is, without question, one of the main reasons why he was so severely attacked by the Free State. Miller accused Brown of being lukewarm on the slavery question and heaped him with abuse and ridicule, depending usually on the latter for the best effect:

"It is exceedingly amusing to see how very much some men were alarmed in this place on the day of election. The editor of the Herald was concealed most of the day, until near night, then, loaded down with revolvers and bowies, sneaked over to the polls and voted after the Missourians had dispersed. A number of others did not go to the polls at all. There was no danger. Those leaders of the Missourians would not have had a dollar's worth of property destroyed or any person injured in Kansas. We passed about through the crowd of imported voters with nothing but a pen knife in our pocket, and was pointed out as the editor of the strongest Free State paper in the Territory; yet no one threatened to molest us. They all treated us in a very gentlemanly manner. But some of our neighbors will explain this by saying that we have joined the pro-slavery party. There is one thing that we understand that many Eastern men do not, and that is how to deal with Southern men. This is the reason why Mr. Brown blunders along so much with his Herald. He would like to do something if he knew how, but cannot get at it right.

"Nothing is so ridiculous and contemptible as the manner in which he has managed the Herald. At first he, through fear and a desire to get more subscribers, got up a very tame, dough-faced paper, or at least those distributed in the Territory were such; we heard it intimated that a different edition was sent East. We noticed him several times, and

finally he began to work right in the Free State ranks, until last week he issued two or three editions, one for the Missourians, containing no anti-slavery at all, the other for the East, rabid in its denunciations of pro-slavery men, and the third for a medium class of thinkers. Such a coward might do in Conneautville, Pennsylvania, but we have but little use for him in the ranks of Freedom, in Kansas. We have suspected these various editions of the same paper for some time, but now we are convinced of their existence, as we have them on our table, procured enveloped, under the pretence of wishing to send some to Missouri and Massachusetts." (20)

The tone of this editorial is typical of the free-state papers, which were inclined to be more conservative than the pro-slavery publications. Nevertheless, although Stringfellow and Kelley and other pro-slavery editors made a great deal more noise and used abuse, and vulgar, rabid language, they actually did not say a great deal more than the free-state editors.

All the territorial newspapers, whether free-state or pro-slavery, displayed some admirable characteristics which have left their mark on Kansas journalism to this day. It is, perhaps, more important to note that the first Kansas newspaper was a hardy pioneer than that it was a pro-slavery paper. There is nothing remarkable in the fact that the Leavenworth Herald, when it took form under an old elm tree on the town site of Leavenworth, adopted the pro-slavery sentiment of the environment. The remarkable thing about this paper is that it had the courage to come into existence

(20) Lawrence Free State, April 7, 1855.

under trying handicaps of a frontier life. And it is remarkable that a newspaper should come before churches, and schools, and banks, and stores,---before even the town itself. In this respect the first newspaper in Kansas established a new record in the annals of pioneering.

This spirit of conquest, of thrusting itself into the problems of human activity with a bold challenge, the spirit exemplified by the first newspaper of Kansas, has been a readily accepted heritage of the newspapers of the state. That the printing press should precede all other agencies of society was an innovation of those early days. The spirit of that innovation became a challenge to other newspapers and to other editors. The challenge was accepted, and beginning with the heritage of the pioneer territorial days the newspapers of Kansas became leaders rather than followers. The Kansas prairies within a very few years were dotted with newspapers surrounded by towns. The newspaper editor of Kansas became a force in the community, not a humble servant of the business or professional men, or of the average citizen.

Like other settlers in the territorial days the newspaper editor was having, usually, his first experience with the hardships of frontier life. He



had no advantage over others; in fact, he found it more difficult to transport a printing press than household supplies. Labor, sacrifice, peril, hardships, were with him continually. But the pioneer editor had faith in his mission. In the face of many misfortunes he stayed with his task, and refused to bow in defeat.

As Captain Henry King has said,

"The newspapers did not have to wait long for news. It soon began to reach them in abundance and diversity. There was something doing every day. Kansas suddenly became a history maker in the full sense of the term. The homeseekers were diverted from their simple and ordinary affairs to meet a problem that trivialized all other considerations. An irrepressible conflict that had exhausted the ingenuity of statesmen in schemes of compromise and postponement was focused here for practical adjustment. It was a question of choosing between free and servile labor, not on moral grounds alone, but also with reference to social and economic interests. A contagion of politics overspread the territory. There was a copious flow of speeches, resolutions, manifestoes and proclamations. Convention succeeded convention almost as often as changes of moon. Twelve general elections were held in less than three years. Popular government was exemplified as a continuous assertion of the rights and functions of citizenship, including the privilege of shooting and being shot at for opinion's sake.

"It was a period of intense feeling and desperate determination. The lines were drawn with unmistakable precision, leaving no middle refuge for the shirk or the sluggard. As a man voted, so he was expected to fight. The conditions were hair-triggered---the word and the blow simultaneous. Excesses attended the proceedings on both sides, but we can well afford to forget them in view of the rich profusion of heroism and glory with which they were associated. It was a busy time for newspapers. They had opportunities that combined practice with theory and provided ample facilities for all kinds of services. Their post of duty

was on the firing line, and they helped to bring about the news they published. In several instances their offices were sacked and demolished, but somehow they got more type and more presses and resumed their work with additional zeal and an invigorated vocabulary. Their number steadily increased, until in 1858 there were twenty-two of them. They pushed their way, with further accessions, through multiplied difficulties, to the day of rejoicing which marked the admission of Kansas to the Union, January 29, 1861. And on the 22nd of February following, the flag of the United States bearing the new star was raised for the first time, over Independence Hall, by that most lovable of our national heroes, Abraham Lincoln." (21)

Thus the pioneer newspapers were crusaders in the cause of Kansas. They pioneered their way into the hearts of the citizens and made themselves indispensable, first to the territory and later to the state. They became leaders in the social, ethical and economic lives of the communities which they served. They exemplified the spirit of a courageous and determined people.

(21) From an address at the University of Kansas, June 6, 1906, by Captain Henry King, editor of the St. Louis Globe Democrat.

## Chapter 2.

## Crusading Editors.

The opening of the Civil War saw no hedging in the Kansas press. There had been wide differences of opinion, strong statements of opposition to this cause and to that, a great diversity in the individual utterances of markedly individualistic newspapers. But the free state sentiment crystallized, the pro-slavery newspapers were discontinued or were sold, and when the war came there was no diversity of interests. The Kansas newspapers, like the loyal citizens of the state, put up a solid front in defense of the principles at stake and the call to arms, which was manifestly of vital significance in Kansas, met with virtually a united response of a loyal press.

The period following the Civil War was a trying one in Kansas. The cause of freedom had been won, but there were many discouragements. The price which had been paid was a heavy one. Political lines were drawn, and party warfare took the place of the struggle with shot and shell which had just ended. There was much criticism of the Republican party.

The newspapers drew sharp party lines and the editors took stock of the situation and pitched into the political battle with a determination to take advantage of every opening.

It was typical of the Kansas editor that he should be most aggressive in taking political sides after the Civil War. Unquestionably there were important issues at stake, and issues which were significant to the citizenry would certainly not be overlooked by editors of the type who had fought to establish themselves in the territorial days when survival of the more hardy was a real battle.

The issues were simple and direct. They were based on antagonisms growing directly out of the war period. The Democratic party was under a cloud. The Republican party was aggressive. But the Democrats were asking: "What about the greenbacks? And credit? And the gold basis?" The Republican party, which was, of course, morally obligated, did not know exactly how to answer some of these embarrassing questions. In addition, the Democratic party launched into a vigorous criticism of the scandals of the Grant regime and used every weapon at its command to show the inefficiency and the incompeten-

ency of the Republican administration.

In the antebellum days, the party was the press. The party principles became known only as they were brought to the people by the newspapers. Party issues became sharply drawn only as the newspapers defined them. Party animosities flared only as the newspapers worked them up to a white heat. The whole political battle became one in which the opposing forces were the partisan newspapers.

The Kansas press was outstanding in its partisanship during this period. The Republican editors of Kansas asserted in their newspaper columns the aggressive spirit of the Republican party. The Democratic editors of Kansas preached the gospel of retrenchment and reform which the Democratic party had adopted as its antebellum policy.

In the meantime, the last of territory and the first of state came for Kansas when the bill for its admission into the union was signed on January 29, 1861, by James Buchanan, president of the United States. "Kansas Day" has been commemorated since that date. War came during the first year of the Kansas statehood, and the response to the call was wholehearted.

During the Civil War the entire quota

assigned to Kansas was 16,654 men. The number raised was 20,097, making a surplus of 3,433. Noble L. Prentis says of the part Kansas played in the war: "In proportion to the force furnished, Kansas lost, in killed, more soldiers per 1,000 than any other state in the Union. There was never in the course of the struggle a man drafted in the state of Kansas, nor was there ever a bounty offered either by the state, or any city or county in the state." (22)

"Kansas was open to attack on the east and south, while on the west, the Indians served as a perpetual menace. The soldiers of Kansas were called alternately to repel invasion, and to penetrate the fastnesses of the enemy. The war was waged in a wide and almost wilderness country; a country of mountains, defiles and tangled woods and canebrakes, traversed by countless streams, rapid and roaring, or deep, winding and sluggish; but, for the most part, without bridges or ferries. In the thousands of miles of marching the Kansas soldiers often saw not a rod of smooth and settled highway; they moved by trails--by traces, over the hills and far away across the prairies, guided by the sun, the distant and random gun, the smoke of combat or vengeful burning. They were far from the region of great and decisive battles, of strategic combinations and foreseen results.

"The columns came and went, making forced marches for days and nights together; fighting a battle and winning a dear bought victory, to return whence they came. They fought, and marched and camped in a region that was neither North nor South, and so possessed a climate with the evil features of both. They met the blinding sleet and snow; were drenched with tropical rainstorms, and braved alike the blazing fury of the sun, and the bitter malice of the frost. Far from their bases of supplies; food and powder must be brought a long, toilsome and dangerous way, guarded at every step, fought for at every ford and pass. It was a hard and

desperate warfare. For Kansas, the Civil War was but the continuation of the border troubles. The embers of that struggle had not been covered with the ashes of forgetfulness when they blazed again into direst flames. Along the border the war assumed the character of vendetta; a war of revenge, and over all the wide field a war of combats; of ambushes and ambuscades, of swift advances and hurried retreats; of spies and scouts; of stealth, darkness and murder. All along the way men riding solitary were shot down; little companies killed by their camp fires; men fighting on both sides neither asking, giving, nor expecting mercy." (23)

The fact that this trying period did not result in utter discouragement was due, undoubtedly, more to the influence exerted by the newspapers than to any other cause. The precedent set by the free state editors, who had done so much through their editorial columns to support the cause of liberty, was followed by the editors during the war. The Kansas soldiery fought through its part in the war with an unswerving loyalty, constantly encouraged and buoyed up by the spirit of the editors of Kansas as displayed through the editorial columns. Editors and soldiers, like D. R. Anthony who was an editor as well as colonel of the Fifteenth Kansas, were "willing to fight to get peace." (24)

The hardships of Kansas during the Civil War served only to make the state more determined than ever before to face its problems with courage

(23) History of Kansas; Noble L. Prentiss, pp. 98-99.

(24) History of Kansas Newspapers; William E. Connelley, p. 5.

and fortitude. The war period had brought dangers from three sources rather than from the single enemy which other states were compelled to face. For Kansas there was not only the conflict with Confederate forces but also the raids of Indians and the attacks of guerilla troops as continually menacing. Of the latter danger, the most appalling example was Quantrill's raid on Lawrence, August 21, 1863, in which 150 defenseless citizens were killed.

Through the four years of strife the editors of Kansas were loyal to the cause, and when peace came the newspapers turned to the problem of building the state. They encouraged settlement and were especially in favor of the great ex-soldier immigration which came into Kansas at the close of the war, to settle in this pioneer state under the provisions of the Homestead Law.

Kansas editors also turned their attention to the railroads which became a great element in the settlement of the state. The newspapers were active in helping railroads to power and in encouraging railroad land grants, and soon the Santa Fe, the Union Pacific, and other railroads were operating in the state. As the newspapers carried on their campaign for settlement of the Kansas prairies



the railroads kept gradually creeping farther westward and the United States land offices, which, in territorial days, had been situated along the Missouri River moved westward to meet the demands of the home seekers who were looking for claims. Prentis describes the westward trek of the homesteader:

"The homesteader has been styled the 'Pilgrim Father' of Kansas. He left the great highways of travel and sought the vast, open country. From the thin line of timber skirting the stream, he might gather a few logs to build his cabin, but more often he shaped his habitation in or of the earth itself, a dugout or a sodhouse, the walls built up of strips of prairie sod turned over by the plow, the roof often covered with marl, or natural lime, as it was called, from the bottom of the prairie draw. Here, with his wife and children, lived in the first hard years the homesteader, under the vast sky, girt about by an immense and remote horizon. And not alone did the homesteader use the sod wherewith to rear his residence and out-buildings; the 'prairie lumber yard' had public uses also. The first schoolhouse for the settlers' children was built of sod, and in the settlement of Jewell county, a fort of sod fifty yards square, with walls seven feet high and four feet thick, was built; and within the enclosure was dug the first well in the county.

