The Newspaper Press in Kentucky

Herndon J. Evans

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The 
Newspaper Press
in Kentucky

HERNDON J. EVANS

Foreword by Barry Bingham, Sr.

THE UNIVERSITY PRESS OF KENTUCKY
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HERNDON EVANS spent more than half a century as a Kentucky newspaperman. In his long career he did many journalistic jobs, including the editorship of a small-town weekly and of a city daily.

Always his love was for the written word. He used writing as a tool for communicating with readers of all kinds, for promoting good causes, for stirring the hearts of Kentuckians to the joy and pride and responsibility he himself felt for his native state.

To such a man, it was important to polish his writing to a clear sheen of meaning and tone. It is sad, then, that Herndon's fine eight decades of existence did not stretch quite far enough. He would have liked to do the final editing job on the book he wrote about "The Newspaper Press in Kentucky."

Much as his friends regret that final quirk of time, however, we must all be grateful that his book is being published for the pleasure and enlightenment of many readers. The editors of The University Press of Kentucky have handled the manuscript with affectionate care. They have given the work to us in as nearly the form that Herndon would have provided as it is humanly possible to do.

Thus we have this labor of love before us. We can read about the Kentucky journalists of two centuries as though we were hearing Herndon talk about them. They are all real people to him, all old friends. We can see the fellow whose first issue was delayed because "a great part of the type fell into pica in the carriage of them from Limestone [Maysville] to the office."

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We recognize the Jovian tones of Henry Watterson: "The carpet-bagger is a nuisance. Carpet-bagging is a swindle. If General Grant means what he says, let him abolish both, and if his party be sincere, let it confirm his act."

But we also recognize a more modest scribe, the old-fashioned "society editor" who burbled over a wedding in such words as: "A queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls who beautify and adorn the family residence of Mr. John Downing was transplanted last evening to the family of Mr. William Kendrick."

Herndon Evans was always a journalist, a member of what he calls in the book "our wonderful profession." His work never prevented him, however, from taking a personal and zestful part in a variety of causes he found challenging. At the Mountain Laurel Festival, in the long fight to preserve Cumberland Falls, in the chair at a meeting of the Kentucky Press Association, in Democratic party campaigns for candidates who commanded his enthusiasm—Herndon was a wholehearted participant.

The current issue of "conflict of interest" never applied to Herndon Evans. His interest was always centered in the Kentucky press. The press, in turn, was important to him as a vehicle for informing the public and steering it toward what he deemed the best and most enduring values of the Commonwealth. His spirit speaks to us, cheerfully and effectively, through these pages.

Barry Bingham, Sr.
Preface

Late in the summer of 1974 I was invited to write the history of Kentucky newspapers as one segment of the Kentucky Bicentennial Bookshelf. I was quite naturally hesitant, since I had never done anything of this nature and I felt utterly inadequate for the task. I asked for time to think it over.

I discussed the proposal with my family and with others and when I told them Jesse Stuart, Thomas Clark, Harry Caudill, J. Winston Coleman, Clement Eaton, and other notable authors had been asked to write about Kentucky’s history, I received this response: “Why would you hesitate? You’ll never have the opportunity to get into such distinguished company again!” So, here goes.

History writing, I found out, means lots of reading from authors who themselves had done lots of reading from predecessors they never knew. It means rewriting, perhaps, in your own style and in your own words, what these predecessors have written. History writing also means the recalling of events and times with which you are personally familiar, so that those who follow you may rewrite someday what you have written.

I was indeed fortunate in writing this story of Kentucky journalism that I had such distinguished predecessors—authors such as Arthur Krock, Isaac F. Marcosson, Thomas D. Clark, and autobiographers such as Henry Watterson and Cassius Marcellus Clay, to make my work easier. I owe a debt of gratitude to Betty Kirwan for providing me with research material. She previously did an excellent job in assisting her late husband, Dr. A. D. Kirwan, eminent historian and university president, in
Arthur Krock back in 1923 compiled the outstanding editorials of the Courier-Journal’s Henry Watterson. It was an excellent book by a writer who distinguished himself in the newspaper profession. Born in Glasgow, Kentucky, thirteen years before the turn of the century, Arthur Krock was reporter, staff writer, managing editor of both the Courier-Journal and the Louisville Times, writer for the New York World and the New York Times, and correspondent in Washington for the Times as well as columnist. He won four Pulitzer prizes for his writings. Isaac F. Marcosson was a star reporter for the Louisville Times, held other positions on the paper, and wrote numerous books relating to the newspaper profession. His biography of Watterson, Marse Henry, won wide acclaim. Background material from Thomas D. Clark’s History of Kentucky and his Southern Country Editor and from W. H. Perrin’s The Pioneer Press of Kentucky also is gratefully acknowledged.

I have tried to cover the early days of Kentucky newspapers and have endeavored to show their influence in the political and social life of our state. Kentucky has produced some outstanding journalists in the last half-century, but space limitations make it impossible to give their names or record their works. Some weekly newspapers, probably under different names, may have qualified for the “Century Club” which is recorded in this story, but their present-day editors or publishers failed to submit proper evidence for their inclusion. Many of these may be included in a work by Victor R. Portmann, retired teacher of journalism at the University of Kentucky, who is writing the history of the Kentucky Press Association.

It has been my rare privilege to serve for more than fifty years in both the weekly and the daily newspaper fields. It is my hope that my fellow workers in all those years will accept this story in the spirit in which it is written and, I trust, enjoy reminiscing with me over the happenings of the past in our wonderful profession.
Introduction

The story of Kentucky's newspapers is the story of our political, economic, and social life. It is the story of issues and answers, the story of life and death. Newspapers, by their very nature, become sources of historical studies. They recount day by day or week by week the happenings, joyous or sorrowful, humorous or sad, enlightening or dull, experienced by those who live in the communities where they are printed and circulated. Yellowed clippings between the pages of the family Bible or tucked away in other books, where grandchildren someday will find them and ponder their contents, attest to the love of all people for their hometown newspapers—and their desire to see their names in print.

In 1784, when this story begins, Kentucky was an isolated pocket of settlers on a fertile western plain, some 300 miles as the crow flies from the nearest newspaper—the Virginia Gazette, recently moved from Williamsburg to Richmond. The American Revolution had so disrupted daily life that no regular mail route had been established between the "Dark and Bloody Ground" to the west and the Atlantic shore to the east, although a growing percentage of the new nation's people lived on western waters. Personal letters still were being hand-carried by travelers. Government, too, had been disrupted by the Revolution. By 1776 Virginia was no longer an English colony, with the English king and his ministers holding veto power over local decisions, but a state making its own decisions. One early decision had been to join with the other twelve former colonies in a formal national government. Another was to "have no truck" with colo-
nies of her own—a first in American history. Virginia wanted her westering citizens to form responsible governments themselves. Now called "the mother of states," Virginia conceived a new idea: that Kentuckians should speak with an equal voice in the national legislature rather than at the general assembly meeting in Richmond.

A huge communication problem existed between the "inland settlements," as Kentuckians referred to Virginians who lived east of the mountains, and the "men on the western water." Yet Kentuckians spoke the language of all Virginia when they met in December of 1784 to begin forming a state. Their meeting place may have been a crude log cabin, but the record they kept was written in as fine a hand as in any legislative meeting in the East. Like responsible citizens of a proud state, they carried these minutes east, confident that one day Kentucky would have its own general assembly and a voice in the national government then being formed.

Among other items noted in the minutes of this first representative meeting in Kentucky—minutes that are still housed in Lexington, Virginia—was this: "Freedom of the Press is highly subservient to Civil Liberty and therefore such measures ought to be taken as may be most likely to encourage the introduction of a Printer into the District." Like other civilized people in Williamsburg, Richmond, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, Kentuckians wanted a newspaper and would work to establish one. A newspaper, they believed, would aid in closing the gap in communication that had most troubled them. Lack of a newspaper made it impossible for Kentuckians to speak with one voice.

The effort to induce a printer to come to Kentucky was no small one. The matter again was noted in minutes of the second convention, held in Danville in May of 1785; a newspaper was needed "to assure unanimity in the opinion of the people respecting the propriety of separating the district of Kentucky from Virginia and forming a
separate state government, and to give publicity to the proceedings of the convention.” Inquiries regarding the matter of a printer for Kentucky were circulated in Richmond and Philadelphia. Kentuckians pressed the search until within three years a printer had established himself in Kentucky.

The printing office was set up by John Bradford in Lexington, Kentucky’s center for commerce, education, literature, music, and other arts and sciences. The town had been named by a party of hunters sitting beside the waters of beautiful Elkhorn Creek (which still runs under the present Vine Street) and talking about establishing a new town. Several names were suggested but all were rejected. Word recently had come that the Battle of Lexington, Massachusetts, had been fought on April 19, 1775. One of the hunters arose and suggested that the name of their new town should be Lexington. The suggestion immediately found favor with the other hunters and the name was accepted. Thus on June 4, 1775, was born a town destined to be called the Athens of the West. This was just a year before Thomas Jefferson, the talented young Virginian with such a “peculiar felicity of expression,” began work on the Declaration of Independence.

In 1786, the first newspaper to be published on western waters was established at Pittsburgh, where the Monongahela and the Allegheny run together to form the beautiful Ohio River. By 1787 Lexington was a bustling inland trade center, the first major inland city in America, and was busy building the first university west of the Alleghenies—Transylvania University. In that year, John Bradford established the first Kentucky newspaper, the Kentucke Gazette.
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JOHN BRADFORD, a surveyor, had come to Kentucky in 1785 to make his home. Although not a printer by trade, the Farquier County, Virginia, native decided that he could learn that trade and courageously offered his services. With all the assurance in the world he accepted the challenge and announced that his new venture would be called the Kentucke Gazette. Assembling the equipment and materials needed for the publication of a newspaper was no easy task. An antiquated press was located in Philadelphia, along with some type and other printing supplies. The press, with several cases of type and other equipment, was transported by boat and then by wagon via Limestone (now Maysville) to Lexington. Bradford had an early lesson in reading upside down letters and figures because a sudden jolt of the wagon from a bump in the road pied one case of type. He had to distribute this type in a more correct manner than that of a slightly inebriated printer, who grabbed up a handful of pied type and shouted as he hurled it across the shop, “seek your respective cases.” Finding helpers for the printing shop was not easy. Advertisements seeking journeymen printers frequently appeared in the Gazette during the early days. The ads bore the headings “WANTED Immedi-
ately.” Thomas Parvin came to work as the Gazette’s first trained printer.

The first issue of the Gazette appeared on August 11, 1787. Months had been spent in getting the necessary equipment in readiness, and perhaps weeks were required to get the first edition set and ready to run. Unfortunately, no copy of this first issue has been preserved.

On August 18, 1787, the second issue of the Gazette set forth its hopes and objectives in the new country. Under the heading “The Printer of the Kentucke Gazette to the Public,” subscribers found this statement of policy:

After having expended much in procuring the materials and conveying them from Philadelphia I have ventured to open a Printing office in the Town of Lexington in the District of Kentucke. Notwithstanding the expences and that of procuring farther supplies of paper for my business, and of supporting necessary hands, I shall content myself at present with the prospect of small gains. I consider this country of being yet in an infant state, harrassed by the most savage enemies, leaving no profitable trade and being drained of money by its present intercourse by the Eastern parts of America. However the exertions made by a great number of Gentlemen in favour of the press convinces me that a Spirit prevails among my countrymen superior to their present circumstances. I am satisfied that every possible encouragement will be given to my present undertaking.

Bradford then stated the great advantages that would accrue from the publication of the Gazette and added that the paper would give “quick and general information concerning the intentions and behaviour of our neighbouring enemies and put us upon our guard against their future violence.” The paper, he said, also “will communicate a timely information of the proceedings of our Legislature and prevent us from undergoing various evils by being unacquainted with the laws of our country, some of which have been in force sometime before they reached the district.”
"Thirdly, it will call our attention to the transactions of Congress, and . . . teach us when we are to prepare for foreign wars; when we are to admire the successful Hero, the generous Patriot, and the wise Statesman; or to treat with abhorrence the betrayer of his country."

The Gazette, Bradford said, would also tell about the "ancient world" and advise its readers about acts of "distant nations who flourish in the arts of arms or peace." The article added that it would bring "sparks of Genius to light" and closed with the declaration that the new editor could "rest satisfied, that all my Countrymen will be sensible of my claim to their notice as the first adventurer in a business which has been chiefly instrumental in bringing mankind from a state of blindness and slavery to their present advancement in knowledge and freedom."

The article was signed "John Bradford."

At the bottom of the printed pages in early editions, the Gazette carried a line which said that the paper was "Printed and Sold by John and Fielding Bradford" at their printing office at the corner of Main and Cross Street (now Broadway) in Lexington and suggested that subscriptions and advertising would be "thankfully received" there. John Bradford soon learned the artistry connected with setting type by hand. Sometimes the type would be lost or inadvertently destroyed; in these instances Bradford whittled out the missing letters from available hardwood. Many Kentucky weekly newspapers still have, among their prized possessions, pieces of wood type expertly manufactured from hardwoods, with now and then a piece hand-carved by some forgotten printer.

During these early days of the Gazette, Bradford never lost sight of the goal that had been mentioned in convention resolutions looking to the eventual separation of Kentucky from Virginia. In stories and letters to the Gazette in the intervening five years from the first appearance of the paper until Kentucky attained statehood in 1792, the movement was carried forward. And rejoicing
was widespread when the paper finally won out in its statehood campaign.

The early editions of the Gazette carried little local news. Lexington was small and the people who lived there knew everything that was going on in the community. Early newspapers carried an unusually heavy volume of foreign correspondence. Apparently the eastern dailies had many columns of such news and the weeklies picked up what they needed. Sometimes the foreign news was accurate, but frequently it was not. The Gazette followed the pick-up-and-publish practice. Lost, strayed, or stolen livestock were reported in advertisements on the front pages of most issues of the paper. One of the first issues carried this notice about a lost horse: “Strayed or stolen from the plantation of William Stevenson (near the surveyor’s office)”; then followed a detailed description of the horse and the offer of a two-dollar reward for the animal’s return. Other advertisements, similar in nature, offered rewards of from four to fifteen dollars for the return of animals. Many notices implied the strong suspicion that animals had not always strayed without some help.

The Gazette also provided its readers with something more to talk about than horse stealing, as this advertisement in the January 26, 1788, issue indicates: “Whereas my wife Katherine Gwinn, having proved false to my bed, and frequently having confessed the same to me and named her associates which were many, I therefore advertised her in the Virginia Gazette, and at several public places in our own county. Therefore unless the inhabitants of this district may not have knowledge of such publication, I hereby forewarn all persons from trusting her on my account as I will not pay any debt she contracts. I learn she is coming to this district.” Signed: Matthew Gwinn.

Another front-page article, which was signed “A FARMER,” gave the writer’s views on the “separation from the state of Virginia” and said that he felt this was the
most interesting question before the people at the time. A page one advertisement told of an upcoming Danville "vendue" and called attention to the "valuable assortment of merchandise, the stock in trade remaining on the hands of Semple, Wynkoop and Co."

The first issues of the paper were four pages, approximately 7-by-8½ inches in size; but the fourth edition was about 9-by-13¾ inches in size. All pages were three columns wide. Advertising volume increased when the larger paper appeared. Other historically interesting advertisements offered for sale "spinning wheels, knee-buckles, gun flints, buckskin for breeches, hair powder, saddle bag locks," and numerous other articles. Another notice said that "persons who subscribed to the frame meeting-house can pay in cattle or whisky"—a far cry from the 1920s when a Frankfort church refused to accept an organ from a local financier because his chief source of income was a distillery.

One issue contained this notice: "I will not pay a note given to William Turner for three second-rate cows till he returns a rifle, blanket, and tomahawk I loaned him." Signed: Charles Bland. Another advertisement offered a fifty-dollar reward for the return of a "runaway Negro," while another reported that people were flocking in to see a dromedary on display.

The big news in the August 15, 1787, issue was a typical Chamber of Commerce story about plans of Jacob Myers of Lincoln:

The subscriber begs leave to inform the public that he is now engaged in erecting a Paper Mill on a branch ofDick's river near his grist mill, and expects to have it fully completed by the first of November next. He flatters himself that in the execution of an undertaking which promises such advantages to this district, he will meet with the greatest encouragement from every good citizen who wishes to see arts and manufactures flourish in Kentuckye. But as a paper manufactury can not be carried on without rags, he therefore most earnestly recommends it to all persons to be particular in saving all their old linen and cotton.
Proper persons will be appointed in different parts of the country to receive rags, for which he will give a higher price in cash than is given for the articles in Maryland and Pennsylvania.

The *Gazette* did not record whether the Myers project was ever carried out. But William H. Perrin, who served as the first secretary of the Kentucky Press Association in 1869, reported in *The Pioneer Press of Kentucky* that after 1793 the paper on which the pioneer newspapers were printed was manufactured in Kentucky. The first paper mill in the West, he said, was erected in Georgetown. A fine spring there known as the Royal Spring provided the clear, sparkling water needed for the manufacture of paper. The plant was about 40-by-60 feet in dimensions and 2½ stories high.

The *Gazette* of January 19, 1788, carried an unusually long article by John Filson, who later was recognized as a historian and outstanding citizen of Kentucky. Filson urged support for a seminary proposed for Lexington. He wondered about the location of such an institution in Lexington in what may have set a record as the longest sentence printed in the *Gazette*:

The ideas of mankind with respect to the seats of education are various, some prefer a town or city, others the country; the latter viewing the many temptations youth are exposed to in towns and supposing they are fewer in the country, think that the most eligible; however probable this may appear, yet experience proves, that a being determined on folly, will find as many opportunities in the country, as in the town, with the addition of a greater secrecy in accomplishing his designs; many mean and vicious practices can be effected, which in a public situation the unavoidable idea of detection would effectually prevent; this is obvious from the view of a country student walking out of school, he carelessly hulks his body in clownish gestures, pays no respect to a genteel movement, from a consciousness that no eye beholds him, fears not the contempt or ridicule which must be consequent upon such a conduct in a
respectable town, or if in a public situation in decorum should pass unnoticed by all, but the teachers, then in the most pertinent season for admonitions which the culprit must be sensible upon the smallest observations to all character and future reputation which he must unavoidably maintain, I concede the voice of thunder could not make more serious impressions. Experience beyond doubt will confirm these observations.

Other contributors to the paper offered such signatures as "Republicus," "Agricola," and similar pen names. There also were individuals such as Levi Todd, Robert Barr, and Henry Marshall. Everyone, it seemed, felt free to use the columns of the *Gazette* to express an opinion on topics of the day and these expressions made the paper more interesting.

John Bradford was one of Lexington’s outstanding citizens. He served many times on the town’s Board of Trustees and was chairman of the Board of Trustees of Transylvania University. At the time of his death in 1830 he was serving as high sheriff of Fayette County. Born in 1749, he had served in the Revolutionary War. He was chosen as the first public printer after Kentucky became a state in 1792 and was reelected continuously until 1796, when he was defeated for the post by James Stewart who founded the *Kentucky Herald* sometime between 1793 and 1795. It was the *Gazette*’s first rival. The Bradfords established the *Guardian of Freedom* in Frankfort in April of 1798, hoping thereby again to be named public printer. The Frankfort venture, which was said to have been only a branch office of the *Gazette*, failed to land the contract and folded in 1804.

Bradford was a practitioner of “personal journalism.” The first issue of the *Gazette* carried this article: “My customers will excuse this my first publication, as I am much hurried to get an impression by the time appointed. A great part of the type fell into pi in the carriage of them from Limestone [Maysville] to the office, and my partner, which is the only assistant I have, through an indisposi-
tion of the body, has been incapable of rendering the smallest assistance for the past ten days.” Bradford’s office was a rude cabin, one story high, covered with clapboards. The paper was printed on a hand press that, at full capacity, would turn out fifty to seventy-five papers in an hour. Bradford sat on a three-legged stool which he had made and wrote or worked from a handmade table. At night he worked or wrote by the light of a buffalo-tallow candle. He had the field to himself, as no other paper was printed within 500 miles of Lexington.

John Bradford had the help of his son Daniel, whose name appeared in 1802 as editor of the Gazette. At that time John Bradford took over the Kentucky Herald and published it for about ten years. But in a few years John again took control of the Gazette. Some years later he sold the paper to Thomas Smith, but it was not long until the paper again was in the hands of the Bradford family. Fielding Bradford, Jr., appeared as publisher with John Norwell as his partner, a partnership that was not to be in effect for long, since in 1825 John again was listed as owner. Then in 1835, five years after John’s death, the paper became the property of Daniel Bradford, who sold it in 1840 to Joshua Cunningham, a foreman in the office of the Daily Advertiser. The Gazette declined in influence largely because of its numerous changes in ownership, and in 1848, after serving Kentuckians for some sixty eventful years, it ceased publication.
Editors of Kentucky’s early newspapers which followed the Gazette accepted fully the responsibility of presenting the news and views of their times. News-gathering in the early days was more difficult than it is today, when even the smallest papers have several persons on the staff. There were no telephones, teletypewriters, or means of speedy transportation by which news articles today are obtained. Editors had to rely upon legwork to seek out items for their papers.