"At first the buffalo in their migrations came near, wandering up to the settler's door, but as the vast herds which had furnished the Indians with food and clothing for untold centuries, without apparent diminution, retreated westward, he followed them, making an annual campaign against them in his wagon, which he loaded with meat. When there was nothing left of them save their bleaching bones, he gathered these up and hauled them to the distant railroad station, where they accumulated in great white piles. Thus he added to his slender store of ready money. From Hays City, in May, 1875, the shipments of bones amounted to twenty tons a day."(25)

(25) History of Kansas; Noble L. Prentis, pp. 127-128.

The newspapers supported the colonization programs of the railroads and used their influence to induce settlement. Illustrative of the colonization methods employed and the results obtained was the work of the Kansas Pacific along these lines in 1871, when 22,000 acres were sold to a Swedish colony in Saline county; 46,000 acres to a Scotch colony in Dickinson county; 32,000 acres to an English colony in Clay county, and 19,000 acres to a Welsh colony in Riley county.

Kansas editors were especially interested in the coming of the Mennonites to the state. Sixteen hundred Mennonites came from Russia in 1874, arriving in Topeka in September. The Santa Fe Railroad sold these people 100,000 acres of land in Harvey, Marion and Reno counties and they were soon well settled and prospering on their farms. The Atchison Champion published an article on the coming of emigrants to Kansas:

"There has always been something very interesting to me in the coming of different peoples to Kansas, and the blending of all of them into a community of interest and language. In my newspaper travels I have interviewed a half-dozen varieties of 'colonists', among them the Hungarians, of Rawlins county, and the colored folks of Nicodemus, who came to Kansas from the distant and foreign shores of Kentucky.

"By far the most extensive and notable immigration in the history of Kansas was that of the

so-called 'Russians', which began substantially in 1874, and which has resulted in the settlement of fifteen thousand Mennonites in the counties of Marion, Harvey, McPherson, Butler, Reno and Barton, besides the Catholic German-Russians, who have some settlements in Ellis county, on the line of the Kansas Pacific, and whose mud village of Herzog I visited in 1878.

"The rallying-point of the Russian immigrants in 1874 and 1875 was Topeka, and that town abounded with sheepskin coats, ample breeches, bulbous petticoats, iron teakettles, and other objects supposed to be distinctively Russian, for many months. There was considerable competition between the two great land-grant roads---the Kansas Pacific and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe---to secure these people as settlers. With its usual good luck, the Santa Fe captured both the larger and the better class, the Mennonites." (26)

The decade from 1870 to 1880 was a prosperous one for Kansas---with one exception. In the year 1874 a drought came after the wheat harvest. The grasshoppers became a burden. The destruction of vegetation was enormous. The state suffered to such an extent that a special session of the legislature was called, but it was decided that relief from the state treasury would not be practical. State relief committees were organized, county bonds were issued, and money and goods were disbursed to sufferers from the locust invasion.

During this discouraging period the newspapers again came forward with a spirit of optimism. In their columns they pointed out all the disagreeable facts of the drought. The editors were willing

(26) Atchison Champion, May 8, 1882.

to face the facts. But they insisted that there was a need for carrying on. The editorial columns were used for appeals for aid but along with these appeals the editors stressed the necessity for a display of fortitude by the citizens of the state, as the Western Spirit does in this editorial:

"Grit and Grasshoppers.

"The devastation of an army of grasshoppers must be seen to be appreciated. We very well understand the discouraging feeling with which a farmer views the desolation and destruction of his fields, upon which he has expended so much hard labor and upon which he depends for taxes, money to pay his debts and to feed and clothe his family. We can understand, we say, the blank discouragement that attends this experience because we have been through it.

"Fields of corn of eighty and a hundred acres that a week ago were full of promise of a fine return are today consumed. Down through western Minnesota, Nebraska, and western Kansas this army of destruction came.

"In many parts of the Solomon valley and Arkansas valley, the growing crops are entirely destroyed. This, taken in connection with the drought of eight or ten weeks in various parts of the State, presents no flattering picture to many of our farmers. It must be forgotten in contemplating this, however, that in parts of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania there has been the same drought this season.

"The grasshoppers, chinch bugs, potato bugs and other minor troubles have scourged the State north and south of us, more or less every year. No locality throughout the country seems free from all the drawbacks which the farmer is called to meet year in and year out.

"It must not be forgotten how lately Kansas corn cribs were full to overflowing with fifteen cent corn where nothing but feeding to Texas cattle would carry off the surplus. Kansas will have little use this year for these long horned, long legged corn cribs, which have brought more loss than

gain to the State. What shall we do, says a farmer whose crops have been taken by drought and grasshoppers. Do? Why fight and hang until another season brings plenty. Every ton of hay it is possible to secure must be put in stack. The scarcity of grain will make a demand for every load of hay that can be saved. It will, in some border counties of the State require an exhibition of grit to go through this year that has not been required in Kansas since in 1860. This may be true also of some of the droughty spots in the interior of the State. For these localities suffering either from drought or grasshoppers, looking the matter square in the face, we must admit that the two most essential and imperative, virtues in the case are economy and grit." (27)

Although there were many differences of editorial opinion in the columns of Kansas newspapers at this time, there was one side and only one in respect to loyalty to the state. Every editor was for Kansas. Through hardships of many kinds in the early history of the state, the editorial columns kept up a spirit of hopefulness. It is certain that a much slower progress would have been made in the pioneering of Kansas if the editors had not been continually urging the people on in their struggle to make Kansas a state to be proud of.

Even Sol Miller, editor of the Kansas Chief, the veteran of the Kansas weekly press, savage as he was in his editorial columns, was nevertheless optimistic and hopeful in the cause

(27) Western Spirit, Paola.

of Kansas and did much to inspire the confidence of his readers in the ultimate better times that were to come. He helped his readers keep their faith in Kansas. In the discouraging grasshopper year of 1874 he was active in bolstering up the waning enthusiasm of many who were hard hit. He wrote many editorials of encouragement of which the following is an example:

#### "Hard Times

"Papers devoted to the business and financial interests, tell us that better times are surely coming, but have merely been postponed. It would rejoice the people of the West to be assured that the postponement is not indefinite. At the present outlook, a gloomy winter is ahead for Kansas. The wheat and other small grain crops were generally good; but the drought and the grasshoppers have cut off the corn crops fully one-half. Our people have generally depended upon their hog money to ease them over the early part of the Winter and tax-paying; but now Kansas is almost depleted of hogs, and that resource will fail. Tens of thousands of hogs have been shipped to Iowa and other places to fatten, and have generally gone at a low figure. What remain are being rapidly bought up, as buyers are scouring the country in every direction. With good corn crops to fatten these hogs, they would have made easy times for Kansas. When we had good corn crops heretofore, immense numbers of cattle were wintered in the north-eastern Counties, making a handy market, and bringing good prices. That resource will be cut off the coming Winter.

"Added to other drawbacks, it is feared that the grasshoppers have deposited their eggs in large numbers, which will hatch out in time to destroy the early crops next Spring. The chinch-bug is still rioting, in the fields, and doubtless providing for an army of depredators next Summer. If we ever have sufficient rain to admit of plow-

ing and sowing farmers should take the risk of putting in as much Fall wheat as possible. If it does come through the Winter, there is less chance of its being destroyed in the Spring than Spring wheat.

"But blue as things look, we are much better off than some other sections. There is no prospect of suffering, and our people will not be compelled to call for relief. The best course is to keep a stiff upper lip, and shove right along."

(28)

Although many of the difficulties of pioneering the prairies of Kansas had been overcome before 1870 there were yet many hardships to be endured. The settlers had come by the thousands seeking homes; they had filed on their claims; they had organized school districts, townships and counties and had become a part of the government organization of the state; they had organized churches and established justice; they had built comfortable cabins for their homes and prosperous towns for their business transactions.

But despite all this development and this promise of general prosperity, nature set plans awry with drought and grasshoppers and there was cause for despair. Had these early settlers not been a hardy lot Kansas would certainly have been much more slowly developed, but they were a hardy lot, and the newspaper editors, knowing that there

(28) Kansas Chief, September 10, 1874.

were many who were of a stout heart and of a resolute mind, took every opportunity to point out worthwhile and determined efforts against heavy odds. The Emporia Ledger wrote of this determination to win:

"The Way to Pull Through

"One of our citizens, to illustrate how Kansas pulls 'through difficulties to the stars', says that at Newton the other day a man came walking into town in his shirt sleeves, with his coat on his arm, and entering a store said he wanted some seed wheat. He added that he had nothing to pay with, except his coat, which was a good one, and he offered that in exchange for the wheat. A farmer in the store after a thorough look at the settler who was so determined to stick to his claim, said to him: 'See here, stranger, you keep your coat and come with me out to my place. I've got wheat enough and will let you have what you need and wait on you until the next crop comes in'. And they went off together.

"We have no doubt that the man who proposed to go without a coat to get seed wheat to plant, is very poor now, but in ten years, if life and health spare him, he will be independent and comfortable, with a valuable farm and a good herd of cattle. That kind of pluck is sure to win in Kansas, and we commend it to new settlers whose gander sass has been gobbled up by the voracious droughthughoppers." (29)

Loyalty to the state was perhaps the only issue on which all the editors of Kansas were in accord in these times. On every other issue there was invariably marked difference of opinion. When there was no definite problem at stake the editors picked little fights among themselves. Often these fights were petty and arose from

(29) Emporia Ledger, (reprinted in the Kansas Chief, October 8, 1874.)



selfish motives. But many times the editorial battles arose from deepseated and sincere viewpoints which the editors held. At no time were these early editors willing to sit back and wait for developments. At the least sign of possible controversy they plunged into the fray. Inevitably this readiness to respond to problems at hand led to many mistakes of judgment. But since in the majority of cases the editors were sincere their willingness to get into the fight, whatever it happened to be, was not a great fault.

The editor of this day felt that any issue which was the people's problem was one in which he especially should be vitally interested. He felt that he was a leader of community thought and action. He had the public welfare to protect. He was loyal to his town, to his county, to his state, to his country. But first of all he was loyal to his readers.

Independence of thought and action was sacred to the editor of this day. He often chose the doubtful or the unwise side to defend, but when he had chosen it as the right side, defend it he did. There was no edging away from the path

that the editor had chosen. He gave his full energies to the cause which he determined to support.

Editorial columns of these early days were often fire-eating, sarcastic, denunciatory, vituperative. At the same time, they were always positive, not passive or compromising or indecisive. Abusive language was resorted to, often unjustly, but the editor was usually in pursuit of a good end. The means employed to gain this end were, he felt, necessary.

Typical of the positive, energetic editor of the time was Sol Miller of the White Cloud Chief (the Troy Chief, the Weekly Kansas Chief). Editors of the day always respected Sol Miller's newspaper, although, to be sure, many of them had plenty to say in their own editorial columns about Sol Miller himself. When he wrote an editorial there was no question as to what he meant to say. And not only did he have something to say; he published a readable newspaper from many points of view. As Prentis says, "In his office at Troy, with his sleeves rolled up, and surrounded by such stacks and piles of newspapers and such boxes, drawers and barrels of clippings as grace no other printing-

office in this Western country, may be found old Sol Miller; queer, bright, quaint, original, a man of old-world virtues, yet keeping his eyes on the moving hands of Time's dial." (30)

Sol Miller took his politics straight. He was a rock-ribbed Republican, he had faith in the Republican party, he believed that he was marching under the right banner. It is obvious from a study of the files of his newspaper that he hated the sight of a Democrat. He was never backward about making himself plain on this subject. And he would not sanction any hedging from the straight and narrow path of standpat Republicanism, as he shows in this editorial:

"Another editor from the Missouri brush, is going to try his hand at publishing a Democratic paper for the regeneration of Kansas. His proposed location is Chetopa, and his name is Harkrider. Thus far, the Missouri bushwhackers have not met with brilliant success in the newspaper business in Kansas. As 'Liberal Republicans', the prospect seems but very little better." (31)

Sol Miller took special delight in pointing out the weaknesses of contemporaries in the Kansas newspaper field or in vigorously setting about to discourage those newspaper editors who were moving in to do things "in a big way" and to "show up" some of the newspapers that were already

(30) Kansas Miscellanies, Noble L. Prentis, p. 106.

(31) Kansas Chief, March 28, 1872.

established. Of one editor who was about to start one of these "big" newspapers he said:

"The idea of starting a newspaper of mammoth size in a small country town, is somewhat like the war tactics of the Chinese, who try to frighten their enemies with immense guns that they can neither handle nor fire, and which more frequently damage themselves than their enemies." (32)

The Western Spirit of Paola commented on the founding of a newspaper at Troy called the Leader. It pointed to the situation at Troy as being one of newspaper overcrowding. "This makes, if the report has it right, three papers published in that young city, viz: Republican, Chief, and Leader. It is impossible for three papers to survive in Troy. Wait and see."