Many of the early newspapers in Kentucky were established for purely political reasons. A leader in the federal government or a candidate for governor of Kentucky often inspired several new papers. Some of these papers were fortunate enough to back winners and continued to be published after their protégés had left office. In addition to the papers which were established to back political candidates, some came into being because their founders wanted to get even with the editors of current publications who had refused to publish their articles or letters. Editors in the early days often took autocratic positions on issues they were advocating and limited opposing views. As a rule, however, those who adopted such policies soon lost readers and advertisers. Even though some of the early papers were established for strictly political reasons, editors on the whole followed
the rules of good citizenship and participated fully in community affairs. Most of them believed in personal journalism, so that readers generally could predict where an editor would stand on every issue.

Editors of these early days in Kentucky journalism led precarious lives. They often were challenged to duels or shot or assaulted because of something they had printed in their papers. Thomas F. Benning, editor of the Kentucky Gazette, was shot March 9, 1829, by Charles Wickliffe for refusing to provide the name of the author of a violent communication published in his paper. Benning died the next day. This led to a duel a few months later between Wickliffe and George James Trotter, who had succeeded Benning as editor of the Gazette, and Wickliffe was killed.

New papers appeared thick and fast in 1798 and in the following years. According to William H. Perrin’s listing in the Pioneer Press of Kentucky, some of them were the Mirror, Washington, 1798; the Palladium, Frankfort, 1798; Guardian of Freedom, Frankfort, 1798; Western American, Bardstown, 1803; Independent Gazetteer, Lexington, 1803; Weekly Messenger, Washington, 1803; Republican Register, Shelbyville, 1804; the Mirror, Danville, 1804; the Informant, Danville, 1805; Western World, Frankfort, 1806; Republican Auxiliary, Washington, 1806; the Mirror, Russellville, 1806; Impartial Review, Bardstown, 1806; the Lamp, Lincoln County, 1808; Argus of Western America, Frankfort, 1808; Louisville Gazette, Louisville, 1808; the Reporter, Lexington, 1808; Western Citizen, Paris, 1808; Farmers’ Friend, Russellville, 1809; Political Theater, Lancaster, 1809; the Dove, Washington, 1809; the Globe, Richmond, 1809; the Examiner, Lancaster, 1810; the Luminary, Richmond, 1810; American Statesman, Lexington, 1811; Western Courier, Louisville, 1811; Bardstown Repository, Bardstown, 1811; and the Telegraph, Georgetown, 1811. Thereafter the pace of entry slackened somewhat, but many an embryonic editor scraped together sufficient
funds and, flattered by his friends over something that he may have had printed in a local paper, launched yet another newspaper. After the Civil War another run of new papers was recorded.

Louisville's first newspaper bore the unusual title of the *Farmers' Library*. Little is known of the origin of this paper. According to Ben Casseday in *History of Louisville*, no one had any knowledge of the paper's history or ownership. It was known only from an Assembly enactment requiring certain laws to be published in its columns. Colonel Reuben T. Durrett, however, says the paper was established January 7, 1801, and was published by Samuel Vail. It was an 11-by-19-inch sheet which contained little local news, a great deal of foreign matter, and some advertising. The heading consisted of the *Farmers' Library* or *Ohio Intelligencer*, Louisville (Falls of the Ohio), printed by Samuel Vail. Louisville was then a town of 800 inhabitants. Matthew Lyon, a prosperous early settler in Kentucky, joined Vail in the venture, using the press and type that Lyon had brought from Vermont, where he had published a paper under the intriguing title of *The Scourge of Aristocracy and Repository of Important Political Truths*. The *Farmers' Library* ceased publication in 1808, presumably because of great pressure from a new rival, the *Louisville Gazette*.

Editing newspapers continued to be a hazardous job not only because of financial problems but also because of dangers connected with writing about affairs of the day and the backgrounds of some of the political leaders. *Western World*, established July 1, 1806, by John Wood and Joseph M. Street, exemplified the dangers. The paper first was published by Colonel Hunter, owner of the *Palladium*, for Wood and Street. The paper was widely circulated its first year as a Federal organ that followed the Hamilton-Adams school of thought. Wood departed from Frankfort after the political atmosphere became a little too heated because of some of *Western World*’s editorial positions. But Street, bold and aggressive, stood
his ground despite many assaults and threats on his life and continued to publish the paper. Challenged by Dr. Preston Brown because of criticism of Brown’s brothers, John and James, Street came out ahead after numerous editorial controversies. Assaulted and shot by George Adams at a downtown hotel, Street drew his dirk and made Adams “advance backward on the double-quick.” Many editors of that early day carried arms to protect themselves against assaults by disgruntled readers.

Humphrey Marshall was a name to be reckoned with in Frankfort journalism in the early 1800s. He was credited with establishing three newspapers there: the American Republic, the Harbinger, and the Constitutional Advocate. Marshall came to Kentucky in 1780. He had been active politically in Virginia and drifted easily into Kentucky politics. He served as a state representative from Woodford County in 1793 and as a United States Senator from Kentucky from 1795 to 1801. He was the patentee of the land where Frankfort now stands. A devoted friend of Frankfort, he served many years on the town’s Board of Trustees. His “stinging pen and bitter tongue” often got him into trouble, Perrin reported, but he seldom came out second best in these confrontations. He even dueled with Henry Clay because of some sarcastic remark he had made about Clay’s homespun clothing. In the encounter Clay’s pants were hit, but the man in them was not.

The Constitutional Advocate was transferred by Marshall to Patrick H. Darby, described by Perrin as the “low comedian” of early journalism in Kentucky. Darby came to Frankfort from Louisville and was regarded as a “noisy, mischief-making demagogue.” He allegedly was involved in the assassination of an opponent of John J. Crittenden. Marshall, on the other hand, was said to have been a “shining ornament to the Frankfort press, and would compare favorably with the ablest editors.”

Well known among early newspapers was the Yeoman, established February 13, 1840, and ably edited by S. I. M. Major for some twenty-five years after he assumed the
post in 1852. Grounded in a classical education—not the background of many early editors—Major was known as an able writer and one of the “most brilliant editors of the state.” He was a public-spirited editor and served in the state legislature in 1867 and as mayor of Frankfort from 1867 to 1871.

The *Lexington Observer and Reporter*, established in 1807, was prominent in central Kentucky for a quarter of a century. William Worsley and Samuel Overton published the paper first as the *Kentucky Reporter*. Worsley learned his trade in Richmond, Virginia, and came to Kentucky about the same time that Henry Clay arrived. He later closed out his newspaper business in Lexington and moved to Louisville, where he and a Dr. Buchanan decided to establish the *Focus* to compete with Shadrach Penn’s paper. Worsley, a most enterprising newspaperman, arranged to have news sent from Washington, D.C., by mail to Frankfort. Thus he was probably the first editor to get news fresh from the nation’s capital.

Shadrach Penn may be credited with establishing the first daily newspaper in Kentucky. He established the *Public Advertiser* in Louisville on June 23, 1818, as a weekly; later it became a semimweekly; and on April 4, 1826, the *Public Advertiser* became a daily, the first to be published west of the Alleghenies. Penn’s paper wielded wide influence not only in Louisville but also in other parts of the country. His paper soon rivaled Ben Casseday’s *Western Courier*, which later was to admit that Penn was “an experienced politician, a forceable writer, and a man of extraordinary tact.” The Penn paper held its position of dominant leadership until the *Louisville Journal* appeared in 1830 under the editorship of George D. Prentice. Prentice later was to rank as one of Kentucky’s outstanding editors, perhaps second to Henry Watterson of the *Courier-Journal*.

Prentice and Penn battled each other tooth and nail, until Prentice finally won out in the fight for supremacy in the Louisville field. Perrin said of these editorial giants of
the day: “The editorial warfare that [Penn] provoked by his open defiance of George D. Prentice and the Louisville Journal is probably without parallel in the newspaper history of the country.” The rivalry knew no bounds, and editors of today would be shocked at some of the exchanges. Dr. Theodore Bell said that Prentice’s wit and humor “were daily feasts to the readers . . . and I readily recall to memory many persons who would sooner have done without their breakfast than the morning Journal.”

Prentice did not always follow ethical practices in his battles with Penn. On one occasion he played a practical joke on his opponent that almost brought the two editors to blows. Prentice came into possession of a copy of a New Orleans paper reporting a big murder story. The paper was well over a year old but still in excellent condition. Prentice ironed out the wrinkles in the newspaper and wrapped it in white paper with the inscription: “With the compliments, Clerk of the Waucousta, five days, seventy-eight hours out from New Orleans. Quickest trip on record. To Shadrach Penn, editor of the Public Advertiser.” Penn fell for the gag, stopped his press when the messenger arrived with the paper, and ran the murder story under appropriate heading. In another column he congratulated the captain of the Waucousta for his record-breaking run. Penn’s embarrassment knew no bounds when he discovered how he had been duped. The Waucousta, as most persons familiar with steamboating knew, was a leaky old craft that never could have made a run like that described by the paper. Prentice continued to rub it in, inquiring slyly whenever the Advertiser published a sensational story, “did that one come by the Waucousta?”

Prentice had come to Kentucky to write a biography of Henry Clay, the Kentuckian who was making a bid for the presidency of the United States. But when the twenty-eight-year-old writer arrived in Louisville he was pressed into service with the Journal. His powerful pen won high
praise from the Whigs. And his unbending support of Clay made him an instant hero of the leaders who were backing Clay for the presidency. Penn had had the newspaper field virtually to himself and what he said editorially was taken as gospel in the state. Prentice was not to be deterred in his plans or intimidated by his well-established rival. Thus the battle was on, with no quarter given on either side. Thomas D. Clark says in his History of Kentucky that Prentice had not yet assumed his duties as editor of the Journal when Penn leveled a scathing attack on him: “This editorial ‘scalped’ the young Whig, and it was partly through its influence that his Whig backers feared they were sending a shorn lamb into battle with a wily old editorial lion. When the Journal appeared it was a neatly organized paper becoming Whiggish dignity. However, it soon became more than a newspaper, for it became the Kentuckians’ ‘Whig Bible’ for ‘every Whig to swear by and every Democrat to swear at.’ ” The Journal was the recognized spokesman for the Whigs and supported Henry Clay and all other Whig candidates in all their campaigns.
THE GOOD OLD DAYS

When the Kentucky Press Association (KPA), organized in 1869, held its midsummer meeting in Paducah, July 25-26, 1931, Urey Woodson was the chief speaker. He took as his subject "The Good Old Days" in Kentucky journalism, and his remarks later were printed and distributed to the newspapers. This rare pamphlet, found by the Paducah Sun-Democrat's Joe LaGore, reveals much of the state's early newspaper history.

Woodson's style of delivery was tangy and humorous. He recalled, in opening, that he had been named as president of the KPA in 1890 and had known many of the editors of that era who made newspaper history. Paducah's newspapers at that time were the Evening News, published by T. C. Ballard and James P. Thompson, and the Morning Standard, founded by the Leigh brothers. "My successor as president of the KPA, elected at that meeting, was Harry Sommers, of Elizabethtown, and his successor, a year later, was Charles M. Meacham, of Hopkinsville." Both of these editors made names for themselves in Kentucky journalism.

Urey Woodson started his first newspaper in September 1877. He told later of seeing Edna Ferber's Cimarron as a movie. "In this picture was shown the interior of a country printing office, with the foreman pulling the back-breaking lever of an old Washington hand press."
said to Mrs. Woodson: 'There I am at Greenville in 1877 getting out the *Muhlenberg Echo* at the rate of 100 copies per hour.'” The picture, he said, showed a linotype. Kentucky’s first linotype was purchased by the *Courier-Journal*, the second by the *Lexington Transcript*, and the third by the *Owensboro Messenger*. Soon thereafter the Model 14 linotype began to appear in weekly and small daily newspaper plants across the state.

James A. Munday founded the *Owensboro Messenger* on October 10, 1877. Another early Owensboro paper was the *Monitor*, established many years before the *Messenger* by Thomas S. Pettit. In 1875 the *Owensboro Examiner* was published by Lee Lumpkin and later consolidated with the *Messenger*. The *Owensboro Inquirer* was established in 1884 by J. J. Sweeney and others. It was owned by several different persons until Judge S. W. Hager, who had lost a race for governor of Kentucky in 1908, bought the paper in 1909. The paper later became the property of Lawrence Hager and on January 1, 1929, the Woodson-run *Messenger* was purchased by the *Inquirer* owners. Today the *Messenger and Inquirer* is operated by Lawrence Hager’s two sons, John and Larry.

Young E. Allison was another newspaperman who became prominent in Kentucky. Allison went with Ben Harrison’s *Henderson News* in 1866 as printer’s devil and at fourteen years of age was local editor of the paper. Once Allison and his brother James published the *Henderson Daily Chronicle* “for about twenty minutes,” Woodson recalled. Young Allison was, for a time, city editor of the *Evansville Courier*. Woodson said:

I know Allison well because we slept together in those days, or rather in the same room, for Allison worked at night on the morning *Courier*, coming in about 3 a.m. to go to bed, while I, being a carrier on the *Courier* at $1 a week, had to get out of that warm bed at that unearthly hour to get to the office in time to deliver my papers in all kinds of weather. My idea of a real hero
is a 12-year-old carrier of a morning newspaper. I can say this in all modesty because I graduated from that school, the only school from which I ever graduated. I had to go to work before I finished my first year in high school.

Allison went to Louisville as city editor of the *Courier-Journal* in 1880 and three years later became managing editor of the *Louisville-Commercial*. Later he was editor of the *Louisville Herald*, as the old *Commercial* was retitled. "Young Allison was one of the most accomplished newspaper writers of my acquaintance," Woodson related.

Colonel Hodges, of the *Lexington Observer*, a paper also edited at one time by Colonel W. C. P. Breckinridge, was another well-known writer in the Bluegrass. Woodson further recalled:

The older Lexington newspapers of which I have any knowledge include the *Gazette*, edited by Howard Gratz; the *Press*, established by Major Henry T. Duncan and Col. Hart Gibson. About 1875 the *Transcript* was founded by George Caldwell. Tom Baxter afterwards bought the *Transcript*, and then James H. Mulligan and Ed Farrell, two brilliant Irishmen, edited the paper until 1891 or 1892 when the name was changed to the *Herald*. Desha Breckinridge took the *Herald* in 1897 and his early associates were Enoch Grehan, who came to him from the *Argonaut*, Walter Hiatt, Jouett Shouse, Sidney Smith . . . and also Dr. R. J. Omahoney, all of marked ability. Who since the days of his gifted father writes a more brilliant editorial than Desha Breckinridge today?

Enoch Grehan was well known to all Kentucky newspapermen as the man who established the Department of Journalism at the University of Kentucky in 1914. Many present editors and publishers received their early training under "Uncle Enoch," as he was affectionately known. His assistant for many years was Miss Margie McLaughlin, who taught most Kentucky newspapermen their "who, what, where, when" approach to news-
writing. Grehan, a stickler for the right usage of words, also was known for his paragraphs in the *Herald* and for his theater reviews during Lexington's heyday in drama offerings at the old Opera House.

Grehan served as head of the Department of Journalism for twenty-three years. He died of a heart attack on December 11, 1937, while actively pursuing the work he loved. He left for his home at the end of his classes and was stricken with his beloved wife, "Miss Jennie," at his side. He often mentioned her in his paragraphs. Few teachers in the university merited or won the love of students as Grehan did. He was father, counselor, and friend to his students. On one occasion, learning that the parents of a young woman planned to send her to another school, he wrote a long letter to the girl's mother—at the request of the young woman's suitor—urging that she change her mind and pointing out the great advantages of his institution over the proposed school.

Upon his graduation from Transylvania in 1894, Grehan's valedictory so impressed Henry T. Duncan, Sr., publisher of the *Lexington Press* which later merged with the *Transcript*, that he gave the young graduate a job on the paper. Advancing through the various stages of newspapering that prepared him for the duties ahead, he later served as news editor of the *Herald*. He was to admit in later years that he had written upwards of 50,000 paragraphs and short editorials, many of which he wrote after becoming head of the journalism department in 1914.

Grehan was considered an authority on words and their uses. He issued a style sheet while at the university and many of these booklets still may be found in newspaper offices throughout the state. He was one of the kindest of men and would not have uttered a word that would have hurt anyone. He loved a practical joke and could gracefully accept one aimed at him, as evidenced one night when he introduced a group of singers from the all-black Kentucky State College in Frankfort. He presented "this unusually talented octet from our capital" and sat down.
His choice of words was meticulous, but someone seated by his side whispered to him: "Uncle Enoch, did you realize that you introduced that group as an octoroon?" Grehan, stammering almost inaudibly, rose halfway to his feet to repair the damage he thought he had done, but was pulled down quickly by his companion.

Grehan helped many a young student to gain employment in the newspaper field. He followed the progress of his former students and always was proud of their accomplishments. He was a man of the highest principles and sought to instill his ideals and what he considered the ethics of the profession in his students.

At the time of Grehan's death, Tom Underwood, then editor of the Lexington Herald and a former Grehan student, had this to say:

To name the editors, members of news staffs and others associated with newspapers who had been his students in the past quarter of a century would be almost to call the roll of all the younger men and women who today are leaders in newspaper work in the state of Kentucky. . . . He insisted upon force and character of editorial declaration, in honesty and integrity of purpose, of accuracy of statement and of grammar but primarily that the truth, however adorned, be free and unafraid. Because of this determination instilled by him in so many young Kentuckians the newspapers of the commonwealth today are outstanding examples of what newspapers in the fields they occupy ought to be.

Among successful Kentucky editors who learned their newspapering from Enoch Grehan was Keen Johnson, who parlayed the editorship of a small Kentucky weekly and a small daily into the governorship of the Commonwealth—after a four-year term as lieutenant governor. Johnson finished his course under Grehan and edited the Anderson News at Lawrenceburg. He then went with the Richmond Register, edited by Shelton Saufley, Sr. He served for a time as secretary of the Kentucky Democratic Committee and then ran for lieutenant governor. Near the
end of his term, after taking over the governorship from A. B. (Happy) Chandler, who was named senator, he was elected to a regular term. He reentered politics in later years, but lost a race for the United States Senate. He closed his career as editor of the Register.

Woodson resumed his story of the early history of Kentucky newspapers with this personal anecdote:

The first time I ever was in Louisville was the Fourth of July, 1878, the date of the world famous four-mile race between Ten Broeck and Mollie McCarty at Churchill Downs. I rode out to the track with other boys on the roof of a little dinky street car pulled by two little mules. But before starting I saw the bookmakers selling pools in the basement of the Galt House, the Californians, who had come on special trains, betting thousands on their little mare and the Kentuckians and many others backing the Kentucky horse, the unbeatable Ten Broeck. I got a seat on the grandstand at 10 a.m., and stayed in it until the race was called at 4 p.m., without a drink of water or a bite to eat. The day was intensely hot. The old grandstand would hold 3,000 people, but there must have been 30,000 on the grounds. I have seen probably forty Kentucky Derbies since then but no race that thrilled me so much as that one. . . . Ten Broeck easily won.

The anecdote led Woodson to discuss the Louisville newspapers. "The Louisville Times," he continued, "was established in 1884, with some misgivings. As I recall it was for some time only an 8-column, 4-page paper, but it grew rapidly in popularity. Its first editor was Emmett Logan, who went to it from the Courier-Journal. Its first managing editor was Polk Johnson. . . . The present editor of the Times, Tom Wallace, has occupied that post for ten years, but has been on Louisville papers for thirty years. He conducts a most interesting and readable editorial page, and has done constructive work of great value to the Times and to Kentucky." Tom Wallace was one of Kentucky's outstanding conservationists. He kept up his work in conservation after retiring from the paper,
fighting until his death to save Kentucky’s streams and forests. His successful effort to save Cumberland Falls from use as a power facility won him many honors. No other Kentucky editor ever contributed as much as Wallace to the cause of conservation.

In 1897 a new daily newspaper, called the Dispatch, was established in Louisville, hoping to profit by the Courier-Journal’s bolt of the Democratic ticket about that time. After four years of heavy losses the paper folded. Several decades later two giants in the state’s financial world, Robert W. Bingham, owner of the Courier-Journal, and James B. Brown, owner of the Louisville Herald-Post, squared off in a newspaper battle that made headlines across the country. The Herald-Post, after reportedly costing Brown millions of dollars, folded after ownership was transferred to others.