To this Sol Miller had a ready reply:

"Slightly in error. That Leader is published at White Cloud. Its conductors are bound to succeed, for they commenced dunning their patrons before their traps arrived, and have dunned them in both issues since starting. The last sentence in the above extract, we are not prepared to dispute. But the Chief proposes to survive. A fair way to judge of the prosperity of a paper, is to notice which one has incurred the envy and hatred of the others, and which one all the others are pitching into, and making common cause against." (33)

There were well defined views in the editorial columns of Sol Miller's newspaper and there was evidence that the editor usually had some real

(32) Kansas Chief, June 12, 1873.

(33) Ibid. June 19, 1873.

purpose in mind when he wrote. However, Sol Miller enjoyed editorial fights and when real issues were lacking he often kept going just for the love of controversy.

"We guess we have finished our controversy with the Atchison Champion, on the railroad question. Our original intention was to refer to the flurry of Atchison about the project of rival cities to tap the Santa Fe road and steal the gravy from her, and to remind her of the tricks she had played upon others in times past; but we 'got to goin', and couldn't stop'". (34)

Marsh Murdock of the Wichita Eagle was another of the early editors who was fond of disputes with other newspapers. He was the object of many editorial thrusts from contemporaries, but he was always ready with an answer. He made it a point not to overlook an opportunity to defend his own principles and to show where others had the wrong viewpoint.

When he was defeated for state senator in 1880, the Manhattan Enterprise and the Winfield Telegram commented on the election:

"Marsh Murdock, candidate for State Senator in Butler and Harvey counties, was vigorously set down upon by his Republican constituents for an alleged violation of a pledge two years ago not to be a candidate this year. His competitor, Wilkie, was elected by about 300 plurality.--Manhattan Enterprise.

"Now it is in order for Marsh Murdock to

(34) Kansas Chief, June 19, 1873.

take a trip up to Manhattan for the express purpose of taking a club to the Enterprise man. It is bad enough to have the public know that he has such a brother as 'Bent', without having Bent's misdoings and defeats laid to his door, and if we were in Marsh's shoes we would speedily administer justice to the man who doesn't know that there is more than one Murdock in the State.--Winfield Telegram."

To these Murdock replied:

"Yes, that's what's the matter, he didn't know any better. The truth is, that Kansas has outgrown quite a per cent of her local scribblers, if indeed she has not always been too large for them, to one or the other of which the Manhattan petent insider, no doubt, belongs. Besides, we have noticed that when the average Kaw Bottom editor attempts to write about the affairs or men of this great valley he invariably gets things mixed,--too big game down this way for their bore." (35)

The Caldwell Commercial criticized

Murdock for a reconciliation when it pointed out that it was not many months "since Murdock, of the Eagle, and Bill Campbell were a cussing and a damning of each other. Now they are as thick as any other two thieves, and the doughty Colonel endorses the 'larned' Judge as a paragon of judicial wisdom, morality and honor. But such is life in the far West."

In answer to this editorial the editor of the Eagle disregarded the point that the Commercial had brought up but he did make it plain just what his opinion of the editor was:

(35) The Wichita Eagle, November 25, 1880.

"Under what evil spell has our friend of the Commercial fallen that he thus outrages his conscience and with flaming rage sweeps down his hot bitterness upon a brotherhood that he might well emulate? Must he digest the venom of his spleen until it doth split him wide open, because, forsooth, he fails to comprehend the philosophy of a friendship that survives the strained jobs of a campaign? Fie, thou Oklahoma boomer, thy blood must be very snow broth! Rather than the plague of such reflections, go gobble the entire Indian Territory, nor neither the 'larned' Judge nor the doughty Colonel will ever again utter a sentence that would disturb thy proud triumph and solitary serenity." (36)

The Caldwell Commercial followed shortly afterward with another thrust at the Eagle in which it asserted that "none of the Champions, Eagles, and other buzzards of the Kansas press have yet discovered that Secretary Schurz has made a report." (37)

Whereupon the Eagle followed with a reply in its next issue:

"Well, what of it? When did that gentleman make a report, and what was it about? If the Commercial alludes to the spectacled piano thumber who presides over the destinies of 'Lo! the poor Indian whose untutored mind, Clothes him before and leaves him bare behind.' We must correct him. We discovered such a report, but found but small allusion to the Boomers, farther than the recommendation for a law empowering and imprisonment of every man caught invading the Indian Territory." (38)

Editorial disputes of this kind were frequent. Often they were personal attacks and rather unreasonable, but usually the editor had some policy

(36) The Wichita Eagle, December, 9, 1880.

(37) Ibid., December 23, 1880. Reprint.

(38) Ibid., December 23, 1880

or viewpoint which he wished to defend or expound.

Charles Scott, as editor of the Iola Register, which was in the midst of politics and crusades in the eighties, was a member of the circle of editors who were ever ready to take the forward step when there were campaigns to be launched or disputes to be settled. Scott in that day was a bit more conservative in his editorial expression than some of the more fiery editors, but he did write in a positive tone and with the courage of his convictions. In disputes with his editorial contemporaries he took a prominent part. When any other editor observed the Iola Register with a critical eye, Scott was willing and ready to meet the challenge:

"The Yates Center News reproaches us for imputing crookedness to Sheriff Cannady in the Rheam affair 'after Governor Martin himself had exonerated the Sheriff'. If the News will read a little closer it will learn that the article was written and published before Mr. Cannady's statement appeared. The Register certainly has no grudge against Mr. Cannady, and is willing to give him the full benefit of his statement. We might add however, that we are in receipt of a communication from a prominent citizen of Piqua, which plainly intimates that Mr. C's deputies might find it a little more difficult than he did, to explain everything satisfactorily. We do not publish the letter because it is libellous and because the whole matter is one in which no one in Allen county is particularly interested." (39)

Scott was staunch in his Republicanism, as

(39) The Iola Register, March 13, 1885.



were many of his contemporaries. Like many another Kansas editor of the day, he preferred to cling to a straight Republican doctrine. He wanted none of the "liberal" strains, and, at times, was a bit impatient with the other side:

"It is coming to be rather loudly rumored that one reason why the new Administration does not 'turn the rascals out' a little faster, is that it finds very few rascals in. For years the democrats have been howling about the corruption of republican office holders. They kept up this howl so persistently and vigorously that a great many republicans began to tremble for the honor of their party when the day of reckoning should come. That day has come, and after a month or more of scrutiny and eager search for evidence of guilt or incapacity, our enemies, most unwilling witnesses, are compelled to bear testimony that they can find absolutely nothing to be condemned. They confess they are surprised to find the requirements of the public service so well met. Not a single republican official has been removed 'for cause'. Instead of being up to their eyes in the filth of the 'Augean Stables', to the cleansing of which they so patriotically pledged themselves, they find every department in order, swept and garnished and dusted, so that they may enter in and take possession without soiling so much as the tips of their fingers. It is slowly dawning upon the Administration that its duty lies more in the line of keeping the rascals out than it does in that of turning them out." (40)

Republican editors in Kansas could see little hope for the Democratic party, and they let these views be known. They felt that real salvation for Kansas as well as for the United States lay in the party to whose policies they adhered. Scott was one of these orthodox

(40) The Iola Register, April 10, 1885.

Republicans. Having adopted the doctrine of Republicanism as the saving hope, he adhered strictly to its tenets:

"Even democratic papers no longer attempt to conceal the fact that relations between President Cleveland and his Secretary of State are very strained, and that an actual rupture is probable. Mr. Cleveland sees that nearly all mistakes of his administration have been made by Mr. Bayard and takes little pains to conceal these impressions. The result is that the President and Secretary never meet now except when it is absolutely necessary that they should. Should all this prove true, it will have a tendency to inflict a serious illness upon the presidential bee in Mr. Bayard's bonnet." (41)

When D. R. Anthony took pen in hand to lay down the law for the readers of the Leavenworth Conservative, and his later papers, he usually had something to say. There were those who agreed with him and those who disagreed with him, but there were surely none who misunderstood him. He was a member of the stock company which founded in 1861 the Leavenworth Conservative, a newspaper which was named to belie its name. Later this newspaper became the Times-Conservative and then in 1871, The Times, the first permanent daily in Kansas.

The Times was Col. D. R. Anthony and Col. D. R. Anthony was the Times. Colonel Anthony had energy and force and was alert to the possibilities

(41) The Iola Register, June 5, 1885.

of his newspaper. Of Colonel Anthony and the Leavenworth Times of the eighties, Noble L. Prentis said: "Like the war-horse in Job, The Times hears the sound of the battle afar off, and usually meets the battle itself halfway, yet it seems to grow a little stronger with each fight. It stands by itself among Kansas newspapers in its singular personal character. It is the voice of one man, and that man of rare force, courage, pertinacity, and enterprise." (42)

Perhaps nothing in Kansas journalism has ever given an editor of the state more pride than to point to the passing of a too-ambitious or "upstart" rival in the same town. Colonel Anthony enjoyed this pastime as much as any of them, as the following editorial shows:

"Dead

"The Daily Appeal died yesterday morning. It had been running about two months. It lived about one month longer than anybody supposed it would. It was a bankrupt concern in every sense of the word, from the first. It was without capital, ability or integrity. There was never any room for it, and it was only started to 'hurt somebody'. There are some men in Leavenworth who have just sense enough to think that any kind of an abortion, got up by any kind of deadbeats, or gamblers, if it will only come out every day, will injure the business of The Times. Certain Leavenworth men, who have been criticised by The Times for various kinds of wrong practices, put their money freely into this defunct concern. L. B. Wheat put in a

(42) Kansas Miscellanies, p. 103.

hundred dollars, and other men who are supposed to know better also contributed liberally. Wheat probably wanted an organ, to advertise his dog, and the others went in for spite. Now their money is gone and their organ is gone. It made no manner of difference to The Times whether the thing lived or died. If a dozen such concerns should be started in Leavenworth every day The Times would not be disturbed by them any more than by so many gnats. The whole thing only shows that men who are usually sensible can act the fool sometimes." (43)

The colonel was dynamic in his convictions and, hence, was quick to grasp at the handy phrase and the definite words to express his beliefs. Not always were these gleaned from a polite vocabulary. In replying to a letter addressed to the editor of The Times, Colonel Anthony named his victim first, reprinted the letter, and then answered it.

"A Dirty, Lying Dog.

"I notice that D. R. Anthony also publishes the "notice" of Munford. I requested him to publish my statement of the facts simultaneously with the appearance of the "notice" but he declined to do so. One year ago D. R. Anthony wanted me, in consideration of \$25, to perjure myself in the Sass-Winter case, in order that he (Anthony) might collect \$180, which amount Sass owed him for rent. I declined Mr. Anthony's offer, and now he thinks he has a right to hate me and publish me as a scoundrel.

T. C. Thurston.'

"For pure, unadulterated, malicious scoundrelism, this drunken, lying whelp, Thurston, beats the world. He testified on both sides of

(43) The Daily Times, July 4, 1879.

the Sass-Winter case; indeed his contradictions were so great that both sides regarded his testimony as worthless. He did come to us and ask for money, in an abject, whining manner, like a dirty little dog. We declined to give him anything, telling him plainly that we thought him a worthless fellow and that we had no interest in the case, having already donated to Sass his indebtedness to us. Thurston is the worst dead-beat in the land and the newspapers that open their columns to his filth are not much better than he is." (44)

When in 1879, there was an investigation carried on by the United States senate into the affairs of some of its members, including Senator Ingalls of Kansas, Colonel Anthony grew impatient. He had faith in the integrity of Senator Ingalls and felt that the whole mess had been stirred up by irritated political enemies of the Kansas senator. He voiced his disapproval of the investigation in no uncertain terms:

#### "The Ingalls Investigation

"Sufficient progress has already been made in the 'Ingalls investigation' to show that the whole thing would be a most ridiculous farce were it not for the injury done to the good name of the State by the thousand and one false stories put afloat by the characterless scoundrels who are the chief movers in the matter. The fact that a committee of the highest and most honorable legislative body in the world, charged with the duty of investigating serious charges preferred against an honorable and able member of that body, should find no other foundation for such charges than the scoundrelly machinations of a pack of scalawags who would not be believed under oath in any community where they were known, presents a picture that would be regarded as ridiculous in the

(44) The Daily Times, July 8, 1879.

extreme were it not for the other fact that all the lies manufactured by these fellows for the purpose of supporting their cause and injuring the character of the man by whom they have been foiled, have gone before the public in the columns of unscrupulous newspapers, and thus injured the good name of the State.