About the turn of the century, Woodson recalled, Paducah had three papers, but none carried telegraph news. Since he recently had purchased the Louisville Dispatch plant for about $9,000, he decided to move it to Paducah and start another paper—which he called the Democrat. Paducah, he said, was not up to supporting the sort of big-time newspaper he wanted and losses mounted each week it ran. “When I was about to start this paper, I received a letter from a former Paducah boy who was on the Louisville Post,” Woodson said. The boy said he was getting only $18 a week and wanted to return to Paducah for $22 a week. He came, but the Louisville paper offered him $24 a week if he would return. After much quibbling over various offers he finally decided to stay in Paducah, where he worked for four years. He then went to New York, tried unsuccessfully to find work, and told Woodson that he would like to return to Paducah. Woodson insisted that he remain in New York and try again to find work, which eventually he did. Later he found employment at the New York World, which earlier had turned him down, even after Woodson’s request that the paper hire him. The reporter started his World job at $80 a week and later
advanced to $7,500 a year with the right to sell stories his newspaper could not use. His next move was to the *Saturday Evening Post* at $20,000 a year with fringe benefits. “Since then he has written many books which have had wide sale. . . . the name of this young Paducah chap . . . is Irvin Cobb.”

Woodson retained his home in Owensboro while publishing the Paducah newspaper. A few months after starting the *Democrat* he purchased the *News*, renaming the publication the *News-Democrat*. Later on, as the *Sun-Democrat*, the paper became western Kentucky’s largest newspaper, covering the area where the Ohio River meets the Mississippi, known as the Jackson Purchase. Woodson concluded his address in the vein in which he won recognition in Kentucky as a speaker:

And now as I conclude let me congratulate you of the Kentucky Press Association upon the great improvement of the country press since I started as one of you. I see an unmistakable evidence of prosperity among you. You come here in your own good motor cars. You care no longer for those once precious railroad passes. The railroads spend more with you for cash advertising, much more, than your railroad tickets cost you. You are independent of them. You all now have one or more linotypes, modern power presses, electric motive power and lights, telephones and radios. You get out much newsier papers, of course, get better rates, make a decent profit and maintain a high standard of ethics.

We of fifty years ago had many difficulties and hardships, the editor often setting his own type, making up forms, and pulling the lever of that back-breaking old Washington hand press. I for one did not disdain taking in exchange for subscriptions, eggs at five cents a dozen, butter, watermelons, nuts, maple syrup and sorghum, and the dear old ladies (now long in heaven) with whom I boarded at $3 a week, did not hesitate to take all this stuff off my hands. But I never did take any cordwood! We had mud country roads five months in the year. We had few railroads. We had no rural routes to carry our papers quickly to their readers, and few star routes. We knew nothing of telephones. The Morse telegraph instrument was still a wonder to
us. Of course we never dreamed of such things as motor cars, flying machines, radios and teletypewriters.

I speak of the contrast between those days and these, and the hardships we had to bear, in no spirit of bitterness. Our lives were no harder than others in other lines of endeavor. We entered upon each day’s work hopefully, even joyously, in anticipation of better times in the future. The hard work made better men of us, it prepared us for the real battle of life, and we enjoyed our few simple recreations immensely, making a dollar go as far as five, even ten, dollars go today. We took our girls riding in hug-me-tight buggies when the condition of the roads would permit, but we had to get them back home before dark, if unchaperoned, or their mothers would never let them go with us again. Now they start out motoring about 10 p.m., chaperones being entirely out of style, and the Lord knows when they get in. We would have abhorred the thought of our sweethearts ever smoking a cigarette, taking an intoxicating drink, contracting the lipstick habit, discarding petticoats and panties, or wearing skirts that barely covered their knees. These were indeed the Good Old Days!

Thus Urey Woodson, political leader, journalist, and speaker, summed up the good old days before newspaper plants in the weekly and small daily fields were modernized.

The ethics of the press received early attention from the editors who assembled in Frankfort for the first KPA meeting back in 1869 and at subsequent gatherings. G. W. Ranck, of the Lexington Observer, declared that there was a growing tendency on the part of the American press to “disregard and ignore the wholesome restrictions that form the safeguards of the legitimate” press, and suggested that a professional censure of such conduct might be in order where newspapers engaged in untruthful, biased, and sensational news reporting. He offered this resolution, which was adopted: “Resolved by the Kentucky Press Association, that while we fully realize the paramount importance of sustaining a free and independent press, we do most earnestly protest against the
exercise of this deplorable spirit which is calculated not only to degrade the press and destroy influence for good, but also make it an enemy of the public virtue and morality.”

The Cincinnati Commercial’s Murat Halstead discussed another phase of editorial ethics in urging the state press to keep their editorial pages free from bias favoring either advertiser or political party. He further admonished them to keep faith with their subscribers and to see that the separation between the press and special interest groups should be “kept as clearly defined as between Church and State.” But his admonitions were not always heeded by the press. Railroads moved early to win the favor of the press not only in Kentucky but also in other states. Passes were made available to editors, publishers, and often to members of their families. Few editors ever walked up to a railroad ticket window and purchased a ticket. “Deadheadism” thrived throughout the state, and other businesses sought to win favor by showering all sorts of gifts and entertainment on editors. “Freedom of the press” took on another meaning. Hotels presented publishers with “due bills” for their rooms and gave supporting advertising contracts to cover some bills.

Acceptance of gifts, transportation, and entertainment seldom really influenced the press. Editors, being men and women of strong character and leaders in their communities, were not about to be bought for a trip to Cincinnati or Louisville or for a bottle of rare wine. They simply fell in with politicians and others in the common practice of accepting gifts. Often the givers felt that they were cementing friendships or gaining certain advantages over competitors by handing out gratuities. Some editors objected to the practice of accepting free transportation or entertainment, but for the sake of fellow publishers who were willing to go along with the established practice they did not make a serious issue of the matter.
UNTIL THE TIME of the merger of the Louisville Journal, the Courier, and the Louisville Democrat, first with Phineas Kent and later with John H. Harney as editors, Lexington dominated the newspaper field in Kentucky. Things would change when Henry Watterson came into the picture in 1868. Thereafter and until today, the Courier-Journal has dominated the Kentucky newspaper field.

Lexington's Kentucky Reporter, established in 1807, controlled the field until it was consolidated with the Kentucky Observer, then owned by Edwin Bryant and N. L. Finnell. The Reporter, in contrast to its predecessor, the Gazette, carried columns of purely local news. This practice continued after its consolidation with the Observer. Politically the Observer and Reporter veered from its original policies and supported the Whigs. Desire to support its hometown leader, Henry Clay, probably influenced this decision.

Robert N. Wickliffe became the sole owner and editor of the paper in 1838, but sold it later to the Observer and Reporter Printing Company. It was about this time that the name of W. C. P. Breckinridge, the first of two editors bearing that surname who later were to be heard from in Lexington journalism, came into prominence. Breckinridge, a lawyer of note and later a Confederate leader,
served several years as the editor of the Observer and Reporter.

Colonel Albert G. Hodges published the Frankfort Daily and Weekly Commonwealth during Reconstruction days after gaining his newspaper experience with the Lexington Observer and Reporter. Earlier he had established the ill-fated Kentuckian at Lancaster and then tried his hand at running the Louisville Morning Post when the Lancaster venture failed completely. Hodges and his partner, William Tanner, tossed a coin to determine which would get the Post when they disagreed on editorial policy. Hodges lost. After another Frankfort venture, Hodges won the state printing contract in 1832 and the following year he launched the Frankfort Commonwealth. The Commonwealth was discontinued in 1872 and Hodges moved to Louisville. During his editorship of the Commonwealth he was known as a writer who strongly supported his own views, but the trouble was that he often changed sides.

Three other Kentucky newspapers stand out as “influential organs of post-war public opinion and public good,” reports Thomas Clark. These he lists as the Owensboro Messenger, the Lexington Leader, and the Lexington Herald. In 1881 Urey Woodson, then of Madisonville, went to Owensboro where he took over the Messenger. It was a strong Democratic organ and supporter of western Kentucky and soon attained a prominent position in that part of Kentucky. Woodson remained a power in state Democratic politics during the time he was editor of the Messenger. His paper later was sold to Lawrence Hager, Bruce Hager, and George Fuqua, who then were publishing the Owensboro Inquirer.

Two years after the Messenger was launched at Owensboro, Samuel J. Roberts decided that Lexington needed a strong Republican spokesman, and so he established the Kentucky Leader. On May 1, 1883, the first issue of the Kentucky Leader came off the presses. Reporters scurried forth to all parts of the city in search of news, while
correspondents reported the happenings in the rural areas and in nearby towns. Roberts announced in the first issue that the paper would work for the development of the Republican party in the South. The paper received the backing of William O. Bradley, William C. Goodloe, H. K. Milward, E. D. Warfield, J. H. Howard, W. W. Huffman, and George Denny, among others identified with the Republican party.

John G. Stoll, Lexington businessman, headed a corporation which purchased the Leader from Roberts's widow on January 1, 1914, and five years later he became sole owner of the paper. Stoll continued sole ownership of the Leader and later of the Herald until 1959, when members of his immediate family inherited the Lexington newspapers. No stock ever was held by outsiders until Knight Newspapers bought all holdings in 1973. Harry Giovannoli assumed editorship of the Leader at the time of its purchase by Stoll. Giovannoli resigned as editor of the Leader in the campaign of 1927 over the pari-mutuel issue. J. C. W. Beckham opposed legalized gambling on horses in his campaign against Flem D. Sampson, the Republican candidate who won the governorship. Giovannoli opposed pari-mutuel betting. Others who served for long terms as editors or chief editorial writers for the Leader included Dr. Thomas W. Rainey, Fred B. Wachs, Burton Milward, and Henry H. Hornsby, who became editor after the Knight purchase in 1973. Fred B. Wachs, who died in 1974 after serving some fifty-six years with the Lexington newspapers, joined the Leader in 1918 and became general manager of the paper in 1927. He later served as general manager of the Herald and of the Sunday Herald-Leader. After Stoll's death he took over his positions as president and treasurer of the Herald-Leader Company. He personally wrote few editorials, directing others to do this work. He also was in charge of the news policies of both papers but never intruded into the area of editorial policies of the Herald.
Prior to the advent of the Leader, the Press was established by Colonel Hart Foster and Major Henry T. Duncan. This paper, the predecessor of today's Lexington Herald, was Democratic in policy and early announced its hopes of spreading Democratic principles in the South. The Press later was consolidated with the Transcript, founded by Colonel George Caldwell and later sold to James H. Mulligan and Edward B. Farrell; it soon became the Herald. In 1897 Desha Breckinridge, who was to continue as editor and later as owner until 1935, took over and announced that the paper would continue its Democratic policies. The Herald always has been a Democratic organ and its editors embraced the same faith. Even after the paper was sold to John Stoll there was a tacit understanding that the Herald would continue to be Democratic in its editorial policies.

On the occasion of the Herald's observance of its hundredth anniversary in 1970, Andrew Eckdahl, city editor of the paper, recalled that the Herald always was an ardent supporter of the Democratic party. "If Mr. Breckinridge supported Democratic principles and made the Herald the mouthpiece of Blue Grass Democracy, as Dr. Clark wrote, the same could be said of the three men who succeeded him as editor: Tom R. Underwood (1935-1956); Herndon J. Evans (1956-1967); and Don Mills (1968 to the present)."

After the death of Breckinridge the Herald was purchased by Lindsey and J. Gilmore Nunn interests. The Nunns were Texans who chose Kentucky for their new home. On August 12, 1937, Stoll purchased the Herald and moved its operation to the Leader Building. The two papers offered an unusual situation in American journalism by publishing a morning organ strongly Democratic and an afternoon paper just as strongly Republican. Other publishers could not understand how this could be, but members of both staffs and the editors of the papers fully understood the situation. In addition to the daily
publications, the plant produced the Sunday Herald-Leader, which shied away from political matters on the editorial pages.

The prominent newspaper town of western Kentucky is Paducah. Since January of 1830 Paducah always has had a newspaper, according to a special issue of the Sun-Democrat of June 1, 1957. In town records of 1832 there was an item to the effect that it be published in the Express. Little is known about this paper. Paducah, according to the 1830 federal census, boasted a population of 105. In 1873 Paducah had two dailies but prior to that time listed several others, including the Whig, the Democrat, the Pennant, and the Union and American. Some reports name the Banner as an earlier paper. The Paducah Daily News was started February 25, 1872.

Paducah’s first daily paper was the Democrat, established January 2, 1854, with R. B. J. Twyman as editor. The Paducah Weekly American—“independent on all things, neutral on nothing”—was another 1854 publication. A group known as the Young Historians made a study of Paducah newspapers and reported in the 1957 special that in the preceding 137 years Paducah had at least fifty newspapers.

Today’s Paducah Sun-Democrat grew out of the Daily News, the Democrat, and the Paducah Evening Sun. According to Joe LaGore, longtime employee of the Sun-Democrat, this newspaper traces its lineage back more than one hundred years. The Paducah Sun, according to LaGore, was launched September 5, 1896, as a daily; the Sun Publishing Company had bought the plant, circulation, and advertising accounts of the Standard for $8,900 cash and a one-year interest-free note for $500. F. M. Fisher was the seller. Joining Fisher in the organization of the Sun were Ed Farley, J. E. Williamson, John J. Dorian, J. R. Smith, and W. F. Paxton. Fisher was elected president and given direction of the company. A year later Fisher again was authorized to conduct the paper “in the course which, in his judgment, would be most
profitable to the company” and also “most beneficial to the interests of the Republican party.” The equipment that came with the purchase of the Standard was substandard. Ten days after the first issue of the Sun appeared, the directors approved the purchase of an electric motor to run the paper’s press because the “water motor” previously used for motive power had proved to be “defective and very unsatisfactory.” Later on additional machinery was bought for the job shop.

The Sun’s first-year budget was set at $10,000, with income expected to be $10,000. These were hard times for all businesses, including newspapers. The Sun had a succession of business managers until, in 1900, Edwin J. Paxton, son of W. F. Paxton, moved from a post in his father’s bank to take over management of the paper. From that time on the Sun prospered. The new general manager’s pay was $1,200 a year. In 1918 it was $5,500 and in 1921, $7,500. The Sun had competition in the evening field from the Paducah Democrat, which, in 1908, was persuaded, with a payment of $6,000 by the Sun, to quit the evening field and publish a morning paper. In 1913 the Democrat became the News-Democrat, headed by John J. Berry as editor. His partners were his brothers, Noel A. Berry and W. A. Berry. In 1922 the Berry group sold the paper to George H. Goodman, who, in turn, sold the News-Democrat to Edwin J. Paxton in 1929. He had owned the Evening Sun since 1900, and after buying the News-Democrat he named the combined papers the Paducah Sun-Democrat. Paxton died in 1961 after having directed the affairs of the paper for more than sixty years. The paper continued in the Paxton family with Paxton’s three sons, Edwin J., Jr., Frank R., and J. Fred, actively in charge.

Two black newspapers were among publications started in Paducah in this century. The Lighthouse was started by Tommy Lawrence; the Struggler was established a few decades ago. Both passed out of existence, as did several other black papers in the state. The state’s
most successful black publication is the *Louisville Defender*, which prospered under the guiding hand of Frank L. Stanley, Sr., who served as editor for some forty years, until his death in 1974.

The *Defender* began its forty-third year of publication with a pronouncement somewhat different from philosophies expressed by earlier black newspapers. It sought also to cater to the black population not only in Louisville but throughout the state. A Lexington bureau was opened and more advertising, aimed at the black trade, was sought in central Kentucky.

“Rationale for the New Look Defender” was set forth in a brochure that was widely distributed as well as in articles in the paper. “The new *Defender* symbol is an artistic rendering of the fleur de lis, symbolic of the City of Louisville, in the form of an African mask. This representation of the black heritage in today’s society symbolizes black America’s ties to both the present and the past,” the co-publishers, Frank Stanley, Jr., and Kenneth Stanley, stated. “The result, we hope, is a new package that will serve as a meaningful and effective voice of black affairs for every black citizen of Kentucky.” At the 1975 KPA meeting the *Defender*’s policy of catering exclusively to the black community was reiterated. In fact, the speaker in a panel discussion chastised the big *Courier-Journal* for trying to cater to the black population, which the *Defender* considered its clientele.

If any minus points are to be scored against the Kentucky Press Association in its active and useful life, they must relate to the organization’s failure to permit the *Louisville Defender* to become a member. The Supreme Court’s broad ruling on integration had been in effect for ten years before the KPA permitted affiliation of the black Louisville weekly with the association—and then only after some of the larger newspapers had threatened to resign from the organization if favorable action were not taken.

If any defense of the KPA’s refusal to recognize the
Louisville weekly, then edited by Frank Stanley, were possible, it would relate to the social side of the conventions and the fact that some Kentucky hotels did not provide accommodations for blacks. Some state parks, too, were more than likely to advise black prospective convention-goers that they were “so sorry” but they were “filled up” at the time. Stanley threatened to sue for membership; but other editors, who were favorable to his claim, promised to assist him in his request for membership in the association. Membership was approved and the Defender was formally accepted in 1965. Since joining the KPA the Defender has participated actively in its deliberations and has carried off its share of prizes in journalistic competition.

The diamond jubilee edition of the London Sentinel-Echo, published in 1954 to commemorate the seventy-five years that the Dyche family had operated this Kentucky weekly, states that the Mountain Echo, then published at Barbourville, “was the first successful periodical published in Southeastern Kentucky, serving as it did for many years this entire section of the state.” The Mountain Echo’s first appearance was in September 1873, published by W. E. Word, a Democrat, and J. H. Wilson, a Republican. By the end of the first year, apparently tiring of the nonpartisan posture of the paper, Wilson bought out his partner, announced his support of Republican John D. White for Congress, and said editorially: “Hereafter in politics it will be Republican and we want it distinctly understood that we have as much right to say what is Republicanism as Ben Butler, Jeff Davis or anybody else.” The paper’s fourth issue on October 3, 1873, referred to the severity of the money panic. Later issues spoke of “hard times” and on April 10, 1874, the paper declared that times “are dull and money very scarce.” United States Congressman Vincent Boering bought into the Mountain Echo and the co-editors ran it until March 1877, when it was leased to James R. Lucas and Company. After the paper was moved to
London, it was purchased by A. R. Dyche, who put in new machinery and extended the paper’s circulation to nearby counties. The London Sentinel was established in 1907 with Russell Dyche as editor and manager. The Sentinel succeeded Laurel County Local and later the paper became the Sentinel-Echo, the name it bears today. Russell Dyche served as editor-manager of the paper for many years and was succeeded by his son Martin, who became the sole owner of the paper in 1965. In 1970 and 1971 Dyche’s two daughters, Mrs. Margaret Keith, Jr., and Mrs. Billie Martin Brown, each purchased 25 percent of the stock. In 1974 Mr. and Mrs. Keith bought the entire stock and became the third generation of the Dyche family to operate this progressive southeastern Kentucky newspaper.

The Carlisle Mercury, Nicholas County’s sole paper, is one of the oldest newspapers in the state, according to Mrs. Joseph H. Conley, current editor. At the time the Mercury was established in 1867 Preston Lindsay was listed as proprietor with William R. Anno as editor. Two years later Judge Thomas F. Hargis became editor and proprietor, the latter term then being used to designate publisher or owner. Since 1912 the paper has been under the editorship of the same family, when Warren R. Fisher, Sr., assumed command of the editorial policies (except for a brief time when the paper was leased to R. M. Feese and later to Paul Brannon). After her husband’s death, Mrs. Fisher was listed as publisher. Warren R. Fisher, Jr., served as editor from 1953 to 1972.

The Mercury plant is one of the most modern in the state, although on April 27, 1967, actual press operations were moved to Paris and in 1971 transferred to Cynthiana. The Mercury always has had a loyal clientele as one of the state’s newspapers whose readers strongly back their hometown product. This strong support was manifest as early as January 5, 1873, when the office and plant were destroyed by fire. Only the subscription list was
saved. “Never was public sympathy more thoroughly aroused,” reported Mrs. Conley. “The Kentucky Press Association hastily responded by a liberal contribution. New subscribers by the score came flocking in, offering to pay one and even two years in advance.” The paper bought new equipment immediately and resumed publication.

The Ohio County News celebrated its hundredth birthday on January 6, 1975. The Hartford, Kentucky, weekly published a 100-page special edition in which it related much of the early history of the town and its newspapers. The News is a consolidation of two newspapers, the Hartford Herald, founded in 1875, and the Hartford Republican, founded in 1888. John P. Barrett was the founder of the Herald, and members of his family also were connected with the paper. Because of differing political views, Colonel C. M. Barrett in 1888 started the Hartford Republican. Barrett continued proprietorship of the Herald for twelve years and in 1886 sold it to Frank L. Felix and McHenry Rhoads. During the Barrett operation the paper carried at its masthead this slogan: “I come, the Herald of a Noisy World, the News of all nations lumbering at my heels.” In 1891 Ben D. Ringo purchased the stock of McHenry Rhoads in the paper and in 1893 Felix became sole owner, continuing in that capacity until January 1, 1917, when the paper was sold to the Hartford Herald Publishing Company, which ran it until 1926. Felix lived to be almost 101 years of age and was credited at that time with being the oldest newspaperman in the United States. The News was purchased in 1965 by Walt Dear and Dix Winston, the latter soon selling his interest to Dear, a Henderson daily publisher. Dear added other weeklies to his chain, including the Franklin Favorite, the McLean County News, the Marshall Courier, and some out-of-state papers. The special edition of the News referred to two earlier newspapers published in the Barrett’s Ferry section of Ohio County—
the Wild Hog Valley Gazette, which appeared in 1839, and the handwritten Slick Knob Scrutinizer in the 1850s.

For more than a century the Kentucky New Era has been in continuous publication at Hopkinsville, and since January 1, 1920, it has been the only daily newspaper in that city. The first copies of the weekly New Era appeared 106 years ago from an upstairs office on Sixth Street in Hopkinsville. Today the paper operates in modern facilities on the outskirts of the city and serves the entire southern Pennyrile area of western Kentucky. The first owners of the publication were businessmen, and it is thought that Hunter Wood, later sole owner of the paper and the first of four generations of the Wood family to own the New Era, was among them. Early in the 1900s Hunter Wood’s son A. W. Wood, Sr., then secretary-treasurer of the corporation that owned the paper, became sole owner and continued operation of the paper until 1933. His sons, Thomas F. and Walker, became co-publishers of the paper in 1941 and continued in that capacity until Walker’s death in 1965. Thomas F. Wood died in 1969.

The New Era occupied several locations during its life and in 1971 opened a modern, million-dollar production plant, from which it has operated since then. Its nearly 15,000 circulation is reminiscent of the price Hunter Wood paid for the plant in the late 1880s—$15,000. Present-day officers of the New Era are Robert C. Carter, president; Joe Dorris, vice president; and Robert Moseley, secretary-treasurer. The paper, now an influential daily, has been at times a weekly, a biweekly, and a triweekly publication. It has the distinction of never having failed to go to press during its 106-year existence. It was one of the first small papers in Kentucky to subscribe to the services of the Associated Press, a 500-word-a-day pony service chartered in 1912. Other Kentucky newspapers reported by their current editors or other officials as having passed the century mark include the
Franklin Favorite, the Glasgow Times, and the Times-Argus of Central City.

The first newspaper at Versailles was the Commonwealth, established in 1824, but it was not until January 1869 that the Woodford Weekly (now the Woodford Sun) was established. Even so, the Woodford Sun is one year older than the Herald, Lexington’s oldest paper.

Captain H. C. McLeod and Clarence R. Greathouse were the founders of the Woodford Weekly and operated it a year before selling it to James D. Hill. Soon after buying the paper J. J. Hayes became a partner with Hill. In another year Hill and Hayes dissolved their partnership and Hayes continued as owner.

In 1875 Dan M. Bowmar, who was to own the paper twice, organized a syndicate which bought the Woodford Weekly from Hayes. Bowmar, the first of four generations of his family to have some connection with the newspaper, was a Woodford County native who had returned to Versailles from Chicago in 1875 because of ill health brought on by overwork in paying off the indebtedness of his Chicago insurance agency after the big Chicago fire of 1871.

In January 1877 Bowmar and his partners sold the Woodford Weekly to Ben Deering, publisher of the Midway Sun, and Bowmar returned to Chicago. Soon thereafter Deering combined the Woodford Weekly and the Midway Sun and published the combined paper at Versailles. At first he called the paper the Weekly Sun; then he adopted the name Woodford Sun which has continued to this day.

Walter K. Scott and Willis Field, Jr., became associated with Deering about the time the name of the Woodford Sun was adopted. In March 1878 Deering sold the paper to Sam G. Field, a lawyer and a brother of Willis Field, Jr. Sam G. Field’s ownership was cut short by a watermelon feast. On the night of August 16, 1878, Field and a group of friends were sitting on the steps of the Woodford
County courthouse eating watermelon. One of the group, Joseph C. Bailey, reached over to get another piece of watermelon. As he did so, his pistol fell out of his pocket. It hit a step and discharged; the bullet struck and killed Field. The Woodford Sun was continued by his brother, Willis Field, Jr., until January 1, 1882, when the paper again was purchased by Dan M. Bowmar, who had returned from Chicago. This time Bowmar became the sole owner. Bowmar's health failed him again in 1885 and in September of that year he retired.

His sons, A. A. Bowmar, 18, and Dan M. Bowmar II, 16, quit school and took over operation of the Sun. They continued to operate the paper for fifty-seven years. During this time, Dan M. Bowmar III and Dan M. Bowmar IV also worked on the Woodford Sun.

After the death of Dan M. Bowmar II in March 1942 the Woodford Sun was sold by his wife and his brother, A. A. Bowmar, to A. B. (Happy) Chandler, former Kentucky governor, who has been the major stockholder since that date. For the past eighteen years, A. B. (Ben) Chandler, Jr., Moss Vance, and Haywood Alves have been the publisher, editor, and manager respectively of the Woodford Sun. Just as the Midway Sun and the Woodford Weekly were combined nearly a century ago, Chandler, soon after acquiring the Woodford Sun, bought the Blue Grass Clipper at Midway and merged it with the Sun.

Forty-nine years after the beginning of Owen County the Owen News made its appearance. The paper was established by J. M. Clark in New Liberty, at that time a town somewhat larger than the county seat, Owenton. Clark soon moved the paper to the county seat.

"It is interesting to note that newspapers have played a great role in the growth and development of Owen County," according to an article in the October 5, 1972, News-Herald. Jerry D. Lillard was editor and owner of the Owen County Democrat sometime after 1874, which, according to the article, is the first known date of this
paper. In 1883 George S. Lee was the editor and publisher of the *News* and in 1884 Colonel R. C. (Bob) Ford was listed as publisher of the *Owen County Democrat*, a post he held until 1888 when he moved to London to enter the banking business.

In 1893 the *Owenton Herald* made its appearance. It was established by William Lindsay and E. E. Settle with Judge J. W. Hill as editor. They were succeeded by B. J. Newlon, a "gallant Confederate soldier." George S. Lee and Emmett Orr were listed as publishers of the *Owen News* in April of 1895. Five years later the *Owenton Herald* purchased the *Owen News* and the two papers were merged into the *News-Herald*, the name it bears today. M. H. Bourne in November 1943 sold the *News-Herald* to John H. Perry of Perry Park, Florida, and New York. Perry then bought the *Owen County Democrat* and the merged papers became known as the *News-Herald and Owen County Democrat* although the last part of the title seldom was used.

The News-Herald Publishing Company was formed in 1953 by C. H. Bourne, son of M. H. Bourne, and the late Clayton Roland. They acquired the paper from John H. Perry, Jr., and C. H. Bourne continues as editor.

No story of Kentucky’s newspapers could be complete without mentioning the *Kentucky Irish American*, a Louisville weekly published by the same family for some seventy years before its demise on November 30, 1968. It would be almost impossible to name a weekly newspaper that attained the wide readership outside its own bailiwick that was accorded this paper during the twenty years that Mike Barry was its editor. He succeeded his father, John Barry, who had taken over about two years after the paper’s founding on July 4, 1898. Mike Barry had the ability to say or to imply satirical comments that made him unique in his field. He kept his readers in stitches with his wit, his outspoken style, and his castigating of politicians whose ability and sincerity he questioned.
Many of his victims, it might be said, would have liked to leave Barry in stitches for some of his comments about them. He declined to print anything complimentary to him or his paper but always was ready to give space to critics. But woe to these critics, for Barry always had the last word. Circulation of the *Irish American* always picked up during a political campaign, particularly if A. B. (Happy) Chandler, always one of Barry’s targets, happened to be taking an active part.

“The *Kentucky Irish American* has been a Louisville institution,” said the *Courier-Journal* on the occasion of the weekly’s imminent demise, “but it aroused the cheers, jeers and laughter of subscribers throughout the nation with its pointed and often barbed front-page editorials and comments.” The *Courier-Journal* quoted Red Smith, one of the country’s best-known sports writers: “Around our house the *Kentucky Irish American* rates above bread and just below whiskey as one of the necessities of life. It’s all the excuse any man needs for learning to read.”

A *Wall Street Journal* editor, greeting a newcomer, said: “So you’re from Louisville, home of the great newspaper?”

“You mean the *Courier-Journal*, of course,” the employee said.

“No,” replied the editor, “I mean the *Irish American*.” There has been no successor to the *Kentucky Irish American*.

Among Kentucky newspapermen of recent years who have achieved national recognition for their editorial stands may be listed Tom Gish, publisher of the *Mountain Eagle* of Whitesburg. Gish is noted for saying what he thinks, regardless of the consequences. His outspoken editorial stands on affairs in the mountain community which his paper serves have brought threats upon his life. Gish has been the subject of magazine and newspaper articles in distant areas. Within recent years his newspaper plant was set on fire and virtually destroyed. Gish
was not deterred. In an editorial he named the persons he thought responsible and brought about their arrests. Meanwhile, his plant gone, he published his paper in his home and carried on his fight against corruption in Letcher County. The slogan of the Whitesburg paper, “The Eagle Screams,” was amended to “The Eagle Still Screams.”

Kentucky newspapers, particularly those located in cities where colleges or universities are situated, often contribute to educational programs. For example, the Park City Daily News of Bowling Green and Western Kentucky University cooperated in presenting “Courses by Newspaper.” The course “American Issues Forum” was offered as History 103, and two hours of credit were given each semester to all students who successfully completed the work. The course explored American history and development and dealt with issues such as labor, government, land use, foreign affairs, and human rights. The Park City Daily News, with John B. Gaines as publisher, is one of western Kentucky’s most progressive weeklies.
THE ERA OF HENRY WATTERSON

In the early years of what might be termed the Henry Watterson period of Kentucky journalism, many editors indulged in "fine writing." Editors and writers in Kentucky, and elsewhere for that matter, appeared to vie with one another to see who could use the most flowery language in presenting the news to their readers. Simple, direct language did not suffice. Writers apparently felt themselves to be poets or literary stylists who must appeal to the poetic natures of their readers. For example, one did not just die; one "passed into the great beyond" or answered the "final call to return to his maker." Some "moved to that mysterious realm from which no traveler returns." Women did not just marry the men of their choice. Girls and the "chosen one" were "united in the bonds of holy matrimony." Unless writers of this era could emulate the writings of William Cullen Bryant in his "Thanatopsis," readers considered them prosaic and uninteresting.

Kentucky newspapermen of today may recall that Enoch Grehan warned his students against what he termed "fine writing," although the practice had all but disappeared by his time. The following example of such "fine writing" is taken from a Louisville newspaper that
on January 19, 1880, described the wedding of Miss Amelia M. Downing and George P. Kendrick of that city:

Ay' surely it is here that love should come,
and find, if he may find on earth, a home.

A queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls who beautify and adorn the family residence of Mr. John Downing, on Fifth Street, was transplanted last evening to the family of Mr. William Kendrick on Broadway. The wedding Ceremony which gave Miss Amelia M. Downing to Mr. George P. Kendrick, was performed by Rev. Dr. B. M. Messick, pastor of Walnut-street Methodist church, in the presence of the immediate relatives of both families.

The lovely bride is well known and very dearly loved by a large circle of friends, who would have been glad to witness the nuptials, but Mrs. Kendrick, mother of the groom, being a confirmed invalid, the bride elect, with rare courtesy, consented that the ceremony should be solemnized in her presence. Among many beautiful and costly presents were souvenirs wrought in lace by fair hands of her sisters and lady friends, diamonds, ornaments in gold, silver and ceramics, and all the accessories to a bridal outfit that willing hands, guided by affection, could supply.

The young gentlemen whose faithful wooing has resulted in winning so fair a bride is a son of Mr. William Kendrick, the well known Fourth-street jeweler, and certainly if youth, health and irreproachable character counts for anything in the battle of life, he is well equipped.

Throned in the love of a noble wife, he has the heartiest wishes of a host of friends for long life and happiness.

In another wedding reported in a Louisville newspaper in 1842, the writer waxed somewhat less poetic but still got the job done: "The Bohemian seer lifted the veil of the future, and with true prophetic ken predicted for the fair bride a happy, useful life. . . . The home thus happily described is where the low-voiced, sweet faced mother sheds the benediction of her example upon as happy a group of sons and daughters as can be found on
the continent.” This editorial comment, marked by a pointing index finger, followed: “We have to acknowledge our devoirs to the fair bride for the delicious morceau of the cake which she sent us. We put it under our pillow last night and of course had a dream.”

In this era given to “personal journalism,” when names of editors often overshadowed newspapers’ names, Henry Watterson, in the opinion of many editors and publishers of today, stood at the top, along with Dana, Bennett, Greeley, Pulitzer, Medill, and Halstead, names to be reckoned with in journalism. Charles A. Dana was the name identified with the New York Sun, even though this newspaper made its appearance in 1833 through the work of others. Two years later James Gordon Bennett was the name associated with the New York Herald. Horace Greeley’s New York Tribune first reached the streets of America’s largest city in 1841, and it was not until 1860 that editor Joseph Pulitzer was identified with the New York World. Halfway across the continent, in Chicago, Joseph Medill was listed among the well-known personal journalists, while a few hundred miles southeast Murat Halstead was telling Cincinnatians, via the Commercial, his views on topics of the day. But none of these editors overshadowed the man known in Kentucky as “Marse Henry,” the pseudonym conferred on Watterson by a fellow player while they were engaged in one of Watterson’s favorite pastimes, playing poker.

Newspaper editors in the era of “personal journalism” were, indeed, personal. Other editors were viciously attacked and expletives were not always deleted. Editors said what they thought and at times what was said apparently had been put together with little or no thought of the ultimate consequences. Letters to the editors also contained vitriolic comments and criticism of editorial writings; they provoked fistfights and sometimes serious threats upon the lives of the writers. Henry Watterson himself became so incensed at one attack upon him that he challenged the writer to a duel. Fortunately, even
though considerable preparations were made, the duel never came off.

George D. Prentice and Walter N. Haldeman, both leading personal journalists, had combined the former's Journal with Haldeman's Courier, to set up the Courier-Journal. In 1868 they had called upon Henry Watterson to assume the editorship of the merged papers. For more than fifty years his name would be associated with the Louisville newspaper. The last of the great personal journalists, Watterson helped shape the opinions of his readers not only in his adopted state of Kentucky but throughout the nation. His writings found their way into other journals of the day and some of his phrases and statements became slogans, widely used and quoted in handout pamphlets and in political campaigns from platforms. Watterson's writings had greater influence on people than did the opinions of other editors and publishers. He said what he thought, hewed to the line, and gave not a hoot where the chips fell. He supported President Woodrow Wilson on occasion and then fell out with him and castigated him with every verbal weapon at his command—and he had many. A friend and follower of William Jennings Bryan at one time or another, Watterson turned viciously on the great orator and castigated him with every invective he could summon to his aid. Theodore Roosevelt also felt the sting of his prose, both in editorials and in personal attacks by letter, but he also won his praise on many occasions. Readers of the Courier-Journal did not ask "what does the Courier have to say today," but rather "what has Henry Watterson got on his mind this morning?"

Henry Watterson was born February 16, 1840, in Washington, D.C., the son of Harvey McGee Watterson and Tabitha Black Watterson. At that time the closest claim that Watterson could lay to Kentucky was that his maternal grandfather, James Black, once had served as chaplain at Fort Harrod, and that his paternal grandfather, William S. Watterson, had come to Kentucky from Vir-
ginia in 1804. Watterson’s father was publisher of a newspaper in the nation’s capital, and young Henry early was inducted into the vagaries of a profession in which he was to take a leading part in later years. Young Henry also learned his politics at his father’s knee; Harvey Watterson served four terms in the United States Congress from the Tennessee district which he called home. His father’s service gave Henry ready access to the halls of Congress and he soon was to become an unofficial page in that body. He knew many members of Congress and was a favorite with some of the leaders. Henry was a frail child. He was not able to run and cavort about with other boys of his age and so he engaged in other activities. He took piano lessons, showing unusual talent in this study, and in later years gave serious thought to becoming a concert pianist. But a bone felon developed in one of his fingers and forced an end to this line of thinking. Among acquaintances he made through his music was the singer Adelina Patti. In his memoirs he recalls this friendship:

Adelina Patti was among my childhood companions. Once in the national capital when I was twelve years old and Adelina nine, we played together at a charity concert. She had sung “The Last Rose of Summer” and I had played her brother-in-law’s variations upon “Home Sweet Home.” The audience was enthusiastic. We were called out again and again. Then we came out on the stage together and, the applause increasing, I sat down at the keyboard and played an accompaniment with my own interpolations upon “Old Folks at Home,” which I had taught Adelina and she sang the words. Then they fairly took the roof off.

Some six years after this charity appearance Watterson, then eighteen years old, had decided to try his fledgling wings in the big city and applied at the New York Times for a job. He was assigned to cover the debut of a new singer who turned out to be Adelina Patti. He gave a review that was as creditable as her performance. Watterson did not stay with the Times long because the critic
for whom he was substituting returned. He went with the Tribune for a brief time and then returned to Washington. Watterson said that he got his best newspaper training from Mrs. Jane Casneau while employed at the Washington Daily States. Here he once again had the run of Congress, where he mingled with the great and near-great. While covering the capital he once met Abraham Lincoln, whom he greatly admired. In later years he planned to write a book about the Great Emancipator, but because of problems that were connected with the newspaper he had to give up the idea. Watterson did write numerous favorable articles about Lincoln. Some of these came after the Civil War, when Lincoln was not beloved in the South, and revealed Watterson’s courage.

Watterson was against slavery and spoke out on occasion against things he felt would happen to his beloved country if war were not prevented. With the Civil War a reality, Watterson went to Tennessee and joined the Confederacy. Watterson felt that he could render his best service in the newspaper field and so he became editor of the Rebel, a sort of transient newspaper that originally was called the Chattanooga Rebel. It was started in 1862; Watterson took charge six months later, moving the paper from location to location through several states in the South. The Rebel’s end came in Selma, Alabama, where federal troops seized the press, type, and everything connected with the paper. While editing the Rebel, Watterson had the good fortune to meet Walter N. Haldeman, who in 1844 had established the Louisville Courier, a newspaper that in the intervening years was variously known as the Louisville, Bowling Green, or Nashville Courier, depending on where it happened to be published at the time.

After the war’s end, Watterson went with the Evening Times in Cincinnati, but some time later he went back to Tennessee and became editor of the Nashville Banner. On December 20, 1865, he married Rebecca Ewing; their marriage lasted for fifty-six years. Five children were
born to the couple. Some time after Watterson’s return to Nashville, George D. Prentice offered him a position as editor of his Journal. In the meantime Haldeman had returned to Louisville and tried to hire Watterson for the Courier. Watterson suggested that the two papers merge, but Prentice declined to go along with the idea and so Watterson went to work with the Journal. Prentice and his Journal were political powers in the South, so Watterson stepped into a post that already was well established.

There were four daily newspapers operating in Louisville at the time: the Journal, Courier, Democrat, and Advertiser. Watterson was quick to realize that four publications could not survive on the volume of advertising generated in that city and he began to think of a merger of the Journal and Courier. Prentice had expressed a wish to retire to California. Upon moving to Louisville from New England in his late twenties, Prentice had made friends with Isham Henderson. Henderson possessed the capital needed to launch a new publication and the Louisville Journal first appeared in 1830. It was not long in making its presence known. Prentice’s vitriolic pen brought readers to the Journal who loved his style and his fearlessness in attacking anyone and everything he conceived to be in the wrong. He was unusually caustic in writing about another Louisville editor, Shadrach Penn, of the Advertiser. An ardent Whig, Prentice sold his benefactor, Henderson, on the idea that such a political organ would succeed in Kentucky. Prentice left his editorial mark upon his adopted state. Few writers challenged him. George J. Trotter, editor of Lexington’s Kentucky Gazette, learned that a challenge could mean a duel when he resented something Prentice published in the Journal and attempted to shoot him down on the streets of Louisville. When Trotter fired at Prentice, the Louisville editor shot the weapon from his adversary’s hand. As he walked away from his now unarmed assailant, Prentice remarked he would “never shoot an unarmed man.”
Prentice might be ranked with Cassius M. Clay in the category of militant journalists. Both men carried arms and it did not take much provocation to draw them into physical combat. Clay, whose support of causes he espoused often led to fights with adversaries, was publishing the *True American*, an emancipatory newspaper in Lexington. Kentucky journalism has never seen two such editorialists, willing to back up their views with the bowie knife in the case of Clay or the pistol in the case of Prentice. In circulation the *True American* was no match for Prentice’s *Journal*. Records do not disclose that the two editors ever met.