"The investigation has already demonstrated that the charges of corruption against Senator Ingalls are wholly groundless, and are due solely to the fact that the fellows who made them were in the market and wanted to sell to Ingalls, but he refused to buy them, and secured their enmity by treating their corrupt proposals with contempt. The harm done by the investigation is in exposing to the world the fact that such moral prostitutes were honored by Kansas constituencies with seats in the State Legislature. But it must be remembered to the credit of the State that the most of them were fresh importations, that they were but little known by the people who voted for them, and since their true characters have been shown, the people who elected them have most emphatically repudiated them." (45)

He followed up his editorial crusade against the alleged enemies of Senator Ingalls, and refused to give up his fight to show that there was nothing in the charges which had been brought:

"The Farce

"The movement against Ingalls by Stumbaugh & Co. is such a ridiculous farce that some of those most active in getting it up have become ashamed of it, and admit that it doesn't amount to anything. No public man in this country was ever beset by a dirtier, or more worthless set of scoundrels than those who have been engaged in this abortive attempt to injure the reputation and influence of Senator Ingalls.

"The supplemental charges brought before the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, on which this investigation was ordered, made charges of bribery, and corruption against ten certain members of the late Legislature, but though the committee has now been in session a week, not a witness has been produced nor a

word of testimony offered to sustain any of these charges. Without such specific charges the investigation would not have been ordered and the result shows that they were false. The only matter of surprise in the whole affair is that the Senate of the United States should have stooped to listen to the groundless charges preferred by characterless vagabonds and their unscrupulous backers.

"In our opinion the committee will soon be satisfied--if it is not already--that the whole thing is an infamous conspiracy, and will drop it in disgust.

"It is understood that the men who have furnished the means to carry the thing on are C. C. Pomeroy, Geo. T. Anthony, and Ben Simpson, who being too cowardly to fight Mr. Ingalls openly, seek in this way to injure him through the means of the disreputable fellows they have employed as their tools. But it will react against them, and when the whole truth is known the people of Kansas, will despise them more than ever."(46)

In the nineties the editors of Kansas put their hearts and souls into politics. Trenchant and personal expressions of opinion held sway. There was no equivocation to be meted in the editorial columns. Issues were presented straight from the shoulder. Personal journalism in Kansas is no better exemplified than in the newspapers of the nineties. The papers were known by their editors rather than by any other designation. There was an abundance of editorial expression and the life and vigor of the state was in its newspapers.

The high peak of the pioneering, independent spirit of the Kansas editor was reached during these days of great editorial vigor and enthusiasm. Although many of the editors took positions of standpatters and

stood by their guns under all circumstances and against all thrusts of the opposition, even these men seemingly often spoke their own sincere views rather than the prescribed platitudinous policies of a party.

There were rock-ribbed standpatters; there were strict independents; there were those who spoke the views of the party when those views coincided with their own, with a slight leaning toward one party; there were those who changed their positions. But all of these Kansas editors were aggressive, frank, forceful. They believed in editorial expression and they insisted on the right of an editor to put forth his views in his editorial columns. They were right and they were wrong; but they were never indifferent.

The editorial expressions were of the lively "kicker" variety which prevailed at the time in the Kansas press. The Kansas City Gazette refers to the "Kansas Kickers" as follows:

"The unanimity of the Kansas press this fall is unparalleled in the history of the state. In kicking and in criticising and in fault-finding generally, probably the Leavenworth Times, Atchison Champion, Lawrence Journal, Emporia Republican and the Kansas City Gazette



are the most unanimous. In some instances the editors on the same papers appear to be at outs, and in one instance two founders of the same paper, a father and son, are running against each other for the same office.'--Wichita Eagle.

"In so far as the Eagle refers to The Gazette, we can clearly say that it is another. The Gazette has not kicked on a single issue. We wanted some flux on and we made a fight for it. And since every state and district expression west of the state of Ohio has been with us, the Troy Chief is the only kicker on this issue. In every other conceivable respect The Gazette has been at peace with all mankind. We are for prohibition; we are for every man on the Republican ticket everywhere in Kansas, and we have not antagonized any of them. But at home we have one faint kick to make for a few days, and that is whether a rump committee, conceived in secret meetings across the line in Missouri a year ago, owns the party, and can distribute representatives in a convention in the interests of the thugs of a Democratic ward at the sacrifice of the voice of wards overwhelmingly Republican. We never kick, we never kick; and The Eagle is the most unblushing prevaricator, and the most nonsensical kicker in the state. However, a kicker is generally a man of convictions, and he is usually the man who causes things to accelerate." (47)

Marsh M. Murdock of the Wichita Eagle was a vigorous editor of the stirring nineties, more forceful than the average, but of the same typical independent spirit of the newspaper men of the time in Kansas. He took an active part in political issues and was ever ready to take the offensive in any political controversy.

When Jerry Simpson made some disparaging remarks about the Dodge City convention and declared

(47) The Wichita Daily Eagle, September 27, 1890.

that the Republican platform was insincere, Murdock came flatfootedly out against Simpson as a prospective national congressman from Kansas:

"Jere (sic) Simpson's Talk.

"Jere Simpson is saying in many places that the Dodge City convention was run by bummers from Wichita, and declaring publicly, in others, that he knows the author of the platform adopted at the Republican congressional convention and that there is not a word of sincerety in it. The ex-constable of Medicine Lodge may win some votes from the ignorant and prejudiced by such talk, but he can hardly fail to disgust fair-minded, intelligent men. Judge Sluss, one of the brainiest men to be found in Kansas, and whose earnestness of purpose was never questioned by any honest man who knew him, was the chairman of the committee on resolutions at Dodge City. He not only stands ready to defend that platform in toto but to puncture the sycophantic hide of the pessimist who goes about among the farmers of the west playing upon their prejudices with vile slanders. A man who descends to such a role on the stump would cut a pretty figure in congress. We don't care what Jere Simpson's dislike of Wichita amounts to, nor how far he can make a display of it win, but with such a man as a representative the average member of congress would no doubt conclude that the Seventh district of Kansas stood as much in need of missionaries as 'Darkest Africa'." (48)

The prospect of being read out of his own party by other newspapers in the state did not frighten Murdock into a submission to "conformity". No doubt he had due respect for his contemporaries, but, like the typical Kansas editor, when he had chosen a stand because he believed it to be right he refused to be intimidated:

(48) The Wichita Daily Eagle, September 21, 1890.

"The Hide and Horns.

"Last May the Leavenworth Times, the Topeka Capital, the Fort Scott Monitor, the Emporia Republican, the Hutchinson News, the Newton Republican and dozens of other minor papers read the Eagle out of the Republican party because of the vigorous onslaught on the tariff schedule as proposed by the McKinley bill. What do these journals now propose to do with Mr. Plumb? Hasn't the hide in this instance gone with the tail and horns? Weren't they in reality trying to read the people out of the party?

"The performance of these papers reminds us of the effort of the Wichita Republican club to read the party itself out of the party." (49)

Murdock explains the stand of the Eagle in an editorial reply to comment in the columns of the Atchison Champion. The editor of the Champion had spoken of the Wichita Eagle in these words: "Our esteemed contemporary, the Wichita Eagle, announces that it 'has no desire to lead and it never follows', by which we are given to understand that it is a stickler for original and unique methods of journalism. Be we right?" To which the editor of the Eagle replied:

"The Eagle is just the Eagle, and 'unique' and 'original' it has never been anything else. Whether or not it has imitators it has no pattern, and never had. Its methods, if the pride of its friends, are wholly obnoxious to its rivals. A cat goes for a mouse not because it is a 'stickler' for that kind of meat, but simply because it was built that way. The Champion excepted, the Eagle is the most independent Republican paper in Kansas; having neither national, state, county, or municipal patronage worth mentioning. It stands on its own

(49) The Wichita Daily Eagle, October 2, 1890.

feet, and for the right, as it understands the right; asking no favor of any man, nor fearing any odds, political or otherwise. These may be precarious times for such a paper, but such a paper the Eagle can only be. Whatever may be thought of it by the politicians and party hacks they know, as do all of its readers, that its motives are honest and its utterances therefore, however distasteful, are entitled to their respect." (50)

The high point in crusading Kansas journalism was reached in the eighties while Sol Miller, Marsh Murdock and Col. D. R. Anthony were in their prime. Other vigorous editors followed, but the efforts of the later editors became more spasmodic than those of their predecessors and the enthusiasm of the editorial column soon became more an individual outbreak than a general tendency. The editors of these early days felt that the vigor of editorial columns was a tradition of their craft, and even if they were not so sure of that, they were determined to give their newspapers the stamp of individuality.

The next period in the history of the Kansas press carried some of the old fire, but the great personalities were gradually dropping out, and the new order, although more businesslike, was destined to become more staid and less interesting.

(50) The Wichita Daily Eagle, December 21, 1890.

Chapter 3.  
Transition.

The Populist controversy of the nineties and the campaigns of boss busting carried on by some papers between 1900 and 1905, proved to be the last of the old Kansas journalism. A few outstanding editors of later days were destined to carry on some of the traditions of the past, but these periods ended the vigorous typical Kansas newspaper. So far as its crusading element was concerned, personal journalism, in a state of great newspaper editors, became the exception rather than the rule. Its place was taken by a sociable but not a social spirit.

The decline of individuality and independence, of some of the sparkling originality, and of the vigorous, ready force of the Kansas editor of the early days had its beginning during the nineties, at a time when the press of the state was in its prime. But the force behind the inevitable was not evident at the time. In the heat of political controversies, such as the Populist days brought to the editors of the state, little note was made of the fact that one

by one the old-timers were dropping out and new men were taking over the editorial chairs. But it was the change of personnel that began gradually to take away from journalistic life in Kansas a great deal of its old-time vigor.

The Populist movement, one which furnished the editors of Kansas a lively subject for discussion, began with the Farmers' Alliance. In 1889 there was a tremendous corn crop. Prices fell. Farmers were impoverished. The Farmers' Alliance was formed, on the theory that the farmers paid too much for what they bought. It established cooperative groceries, had secret meetings in country schoolhouses, and developed an extreme bitterness toward merchants and professional men, especially against lawyers, whom it regarded as leeches and parasites, and whom it blamed for the foreclosing of farm mortgages.

When the Farmers' Alliance became a definite political factor in the life of the state by being converted into the Populist party, the editors of Kansas found themselves presented with another lively topic for controversial discussion. From the middle eighties to about 1900 economic and political questions were at the fore. But the antebellum editors who were

well qualified to write on these topics were retiring, and many of the new editors who came into ownership of Kansas newspapers were printers who had worked themselves up from the back office. These men were not qualified to discuss such economic and political questions as free silver, farmers' warehouses and Populism.

With editors who found the task of discussing the lively topics of the day too much for them, Kansas newspapers gradually drifted away from the editorial spirit to the business and mechanical sides of newspaper production. The older spirit carried on through the days of Populism and for a few years after, but from about 1905 on, with a few notable exceptions, there was a loss of vigor in journalistic Kansas.

The new political force in Kansas, in the form of the Farmers' Alliance, kept up the vigor of a crusading editorial spirit that was beginning to show signs of losing its virility. But it was to be expected that the editors of the state would not overlook this new and important factor in the economic and political life. As a secret and social organization of farmers in 1889 the Alliance had not attracted

a great deal of attention; but when, in 1890, it became an openly active political force, editorial campaigns for and against it became numerous.

The organization of the Alliance, as has been said, had come about through the feeling among the farmers of Kansas that they had suffered discrimination in many ways in the making of laws and in the conduct of government generally, that "capital was allowed undue weight, that corporations were allowed full sweep for unjust, avaricious and oppressive disposition, and escaped their just burden of taxation; that the loaner of money had all the advantage in his transactions with the borrower; the mortgagee of the mortgagor; and that a government originally designed on the basis of the freedom and equality of all men, had become perverted, and was conducted on the principle that 'to him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath'." (51)

The "People's Party", or the Populist Party as it became popularly known, was the result of the political organization of various groups which were in sympathy with the principles of the Farmers' Alliance. On June 12, 1890, at a Topeka convention, the following groups sent delegates as representatives in the forming of the Populist Party: the Farmers'

(51) History of Kansas, Prentis, p. 198.



Alliance, the Industrial Union, the Patrons of Husbandry, the Knights of Labor, the Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association, and the Single Tax Clubs.

The Populist Party furnished the first important editorial subject for William Allen White after he became editor of the Emporia Gazette. In June, 1895, he bought the Gazette. For a year he marked time, writing on such harmless subjects as "The Company Has Gone", "A Kingdom Coming", and "The Literary Society". But with the specter of the Populist Party peering over the horizon, White as a rock-ribbed conservative who put Republicanism next to godliness, was horrified, and prepared to battle the invading enemy:

"Patriotism or Anarchy?"

"The question before the voters of this country is a simple one. It is not involved; a child may comprehend it. The question before the voter of this country--of Kansas, of Emporia--is shall American institutions prevail; shall every man have a right to enjoy the fruits of his endeavor, or shall political and financial anarchy prevail?"

"The man who supports the Populists in this election, whether for road overseer or for President, is lending his vote and his influence to the cause of anarchy.

"Let us reason together. The platform of the Republican party declares in effect that American institutions shall be preserved as they are. It declares that honest debts shall be paid in the money promised. It declares that as gold has been the standard money of this nation for generations, and as the circulation has constantly and steadily increased, every debt shall be paid and every contract held inviolable.

"On the other hand, the Populists demand that

debts be cut in two. They lie when they say that the currency has been contracted. Every thief in jail has his excuse; he thinks he did right. He justifies himself. So do the men who want to steal half their creditors' money justify their crime by talk about the contraction of the currency. But it is a criminal's subterfuge. It is a rogue's sophistry.

"The demand for fifty cent payment for a dollar's debt would cut every savings bank deposit, every widow's insurance policy, every building and loan stock in two. That would put a discount on frugality. It would also cut every single piece of accumulated wealth in two. That would put a discount on thrift, business talent, and industry. Of course it would. You can't destroy wealth. The half that you take away from the man who saves would go somewhere. It would go to the man who has not saved, who has been an idler, who has been shiftless. The anarchist, in clamoring for the 'division of property', has always claimed that men who had no property to divide were 'unfortunate'. The anarchist drools over a worthless man, and calls the frugal and industrious man a thief.

"What in the name of Heaven are these latter-day anarchists doing but that? They are clamoring for a 'divvy'. They have sugar-coated their demand for a 'fifty cent dollar', for an easy 'way out', for a division of property, for anarchy, if you please--they have sugar-coated that demand with fine words and rhetorical claptrap. But it is the same old robbery that Herr Most has ever demanded.

"The American people hanged five men for demanding just what the Populists are demanding now. Governor Altgeld, the leader of the Populists, pardoned the anarchists who escaped the gallows and the men who demand a division of property now are cheering him for it.....

"The Republican party is the party of manhood. It does not stir the poor against the rich. It has no class hatred to foster. It is for manly pluck, for honor, and for the best kind of people--the thrifty, frugal, courageous people. The Republican party is against the chinc and the demagogue.....

"The Republican party holds out no inducements to men who want a 'divvy', who want a fifty cent dollar to pay a dollar's worth of debt. The Republican party desires and will receive the support of conservative, honest Americans who believe that working and saving and honesty win in this world.....

"Are you an American or an Anarchist?" (52)

White continued with editorials in similar vein, in which he directed the attention of his readers to the perfect party, the Republican party, which stood for "independent manhood". "The American idea is today in the balance," he said. "The Republicans are upholding it. The Populists and their allies are denouncing it. The election will sustain Americanism or it will plant Socialism. That is the breadth of the question at stake."

It can be said for Mr. White that at the time when these editorials were being written he was going through a period of conservatism which stayed with him for many years but did not become a permanent characteristic. In later years he found occasion to admit that the Republican party was capable of imperfections, that Socialism had its good points, and that being a hide-bound conservative was a foolish business.

The early editorials would lead one to believe that, at least politically, the editor of the Gazette had set his sails on a permanent tack, but the Gazette soon revealed, as Helen O. Mahin says, "lack of consistency startling at first thought. What its editor said yesterday lays no dead hand on what he says to-day; nor in speaking to-day does he worry a whit about what he

may want to say to-morrow. Each day he voices an eager and vehement spirit with entire freedom. And you are presently filled with a surprised gratitude that whether you like what he says or not, you know he is not fooling you, and if he does not fear you, neither does he fear your enemy. Nor does he fear to let the world know it when he has changed his mind; he never shrinks from his record.

"There is something more than mere sincerity of motive in it. The worthy propagandist is sincere. But Mr. White is no propagandist; he has no program to serve except to speak his mind at all times. The result is a striking evolution. The ardent reactionary of the late '90's is the bane of the reactionaries twenty years later; and midway of the period he pauses with a reminiscent 'Well, well, well!' to remark the fact that he and his kind are now advocating some of the very things it used to scandalize them so terribly to see the Populists trying to do." (53)

And what the Populists were trying to do was just the thing that gave impetus to the writing of the editorial, "What's the Matter With Kansas?", that attracted nation-wide attention, and put the spotlight of the United States on William Allen White of the Emporia Gazette. "The editorial had an unusual

(55) The Editor and His People, Mahin, Intro., p.10.

vogue", says Mr. White. "It was reprinted in nearly every Republican newspaper in the United States and Mark A. Hanna, chairman of the Republican National Committee, said that he used the editorial more widely than any other campaign document in the campaign. The editorial is directed at the Populist ticket in Kansas and refers to a former Populist administration. The editorial did not keep Kansas from electing the Populist ticket, but Chairman Hanna was kind enough to say that it helped materially to elect Mr. McKinley and a Republican Congress. The editorial represents conservatism in its full and perfect flower." (54)

Criticism of the Populist Party came to be an indoor sport among the editors of Kansas. The populist congressmen, Peffer, Simpson, Clove and Otis, were continually assailed. There was a generous airing of the Lewelling administration, the state board of charities scandals, the police board scandals in Leavenworth and Wichita, the legislative bribery investigations, and the alleged blackmailing operations under the Populist insurance commissioner.

W. Y. Morgan of the Hutchinson News lent his aid to discouraging the Populist movement and was pleased to make announcement of the gradual dissolution

(54) The Editor and His People, Mahin. Note W. A. W., p. 244.

of this political force in Kansas . His campaigns were never as vigorous as those of White, but he was never backward about upholding his side of any controversy. A good deal of his editorial comment was in the form of humorous ridicule, and often it was very effectively employed. He followed the Populist movement with a watchful eye and a ready pen and predicted its early demise.

"At the last election in Denver eight state senators were elected who claimed to be Populists. These senators have now announced that they will go into the Populist caucus and not only that but will join the Democratic party. This is the legitimate fruit of fusion and every incident that marks the downfall of the Populist party has upon it the mark of fusion. What have the Populists gained by fusion? It has been used as the tool of Democracy and the death of the party was the only possible result." (55)

The funeral sermon for the Populist party was preached by the Lawrence Daily Journal, which could see no further hope for the party following the issuing of a manifesto by the state committee, calling for contributions to keep the party in force.

#### "Passing of Populism.

"Secretary Curran, of the populist state committee has issued a manifesto in the nature of an ante mortem statement, in which he declares that his party is in the throes of dissolution, and unless copious contributions flow into the treasury before August 1st, next, the headquarters will be closed and the populist party disbanded.

"It is safe to say that the contributions will not come. The farmers are expected to send in

(55) Hutchinson News, January 2, 1901.

their wealth, but one of the first things a farmer learns in life is that a dead horse isn't worth paying for. Populism is a dead horse, or, more properly speaking, a dead mule. This is said without disrespect to the mule, or to the party. The mule is a born kicker; so was the populist party. There are other points of resemblance not necessary to mention here. But that, aside the dictum of Secretary Curran, simply puts the official seal upon a truth which everybody had come to realize; the populist party is dead.

"Its life has been as full of tribulations as a boy's heel is of stone bruises, and trials have been its portion from the cradle even to the brink of the grave where it stands today. Populism was not without cause. It was the protest of man against the inequities of fate. It was a wailing cry against the inexorable destiny that downs one man to slavery and drudgery, and want and poverty, and elevates another to affluence, power and dominion. It was the feeble and ineffectual attempt of man to conquer Fate.

"From the beginning of time, man has struggled ineffectually against the injustice of Nature. The populist party was an organized effort to change the laws of human destiny, and to alter them so that the men who were unfortunate should be equal to those who were favorites of fortune. Ostensibly, the effort was to make men equal; really it was to dethrone the strong, and to put the weak in his place. In the beginning, it was an honest effort, fool, puerile but nevertheless honest. The rank and file of the party was made up of men with honest intentions, brave hearts, and high aspirations. But whatever good might have been accomplished was thwarted by the demagogues, whose ambition was power and place, and who led the party into such tangled ways of error that the most sincere and honest effort became ridiculous, and the party itself became the laughing stock of the country.

"All of which was unjust, cruel, and heart-breaking. To bring about such a millennium as the honest populist dreamed of was obviously impossible, but that did not deter honest men and women from having their dreams, and while they were dreaming, the demagogues tore down the foundations that were builded, and divided among themselves the things of value they found. But the dream is over now, and populism is a reminiscence. The members of the party must abandon the hopes they have cherished, must awaken from the dreams that have been so sweet to them, and must face

the stern fact that they no longer have a political home, but must seek one among those who have been their enemies. It is a cruel awakening, but they are not the first who have dreamed of sleeping upon roses to awaken and find the bed of thorns." (56)

Another topic which furnished lively editorial discussion in the late nineties and the early part of the following decade was prohibition--and Carrie Nation. Every paper in Kansas took occasion to give Carrie Nation generous publicity in its columns. Some of the editorial comment supported her, but most of it was adverse criticism of her process of doing away with the demon rum. The Emporia Gazette opposed the Carrie Nation method at first, but later changed its attitude.

#### "Carrie Nation and Things.

"Carrie Nation is wrong--dead wrong. Many people who are right are wrong. John Brown was. So was Christ, for that matter. Probably if the Gazette had been published in Jerusalem 2000 years ago it would have stood by the social order, and the dignity of the law, and would have cautioned people to keep away from the mob that followed Christ over the country, listening to his spurious doctrine. Probably the Gazette would have referred to the Sermon on the Mount as 'incendiary talk' delivered to the 'ragtag and bob-tail yesterday out on Mount Tabor'. The Gazette also probably would have referred to his charlatan tricks in serving free lunch, and would have advised 'the people to keep their heads, and not be led into foolishness by an unknown fellow who goes about the country imitating the fakirs of India, and stirring up dissension with the established church'. The Gazette would have called attention to the fact that this Jesus of Nazareth was a man of no particular education, and that the scribes and the elders, who had spent all their lives studying the law, probably knew more about what was proper for the people to believe than the half-



cracked son of a carpenter down at Nazareth, where the people are so stupid they don't know straight up when the sun is shining. Also the Gazette would have printed interviews with prominent citizens something like this:

"The Gazette reporter saw our esteemed fellow citizen, Hon. P. B. Pilate, judge of the superior court for Judea. When asked about the riots and disturbances of this Nazarine, Jesus, Judge Pilate said: "Of course, I know nothing of the case except what I have seen in the Gazette. But judging from that I should say the man is crazy. It is one of the phenomena of insanity to conceive the idea of divinity, and while this Jesus of Nazareth seems harmless enough, still I suppose the centurion should hold him in check. Even a mild monomaniac can do some harm, and the outburst in the Temple yesterday against the money changers who were there clearly by license of the elders--if I understand your city ordinances properly--was clearly the act of a fanatic.

"It was destructive, not constructive. If the fellow had a philosophy he would not try to tear down. He would build up. If his mania should take a homicidal tendency he might be a serious menace to the city. For he has a mob behind him." Asked what he would do if Jesus were brought before him for trial, Judge Pilate only smiled and twitched his lips humorously. But as he is very anxious to get in good graces with the better element in this town, there seems to be no doubt that Judge Pilate will not interfere with the operation of the city law in the matter. It is a case of local option.'

"Of course, if the Gazette were printed under the present management it would take another view. This is probably the generic view of the generic newspaper.

"Now, as to Mrs. Nation! She is crazy as a bedbug. There is no doubt about that. And she won't stop the sale of beer by her foolish crusade. Also by appealing to anarchy she discredits the very law which she would have the jointist respect. She has, by her unwomanly conduct, forfeited every claim she may have had to respect as a woman, and she deserves richly everything she has got--and more, too.

"But still that is merely her personal side of it. There is also this side: She is giving a great big horse-type object lesson which tells the people in simple, homely words of one syllable that a man who sells whisky illegally, or a man who en-

courages him, has no moral right which a white man is bound to respect. It's just as well to keep that a lesson in view--even if it takes a crazy woman to carry the banner." (57)

White was just the sort of a man who would not mind having a person "raising the devil" so long as this was being done in the cause of righteousness.

"Hurrah for Carrie.

"At first the Gazette was against Carrie Nation. She seemed to be going at it wrong end to. But events justify her. She is all right. She is not crazy. She is doing a good, sensible work, and is doing it effectively and well.

"She has aroused the law-abiding people of Kansas to the disgrace of lawbreaking--partly by the example of her own lawlessness. She has awakened the decent people to the folly of letting the indecent people boss them and increase taxes and enjoy the luxury of crime in the bossing. Carrie Nation has literally raised the devil with the saloons of this state. She is a brave, fat old heroine, and the Gazette hereby apologizes that it didn't discover her worth sooner, and publicly acknowledges that it was stupid for not recognizing her good points sooner.

"Fight the devil with fire. Smash the joints with hatchets. Drive the jointists from Kansas. They have no rights that a white man is bound to respect.

"Hurrah for Carrie Nation!

"She's all right!" (58)

The Hutchinson News, in line with Morgan's tendency to find the humorous vein in the situation," announced that "the rest of the state has nothing to fear from Carrie Nation for several years at least. She says she is going to stay in Topeka until every joint in that city is cleaned out." (59)

(57) Emporia Gazette, January 28, 1901.

(58) Ibid., February 11, 1901.

(59) Hutchinson News, February 1, 1901.