Due to Prentice’s pungent paragraphs, the *Journal* grew rapidly in circulation. He soon was being quoted across the nation as his writings were picked up by other newspapers. Though soon to be overshadowed by the figure of Henry Watterson, Prentice was one of the most powerful political writers in the country, but he never received the acclaim that was accorded to other writers of his period. Watterson recognized Prentice’s greatness in the newspaper field. In an address before the Kentucky General Assembly he had this to say of the *Journal’s* former editor: “In his combats he displayed parts which were both signal and showy, overwhelming invective, varied by a careless, off-hand satire which hit home; or strong and logical, or plausible and pleasing argument that brought out the salient points of the subject and obscured the weak ones; or nipping, paragraphic frost that sparkled and blighted; or quiet daring that was over­reckless of consequences. Who can wonder that he be­came the idol of his party? Who can wonder that he was the darling of the mob? Prentice’s death at 68 removed from journalism one of its great editors.”

Watterson in 1868 again approached Haldeman with the suggestion that the *Journal* and the *Courier* ought to merge. His approach this time was somewhat threat­ening, as he had just purchased some property in Louis­ville which he told Haldeman would be used in an
expansion program for the *Journal* that would "put The Courier out of business." Haldeman listened intently to the proposal and agreed that merger might be for the best. The plan called for purchase of the *Democrat*, which would reduce by one the daily publications in Louisville, and to absorb another paper through the merger. All was accomplished quietly and on November 8, 1868, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* made its first appearance. In the consolidation, Watterson was given seventy-five shares of stock by Haldeman and the editorship of the merged papers. A value of $75,000 was placed on the stock and Watterson was provided with a salary of $10,000 a year, an unheard-of figure in that day. Watterson was twenty-eight years old at the time and his pathway, politically, was uncertain. The South was under the iron heel of reconstructionists and Watterson's position as an editor seeking to bring warring factions of the nation together once again was not popular. The South soon let it be known that it did not care for his reconciliation approach.

One of Watterson's first campaigns after assuming the editorship of the combined newspapers was to strive to bring that peace to the country which he felt Lincoln would have accomplished. The South was overrun with troops and carpetbaggers and Watterson appealed to Washington to clear them out of the southern states as the first move to bring about peace. His second editorial, November 9, 1868, set forth this position under the heading of "Carpet-Baggery and Peace":

> What the South wants above all things is just what General Grant says let us have, and that is peace. But there is often a very great disparity between the desires of one party and the expressions of another party, though the expressions be never so strong in the same direction as the desires. In order to get at the truth we must look a little into motives. The surface of things is but too seldom genuine. . . . Thus Grant who enters the executive office with almost dictatorial powers, may cry out, "Let us have
peace” and the disasters of the South, which are well-nigh heart-breaking, may cry out “Let us have peace,” and yet we may have no peace.

When we say we have no peace, we do not mean to say we may have war. Not at all. . . . But there is a state which is not a state of war that is not a state of peace. It is a sort of purgatorial camping ground which lies between the two conditions, partaking of the suspense of the one, and the lassitude of the other. Such is the condition of the South. Carpet-baggery has taken possession of the country, and carpet-baggery is an unmitigated curse and swindle. The Northern people ought to be ashamed of it. The Republican party ought to blush for it. Reputable newspapers everywhere should expose it. The Radicals call it liberty, and, indeed, it may be a new-fashioned sort of liberty. But it has a marvelous likeness to the old-fashioned sort of pillage which was represented by the Goths and Vandals and other classic carpet-baggers who figure in polite barbaric literature.

The way to peace is through justice. The first step to justice is toleration. . . . The carpet-bagger is a nuisance. Carpet-baggery is a swindle. If General Grant means what he says, let him abolish both, and his party be sincere, let it confirm his act. . . . The Freedman’s Bureau ought to be split up for the Christmas fires. Then we should have peace and Union enough.

The choppy style Watterson used in this contentious editorial later was changed to one that flowed and was more rhythmic. This rather lengthy editorial later was to become known as one of the editor’s most famous pronouncements. Apparently when Watterson was worked up over some issue of the day he adopted this staccato style, his short, to-the-point sentences, expressing clearly and succinctly what was on his mind. While his sentences as a rule were short, his editorials or essays were unusually long. No newspaper today permits such lengthy articles on its editorial page. Today’s longest editorials generally are about one-fourth the length of a Watterson essay.

In contrast to Watterson’s editorial on “Carpet-Baggery and Peace,” a year later he offered a Christmas article that
more nearly conformed to his style of writing in the late years of the nineteenth century. On Christmas Day 1869, Watterson said:

The seasonable cold without and the comfortable warmth within, joined to that blessed spiritual communion that makes the whole world kin for a day at least, impress the hardest natures. . . . Albeit most of us are given to gushing at Christmas, let us hope and believe that the gush is honest, and . . . that it will surely come again next Christmas, and all our lives, as regularly as the twenty-fifth of December. So we may be proud of it as an heirloom in the family, which we array just once a year.

The article continued in the same vein, column upon column, apparently in the belief that the readers, once their Christmas gifts were unwrapped and made over, would have unlimited time on their hands for reading. This Christmas editorial was more than 1,300 words long. In concluding the editorial Watterson wrote, “The desires of life regerminate. Out of the fallows which time plows up within us, out of the seams and scars of afflictions suffered and wretchedness nobly borne, spring up fresh violets. Bless God for them and Christmas . . . and as we gather close about the chimney, we shall none of us forget to bless the good Saint Nicholas, to whom be thanks and praises and blessings, so long as there is a peg in the mantel-board and a stocking to be hung, so long as there are little hearts to be glad and to glorify the morning that glorifies the Christmas year!”

Watterson in 1872 supported Horace Greeley over General Ulysses Grant for president. He liked Greeley because the Tribune’s editor had befriended the South when others in the North wanted a crushed, subservient South. Greeley had stepped down as editor of the Tribune and, with the vigor and drive that had characterized his years as editor, took to the hustings. Watterson, although he had not backed Greeley in the Cincinnati convention, set out to do all he could for his fellow editor.
Thomas Nast, the famous cartoonist, launched a bitter pen campaign against Greeley using editorial comments that the Tribune editor had written on a wide variety of subjects. Greeley was vulnerable and the Nast cartoons were credited with helping bring about his defeat.

Watterson did all he could to paint a better picture of Greeley, but many questioned his approach. No editorial writer today would go so far as to discuss a candidate's personal appearance except in the most casual manner. But Watterson frankly leveled with the voters he was trying to influence. In an article on July 3, 1872, the Courier-Journal editor said this about Greeley:

Much is said about Horace Greeley's unfitness for the presidency. We ourselves, remembering his peculiarities, have felt, and expressed the force of the suggestion. But, after all, may we not make a common psychological mistake, and attach too much importance to the outside of the man?

Mr. Greeley is an odd, exceptional person. He is now sixty years of age. His hair is white as silver. But the bloom of a lad of sixteen is in his cheek. He has the pressed and collected strength of a life devoted to useful pursuits, to study, to exercise, to charity, to drudging, to intellectual work and physical work, to perfect sobriety and regularity . . . Greeley . . . is a sentimental ascetic—a product of that Scotch-Irish creativeness that has peopled our history and our literature with oddity and with power; a strong man, a moral man; a shrewd man abounding in mother wit, intuitive perceptions, self-will—a natural, honest demagogue in the original and complimentary sense, when the demagogue was the true representative of the people. . . . He has for thirty years administered a great daily newspaper—a mimic government within itself—with extraordinary practical success. He is a model, practical farmer, and makes his model farm yield him a handsome revenue. In all his worldly gear he is a success. . . . May not Mr. Greeley—who is not our ideal of what a President ought to be in his outer man—prove a contradiction to all our worldly notions?

Well, well, well. We mean to take our chances of him anyhow. He is an able man. He is an honest man. He is a good man. He may be cranky—he may be curious, according to our preconcep-
tion. Who knows? We do know that Grant is an iron-hearted, wooden-headed nutmeg, warranted to kill; we know that he is obstinate and parsimonious; we know that he is a good fellow to his friends, with a bad faculty for choosing a bad set of friends, and a bad fellow to his enemies, who are of our best people. . . . The South cares nothing about party titles and records. It looks to its own emancipation—moral not less than legal. It seeks relief. It seeks association. It seeks principles, not men or measures, as the foundation of its future fabric. It goes back to Jefferson—a thorough liberal and reformer—and takes its new departure from the founder of our Democracy. Be we not too critical about minor points, about dead issues. Let us look upward and forward!

But Greeley did not gain the presidency. Grant won 286 electoral votes to Greeley's sixty-eight, and the military leader had a popular vote of more than a million over the Democratic candidate. As the campaign drew to a close, Greeley's wife fell ill and died within a few days. Twenty-four days after her death Horace Greeley himself died. Watterson, his friend since the days when they both were newspapermen in Washington, paid this tribute: "The multitude remembered only the old white hat and the sweet old baby face beneath it; heart of gold, and hand wielding the wizard pen; the incarnation of probity and kindness, of steadfast devotion to his duty as he saw it; and yet as his body was lowered into its grave there rose above it, invisible and unnoted a flower of matchless beauty and love between the sections of the Union to which his life had been a sacrifice." At this point Watterson was glad to find respite from the ardors of a campaign in which he had taken such a vital interest. But he was to get little rest. Soon the scandals of the Grant administration occupied his attention and his pen was active again.

During the formative period of the Kentucky Press Association, Henry Watterson was gaining in stature and the Courier-Journal was fast becoming not only the voice of Kentucky journalism but also one of the leading papers
in the nation. Watterson was moving into a stronger political position and his stands in elections were being followed by other publishers. The bitter campaign between Samuel J. Tilden and Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876 projected Watterson into the national limelight as never before. The final outcome of that campaign left Watterson unreconciled and somewhat sick of the whole business of politics.

Tilden was thought to be the winner. With his running mate, Thomas A. Hendricks of Ohio, he had piled up a total of 4,300,316 votes to Hayes’s 4,036,016. Democrats were building bonfires across the nation and whooping it up for their successful team when word came out of New York that they had cause to be worried about results from Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida. The *New York Times* pulled out a halfway-concession editorial and substituted another to the effect that Republicans were claiming all doubtful states, even though President Grant and other leaders had given up earlier. The *Tribune*, a Republican stalwart, had conceded that Tilden was the winner. The *Times*’s news editor, John C. Reid, took matters into his own hands and wired Republican leaders in the three states in the South advising them to “not be cheated in returns” and asking them to take all necessary steps to see that the Republicans won the states.

Later in the day Republicans claimed the election, predicting that Hayes would receive 185 electoral votes—enough to win over Tilden. Then followed what became known as the Drama of the Disputed Succession. Watterson, who had presided over the convention that nominated Tilden and delivered the keynote address that brought the Democrats out fighting, took an active part in the contest proceedings. Watterson was high in the Democratic ranks and would have been considered closer to Tilden than almost any other man in the event of Tilden’s election. He looked to Tilden to accomplish for his country those things that Lincoln’s untimely death had reduced to an impossibility. Tilden was Watterson’s
ideal. In supporting his election editorially, Watterson contended that Tilden was the one man who could re-unite the country. Previously he had urged Tilden's nomination in editorials pointing out to the South that it must forgo greenbackism and sectionalism if it were to win over the Republicans.

But these things were not to be. In a contest that brought the United States closer to internal warfare than anyone believed possible so soon after the Civil War, Hayes was declared the winner. Before his certification, Watterson wrote an editorial suggesting that "a group of 100,000 peaceful men" converge on Washington to assert their position that the election of Hayes was stolen. Joseph Pulitzer's *Tribune* went a step further and suggested that the group come armed. No tenser situation ever faced the country. The so-called Hayes Conspiracy that resulted in his certification in 1877 brought bitter, flaming editorials from Watterson, who, at the urging of Tilden, was now serving another Kentuckian's unexpired term in Congress. The period Watterson spent in Congress was his only move toward public office, though he had been told by party leaders that he could be nominated for vice president with Tilden if he would but give his assent. He offered several excuses, none of them very convincing, but finally closed the door completely. In speeches and editorials during the campaign he felt he could be more effective—and he was. Grantism was a big issue in the campaign and Watterson made the most of it.

Watterson reported in his memoirs written years after the Tilden-Hayes contest that the office of the presidency was "for sale." He recounted his meeting with a man, purportedly acting for the Returning Board studying results from Louisiana's election, who suggested that Tilden might have the presidency for $250,000, to be divided among the four members of the board. Watterson, of course, turned down the proposal with the comment that he did not happen to have that much money on him.
There is little question that fraud and chicanery were present in the actions that finally gave the presidency to Hayes. The electoral votes of the three contested states all went to Hayes, while only one vote was needed by Tilden to gain the chief magistrate’s place. He could not come up with that vote. The historian John Ford Rhodes wrote of the affair: “The power and dignity of the Federal Government and to a large degree, the honor of the nation, were deliberately prostituted.” Watterson accepted Tilden’s defeat philosophically because he felt that it was best for his country not to create new schisms. He had fought a good fight and lost, but he never indicated otherwise than that corruption and bribery on the part of Hayes’s operatives were causes of the defeat.

In his final address as a member of Congress, Watterson asked his countrymen to stand firm: “I shall go home to another and fairer scene and, seeing the spring flowers illuminate the blue grass of Kentucky, signals at once of God’s love and bounty, shall feel that the heavens are not yet robbed of their sunshine, the earth of its fruition, nor the future of hope.” Henry Watterson emerged from the Tilden campaign not only a great editor but also a political leader of prominence. His position as a leader in the Democratic party was well established and certainly well grounded. He made a move to have Tilden nominated for president in the next Democratic convention, but Tilden declined. James A. Garfield, accused editorially by Watterson as one of the participants in the “steal” of the Tilden election, was elected president in 1880. Except for some editorial support for the Democratic ticket, Watterson did not get very involved in this campaign.

The *Courier-Journal* editor bade farewell to his hero, Tilden, in an editorial in 1884, at a time when Tilden’s health presaged his possible early death. In that editorial, a literary gem, Watterson coined a phrase that later became “the most widely quoted political expression in American history,” according to Arthur Krock, who, in 1923, compiled Watterson’s outstanding editorials.
Speaking of the desire of many Americans to see Tilden again step forward to lead the Democratic party, Wat­terson said:

The undiminished vitality and overshadowing pre-eminence of Mr. Tilden contradict the adage that a prophet is not without honor save in his own country . . . and whether the transac­tions of the current political year come too late to render actual justice to him or not, there is in the spontaneity of the call upon the old statesman to emerge from the seclusion of his declining years, and to draw, if need be, even the robes of death about him, that before he passes hence forever he may lead once more the hosts of freedom and reform, a poetic justice rarely achieved in the world.

It is not that Mr. Tilden is too old, nor yet too ill, to accept the leadership thus sought to be thrust upon him, and by none so noisily as by those who withheld it four years ago. But those who know him best and love him most feel, and he feels himself, that the length of his days is conditioned upon complete repose, and that he has not the strength to stand the wear and tear of a great national struggle. It would be but a poor consolation to the mass and body of Democrats, who are right at heart, if their rash, and not wholly unselfish, enthusiasm should prevail, only to enable them TO FOLLOW THE GLORY OF TRIUMPH TO AN OPEN GRAVE, or perchance to encounter the yet greater ca­lamity of finding a living movement turned, before its time, into a funeral.

Watterson left the final decision to Tilden, and the man who lost the presidency through thievery, bribery, and skullduggery decided not to make the race. Watterson accepted the decision and it was not until the campaign of 1884, when Grover Cleveland was the Democratic nominee, that he launched into further phrase-making that was to be a trademark of his journalistic career. Watterson liked Grover Cleveland personally but disagreed with him on the question of tariffs. It was during this campaign that Watterson coined a phrase that is used to this day: “Tariff for Revenue Only.” The expression caught on immediately. In this same campaign Watterson origi-
nated another phrase that was repeated year after year: “The Star-Eyed Goddess of Tariff Reform.” He declared in an April 29, 1884, editorial:

Kentucky stands as a stone wall in the center of the Democratic line of battle. We see only the enemy in front of us. Above us floats the free heart’s hope and the free-home’s flag—the ensign of fair and free government—bearing the motto: Honesty, Economy, Equality and A Tariff for Revenue Only!

And what do we propose?

We propose just taxation. We propose that the blessings of Government, like the dews of Heaven, shall fall upon all alike. The Tariff is a tax. As enacted by the Republicans it is paid by the poor. We propose that it shall be paid by the rich no less than the poor, each according to his means. We propose that not a cent of it shall go to enrich individuals, but that every cent of it shall go to the public Treasury, and that no more of it shall be collected than is needed by that Treasury. Millions, if need be, for defense; not a penny for tribute.

This is the monster that affrights the hardened soul of bounty-fed avarice. It is the dread specter that stands at the door of as wicked and heartless a monopoly as ever wrung blood and tears from the needy and the weak, the widow and the orphan. It is the inexorable spirit of Justice which says to a blind and brutal system of rapine, born of the cruel necessities of war and kept alive by the sharp and venal forces of corruption, “Choose for your executioner. Me or the Mob!”

Democrats, everywhere, gather about this star-eyed Goddess of Reform, and fear not, for Truth is mighty and will prevail.

Grover Cleveland’s service as governor of New York had projected him into the national limelight. Watterson, although he supported Cleveland in the final campaign, did not want him to be nominated. The editor really preferred John G. Carlisle, a Kentuckian who had served with distinction as Speaker of the House, senator, and later on as secretary of the treasury. Watterson did not go all out in support of Carlisle in the 1884 campaign and Cleveland easily won the Democratic nomination, going on to capture the presidency. Despite disagreements on
issues, Watterson often visited Cleveland at the White House.

When Cleveland again sought the presidency in 1892, Watterson opposed his nomination and made an all-out fight for Carlisle. In one of his customary lengthy editorials on February 23, 1892, Watterson discussed the strengths and weaknesses of Cleveland and his opponent, David Bennett Hill of New York. He ended with a plea that Carlisle be nominated. At the Kentucky party convention he also made the same plea. But his efforts were in vain, as Cleveland defeated Hill by the lopsided margin of $617\frac{1}{3}$ votes to 114. Carlisle made no showing. Cleveland went on to win the chief executive’s post a second time. It was during this term that the warm friendship between Cleveland and Watterson ended. In an exchange of letters they came to the parting of the ways. Before long they quit speaking even when they saw each other in public places.

Many of the issues Watterson espoused during Cleveland’s second administration were lost causes. But like the Courier-Journal of today, which comes out second best in many of the causes or candidates it supports, he probably agreed with Henry Clay that it is “better to be right than to be President.” Watterson inspired confidence in his predictions on candidates and political events. His following grew as his forthright manner of presenting his side on all questions brought many supporters.

A strange anomaly of political history was the Courier-Journal’s editorial switch from initial opposition to support of William Jennings Bryan’s efforts to win the presidency. In the 1896 campaign the Louisville newspaper made a determined fight against Bryan and then bolted the Democratic ticket to support a third-party move. Watterson was away from Louisville during this campaign, but he wrote frequent articles from Geneva, Switzerland, and sent telegrams that apparently swayed the
voters of Kentucky to support a Republican nominee. From the time Watterson sent his famous cablegram to his partner, Walter N. Haldeman, calling for “no compromise with dishonor,” the Courier-Journal was fully aligned against Bryan. Watterson thus opposed the policy of “free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen ounces of silver to one ounce of gold.” Watterson contended that free silver would wreck the country. Bryan’s famous “crown of thorns and cross of gold” speech at the Chicago convention had swayed the gathering and sent the Democrats back to their homes advocating free silver. Haldeman, who was in charge of the Courier-Journal’s editorial policies, summoned Harrison Robertson, Watterson’s assistant, and asked that an editorial be prepared rebuking Bryan and the free silver policy. Dissenting Democrats joined with the newspaper and, at an Indianapolis convention of representatives of most of the southern states, they nominated General John M. Palmer for president and Simon Bolivar Buckner for vice president. They ran on what was called the Gold Democratic Ticket. The entry of this ticket assured the election of William McKinley, with Kentucky being listed in the Republican column for the first time in its history. Watterson had been urged to come home and head the Gold Democratic Ticket, but before the dissident convention met, Haldeman himself inadvertently let it be known that the Courier-Journal editor would not return to accept the challenge.