The Lawrence Daily Journal commented on Carrie Nation in a tone similar to that of the Hutchinson News:

"It is said that the plan for a new insane asylum is to be defeated by the legislature. It should not be defeated as long as Mrs. Carrie Nation is at large." (60)

"The Kansas City Times suggests that Mrs. Nation may have broken those Wichita mirrors by looking in them. Wichita mirrors are proof against such accidents. The Times evidently is not familiar with the appearances of the Wichita countenances that those mirrors are compelled to face daily." (61)

And the Emporia Gazette saw something funny in the hatchet-wielding Carrie:

"The Madison Case.

"Carrie Nation is used to scare the Rum Fiends just as boogers and the Bad Man are used to scare children. The other day a forged telegram, dated Emporia, saying that Carrie Nation was coming to Madison on the next train, was shown to a friend of Bill Perkins, the town jointist. Old Mr. Bill heard it, and locked his joint, and pulled out for the railroad yards. There he hid behind a pile of ties until night. The town had lots of fun with Bill. They could see his head bobbing out from behind the tie pile all day, and it was such a good joke that no one went down and put him on to the joke. Mrs. Nation says she is going to Atchison to see old Ed Howe of the Globe. Old Ed Howe is terribly brave when Carrie is in Topeka, but he'll hunt his tie pile when she comes to Atchison, all right. There never was a man--not even so smart and good and decent a man as Ed Howe--whom a woman couldn't bluff if she kept her nerve.

"Carrie Nation keeps her nerve." (62)

It was the contention of the Lawrence Daily Journal that Carrie Nation was insane, and the advice

(60) Lawrence Daily Journal, January 7, 1901.

(61) Ibid., January 9, 1901.

(62) Emporia Gazette, February 18, 1901.

given by this paper was that she "be given the care that her condition demands". This paper, evidently seriously, wanted to see action taken to place Carrie Nation in the insane asylum where it felt that she belonged.

"Carrie Nation's days seem to be full of trouble. She had a scrap with the Home Defenders, eleven in all, early in the evening, and later on was fired bodily out of the Topeka club rooms. In addition to that she had to hunt houses most all day, and at the end of the long shank of the evening tossed up for a decision and found she had been leading a somewhat strenuous life for eighteen hours. It was not so full of excitement as were the days when she smashed saloons of course, but her fight with her Doves of Peace was a refreshing variation from the monotony of jail life, and she seemed to brace up wonderfully as she alluded to the Lovely Defenders as children of hell, liars, devils, whiskeyites, and such like pet names. It must have rejuvenated the old lady wonderfully, and she is perhaps feeling gay enough today to forfeit her bond. But isn't it time that something should be done with this woman? The Journal asserted after her first speech and lawless act that she was insane; today that is the universal opinion. Instead of persecuting her in police and criminal courts, why is she not given the care that her condition demands? It would be an act of mere humanity to place her in the insane asylum for treatment. There is no reason why the poor woman should be permitted to be at large. She is as crazy as it is possible for her to be on her favorite subjects. We do not arrest other insane people and treat them as criminals. Why should she be abused in this manner? It is time to call a halt on this shameful business."(63)

The Wichita Beacon also looked upon Carrie Nation as insane and insisted that she be arrested, tried, and sent to the insane asylum "where she

(63) Lawrence Daily Journal, March 13, 1901.

belongs". It called her "a disgrace to religion and temperance". The Beacon blamed members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union for encouraging Carrie Nation in her saloon-wrecking campaigns.

"Bogus Goodness.

"Carrie Nation, the woman who is wrecking saloons in Wichita, is a disgrace to religion and temperance. She announces that she is 'The right hand of God!' and rides through the streets singing 'Nearer My God to Thee'.

"When the sheriff attempted to arrest her for disorderly conduct, she slapped him in the face, pulled his ears and otherwise handled him roughly. The sheriff had a rough and tumble fight with the old woman in the Union depot and got the worst of it, as she is as strong as a cow. When a police officer attempted to prevent her from attacking the Carey hotel bar a second time she hit him with a poker. When she was finally landed in jail she began singing and praying and disturbing the neighborhood as crazy people do.

"When Mrs. Nation made her first bid for notoriety, she should have been quietly arrested, tried and sent to the insane asylum where she belongs. Instead of that, a lot of W. C. T. U. women encouraged her, and she rapidly became worse. Mrs. Nation is unquestionably crazy, and is disgracing religion and temperance. All over the world respectable advocates of temperance and religion are blushing." ( 64)

Since there was evidenced in the columns of the newspapers a decidedly controversial aspect of the Carrie Nation question, it was to be expected that there would be a great deal of exaggerated misstatement in the leading editorial columns of the times. Most of the influential newspapers of the state were actively opposed to prohibition, and especially to the Carrie

Nation method of bringing it about. The editorial comments were sarcastic, humorous, often bombastic. They were always pertinent, though not always just.

The Beacon's charge that a good deal of the blame for Carrie Nation's activities should be laid on the shoulders of the ladies of the W. C. T. U. was not altogether justified. Not all members of temperance unions in Kansas were in sympathy with the saloon-wrecking mode of attack, as is illustrated by the following editorial, condemning the action of Carrie Nation in her Wichita activities, in the Kansas Issue, the state organ of the Kansas State Temperance Union:

"While it is undoubtedly true that the sympathy of the people of Kansas was with Carrie Nation, and with the Wichita joint crusade, as against the illegal bartenders of the state, nevertheless the opinion is generally and very justly held that this crusade would have been far more effective in accomplishing its results had it been attempted and persistently pushed in an entirely different manner.

"There is unquestionably altogether too much violation of the law in Kansas. The joint evil is not suppressed as it should be. A crusade is needed--not, however, a crusade of law enforcement to suppress lawlessness, and this accompanied or preceded by gospel temperance and organization crusades, the former to show men and women the evils of intemperance and to win them to a total abstinence standard, the latter to organize them for various lines of aggressive work in their respective communities.

"If Mrs. Nation will begin her efforts anew by getting together the women of Wichita into praying and singing bands as in the 70's for daily moral

suasion work in every part of the city, and if she and her co-workers will persist in this work, it will result in time in closing every saloon in Wichita. It will do even more. It will spread out over the whole state and finally become just such a moral suasion and law enforcement upheaval as Kansas has long needed." (65)

Following the Carrie Nation days, with their supply of controversial editorial subject matter for the newspapers throughout the state, Kansas editors undertook a "boss busting" campaign with an occasional display of the old-time vigor. The more spirited editorial discussion was confined to a few newspapers, however, with the Emporia Gazette leading the way against the "boss busting" papers, and the Topeka Capital and the Lawrence Gazette insisting that things were being run too much by a few powerful leaders and that there was need of a change.

For Kansas newspapers as a whole the boss busting editorial campaigns were desultory and hardly worthy of being classified as definite campaigns. Such newspapers as the Topeka Capital, the Lawrence Gazette and the Emporia Gazette did go actively into the controversy, however, and were never backward about asserting themselves. The Emporia Gazette as early as 1897 had insisted that the boss rule was all right. Said the Gazette: "New York City voted for a boss. New York City had to have a boss. New York

City is a community in which the majority of the people have no nearer conception of the American idea of government by the people than they have of the Golden Rule. They need some person to represent the governmental idea, just as the heathen needs a carved wood or a graven stone to represent his idea of God. The majority in New York needs a boss just as the majority in Europe needs a king and a grandeur of a court to represent the idea of a nation....."(66)

Then, in 1901, the Topeka Cantial was aroused by an editorial in the Emporia Gazette in which Mr. White wrote that the "boss system is a good system or it would not exist. It is born of necessity, and if the boss did not stand between the people who are sometimes hotheaded, and their designs, there would be all kinds of trouble. When the people grow wise enough to think twice before voting, the boss will disappear." (67)

The Capital followed with an editorial on "Bossism:

"If the Gazette will change its doxy to the 'boss system is a necessary system' instead of that it is 'a good system' it will have less trouble proving it. Ever since men were gathered in tribes, the boss system became irksome to the intelligent Greeks, but they realized that it was necessary, so instead of trying to do away with it they tacked a

(66) Emporia Gazette, November 8, 1897.

(67) Ibid., December, 26, 1901.



new idea to bossism in the shape of ostracism. Modified by the principle of ostracism, bossism was not so bad a practice. In the middle ages bossism became as complex a system as Dean Swift's theory of fleas, which have lesser fleas to bite 'em etc., ad infinitum. The idea that the majority were created for the special ease and benefit of a few chosen lords, proprietors, satraps, dukes, kings, emperors, czars, shahs, mikados and other bosses has had a wonderful prevalence for ages among the feudatories as well as the bosses themselves; but that the system is good is no longer conceded. The bosses as long as they continued to hold the purse, make the laws, monopolize the ability to read and write, control the standing armies and execute prompt sentence of death on anybody who refused to take off his hat when they passed by, persuaded the people that the boss system was divinely appointed and therefore good. The boss system in politics is in no respect different from the old feudalistic theory and practice. It is bad every way and ought to receive a whack whenever it sticks its head up. The idea that people can't run their own government and must have bosses to run it for them is no longer even orthodox." (68)

To which the Gazette replied that "government by a majority of the men over twenty-one is not necessarily the best government. It is merely a convenient way of establishing government by force, because the men over twenty-one do the fighting. But government by the red-headed or the one-eyed men or the short-haired women has just as much divine sanction, and would probably prove as wise as what is known as popular government." (69)

White continued for several years his campaign against the boss busting advocates. He ridiculed the talk about the righteousness

(68) The Topeka Daily Capital, December 29, 1901.

(69) Emporia Gazette, December 30, 1901.

of the government by the people and looked with disfavor on those who considered government by the people to be "by divine right established as a perfect thing."

The Lawrence Gazette finally broke away from its boss busting campaign and resigned itself to saying a few good words about the old machine:

".....No man can ignore or betray the men who put him into office, and then hope for support afterward. The men who fought Hoch are the ones who have now the best offices in the state; it is proposed not only to continue them in office, but to appoint a whole lot more machine men to other places. Whatever else you can say of the old machine, it had this cardinal political virtue: It stood by its friends, and did not throw any sop at its enemies. It stood pat, and when it won, it took the rewards of victory. When it lost it took its medicine and bided its time, as it is doing now. And just so sure as the sun shines and the birds twitter, just so sure will the Leland machine be returned to power in the state in two years if the policy of petting the machine men and ignoring the 'boss busters' is continued by Hoch. The plan of heaping coals of fire upon the head of your enemy by doing good things for him may be all right in Sunday school, but it doesn't go in Kansas politics." (70)

This change of attitude on the part of the Lawrence newspaper amused the Emporia Gazette highly. "It is very funny", averred Mr. White, "considering the fact that former Governor Bailey was defeated for standing by his friends. The boss busters, one of whom the Lawrence Gazette was the whitest, said

(70) The Lawrence Daily Gazette, December 15, 1904.

that the party was run on too narrow gauged a track. The boss busters were right. The party was too close a corporation---too much of a family affair with the old man all the family." (71)

From the boss busting days to the present there has not been a sustained, vigorous, crusading editorial campaign carried on simultaneously by any appreciable number of Kansas newspapers.

C. S. Finch, editor of the Lawrence Daily Gazette, was one of the more vigorous editors who was becoming impatient over the passing of an editorial enthusiasm in Kansas newspapers as early as in 1904. In his newspaper he gave this advice to the Topeka Capital:

"The editors of the Topeka Capital are two of the smartest men in Kansas. They ought to get up the best and brightest paper in the state. And yet, they affect the style of the decrepit and verbose journals of the east and make the paper dull, editorially, when they could make it bright and interesting. There are not two men in Kansas who know better how to write things, and write them right than do Arthur Capper and Harold Chase. Why do they not make the editorial page of the paper what it should be? This is not a criticism; it is a plea. The Topeka Capital ought to have the brightest and best editorial page of any paper in the whole west. It is dull and tiresome. But maybe there are things nobody else knows about. Possibly the work is done when tired brains and weary hands ought to be at rest. But the editorial page is not up to other departments of the paper. We would rather say this to Capper and Chase when nobody was around, but we haven't time

(71) Emporia Gazette, December 16, 1904.

to go up to Topeka and tell them, and they have not time to come down after the advice, which wouldn't cost them a cent, and for which no charge is made. But we wish they would brace up." (72)

(72) The Lawrence Daily Gazette, December 12, 1904.

## Chapter 4.

## Present Tendencies.

Since the boss busting days there have been controversies between a few Kansas newspapers, usually on relatively unimportant topics. There have been a few individual campaigns, usually of merely local significance. There have been a few lively disputes between two newspapers, such as the fight between Henry Allen of the Wichita Beacon and William Allen White of the Emporia Gazette in 1922, in the matter of adjudication as distinguished from arbitration of industrial differences. The difference in viewpoint lay in the functioning, not the existence, of the Industrial Court. Governor Allen wanted to use the court as a court of trial; Mr. White, as a court of arbitration.