The bolt from the regular party hurt the Courier-Journal financially in the South, causing the loss of thousands of subscribers and many advertisers. The financial blow was so great that Watterson, who had moved abroad to educate his children while giving serious thought to retiring from his profession, returned to Louisville, where for the next four years he fought strenuously to recoup the paper’s losses. The paper resumed its sound financial position and in 1900, when Bryan again sought
the presidency, the *Courier-Journal* and Watterson were on his side. Again in 1908 the two were found in the Bryan column.

When Watterson returned to assume command at the *Courier-Journal* one of his first acts was to support William Goebel, Democratic candidate for governor of Kentucky. It was this stand and the paper’s support of Bryan in 1900 that apparently saved the *Courier-Journal* from financial ruin, if not from actual destruction through the carrying out of one of the several threats to burn the plant. Goebel was sworn in on his deathbed and later succumbed to wounds received at an assassin’s hands. J. C. W. Beckham, lieutenant governor, succeeded him and the *Courier-Journal* thereafter was a supporter of Beckham in his political races.

Watterson found a political target to his liking in Theodore Roosevelt in the 1904 campaign. He attacked Roosevelt for his use of the “Big Stick” and said that this sort of intimidation was a menace to free government and democracy. Under the editorial heading “He Is the Big Stick,” Watterson said: “We need a man in the Magistracy who is a Magistrate, and not a Mountebank. We need a just and sensible man, not a theorizing experimentalist. In every respect Judge Parker realizes the Magistrate. In every respect Theodore Roosevelt embodies the Mountebank.” Although Watterson always liked Roosevelt socially, there was no political love lost between them. Watterson’s on-and-off attitude continued throughout the Roosevelt tenure and with the opening of the 1908 campaign the *Courier-Journal* editor launched into a bitter denunciation of Republican nominee William Howard Taft. He gave unstinted support to Bryan and even served as honorary publicity chairman at Democratic headquarters in Chicago. But his efforts were fruitless, as they had been in the campaign four years earlier when he gave full support to Judge Alton B. Parker’s quest for the presidency at the head of the Democratic ticket.

In 1910 Watterson predicted that the Democrats would
capture the House of Representatives and that two years later they would take over the government at Washington. Both predictions would come true. Watterson was credited with swinging the Kentucky delegation to Champ Clark in the 1912 convention, which nominated Woodrow Wilson. Wilson immediately won Watterson's support in the campaign. On July 4, 1912, Watterson called for the election of Wilson in an editorial in which he took pains to explain his position in the proceedings prior to Wilson's nomination and ended his appeal as follows:

The *Courier-Journal* did not oppose Governor Wilson because it thought him a weak candidate. It regarded him as a very strong candidate. It opposed him because, from the Democratic point of view and from none other, it held him an undesirable President. Preferring Champ Clark, it would have gladly taken [Oscar] Underwood, not doubting the election of any ticket named by the Baltimore Convention.

With this plain statement, let the battle go on! Sound the bold anthem! The country needs nothing so much as a change of parties. Down with the piratical flag of Roosevelt! Up with the ensign of Wilson and Marshall. And if, after they are elected and inducted into office, they don't behave themselves, there's plenty of pitch left over in the pot to do them to a turn!

Stronger support for Wilson came from Watterson's pen in the 1916 campaign when the incumbent president ran against Judge Charles Evans Hughes. Early in the campaign Watterson called Hughes "The Kaiser Candidate" as he launched into a series of anti-Germany editorials that won him acclaim among the patriotic Americans who wanted to see Kaiser Wilhelm's imperialist hopes thwarted. But the same editorials brought financial problems to the *Courier-Journal* again as Louisville German-Americans defended their fatherland. Watterson gave little space to Wilson's campaign slogan "he kept us out of war"; during the prewar period and all during the war he hammered away at the "Hapsburgs and the Ho-
henzollems” and their ilk. The newspaper continued to lose subscribers and advertisers because of his stand.

An interesting sidelight on Watterson’s editorial writing during World War I is given by Patrick S. Kirwan in his master’s thesis submitted to the University of Louisville. Writing almost twenty years after Watterson’s death, Kirwan classed the Courier-Journal’s editor as the leading “propagandist” for the war and challenged many of his statements. A spokesman for the Courier-Journal in a letter to Kirwan said he had done a clever job on Marse Henry’s weakness for Allied propaganda, but also pointed out that it would be considered in very bad taste to carry the article in the paper, as had been requested, with Watterson not able to reply.

Watterson never ceased to hammer the Kaiser and Germany during the war. An editorial in the Courier-Journal on October 15, 1914, is typical of many he wrote:

All these tidings are lies out of whole cloth, characteristic not only of the Militarist System and methods of Berlin, but of the pro-German propaganda in the United States. Henceforward let him be called the accursed Kaiser—William the Damned—who, like the devil and Bonaparte before him, will live immortal as the father of lies and lying, his agents in the field and in the counsel of the same murderous and bloody kidney.

Let them enjoy while they may the riot of vandalism—the orgy of butchery—the dance of death they have imposed upon Europe, but especially upon the little brave land of Belgium, even whose good name they would assassinate; but their doom is before them; they await their Waterloo; when the word will wing around the universe, “To Hell with the Hapsburg and the Hohenzollern.”

This closing phrase found its way into many Watterson editorials as he urged the United States into involvement in the war. Pro-Germans and German-Americans in Louisville and other areas were highly critical of Wat-
Watterson's editorials and accused him of pushing America into the war with Germany. As war with Germany drew nearer Watterson intensified his attacks on the pro-German elements that were fighting to keep America out of the war. The sinking of the _Lusitania_ was almost more than the editor could stand, and he began to attack Wilson for spending his time writing notes to Germany when, Watterson felt, America ought to be joining with the Allies in fighting Germany. He continued editorially to shout his slogan, now adopted by others across the country: "To Hell with the Hapsburgs and the Hohenzollerns."

When the heir to the Austrian throne was assassinated in Sarajevo in 1914, Watterson was seventy-four years old and for the past several years he had been devoting more and more time to writing magazine articles, while turning over most of the newspaper editorial work to others. The threat of World War I grew until on July 28 war was declared by Austria. Watterson foresaw that this country might become involved and until America actually went to war he kept urging Wilson to join the conflict. During the war he gave his strongest support to the president and the cause of the Allies. In an editorial on April 4, 1917, Watterson made his final attack on William Jennings Bryan, who served as secretary of state in the Wilson cabinet. Bryan made a final plea to keep America out of the war, but it was without effect and three days later a declaration of war was approved by Congress.

Watterson wanted to see Berlin sacked and his disappointment over the fact that a treaty was signed that precluded the possibility of the German capital's thorough roughing up displeased him greatly. After the war he opposed the League of Nations and it was his position on this question that led to his retirement from the _Courier-Journal_ after its purchase, along with the _Louisville Times_, by Judge Robert W. Bingham, whose family still owns the leading Kentucky newspaper. It was in
August of 1918 that Judge Bingham bought the papers. Less than a year later the Courier-Journal carried this announcement under the date of April 2, 1919:

Mr. Watterson retires as Editor Emeritus of the Courier-Journal with this issue. From 1868 until 1918 its editor, his brilliant, forceful and individual writings on public questions brought fame both to himself and this journal. Desiring to retire last August when control of the newspaper changed hands, he was persuaded to remain Editor Emeritus, through which connection he might continue to address the readers of the Courier-Journal while relieved of the active responsibilities of the editorship. He now requests his retirement, finding in conflict his views, opposing the League of Nations, and those of the Courier-Journal favoring the proposal. His personality will continue to be an inspiration to Courier-Journal workers; his accomplishments, a standard of achievements; his name, one to be praised and loved. He has passed his seventy-ninth birthday. May he pass many another milestone before the world loses him as a companion and letters are deprived of the magic of his pen!

But the retired Watterson still was to be heard from in opposition to the League of Nations in letters and special articles. In one of his last editorials before stepping down as Editor Emeritus, he may have predicted the end of his journalistic career, when, on March 5, 1919, he discussed the League of Nations, the topic which by then had brought about his complete break with Woodrow Wilson:

The League of Nations, so-called, is one of those pretty conceits which, after the manner of the copybook maxims, are easier recited than followed, or applied. . . . Inevitably Woodrow Wilson would be caught by such a whimsy as the League of Nations. We must do the President no wrong. He is our file leader. . . .

But the League of Nations! It is a fad. Politics, like society and letters, has no fads. In society they call it fashion, and in literature originality. Politics gives the name of “issues”
to its fads. . . . In a sense the Monroe Doctrine was a fad. . . . Everything twixt hell and Halifax was Yankee preempted. . . . Truth to say, your Uncle Sam was ever a jingo. . . . But your Cousin Woodrow, enlarging on the original plan, would stretch our spiritual boundaries to the ends of the earth and make of us the moral custodian of the universe. On the surface this League of Nations nonsense . . . seems an appeal for votes. I do not believe it will bear discussion. . . . We have plenty to do on our own continent without seeking to right things on other continents. . . . I love my country. . . . It is this sense that keeps me at the grindstone of the daily newspaper. I need not work if I don’t care to. I have a crust of bread and a roof to cover me. I want to warn the people against mischief. I would give them the benefit of long and varied experience. I do not flatter them. . . . If they don’t like it they know what they can do and where they may go. But, heavens! there is the dinner bell and the sound of a voice I never have ceased to heed!

During his retirement Watterson lived most of the time at his home, “Mansfield,” in Jeffersontown just out of Louisville. Early in December 1921, Watterson went to Jacksonville, Florida, with his family. On December 18 he sat in his hotel to read the Louisville newspapers, which he never failed to do no matter where he happened to be. The next day he contracted a cold and two days later a bronchial congestion developed. Death stilled the hand that wrote, in almost indecipherable longhand, the editorials that many believe have never been equaled.

Watterson’s editorial style was without equal in the nation. It seemed to change with each succeeding article. No one has tried to copy his style. He wrote as he talked, sometimes in full sentences and sometimes in phrases. Half a century of American history is covered in his writings and a student today can learn almost as much from reading his editorials as from perusing history books. His editorials were reflections of the man himself, full of strength and vitality. He had an enormous capacity for work. Even after his partial retirement—for Watterson
never actually retired—he wrote articles for magazines and essays about his favorite people. While his editorials often had the quality of poetry, he also possessed the power to deliver rapier thrusts at some of his favorite targets. It is small wonder that the *Courier-Journal* was a national newspaper during his years at the helm. Two of his editorials won Pulitzer prizes in 1917, which pleased him greatly.

Watterson’s sense of humor saved many a trying situation. His acts were often unpredictable. It was his practice, when he needed money on the spur of the moment, to go to the cash drawer at the *Courier-Journal* office and take out what he needed. This was in the period when Uncle Sam was not looking down your neck through his IRS spectacles, but it did pose a problem for the bookkeeper. Finally Watterson was approached about the matter and asked if he would be willing to leave a notation in the cash box advising the bookkeeper of the amount he had withdrawn. A few days later the bookkeeper found a note, “Took all. H.W.”

If an unusual amount of space has been devoted in this story of Kentucky journalism to Henry Watterson it is because he always was recognized, and probably always will be, as the greatest personal journalist and the most dynamic editorial writer this state has produced.

After Watterson left the *Courier-Journal*, Robert Worth Bingham continued as editor and owner, the post he held following purchase of this newspaper and the *Louisville Times* in 1918. Harrison Robertson was editorial page editor until he retired in 1940.

Barry Bingham, Sr., became president and publisher of the papers on December 19, 1937, and Mark Ethridge became general manager in April 1936. Herbert Agar served as editorial page editor from 1940 to 1942, and during the war years, 1942 to 1945, Ethridge served as publisher. Upon Agar’s leaving the *Courier-Journal*, Russell Briney assumed the editor’s position. Barry Bingham,
Sr., was listed as publisher again on June 19, 1961. Molly Clowes was editorial page editor of the *Courier-Journal* from 1966 to 1971, and Barry Bingham, Jr., was associate editor from 1968 until he took over as editor and publisher on June 1, 1971. In February of that year Robert T. Barnard became editorial page editor.
Even before Kentucky became a state in 1792 the question of slavery had been a heated topic in many gatherings. The dispute waxed in succeeding years. Most of the opposition to slavery, however, was centered in the North. To many opponents slavery was a moral issue. One of the big issues of the times was whether slave owners were to be compensated for loss of their property. Some people in the North, and a few even in the South, felt that no payments should be made because ownership was an immoral act and deserved no compensation. A side issue that later became a major one was what should be done if the slaves were freed—should they be sent up North or colonized in some country outside the territory of the United States? Colonization actually was carried out in a limited way late in the campaign to abolish slavery.

The abolitionist group was led by the brilliant but somewhat fanatical William Lloyd Garrison, who formed what he called the American Anti-Slavery Society. This group asked for the immediate and absolute emancipation of all slaves. Garrison was among those who felt that compensation was out of the question and that if all else failed, force should be used to bring about emancipation.
Some states had laws which prohibited the teaching of blacks to read and write. Kentucky had no such law. At times it appeared that the Bluegrass State might be willing to accept emancipation if owners could be compensated for their slaves and if some workable plan for determining what to do with the freed blacks could be set up. Even Henry Clay leaned in this direction; he went so far as to approve colonization.

Cassius Marcellus Clay was in his early thirties when the movement against slavery began to take shape. Kentucky, being a border state, was divided over the issue, but abolitionists were in the minority. As the son of one of the larger slave owners in Kentucky, Clay was expected to be aligned on the side of the men who felt that a slave was just a piece of property, like an acre of land, a barn, or a mule. It was in the summer months of 1845 that Clay put his beliefs to the acid test. He staked his fortune, which then was adequate for good living, and his life, if need be, on the issue of slavery. Clay became leader of the Kentucky emancipatory movement. He launched an emancipatory newspaper which he called the *True American*, so that he might give wider expression to his antislavery views. The first issue appeared on June 3, 1845.

Ten years before Clay started his *True American*, James G. Birney, who had been an activist in the cause of freeing the slaves in any manner possible, announced that he would publish an abolitionist newspaper in Danville. Birney had advocated colonization of the slaves but later gave up that approach. A native Kentuckian, Birney had returned to his home state full of enthusiasm for his idea. He announced that the first issue of the *Philanthropist* would appear in August of 1835. Opposition arose immediately and the prospective editor was bluntly told by a mass meeting of slave owners that he would suffer dire consequences if he carried out his announced plan. Although he was a courageous man, Birney heeded the warnings and moved to Cincinnati, where he published
his newspaper during 1835 and 1836. With Birney’s depar
ture from Kentucky, the Kentucky Anti-Slavery So-
ciety all but passed out of the picture.

Nevertheless, opposition to slavery had been growing
in the years preceding the launching of the *True Amer-
ican*. In 1837 the Kentucky legislature under its constitu-
tional authority called a convention to take up the ques-
tion. Abolitionists thought they would win easily in the
election of delegates and were making plans for the law’s
implementation. But when the day came it was a different
story. Slave owners and their friends had worked harder
than the opposition suspected and when the final tally
was made the abolitionists had lost by a four-to-one
margin. Things cooled down considerably after the elec-
tion and even Cassius Clay two years later judged the
abolitionists and the proslavery radicals as equally
“evil.”

Clay was the son of Green Clay, a wealthy landowner of
Madison County, Kentucky. Clay was born October 10,
1810, in Madison County. He received much of his early
training from Joshua Fry, a celebrated teacher in Garrard
County. Later he attended the Jesuit College of Saint
Joseph in Nelson County and Transylvania University in
Lexington. He then went on to Yale University to study
law for two years. Garrison’s lectures at Yale had a pro-
found effect upon Clay. The lecturer pictured slavery as a
great moral and religious wrong and a flagrant violation of
human rights. After listening to one of Garrison’s lec-
tures, Clay declared: “I felt all the horrors of slavery; but
my parents were slaveholders; and I regarded it as I did
other evils of humanity, as the fixed law of nature or of
God. . . . Garrison dragged out the monster . . . and
left him stabbed to the vitals, and dying at the feet of
every logical and honest mind. . . . I then resolved that
when I had the strength, if ever, I would give slavery a
death struggle.”

Clay returned to Kentucky after his two years at Yale
and soon became active in politics. He possessed great
courage, both moral and physical, and few men cared to challenge him as he launched into his antislavery campaign. He served in the Kentucky legislature from Madison County after his election in 1835, but lost his next race. Then he moved to Fayette County and was elected again to the legislature in 1840, but opposition by slave owners brought about his defeat when he sought reelection the next time. His opponent in this election was Robert Wickliffe and the campaign was a bitter one. An altercation between the opponents caused Clay to challenge Wickliffe to a duel, a challenge that promptly was accepted. The men met at dawn on May 15, 1841, near Louisville, faced off, and fired their pistols at ten paces. Both missed. Seconds immediately called off the affair and the men left the grounds, still enemies, as Clay said.

When the race for Congress came up in 1843, Wickliffe was a candidate, with Garrett Davis his opponent. Clay stumped the district for Davis and this infuriated Wickliffe. In the course of the campaign Wickliffe was accustomed to reading a handbill that was favorable to his cause, but Clay interrupted him in a speech and said the handbill had been proved false. Wickliffe then sent to New Orleans for a recognized bully and placed him in position to challenge Clay when the matter came up again. It was not long in coming. At Russell’s Cave, Samuel M. Brown, “a social character, strong physique, and, in a word, a political bully” appeared at the speaking, armed with a colt revolver. When Clay interrupted Wickliffe, Brown challenged him. Clay was dragged about fifteen feet backwards while Brown drew his gun. Clay drew his bowie knife.

I advanced rapidly on him, knife in hand. . . . he knew very well that nothing but a sudden and fatal shot could save him. So . . . taking deliberate aim, just as I was in arm’s reach, he fired at my heart. I came down upon his head with a tremendous blow. . . . it so stunned him that he was no more able to fire, but
fiebly attempted to seize me. . . . I was also struck with hickory sticks and chairs. But finding I was likely to get loose, they threw Brown over the stone fence . . . which ended the fight.

Raising my bloody knife, I said: "I repeat that the handbill was proven a falsehood; and I stand ready to defend the truth." But, neither Mr. Wickliffe nor any of his conspirators, taking up my challenge, some of my friends, recovering from their lethargy, took me by the arm . . . to the dwelling-house; and on opening my vest and shirt-bosom, found only a red spot over my heart, but no wound. On examination it was found that the ball, as I pulled up the scabbard of my Bowie-knife . . . had entered the leather near the point, which was lined with silver, and was there lodged.

Thus Providence, or fate, reserved me for a better work. . . . Brown had his skull cut to the brain in several places; one ear cut nearly off, his nose slit, and one eye cut out; and many other wounds. Had the encounter taken place between two ordinary citizens, no notice would have been taken of it by the grand jury; but as I was odious to the slaveholders, they approved all the chances to weaken and ruin me. I was indicted for mayhem. Henry Clay and John Speed Smith were my counsel and defenders; both volunteering their services. Brown, outraged at his being thrown over the fence, and deserted, was my principal witness. He proved that there was a consultation in Ashton's (hotel-keeper) between himself, Wickliffe, Professor J. C. Cross, of the Transylvania Medical School, Jacob Ashton and Ben Wood, a police bully; that the pistol with which I was shot was loaded in advance; that he was to bring on the affray, and they were to aid; that they four went in the same hack to Russell's Cave, and there all took part in the fight.

Such were the conditions prevailing at the time Clay was thinking of launching his antislavery newspaper. This was but one of many fights in which Clay engaged. He was adept with the bowie knife and seldom was without one. In some of his speaking engagements he placed both a knife and a pistol on the rostrum and thereby let his listeners or dissenters know that he was prepared. Clay praised his attorneys for the type of de-
fense they provided when he faced trial on the mayhem charge.

Of his relative Henry Clay, the defendant said:

It is a remarkable fact, but well known, that Mr. Clay, as a criminal advocate, never lost a case. Of all men whom I have known, Clay had more of what is called, in modern times, magnetism. He was . . . quite tall, yet commanding and very graceful in manner and movement. He had the most wonderful voice in compass, purity, and sweetness; and which, with the whole science of gesticulation and manner, he seduciously cultivated. . . . After stating clearly the grounds of vindication, which was simply self-defense . . . Mr. Clay ventured to counteract the intense prejudice against me, by appealing to passions of like intensity in a community where sentiment is everything when once free to act. He generally stood as near his audience as possible, especially when it was a jury.

Henry Clay argued:

"The question which this jury of freemen is called upon their honor and conscience to decide, is not whether the political views and sentiments of the prisoner were just or not. . . . You are bound, on your oaths, to say, was Clay acting in his constitutional and legal right? Was he aggressive, or resting peaceable in the security of the laws which guard alike the safety of you, and me, and him? . . . Standing as he did, without aiders or abettors, and without popular sympathy; with the fatal pistol of conspired murderers pointed at his heart, would you have had him meanly and cowardly fly? Or would you have had him do just what he did do—there stand in defense, or there fall?" And then turning partly toward me with the most pathetic voice, broken but emphatic, and raising himself with the most imposing personality and dignity that ever an American has attained, he said: "And if he had not, he would not have been worthy of the name which he bears."

Henry Clay's oratory and logic prevailed and Cassius Clay was freed of the charges.

Inability to get his views before the people in the
newspapers of the day probably helped influence Clay to enter the publishing business. "And when in the New York Tribune I set forth my true position . . . my letter is denied publication in the presses of both political parties; and yet still goes on the eternal prating about freedom of the press." On February 19, 1845, in the Lexington Observer and Reporter appeared a notice that "Cassius M. Clay, and others, slaveholders and non-slaveholders, propose to publish a paper devoted to gradual and constitutional emancipation." Editorially the same newspaper commented: "We do not pretend to question the clear constitutional right of Mr. Clay . . . to establish a press devoted to this or any other purpose. . . . In our judgment Mr. Clay has taken the very worst time to begin the agitation of this great and delicate subject . . . we do not believe that the country is at all with him on this question . . . we do not know anyone whom under such circumstances we should welcome to the Editorial Corps with more cordiality than Mr. Clay, but . . . he is embarked in a very hopeless undertaking."

At the time Clay already had been hard at work organizing his paper. He had about 240 subscribers but hoped to get five or six thousand in the North and East. The first issue made its appearance on June 3, 1845. In the June 10 issue Clay said that 500 extra copies of the first edition had been "immediately absorbed" and that the subscription list was "increasing rapidly at home and abroad." The True American, in the editor's own words, was off to a fine start. The list of subscribers had doubled in four weeks. Number 3, North Mill Street, was the site of the office, where Lexington was treated to its first newspaper plant armed with two brass cannons, iron barred windows, and an arsenal of Mexican lances and pikes. A trapdoor in the roof provided an escape route in case the editor and his helper found they could not hold the fort in an attack. In the basement Clay had rigged up an "infernal machine" with a powder keg that he could set off
from the outside to blow up the building and whoever was in it should the attackers succeed in taking over the plant. But opposition of the slave-owner faction was not the only thing that plagued the emancipationist in his efforts to get his paper started. There was trouble from within.

In his memoirs Clay wrote:

My object was to use a State and National Constitutional right—the Freedom of the Press—to change our National and State laws, so as, by a legal majority, to abolish slavery. There was a danger, of course, of mob-violence, as . . . others had been silenced; and I determined to defend my rights by force, if need be. My fortune, somewhat shattered by political life, was yet not greatly impaired. I knew very well that such a paper would be a losing business, but I was willing to make the sacrifice. I engaged T. B. Stevenson, editor of the Frankfort, Ky., Commonwealth, to edit the paper, which was called The True American, allowing him one thousand dollars a year. When he heard of my design, he volunteered to join me in the movement, saying that he felt that God had intended him for the service.

But, Clay pointed out, when mob violence threatened the lives of all engaged in the enterprise, Stevenson's courage failed him; and he never appeared on the scene of action. "Poor humanity! His cowardice was not all. Degraded in his own self-esteem, and lowered in my respect, of course, he turned out to be one of my bitterest enemies and denouncers."

The format of the True American was similar to other papers of that day. It consisted of one oversize six-column sheet of paper, folded once, thus furnishing four oversize pages. In the upper left-hand corner of the first page was the usual notice with subscription rates. Directly below this, in all thirteen issues, was a bit of contemporary poetry of several stanzas. The poetry did not deal with the slavery question but was of a contemplative or spiritual tone. Long stories about out-of-state antislavery conventions took up much of the space. Sometimes letters from
antislavery leaders such as Horace Greeley, W. H. Seward, and leading ministers from other states were used.

Two features generally occupied page two of the paper. One feature was headlined “Pro-Slavery” and here the defenders of what was referred to as the “peculiar institution” had their say. The other feature carried the caption “Anti-Slavery” and branded slavery as a great moral, economic, and political evil that should be done away with. Between the two viewpoints were articles on farming, fishing, traveling, and other topics. Sometimes news articles appeared on this page, but as a rule they were on page four. Page three was the editorial page. Here Clay attacked with plain, blunt language those who would defend slavery; his vitriolic pen shattered the arguments of the proslavery group; his writing did nothing to make friends with even the few who might have been “on the fence” in trying to study the issues involved. No one who favored slavery in a small degree was immune from his writings. Letters to the editor, ridiculing, castigating, and even threatening him were carried in various places in the paper.

The early editions carried advertisements warning against counterfeiting, one of the crimes common in that day. Often advertisers used “counterfeit” as headings for their products, causing readers to peruse half the story before discovering that it really was an advertisement. Advertising was sparse; no issue contained enough to make up half a page in its entirety. They covered a wide range, from Farmer’s Almanac to the Western Lancet, devoted to “medical and surgical sciences.”

The first edition of the True American carried a letter signed “Junius” in which the writer discussed freedom of the press. He would not claim such freedom for papers like the New York Tribune which went along with Clay’s views on slavery. Clay did not let the letter go unanswered. He resented the implication that his paper was not entitled to say what it would about slavery. Robert
Wickliffe agreed with Junius, but Clay discredited the threats of violence of these two and hurled defiance back at them: "Though under the ban of popular proscription, baited by the widespread tongue of slander, and the relentless denunciations of such men in power, set on by bands of hireling assassins, still undismayed, planting ourselves up on the firm basis of our birthright, Constitutional liberty, and the world wide principles of truth and justice, we hurl back defiance against these cowardly outlaws."

If Clay gave any thought to libel in his writings, or to slander as he echoed in his speeches the same sentiments, it was not apparent. He said what he thought and had his bowie knife handy to back up his statements. Most opponents knew that and kept a safe distance. Wickliffe, however, spoke out via pamphlets, vituperatively scorching his enemies, political and personal, and Clay often was a ready target. No matter how often other publications pointed to Clay as a likely assassin's target, still he managed to survive.

In the South a great many voters could not read but followed speakers' arguments for their information on issues of the day. Therefore it was all important to the success of his cause that Clay should "add to the liberty of the press the liberty of public discussion." Clay permitted the publication of letters that actually threatened his life. The letters often were signed by anonymous writers. One such letter, addressed to Cassius M. Clay and signed the "Revengers," bore a Louisville postmark; it made a savage, personal attack on Clay and closed with this open threat: "Eternal hatred is locked up in the bosoms of brave men, your betters, for you. The hemp is ready for your neck. Your life cannot be spared."

Although he used strong terms in his editorials and the proslavery press sought to interpret his writings as revolutionary, Clay actually kept up his pleas for peaceful settlement of all controversies. "In resisting by violence even a manifestly unjust act he (the citizen) violates the
principles of all government, by not submitting to the laws, till changed by constitutional means.”

The True American on June 10, 1845, carried an editorial headed “Slavery the Enemy of Genius” in which Clay said that of eighty-five recognized poets of genius in America, seventy-seven were from free states and only eight were from slave states. He then showed that lack of education produced this condition and declared that the free states surpassed the slave states in wealth. “Between liberty and slavery there is not, there cannot be, any compromise. . . . As sure as God regards the right, Kentucky shall be free.” He then asked, hypothetically, who was benefited by slavery:

Lawyers, merchants, mechanics, laborers, who are your consumers? Robert Wickliffe’s 200 slaves? How many clients do you find, how many goods do you sell, how many hats, coats, saddles, and trunks do you make for these 200 slaves? Does Wickliffe lay out as much for himself and his 200 slaves as 200 freemen do? We stand for the whites, Mr. Wickliffe for the slaves—if any fighting is to be done will you stand by us who put bread in the mouths of your children, or by Mr. Wickliffe, who hates and fears you because he knows he injures you.

Slaveholders organized the opposition and some newspapers charged Clay with being an irresponsible firebrand and revolutionary. Lexington’s Observer and Reporter stated: “To put such a lever as the Press into the hands of such a man as C. M. Clay, heedless, reckless, impetuous, ultra and revolutionary, is almost like putting a torch into the hands of an incendiary.”

The True American had a short life in Kentucky, but in the months that it appeared it made its influence felt. Clay carried on his fight for freeing the slaves and spoke at every opportunity after recovering from serious wounds received in an attack upon him at Foxtown which nearly cost him his life. The True American dealt at some length with the constitutional and legal aspects of slavery. Both
in editorial opinion and in news items, Clay brought before his readers food for thought on this question and stressed the tyrannical nature of a government that would legalize slavery. He charged newspapers—the Louisville Courier-Journal among others—with refusing to publish letters he sent in on the antislavery theme. “And yet we read,” he said, “all through the Democratic press, denunciations of the Czar because of the suppression of the liberty of utterance.”

Clay always used sound logic in his writing and speaking against slavery. Other newspapers, favoring slavery, resorted to the practice of insinuating or declaring that antislavery advocates were trying to overthrow the government whenever they moved to free the slaves. No matter how acrimonious the writings of others were, Clay always managed to keep calm, though at times he did soar away into flights of oratory that ended with such warnings as “slavery must die!”

The last issue of the True American came out on August 19, 1845, with pages two and three blank. Clay was ill at the time. Other pages contained articles covering the debate being carried on by the Reverend Francis Wayland, of Providence, Rhode Island, and the Reverend Richard Fuller of Beaufort, South Carolina. Baptist and Methodist churches had split over the slavery issue and northern and southern Methodist groups would not be reunited until the middle of the twentieth century. Throughout its brief life the newspaper always offered the opposition space to state its viewpoint, but it must be noted that the arguments of proslavery advocates were not presented by the most brilliant or the most eloquent authorities. Clay, while commenting on his fairness, did not always seek out the strongest advocates of the proslavery side but gave space to those who volunteered their opinions.

Although Clay had dedicated all his energies, much of his fortune, and most of his time to efforts to free the
slaves, he faced stark tragedy in the death of his second son, allegedly at the hands of a slave. Cassius, Jr., three or four years of age, became ill on September 1, 1843, and died on September 20. Emily, the boy’s nurse, was accused of poisoning the child. She stayed in Megowan’s slave jail in Lexington for two years, and in the meantime Clay sold her mother, sister, and brother into southern slave markets. When Emily was tried and acquitted, Clay promptly sold her down South. The proslavery faction immediately made the most of this.

Thomas Metcalf, a former Kentucky governor who had felt the sting of Clay’s writings, took full advantage of the sale of Emily. He called Clay a “monster and villain,” a “daggard,” and a “dastard assassin,” along with other choice appellations. He said, in a letter which Clay published, that Clay had “an Arnold and an Iscariot soul” and was a “would-be traitor.” Clay dismissed Metcalf’s name-calling and suggested that, to establish the facts, a “more particular investigation” be made rather than that he be branded with the “damning infamy of a black-hearted villain.”

During the three months of the True American’s life, opinion favorable to the antislavery cause had been building up. But Clay’s attacks, in the paper’s latter days, worked against his program. On August 14, after Clay published an article which slavery forces considered most objectionable, a committee of infuriated citizens met at the courthouse and made its decision that the True American must go. Thomas F. Marshall, an avowed enemy of Clay, asserted that the editor had “assassinated the peace and good order of the community” and said the paper must cease publication. Clay asked to be heard but his plea was denied. The committee’s brief stated that further publication of the paper “is dangerous to the peace of our community and to the safety of our homes and families . . . and a threat to his personal safety.” Clay was outraged. Their advice to his personal safety, he said, “was worthy of the source whence it emanated, and
meets with the same contempt from me which the purpose of your mission excites. Go tell your secret conclave of cowardly assassins that C. M. Clay knows his rights and how to defend them.”

Proslavery forces prepared handbills calling for a mass meeting of Lexington citizens to take over the printing plant. Clay armed about half a dozen trusted friends and placed his brass cannons so they covered the doorway of the shop. The mob had second thoughts and decided to take over the plant by legal methods. Police Court Judge Trotter issued an injunction against the paper and the city marshal demanded its surrender. Clay complied with the order, again demonstrating his observance of the laws of the land. A crowd of 1,000 men already had assembled in the courthouse yard and Thomas Marshall addressed them, berating Clay and condemning the paper. The mob unanimously passed Marshall’s resolution:

First: That no abolition press ought to be tolerated in Kentucky, and none shall be in this city or its vicinity.

Second: That if the office of The True American be surrendered peaceably, no injury shall be done to the building or other property. The presses and printing apparatus shall be carefully packed up and sent out of the state, subject then to C. M. Clay’s order.

Third: That if resistance be offered, we will force the office at all hazards and destroy the nuisance.

Fourth: That if an attempt be made to revive the paper here, we will assemble.

Fifth: That we hope C. M. Clay will be advised. For by our regard to our wives, our children, our honor, wear what name he may . . . he shall not publish an abolition paper here, and this we affirm at the risk, be it of his blood or our own, or both, or of all he may bring, of bond or free, to aid his murderous hand.

Sixth: That the chairman be, and he is hereby, authorized to appoint a committee of sixty of our body who shall be authorized to repair to the office of The True American, take possession of the press and printing apparatus, pack up the same, and place it at the railroad office for transportation and report forthwith to this body.
The committee of sixty was headed by James B. Clay, son of Henry Clay and a distant relative of Cassius Clay. The committee went directly to the newspaper plant but found the city marshal already there. The committee quietly, efficiently, and expeditiously carried out its work and by nightfall the machinery and other material that produced one of the country’s most controversial newspapers was resting at the depot. That night the “remains” of the *True American* were shipped to Cincinnati, where a “large and respectable portion of the citizens” had met in August and invited Clay to continue publication of the paper.

Clay passed through a trying period after his paper, press, type, and equipment were moved. Finally he resumed publication of the *True American* in Cincinnati, but it still carried a Lexington dateline. He moved quickly to rebuild the paper’s circulation. Slave owners far outnumbered the Kentuckians who opposed the practice, so Clay decided to sell his subscriptions to the minority group at half price, feeling that once the papers were in the hands of the antislavery group the chances of emancipating the slaves would be improved greatly. Clay was not one to give up easily. He planned to continue the fight, even though at times he felt he was fighting a losing battle.

When the paper resumed publication it was under the editorship of John Vaughan, a newcomer to Lexington from South Carolina, and by Brutus Clay, Cassius’s brother. Cassius Clay volunteered his services in the Mexican War and left Kentucky. The subscription list fell off and Vaughan, with Clay’s approval, in June of 1847 moved the equipment to Louisville and published the *Examiner*, another emancipatory paper. The *Examiner* was published until late in 1849 and was highly regarded by the press of Kentucky.

Newspapers offered different opinions on the forcible suppression of the *True American*. George D. Prentice deplored the mob action, but the *Richmond Whig* said,
"We feel no sympathy for Mr. Clay, a member of that family of fanatics, who pernicious ever to society and its peace, are more especially pernicious to the cause which they undertake to promote." The Richmond Enquirer said editorially: "We feel that our existence would not be free from danger whilst a fiery fanatic like C. M. Clay was allowed to continue an abolitionist paper and hurl his incendiary missiles into every corner of the South."

The Lexington Observer and Reporter, which earlier had raised its voice against any threat of violence to the Clay paper, reversed its thinking. "The action of the people," the Observer said, "was dictated by what was demanded by the public welfare and safety of the community." It actually commended the mob for its handling of the whole affair, accomplishing "their purpose without the slightest damage to the property or the effusion of a drop of blood." Offering a bit of advice to those who might try to write books to prove the committee action a lawless procedure and in violation of the Constitution, the Observer said "it would avail them nothing. . . . There may be a state of things in which the Constitution and laws are totally inadequate to the public protection from dire calamities, and in that event popular action (though usually to be deprecated) must be excused." This reversal in editorial thinking by an outstanding newspaper shows the intensity of feeling in the proslavery South and the hatred of Cassius M. Clay for his stand on the issue. It demonstrates the power of the proslavery forces, backed by a willing press, to destroy a paper that stood up for what it felt was the right.

Clay stood only for emancipation, gradually and in accordance with the Constitution. He constantly was branded an abolitionist, but he always sought to bring about emancipation legally. The slave owners wielded great power and it was dangerous for an antislavery speaker to take the platform against this group. Freedom of the press was denied and few papers would publish material favoring emancipation. Many prated about the
freedom of the press, but when the showdown came they seldom had space available for the abolitionist leaders.

The battle against Clay continued unabated. He wanted to get out of the publishing business, but the fighting spirit that was his chief characteristic kept him at his desk. After returning from Mexico, where he had distinguished himself in the war, Clay reported in his memoirs, "in the great struggle which I was now entering anew, there was no outside support; and I had to depend upon myself and fate for the solution." He stated:

> Self-defense is the first law of nature; and, standing upon my rights of State and National Constitutions, I was allowed full discussion of all subjects—even slavery; being responsible by legal process for punishment in its abuse. At Lexington, on the 18th of August 1845, the combined physical power of the community was too strong for me, and my press was removed to Ohio; but I stood impregnable in my moral strength of self-sacrifice and fortitude, which proved at last triumphant. So, now, I had all the moral and legal forces on my side; and so much physical power as good arms and a brave heart could give me.

Clay filed suit against the committee for property damage and collected $2,500.

Slavery in Kentucky had its most serious threat from the *True American*, according to Thomas D. Clark's *History of Kentucky*. Clay came from one of Kentucky’s largest slaveholding counties, his own father being among the larger owners. His editorship of this newspaper, his courage, his unfaltering efforts to shed light on the issue of man’s ownership of man, kept him in the limelight in Kentucky and throughout the country. Later on his political sagacity and statesmanship brought him many honors. In 1851 he made an unsuccessful attempt to win the governorship of Kentucky, but lost by an overwhelming vote in an outpouring of proslavery advocates and anti-Clay voters. Previously, a proslavery constitution had been approved by Kentucky and the thinking of the people was that slavery should be continued. Clay
continued in the ranks of the emancipationists, changed to a Republican, and supported Lincoln for the presidency. He was slated to be secretary of war in Lincoln’s cabinet but had to accept the ambassadorship to Russia instead. He returned to Kentucky from Russia in 1868, separated from his wife. In 1878 a divorce decree was handed down.

Clay continued to take an active part in national as well as state politics following his separation and divorce. In 1871 he spoke in behalf of Horace Greeley, his favorite candidate for the presidency. “When the convention was called in Cincinnati in 1872, I headed the Kentucky delegation,” Clay recalls in his memoirs. He carried the delegation against the Watterson influence in Louisville which was for Charles Francis Adams. “Many wished to put me in nomination; but I declined the first office, as well as the second, which last I would have had no difficulty, I think, in getting, had I joined the Adams’ party.” Clay, after referring to the Courier-Journal, discussed newspapers generally: “The great feature of our times is the great journals. The inventions of modern times all tend to the interchange of ideas and commercial products. The newspaper, then, is the necessity of the age. It is read by all active minds; and, in consequence, it has superseded the ancient political leader. The press no longer waits for the oracles, but plays the part of seer itself. So that, when the greatest statesmen speak to hundreds or thousands, the press talks to hundreds of thousands. It is the ‘Third Estate.’” Clay continued:

In 1872, then, the Courier-Journal was a great power. . . . Just before the vote was taken . . . I saw a small, flaxen-haired “chipper” man coming down from the chairman’s platform, and making his way toward myself. When he got to me he said: “Mr. Clay just give us your vote of Kentucky for Adams once.” As this would have absolutely defeated all my plans, and elected Adams, I was so astonished that I made no reply. . . . Recovering from my surprise, I asked of a companion: “Who is that?”
“Why don’t you know?”, said he, with equal surprise; “that is the editor of the Courier-Journal—Henry Watterson.” So this was the first I had seen or heard of the brilliant, eccentric and combustible Watterson. For I had taken no journals in Europe; and though I took the Courier-Journal on my return home, I did not know who was the literary or political editor of it, though I did know that Haldeman held the pursestrings.

Thus, at the very birth of my new Southern career, I made an enemy of the man who was virtually dictator in my own state, and the most potent politician in all the South.

Clay then gloated over the defeat of certain things sought by Watterson:

But the influence of Watterson has steadily declined. His dictatorial manner about Tilden’s nomination, his untimely and foolish proposal to march one hundred thousand unarmed men to Washington at the time of the inauguration of Hayes, his equally sudden abandonment of Tilden at the Lexington Convention, his opposition to Hancock and defeat in the National Convention at Cincinnati, his free-trade folly, his foolish speech at the Iroquois Club at Chicago, his support of Grant as Dictator, his toadyism to Grant men, his equivocation upon the currency—these, and all the weaknesses of a poetic temperament, and want of common sense, is sinking the Courier-Journal, and building up the Louisville Evening Post into supremacy.

Although Clay continued to refer to Watterson as the “brilliant, erratic and combustible Watterson,” there is no report that the editor of the Courier-Journal ever took notice of Clay.