In general, life of the editorial column in Kansas newspapers has been slowly ebbing until it is with difficulty that one finds in the present-day Kansas newspaper editorials that show signs of the old spark of independence and adventure. From the long list of weeklies and dailies now being

published in the state, one Kansas editor, who is a worthy representative of the old school and is still actively upholding the best traditions of the profession in Kansas, names these newspapers as still displaying some of the old-time crusading spirit: Topeka Capital, Topeka Journal, Emporia Gazette, Fort Scott Tribune, Salina Journal, El Dorado Times, Wichita Beacon, Wichita Eagle, Winfield Courier, Iola Register, Arkansas City Traveler, Coffeyville Journal, Ottawa Herald, Lawrence Journal-World, and the Leavenworth Times,

This list is admittedly a liberal one. If out of this group were to be named the few newspapers which carry on, with any degree of frequency, vigorous and sustained crusading campaigns of either local or state-wide significance, not more than a half dozen of the group could be included.

It is true that there are several influential newspapers in Kansas which have opinions on public questions and which endeavor to support these opinions in their editorial columns. But the usual practice is to avoid any discussion of a controversial nature and to carry out strictly a "safety first" policy in regard to editorial comment. Local affairs are some-

times strenuously attacked by some Kansas editors, such as George Marble of the Fort Scott Tribune, who has made an independently Democratic newspaper successful in a strongly Republican community and who has absorbed the other two dailies in Fort Scott, chiefly because he has conducted many vigorous editorial campaigns. These campaigns have been for Fort Scott primarily, but they have been crusading, constructive, and independent. The Tribune has concerned itself with such matters of enlightened community self-interest as bringing the dairy industry to Bourbon County, and such moral crusades as chasing the bootleggers and liquor law violators off the Fort Scott map.

A few other editors in the state are carrying on the traditions of earlier newspaper days, but their efforts are lost in the haze of editorial mediocrity and indifference which has settled down upon the Kansas press. William Allen White of the Emporia Gazette and Charles Scott of the Iola Register are still in evidence, but they are the last of the old guard. Henry Allen of the Wichita Beacon is lending support to the voice of the crusaders, although he came into prominence later than most of the other crusaders. (73)

(73) Purchased the Beacon in 1908, after having sold the Ottawa Herald.

Lack of interest in editorial controversy was evidenced to a marked degree in the forged letter incident of the White-for-governor campaign in 1924. Very few Kansas newspapers even commented editorially on the affair, although surely many of the editors felt personally that this was matter worth discussing, whether for one side or the other. The Kansas newspapers played politics and did not rally to the cause of fairness and justice. Rolla Clymer of the El Dorado Times did comment on the forged letter incident, but not in a manner acceptable to the Kansas City Star, as is shown by the following editorial:

"Discussing the forged letter given out by Kansas Republican headquarters as having been written by William Allen White, the El Dorado Times, edited by R. A. Clymer, remarks that it 'Has felt all along--- and has said so---that this letter was a foolish piece of business'. The letter, the Times adds, is 'one of the biggest political boneheads that this newspaper has had the privilege of observing in a number of hectic years'. It concludes that the letter was a 'mistake'.

"If the Star rises to make a protest here, it does so because it hates to see so good a fellow as Rolla Clymer get into the political rut to the confusion of right and wrong. The professional politician regards any lie as justifiable, if it will help his cause. If he is caught in the lie he thinks he has made a sufficient excuse if he pleads it was 'just politics'. But that position is thoroughly immoral. It is just as wrong to lie in politics as it is to lie in business or in social relations.

"The letter sent out from Kansas Republican headquarters as coming from Mr. White was an evident forgery. We assume Mr. Clymer, being an intelligent



man, knows this is true. Then it is a confusion of moral values to refer to it as a 'foolish piece of business', a 'political bonehead' and a 'mistake'. A man who forges a document of this sort, or gives currency to it knowing it to be forged, has no place in decent company. Forgery is a grossly immoral act. To call it by soft names is to condone deceit and trickery.

"For its own protection society needs to realize that a big embezzler is a thief. For its own protection it needs to realize that a politician who forges a document is a scoundrel." (74)

The apathy of editorial columns in Kansas newspapers was also in evidence during the investigation, by a legislative committee, of the Kansas public service commission. The investigation was carried on for more than two weeks in May and June, 1927. During the investigation, and after it closed, a great deal of allegedly damaging evidence was disclosed. It was just the kind of affair into which the crusading editors of the Kansas of an earlier day would have jumped with both feet, and to a man. True, not all of the earlier editors would have been on the same side of the controversy. But they most certainly would have been on one side or the other.

What was the reaction of the present-day editor of Kansas? With very few exceptions, the editorial responses to a situation which was certainly of vital importance to the citizens of the state were pitifully few.

(74) Kansas City Star, October 24, 1924.

The investigation of the Kansas public service commission brought out so many embarrassing details that when the legislative committee finally decided to close up its books the state house sighed with relief. It had been an unpopular proceeding from the viewpoint of certain state officials. There had been charges that the committee was acting without authority, and that it had gone beyond its bounds and beyond the original intentions of the legislative resolution. Governor Paulen was not in sympathy with the work of the committee, it was alleged. But throughout the investigation the interest of the state was aroused. It was the "talked up" but not the "written up" thing in Kansas.

The committee had been appointed by the legislature originally on one ground for investigation, the discovery that the public service commission had been spending a great deal of money for employees not provided for in the state's statutes. But as the committee called its witnesses other facts began to appear and other angles of investigation were followed. The spotlight of the committee was thrown on Lew T. Hussey, chairman of the public service commission, and virtually all of the disclosures had to do with

his alleged inefficiency. Through the calling of various witnesses and the study of letters, books, files and other sources of evidence, it became clear that the committee was attempting to discover whether there was truth in the following charges:

That Lew T. Hussey established a spy system in the public service commission, that the influence of this spy system was highly detrimental to the efficiency of the commission, and that state funds were used under this system to obtain evidence against members of the commission and its employees.

That the public service commission had been used by Chairman Hussey for the placing of personal and political friends on the state payroll.

That two witnesses of unquestioned character and standing testified correctly when they asserted that Chairman Hussey offered to "swap" a decision in the long train case to the railroads in consideration of a favorable decision for the commission in a gas case.

That the Hussey administration as chairman of the commission had destroyed the morale and the effectiveness of the organization.

That Hussey's conduct toward certain employees was not compatible with the dignity of a public official.

That Hussey used the state funds to pay for private and personal telegrams and telephone messages in the conduct of his personal affairs.

That Hussey while acting as chairman of the most important commission in the state also acted as head of the big insurance lobby in the 1927 legislative session, a lobby which spent large sums of money to influence legislation favorable to the insurance companies.

That Hussey wrote letters to the Potter Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of fire escapes, in which he promised the company that he would use his influence to amend the fire escape law of Kansas to the better interest of the company. That at about the same time the legislative bill was changed to read "metallic fire escapes", the word "stairways" being eliminated. The Potter company manufactured metallic fire escapes. Before he became chairman of the public service commission Hussey was state agent for the company.

This was the nature of the investigation carried on by the legislative committee. Did the editors of Kansas respond? A few did.

Jack Harrison of the Reloit Gazette had

this to say:

"In his column in the Lyons News, Clerk Conkling charges that the investigation of the public service commission has not been in accordance with the instructions of the legislature; in fact, Mr. Conkling rather charges unfairness on the part of the investigating committee. Chairman Hussey may not be guilty of many things charged against him, and the committee may not have been as fair as it should be, but facts and conditions have been disclosed that should result in an early end and a complete reorganization of the public service commission. Lew Hanback may still be telling how the grasp of a comrade's hand is warmer than that of any other hand, but he is telling it on another shore. 'Farmer' A. W. Smith may still be telling the 'Boys' how 'they swept us off a hundred men or more' at Chickamauga, but he is telling it to a crowd assembled in Elysian fields. The days of 'vote-as-you-shot' and of 'vote-for-a-yellow-dog-instead-of-a-Democrat' passed long ago in Kansas. New issues and new conditions now obtain in Kansas, and one of these political conditions is that a public official should be like Caesar's wife, above suspicion. Gov. Paulen, Attorney General Smith and the other leaders of the Republican party should bear this fact in mind, or they may have cause to regret their oversight. The public service commission should be completely reorganized and this job should be done at an early date." (75)

This editorial is not in the vigorous language of the earlier Kansas editor, nor does it have the drive and force of the crusader, but it does show a reaction to a controversial problem. Also, the outlook on present-day political Kansas, as revealed in this editorial, may seem to some a bit fanciful and idealistic, but there is an opinion stated, after all.

(75) Beloit Gazette, June 1, 1927.

The editor of the El Dorado Times was satisfied to wait until someone else had said something about the public service commission investigation. Then he commented on Jack Harrison's editorial as follows:

"And that seems to be about the general average of opinion in Kansas since the storm broke at Topeka. Mr. Hussey may be pure as the driven snow, but evidence of the spy system, of trading influence, of petty grafts, of favoritism to industrial interests over the rights of the public have accumulated to destroy any confidence the public of this state may have had in the Public Service Commission. The signs of 'practical politics', as played in Topeka, are not pleasant to contemplate. Their pettiness is their greatest offense. The commission is due for a general house-cleaning and the governor should wield the broom. The whole situation is a smelly mess---and Kansas generally is disgusted with it." (76)

Here there is no question as to the editor's opinion on the matter, although there would perhaps be some who would prefer to think of the disclosures of the legislative committee in stronger terms. That the charges could be referred to as pettiness might

(76) El Dorado Times, June 2, 1927.

also bring forth some differences of opinion among critics of the affairs of the state house. Rolla Clymer here reminds one of the Rolla Clymer editorial comment in 1924 on the forged letter incident of the gubernatorial campaign, in the editorial in which he referred to this "foolish piece of business", a "mistake", and "one of the biggest political bone-heads that this newspaper has had the privilege of observing in a number of hectic years." (77) However, it is a definite statement of editorial opinion, and deserves recognition for its very rarity among Kansas newspapers, if for no other reason.

The investigation called forth from Charles F. Scott some pointed advice. The editor of the Iola Register shows, in his reaction to this particular state house development, signs of the spirit of the old editorial clan, of which he was an active participant and in whose campaigns and crusades he took a prominent part.

Of Scott's comment on the Topeka investigation the Emporia Gazette said: "Governor Paulen has many advisers who have many axes to grind. Here is a man who asks no favors of any man, who is a stalwart Republican and a loyal Kansan. When he

(77) El Dorado Times, October 20, 1924.

speaks any politician should harken." (78) The editorial on which this comment bears reads as follows:

"'Why should I get in it?' Gov. Paulen is said to have exclaimed with some heat when asked what he proposed to do with respect to the disclosures that have been made with relation to the record of the public service commission chairman. 'I was not invited in when the legislature created its committee. I have not been invited in except in the letter I received, and I believe the thing for me to do is to let the committee proceed as it sees fit.'

"It is undeniably appropriate for the governor to 'let the committee proceed as it sees fit'.

"But may it not be respectfully suggested that there is every reason why the governor should 'get into it', to the extent, at least, of giving the state clearly to understand that he will not countenance the misappropriation of public funds, nor the use of public office to build up private business, nor any sort of criminal misconduct on the part of a public official? The governor appointed the members of the public service commission and he cannot wash his hands of them. Whether he considers that his responsibility for these officials ceased when he named them and the senate confirmed them or not, the people will not so consider it. Whether he has the legal power to remove members of the commission or not, it will be believed, and doubtless justly, that he has the moral power to force their resignation and that he ought to exercise that power if one or more of them is found unworthy to remain in office will be the universal conviction. The governor's responsibility is undeniable and imperative and it cannot be cavalierly dismissed with an angry gesture." (79)

A few other Kansas newspapers commented, rather tactfully, on the investigation of the public service commission. The great majority of Kansas editors were content to maintain an atmosphere of sweet indifference in their editorial columns, and

(78) Emporia Gazette, June 2, 1927.

(79) Iola Register, May 31, 1927.



to write on such subjects as how the Chinese address their letters, the need for downing the bachelor, and the strange case of the republic of Andora high up among the craggy Pyrennes which divide France from Spain.

What are the reasons for the neglect of the editorial columns and the passing of the crusading spirit in Kansas journalism? And are the Kansas newspapers better now without the old-time editorial vigor? Who is responsible for the change? Is it the editor or the reader who has brought about the transformation to which many of the editors point with pride and which only a few decri?

Undoubtedly, the business side of present-day newspaper management in Kansas, as elsewhere, has had a profound influence on the editorial columns. It has not necessarily taken away the courage and vigor of the editor, but it has brought a great business problem into the editor's daily affairs; consequently, so much of the editor's time and energy is taken up with this part of his work that he has very little time for writing editorials.

Henry Allen of the Wichita Beacon admits that the business side of the Kansas newspaper has taken on

a great importance, but he does not believe that the situation is hopeless. In a letter written on this subject he says:

"I do not think that the newspapers of Kansas are run more to make money than they used to be, altho undoubtedly they make more money than they ever did before because they are better organized and occupy a more important relation to the business field than ever before. The art of advertising has taken on new meaning, new intelligence and new effectiveness, and this has all made the newspaper of today a more useful business organ than it ever was before.

"I do not think that the country editors of Kansas are keeping up the vigor with which they once expressed themselves editorially. There was a quality in pioneer life which does not transmit itself to the more staid conditions of maturity. I suppose that what we are observing today is that calm flow of a commonwealth that has found its bearings, solved most of its problems, and gotten into the rather straight and narrow rut which characterizes the older commonwealths.

"Altogether the modern newspaper has more merit than it had a quarter of a century ago; it prints more news; has greater circulation; deals in useful features; and gives a subscriber very much more for his money than it ever did. It has become a more important business institution, requiring greater overhead. I presume more attention is paid to its business life than ever before. But outside of the decline in importance of the weekly newspaper, the general situation is stronger than it ever was.

"The growing strength of the daily situation, the multiplied means of transmission, the daily mail delivery system, and the new quickstep with which the whole age is marching, have, of course, naturally reduced the importance of a weekly paper. It has been obliged to deal less with news and more with features. The keen young men who used to seek the weekly newspaper fields now seek the daily fields. All conditions have conspired to reduce both the importance and the character of the weekly newspaper in Kansas. Twenty-five years ago, when we referred to the newspaper situation in Kansas, almost invariably we had in mind at least a hundred strong, vital weekly

newspapers. Now there are not over a dozen in the state that would be mentioned in that classification. On the other hand, there are about thirty daily newspapers that have become very worth while and creditable expressions of the best journalism.

"I do not think there has been any change in the predominating motives that lead men to run newspapers. There has been a change in the public mind, but you still find the good newspapers doing missionary work out of their civic spirit, and taking the public into partnership in their desire to be useful. Most of the newspapers in Kansas are large enough now so that there is a place for the expression of the man whose newspaper ambition is for literary work, as well as for the man who likes the business end of the paper. There has been a very great recession on the part of the men who run newspapers for political advancement. A quarter of a century ago nearly every country editor was a politician. Today most of the good ones are busy running their newspapers. The love of a lively fight remains about the same. Newspapers must keep themselves lively. No fight helps them unless it is a good fight and for the right motive, but I think very few editors go into a fight purely for the love of fighting.

"I do not think that the changes which have come in the enlargement of the business have usurped originality, have reduced the power of the papers in forming public opinion, or have reduced their ethics. Undoubtedly, however, the new situation has reduced the emphasis of any one personality, and it has reduced the partisanship of the papers. They have become highly departmentalized. They are no longer a one-man institution. Their power in forming community opinion must be more cunningly exercised. Properly edited they are more powerful than ever before, because they go into relatively a larger number of homes.

"I should judge that the improvement of the editorial page is probably more important than any other element of personal journalism. There is a tendency in modern journalism to under-estimate the importance of the editorial page. This is sadly true in the smaller dailies.

"I would hate to see the feature of poverty, which used to characterize Kansas newspapers, brought back. I would hate to see the limited vision of the

editors as to the news possibilities of their papers returned. I would hate to see the type of paper once so familiar as 'The Organ' come back. And I would hate to see, above all the other evils of the early days, the morbidly bitter partisan newspaper returned." (80)

This is more optimism than Henry Allen will ordinarily admit in regard to the newspapers of Kansas. Mr. Allen is growing more pessimistic every year in his outlook on journalism, not only toward the Kansas press but toward the whole press of the United States. He sees very little promise of improvement, and from recent indications is convinced that the idealism of the profession of journalism is rapidly disappearing.

Kansas editors of the present day are frank to admit that they are running their newspapers primarily for the profit that can be made. This appears to be the editor's main objective. Frank S. Foster of the Ellsworth Messenger says that he believes that "publishers now look more to making a living, a real living, out of their business than formerly. Too much space was formerly given to politics, the country editor frequently getting the idea that the welfare of the entire nation depended upon his expression of political opinions. The politician used him and his paper to further their ends without paying much for anything realized. Newspapers generally are conducted now upon

(80) Letter by Henry J. Allen of the Wichita Beacon, March 24, 1926.

a better basis, more business ability being brought to their operation."

Most Kansas editors of today feel that the older newspapers had very few features that would be worth while in the present-day newspaper. Ewing Herbert of the Hiawatha World thinks that "there is nothing worth while to bring back. Might just as well bring back the candle dip as the old time newspaper." Frank I. Sage of the Alma Enterprise believes that the papers of today are "so much better than those of forty years ago that there is no comparison. Some of those early day papers would hardly be permitted to go through the mails today, much less be allowed in the home. The big thing the old-timers had was courage that perhaps some lack today, but we must remember that those were fighting days and 'everybody was doing it' as well as the newspapers."

"The old time political buncombe of whetting the editor's snickershears upon every occasion and delving into the gore of his competitor", is a feature which J. Byron Cain of the Belle Plaine News does not desire for the modern newspaper. P. A. Lovewell of the Merchants Journal, Topeka, believes that the older newspapers of Kansas were characterized by

"abusive editorials, slack articles by Constant Reader and Vox Pop."

Charles F. Scott holds a different view. "The present-day newspapers of Kansas", he says, "lack the old time fighting belief in things one believes. Too many men don't seem to believe anything now strongly enough to fight for it." W. C. Palmer of the Jewell County Republican says: "Perhaps the best feature that could come back from the past would be the old fire of enthusiasm. The thrill of feeling that the country, the state, the nation, the world and the universe are involved in the issue; that you are rushing to the rescue regardless of personal danger."

A great majority of Kansas editors feel that the spirit of the older journalism is more to be deplored than admired. Especially are they critical of what they believe was an abusive tendency in the editorial columns. This is in contrast to the opinion of William Allen White, who asks, "After all, what's a little slander more or less between old friends?" in observing reminiscently on the withdrawal of the Emporia Daily Journal, of which Ed Martindale was editor, on October 21, 1910.

A good deal of the criticism of the older newspapers is ill founded, especially in regard to the abusiveness of the editorial columns. An inspection of the files of the older Kansas papers shows that the abusive editorial was confined usually to a few newspapers, and that most of the other papers, far from being abusive in tone, were scholarly, instructive, thorough, vigorous.

The literary tone of the newspapers of the early days was certainly higher than that which is found in the average editorial column of present-day Kansas newspapers. In those days, the reader depended to a great extent on the newspaper for his education and culture. Many of the editors felt the responsibility of bringing the best reading matter to their subscribers. This responsibility was generally reflected in the editorials themselves, which were obviously the result of a serious purpose, an educated mind and a painstaking care. Most editorials were written with a definite purpose in mind; they were not dashed off by the editor in a last-minute effort to fill up space or to lend respectability to his publication.

The educational significance, the literary

tone and the vigor of the editorial column in Kansas journalism has been, to a great extent, lost in the business of publishing newspapers. The dailies have gone into an era of business enterprise and have, at least temporarily, allowed the editorial column to fade into insignificance. The weeklies, the old faithfuls of the Kansas newspaper family, having established the Kansas tradition of a vigorous journalism, are trying to compete with the dailies, and the editorial column of the weeklies has fared even worse than it has in the dailies. In fact, an examination of the weeklies shows that many of their editors have given up entirely the writing of editorials.

It cannot, however, be said that present-day newspapers in Kansas have lost all of their individuality, or that the editors have definitely determined to desert the editorial column for the counting room. Nor can it be said that the old Kansas newspaper originality is gone. On the contrary, this originality is still alive; but it has been diverted into a new channel that seems to satisfy the editors and to show no prospect of being changed. Kansas newspapers have gone into an era not only of business enterprise but also, editorially,



of sprightliness, in which paragraphic badinage is supplanting serious editorial writing.

Who is there to say that this later development is not a worthy one, and that Kansas editors cannot accomplish as much by writing clever paragraphs as they could by laboriously pounding out slashing editorial attacks? Whether the new will be more worth while than the old remains to be seen. The development and the general acceptance of the sprightly paragraph "tradition" is so recent that it can not yet be fairly judged.

One Kansas editor, at least, Ben Hibbs of the Arkansas City Traveler, believes that the new trend in the editorial columns in Kansas is a good one, and that more of the same thing is desirable:

"There is too much thundering at nothing in our newspapers, too much shadow boxing. There is a place for thunder and lightning in the newspapers, but too many editors don't understand when and how these elements should be used. There is too much barking at the moon.

"And so to maintain a sense of proportion there must be those writers who make use of levity. There must be smiles, public smiles, in our newspapers. And with Jay House, William Allen White, and others of their ilk leading the way, there has sprung up in Kansas a wonderful tradition of smiling editors.

"Probably in no other state is so much sprightliness to be found in the editorial columns--- some of it broad and rollicking, some of it subtle and perhaps a bit sharp, some of it trivial and purposeless, but extremely readable, and some containing truth as

rare as free gold. It all adds up into a sum total of sly joyousness which is one of the dominant notes in the voice of Kansas newspaperdom---a note which helps the 'horn-rimmed' world to see itself in the right perspective." (81)

This sprightliness in the present-day Kansas newspapers, although comparatively of recent development for the state press in general, does have roots which run back into the past. The early files of the Atchison Globe show that Ed Howe specialized in sprightly paragraphs in his newspaper as long ago as fifty years. Also one can find beginnings of this spirit in the editorial columns of the Hutchinson Herald, where W. Y. Morgan was writing editorials in the lighter vein in the early days of that newspaper. Ed Howe and W. Y. Morgan were without question the real beginners in this field, although their pioneering has not been extensively recognized.

The current editorial badinage of the Kansas press, now its outstanding characteristic, consists in controversies over the advisability of wearing spats, one editor's dislike for onions, light comment on current events, harmless attacks on editorial personalities of the state, and wide variety of similar by-play. This sort of writing activity has entirely overshadowed the more serious type of discussion, and

(81) From an address at the University of Kansas, October 21, 1927, by Ben Hibbs of the Arkansas City Traveler.

the average Kansas editor is frank to admit that he does not miss the latter.

Just what brought about the change of editorial style can not easily be explained. No doubt it has naturally followed certain economic and social recastings which have come gradually rather than precipitously. The change of editorial personnel, as has been pointed out, had the effect of steering enthusiasm and effort away from the editorial office, but the later increased interest in editorial writing, in a different form, cannot be thus explained.

Perhaps this new spirit can be partly accounted for in two ways.

First, with a greater business enterprise on his hands the editor found that it was wise to avoid arousing antagonism of any kind in his columns and to adopt the policy of "safety first", a policy which consisted in a willingness to furnish much news and entertainment but very little controversy.

Second, there came upon the editor a growing realization that continual fighting in the editorial columns was not "getting anywhere"; the readers had, through some change in the main current of social relationships, lost interest in questions which in earlier days had been momentous issues. In politics

the change in public sentiment was especially evident. People no longer gathered on street corners to discuss their favorite candidates; one of the greatest of editorial subjects, "politics", was becoming virtually a dead issue.

Kansas editors have realized, also, or believe they have realized, that readers have become less interested in the content of editorial columns and have been turning to other sources for matters of opinion and controversy. Magazines are more widely read than formerly, and are depended upon to a great extent for the setting forth of the various angles of current discussion. The newspaper is being read primarily for information and entertainment, rather than for the opinions presented by the editors.

Whether the loss of reader interest in the editorial columns of Kansas newspapers is the fault of the newspapers themselves or merely the result of a changed public temperament is difficult to determine. Perhaps both factors enter in. At any rate, there seems to be no evidence that the Kansas press has been less zealous than that of any other state in keeping its editorial columns alive. In fact, there is little doubt that Kansas still holds a high rank in editorial

quality. But it is more keenly to be felt in Kansas because of the former vigor and effectiveness of the editorial columns.

The future will probably be governed almost entirely by the temperament of the Kansas public. If the readers begin showing a new interest in current opinion, if they display a revived enthusiasm with respect to such questions as politics and laws, there will no doubt be a return of interest in the editorial columns of the newspapers, since, after all, the magazine can not treat public questions as extensively or in as timely a way as can the newspaper. And as soon as this new interest is shown, the Kansas newspaper editor will furnish the editorials. He will meet the demands of his readers. But he is not likely soon again to lead them aggressively.

There is some promise of a true revival of vigorous editorial discussion in Kansas newspapers in a slight recent tendency on the part of editors of the state to pay more attention to this phase of their work. The period of intense business enterprise and competition seems in some measure to have passed. Those newspapers which could not stand up under the fight for business survival have gone down.

The average Kansas newspaper editor, finding himself rather secure on the business side, now seems willing to get back to the writing of worthwhile editorials. There need be no loss of sprightliness, and there is little danger that there will be. The spirit of levity has become a part of the editorial life. And certainly there is no objection to a carrying on of this strain of good fellowship; dullness is an unpardonable fault when it occurs in editorial columns. But surely no harm will be done, and there is great possibility for good, if the Kansas editor determines to restore vigor and enthusiasm and a deep interest in current discussion to his editorial columns. "Great journalism is journalism in attack", (82) observes a current historian. It must never be satisfied merely with letting human events course calmly by. It must interpret, inform, advise, and show a willingness to accept its responsibility as a guardian of the public welfare. If the Kansas newspaper would return to its former glory it must again be fired with the spirit of the crusader.

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