Clay lived at White Hall in Madison County and grew more lonely in his old age. He sent for his illegitimate son, born in Russia in 1866, and brought him to White Hall. Clay’s son Launey grew to manhood and moved out West, where he died in the 1920s. Clay, still lonely and seeking companionship, married Dora Richardson, a fifteen-year-old girl from a tenant family. Clay, almost eighty-four years old at the time, claimed this as the greatest love of his life. During the early days of his
marriage Madison countians who objected to the union got together a group of men and with the sheriff went to White Hall. Clay had learned of the plan and, using the two brass cannons that had guarded the *True American* in Lexington, blasted away at the posse when it came to take the girl away. Dora left Clay a little later and in 1898 the court granted her a divorce.

As age came upon him, Clay grew more and more cantankerous, threatening visitors who came to his door and ordering them from the premises. He became suspicious of everyone and imagined that someone was out to kill him. He refused to pay his taxes, saying the state gave him no protection. In the summer of 1903 he became quite ill and could not leave his bed. On July 22, 1903, during a storm while lightning flashed and thunder shook the house, the man often called the “Lion of White Hall” died, ending a career that never has been matched in Kentucky history.
A MOVEMENT had been under way for several years prior to the Greeley-Grant presidential campaign for the formation of an association of newspapers in Kentucky. Similar groups had been formed in other states and it was natural that Kentucky, with many of the country’s leading editors and publishers recognizing the need, should form its own organization. There was a need for newspapers to stand together and put an end to the schisms that developed before and during the Civil War and continued after the conflict came to an end. J. Stoddard Johnston, editor of the *Frankfort Yeoman*, and S. R. Smith, of the *Frankfort Commonwealth*, bitter opponents during the war, got together in 1868 and issued a call for a meeting of newspaper editors and publishers the next January.

Kentucky had many newspapers at that time. Some were organized purely as political sheets, soon to fall by the wayside as the candidates they backed faded from view in primaries and general elections. Others came into being because of envy of neighbors who earlier had launched publications. At that time little capital was needed to start a weekly newspaper and backers usually could be found who were willing to risk capital to see their names at the mastheads of newspapers. Less than $3,000 launched many a newspaper in Kentucky in the days just
before and after the Civil War. A hand press, some type, and a printer or a young man willing to learn the trade were about all that were required. Sometimes small communities had as many as three or four newspapers fighting over meager news or store advertisements that paid the bills.

Dr. J. Perry Ashley, assistant secretary-manager of the Kentucky Press Association (KPA) from 1957 to 1965, prepared a highly interesting article on the formation of the association that appeared through courtesy of the Louisville Courier-Journal exactly 100 years after the first meeting of the Kentucky editors in Frankfort. At that first meeting on January 13, 1869, George D. Prentice of the Courier-Journal was named president. A. G. Hodges of the Frankfort Commonwealth was made vice president, and W. H. Perrin of the Louisville Democrat, secretary. The following year Hodges was moved up to the presidency and the minutes noted the addition of another officer, to be known as the orator. J. Stoddard Johnston was the first editor to assume that post. Walter N. Hal­deman of the Louisville Courier-Journal was the third president, and G. W. Ranck, of the Lexington Observer was named orator. The KPA evidently liked J. Stoddard Johnston, for it named him president for the years 1871 to 1884. J. G. Craddock of the Paris True Kentuckian served ten years as treasurer; but as was pointed out at numerous annual elections, there was little money to be looked after or accounted for by the association’s fiscal officer.

Orators played a prominent part in the early days of the Kentucky press. For many years the association also designated a poet, with Henry T. Stanton of the Maysville Bulletin perhaps the most famous in that category. It was during the early development of the press association that Henry Watterson began to be in demand as an orator. Newspaper editing and oratory went hand in hand in many sections of the country, and outstanding editors sometimes took to the platform to elaborate on what they had written in their newspapers. Watterson was out-
standing as an orator and his services were in great demand. He was known as a “lecturer” but probably gained more fame as a political speaker. His ability to get to the real heart of an issue helped him sway many an audience and control many a political gathering in Kentucky and often in the nation.

In May of 1873 Watterson spoke before the Indiana Press Association in Indianapolis on “The American Newspaper.” It was an “oratorical” appearance as well as a discussion of personal journalism. Watterson at this time alluded to the “smallness of our towns which are not large enough to afford concealment to an individual occupying an important local place. . . . Those who read a newspaper are pretty sure to find out who it is that edits it; there is no possible escape; the man’s simple comings in and goings out will discover him; and just as he happens to be a person of exceptional character or characteristics he is likely to be marked and talked of until, being presently very well known, and having himself charged with all the virtues and all the offenses of his journal he is involuntarily a personal journalist.” This well might have been self-appraisal that developed while he was working on numerous small newspapers before assuming the editorship of the state’s largest daily. Identifying himself in this way with personal journalism certainly sounds plausible and carries no hint of self-approval.

The next year Watterson was asked to deliver an address at Georgetown College on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the settling of Kentucky by Daniel Boone and other pioneers. This lyrical oration was Watterson at his best and established him as a speaker who could wax eloquent over the charms of nature. Telling about Boone and his party’s trek into Kentucky, he said:

Nature herself seemed conscious of the coming of an important embassy, and put on her richest apparel to receive it. The pomp of all the heraldries of the world could not have furnished
a more splendid fete than that which waited these humble ministers and envoys in buckskin. It was when the June skies were softest and the June fruition was at its full; when the elms and maples vied with one another which would show itself the more hospitable and magnificent; when the welcoming bluebird call was clearest and sweetest, that the mysterious pathway through the forest which had opened day after day, not like the fabled avenue in the enchanted garden, but like a track pointed out to Christian by divine inspiration, brought the little band to an elevation from which its members beheld, for the first time, what they had come so far to see. Moses, stretching his weary eyes from Pisgah into Canaan, was not gladdened and refreshed by a lovelier prospect.

This poetic tribute seemed to justify the Kentucky Press Association's action of designating an orator as one of its staff officers. These orators usually appeared at the annual meetings of the association to stir the members with their flag-waving effusions. They also discussed matters of interest to publishers and offered advice and counsel on how to succeed in the newspaper business. Kentucky historian Thomas D. Clark, in *The Southern Country Editor*, asserted that press associations primarily were concerned with bringing editors together for three or four days of inspirational speaking and socializing. Others described the gatherings as larks in which little serious business was transacted and most of the time was spent in drinking and socializing.

A. G. Hodges seemed to express the viewpoint of a majority of editors in Kentucky. As association president he commented at the second gathering of the editors that he had detected a lessening of the rivalries between editors since the first session. He noted that "it was a source of particular gratification to have noticed that much of that bitterness and asperity of language has been banished from the editorials of the Kentucky press, and that there may be a continued improvement in this respect, even upon the past year, is my most ardent desire.”

During a summer meeting the next year Eartus Brooks of
the New York Express told KPA that newspapers did, and should, have differences of opinions, but added, “I am glad to know that upon occasions like this, at least, we can forget them and feel that all nature’s differences is all nature’s peace.” A few years later, J. Stoddard Johnston, then president of the association, further expressed the sense of the meetings by reassuring the delegates that “the objective of the reunion is the uniting of the journalistic forces of Kentucky so as to make them better able to use the great power which they possess.”

Dr. Ashley in his thesis on Kentucky journalism quoted Princeton Banner editor C. T. Allen, who had served as orator in 1874, as likening the Kentucky journalists to Henry Clay:

It is in strict accordance with the eternal fitness of things that Kentucky should occupy at this time the position of mediator between the once hostile sections—that her press should be the medium through which the spirit of nationalism should be advocated. Is not the history of Kentucky full of manifestations of self-sacrificing devotion to country for the sake of the country? Her statesmen have been foremost in the work of patriotic duty, and in all traits and qualities that ennoble and dignify the public servant, they have been second to those of no other state or section.

The Kentucky Press Association held its meetings in different localities. Small communities, some of them hardly large enough to provide the accommodations needed for all who planned to attend, managed by quartering some delegates in private homes, where the editors were entertained royally. KPA did not draw heavily in attendance in its beginning years. Less than thirty editors and publishers were present for some of the early meetings and it was an easy matter for the smaller communities to go all out in entertaining the men and their wives. Later on attendance grew until as many as 250 persons were making trips to all parts of Kentucky and learning about the industries, accomplishments, and hopes of
these areas. Politicians often “just happened to be in the area” and dropped in on the conventions, hoping to meet some of the editors and thereby gain their support. In some instances leaders in the press managed to get invitations for some of their favorite politicians to appear on the program—of course, in a “most informal manner.”

One correspondent wrote that the annual gatherings created a certain esprit de corps “among the workers in a common cause, and thus softens the asperities too common in our calling. They bring before the whole state the social characteristics of the people, and the material advantages of the locality visited. They break down sectionalism and sectarianism, and diffuse a geographic knowledge that in time will make it impossible for an agricultural editor to place Nicholasville in Nicholas County and Hickman in Hickman County.” Harry Sommers, who became president of KPA in 1891, had been the KPA speaker and had given a general history of the Kentucky press. His comments throw new light on his era of Kentucky journalism:

My first connection with the Kentucky Press Association began at the Bowling Green meeting in the summer of 1879. Colonel J. Stoddard Johnston, a distinguished citizen of Frankfort and the editor of the Frankfort Yeoman, was president of the association at that time. Among other distinguished editors who attended that meeting were Hon. Henry Watterson, the greatest editor in the South of his day; Col. E. Polk Johnson, for many years afterward managing editor of the Courier-Journal and editor of the Frankfort Capitol; Henry Stanton, of the Frankfort Yeoman, and poet laureate of the Kentucky Press Association who wrote among other things “The Moneyless Man”; Emmet Logan, afterwards editor of the Louisville Times and the most brilliant paragrapher in the state; Sam Gaines, gifted editor of the Hopkinsville New Era, and Dr. John D. Woods, the gifted editor of the Glasgow Times.

Sommers related that about 100 newspapermen and about 200 “outsiders who sold something to newspapers”
attended the Bowling Green meeting that year. The whole crowd had to be quartered in private homes where they were entertained free of charge, a practice followed in many communities where the association met. The next year Ashland was host to the editors and "hangers-on," he related, and this broke up the association for several years. Later on Danville was designated as host city, but a new constitution limited attendance to bona fide publishers of newspapers and said that those in attendance had to pay their own bills at hotels and boarding houses where they were quartered. That ended the free-loading practice. In more recent times some hotels offered "due bills" in exchange for advertising during conventions of the press.

There was a long period during which the Kentucky editors held their meetings at the sites of the springs that once abounded in Kentucky. Meetings were held on successive years at Olympia Springs, Estill Springs, Crab Orchard Springs, Grayson Springs, Dawson Springs, and Serulean Springs. Most of these resorts, famous in their day, now have disappeared as gathering places for conventions. There was a day when the gaily bedecked tallyho came from Cincinnati, Louisville, and other cities to unload its stylish guests at these resorts for weekends or longer visits where they drank from mineral wells or springs or bathed in the health-giving waters. As membership grew and small towns became unable to take care of such large groups, summer meetings were held, and still are, usually in some beautiful state park, with the winter sessions in either Louisville or Lexington. Programs are devoted largely to social activities at the summer meetings with business generally transacted in the morning sessions. These meetings are considered family affairs and editors are encouraged to bring their children along to enjoy the events arranged for their entertainment. The winter meetings devote most of the time to association business, bringing in outside speakers to discuss newspaper problems. Supporters of certain
charities or semipolitical organizations usually manage to get on the program to promote their businesses or organizations. Very often these speakers are suggested by association program planners who may or may not have some political motive to serve through a speaker from some department of the federal or state government. But the editors are not swept off their feet by these outsiders and accept what they have to say with a grain or a barrel of salt as the occasion warrants.

At the close of meetings of the press, resolutions usually expressed the members' appreciation of entertainment provided. One resolution at an early meeting of editors stated “the thanks of this association are hereby tendered to the Louisville, Cincinnati and Lexington Rail Road, the Louisville and Nashville Rail Road, the Kentucky Central Rail Road, and the Cincinnati and Maysville Packet Company (for the Steamer St. James) for their kindness and courtesy extended to offering the free use of their several lines to those desiring to attend the convention of this organization.” Such free transport was called “deadheadism.” After the KPA’s fourth annual convention, the Courier-Journal editorially stated that it was about time that the practice of deadheadism, which it felt was the “cause of many abuses in this country,” was ended. The Louisville newspaper called attention to the fact that papers in other areas had condemned the practice, but added “it is useless to denounce the abuse and then practice it when the first opportunity is afforded.” Murat Halstead, visiting with the press of Kentucky in 1874, also condemned the practice of accepting railroad passes to “go to and fro, up and down the earth like the distinguished historic character un-chained for a season.” He suggested that railroads pay for their advertising and that editors pay for their travel. The Courier-Journal once suggested that the press seek help in the legislature to stop the practice of railroads giving passes to editors or others outside the transportation industry. But in spite of opposition and warnings the practice continued for many
years before it was outlawed. The practice of certain indus­
tries in giving parties or so-called receptions to the press in annual conventions still persists, however; and in recent years no move has been made on the part of the press to put an end to this practice. Few editors today consider it likely that the press will be influenced by the handout of a few bottles of beer or potato chips dipped into soft cheeses.

Journalists who visited numerous Kentucky cities to attend the conventions generally repaid their host cities in publicity, and copies of articles commenting on the entertainment usually found their way back to the host city's newspaper for republication. One writer waxed eloquent over his entertainment in a Kentucky city as he said that everyone “came away desperately in love with his charming hostess. The members of the Kentucky Press Association were entertained with the most pro­fuse, genial, and elegant hospitality by the citizens of Shelbyville.” One editor, reporting on the summer meeting in 1870, told of a trip to Mammoth Cave. Speeding along the countryside “over well balasted roads at 30 miles per hour” on a special train contributed by a railroad line, the party of editors arrived exhausted by the journey. To revive themselves, the “men who by the power of their pens controlled states and commu­nities, indulged in wrestling, leaping, and running with ardor unequaled in the happy days of boyhood.” In foot races and Indian wrestling, “Black Republicans con­tended with Red-hot Democrats” with sometimes a good bet put up on the outcome. The horseplay of 100 years ago has now been replaced by golf, fishing, swimming, and hiking by today’s editors.

“Why not meet once or twice in every while to drink Falernian with the boys?” said one writer in commenting on the social behavior of his fellow members. “Is life a valley of dry bones, that there is nothing better in it than articles which no one needs or local items which offend?
Are not the berries red? Is not the Bourbon mellow? And shall one vanish and the other waste for lack of jolly fellows to mix them? . . . It is a fine thing to condemn, but a finer thing to enjoy."

Highlights of many early conventions were the final nights' banquets when members were treated to what some writers referred to as "literary exercises." At these dinners members were subjected to as much as three hours of oratory and poetry offered by the newly elected orator and poet. These ordeals were done away with before the turn of the century. In more recent years the Kentucky Press Association has engaged in numerous activities that give a broad picture of journalism in Kentucky. Some of these activities are noteworthy. For example, KPA has a foundation which provides scholarships to high school students who wish to pursue journalism studies in college but lack sufficient funds. The foundation has awarded as many as six scholarships per year.

In the more than a century that the Kentucky Press Association has been in existence, six pairs of fathers and sons have served as president. James T. Norris, Sr., served as head of the KPA in 1932; his son James T. Norris, Jr., was the 1970 president of KPA. T. C. Underwood served in 1909; his son Thomas R. Underwood, in 1939. John B. Gaines served in 1916 and his son John B. Gaines, Jr., in 1962. Colonel B. F. Forgey served in 1919 and his son Chauncey Forgey, in 1945; George A. Joplin, Jr., served in 1934 and his son George A. Joplin III, in 1964; Russell Dyche served in 1941 and his son Martin Dyche, in 1958.

Upon his election to the presidency of the Kentucky Press Association, James T. Norris, Jr., told readers of the 1971 Kentucky Newspaper Yearbook that "the newspaper industry in Kentucky is a growth industry—in sales volume and circulation. It also is oriented to modern production methods. There are 112 weekly newspapers printed by offset, out of a total of 137. Fourteen of the
state's 24 dailies are offset,” he wrote. Others have been added since that year. He continued:

Country newspapers in Kentucky and throughout the country hold a unique position of trust and influence in the minds and hearts of their readers. This special privilege carries with it an obligation which we do not take lightly. We believe that we must maintain high standards of professional integrity; also we must keep abreast of all the improvements which space-age technology continues to bring us. What we have to sell is a blend of the old and the new; a heritage of integrity, which never changes, and technical improvement, which changes constantly. We of the Kentucky press pledge our efforts to provide what our customers and readers deserve: the best we can give.

Each year at the summer conventions of the Kentucky Press Association, contests are held to seek out and honor the newspapers that are best in various categories. Competition is keen and hundreds of weeklies and small dailies compete for the plaques, silver, or certificates that are awarded. Leading newspapermen from other states serve as judges for the various contests. Awards in these contests offer incentives that will make journalistic endeavors stronger and better. Hometown prestige is increased when the editors return to their papers and display their trophies and let the local folk know that they have a good newspaper.
COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS often are described as “country weeklies” because they are published in small towns and many of them are oriented toward the farm populace. Often these papers carry columns of correspondence from rural areas, giving writers free rein to relate news of their little areas in their own words, even though their expressions do not always conform to the rules of journalism. Many of these rural correspondents have attained fleeting fame through reprinting of their articles in the daily press.

Weeklies supply news for the “little men,” it was pointed out in a KPA meeting. Weekly newspapers were admonished at this same meeting to continue to give adequate space to deaths, weddings, and “little events” that interest their readers. They were advised not to join the dailies in charging subscribers for carrying notices of weddings and engagements and in seeking paid obituaries of considerable length or holding death notices to minimum space.

Throughout the years since the founding of Kentucky’s first newspaper back in 1787, weekly newspapers have played a significant role in the state’s development. Today’s weekly newspapers, housed in their own
modern buildings, are a far cry from the ink-spattered, one-room edifices where many of them started. Many of today's small dailies are located along busy streets in handsome buildings and some combine their newsgathering activities with the operation of radio stations. Many of the larger daily publications across Kentucky boast television stations to aid them in the dissemination of news.

Weekly newspaper editors generally are leaders in the communities in which they live. They must attend all sorts of meetings, serve on many committees, and assume leadership in many enterprises. They must promote and even participate in little theater plays; help coach the athletic teams; be seen at church every Sunday morning; attend city council meetings, offer suggestions on new ordinances, and help in the selection of officials; take up their city’s fights with nearby communities, and otherwise be in the forefront of every community endeavor. Their role is that of a personal journalist as distinguished from the sometimes impersonal roles played by the editors and officials of the big dailies. The very nature of their work forces most country editors into the limelight whether they wish it or not.

The formation of the Kentucky Press Association did much to improve the status of the weekly or country newspapers. Little could be accomplished when newspapers had to tackle statewide issues alone. The organization gave the press standing and, when the combined force of the press got back of an issue, success usually followed. Editors, being individualists, often have found it difficult to agree on all facets of a question, but in the long run agreement has been reached on most major issues. On such big issues as “the people’s right to know” there was general agreement and after a century of endeavor the press finally succeeded in getting legislation on the statute books that guaranteed open meetings for the transaction of public business. Enforcement of the
statutes has been slow, but the day will come when this thinking will be accepted fact.

There are 156 newspapers in Kentucky, according to a recent count. Most Kentucky counties have but one paper, although some of the smaller ones list two or even three. Consolidations and the elimination of others because of high costs of operation have reduced the number greatly in recent years.

The aim of most weekly editors always has been to establish the best possible rapport with their readers. But few Kentucky weekly editors established the harmonious relationship that existed between the late George Joplin, Jr., editor of the Somerset Commonwealth, and his subscribers. On one occasion Joplin went to the Pulaski County jail to interview a man who had just been locked up on a charge of murder.

"I'se mighty sorry, Mr. Joplin, that I killed this rascal today, knowin' as I did that your paper already was out for this week," the jailed killer told his interviewer in all seriousness.

A great many Kentucky "country editors" carry personal columns in addition to editorial columns. These homespun, personal stories are looked forward to each week. Some dailies also carry such personal journalism articles, perhaps the best known in recent years being those of Joe Creason of the Courier-Journal, who followed Alan Trout's dissertations on barnyard philosophies. Anthony Woodson also was a recognized Louisville newspaper columnist.

Editor Jim Allen, who philosophized in the Cynthiana Democrat over the years, used the simple article of an umbrella to bring laughter to his readers. Almost weekly he recounted some story to advise his readers about the loss of his umbrella and to seek ways of finding it. It was a simple gimmick, but it identified the writer with his column and brought him new readers week after week.

Another editor, with tongue in cheek, each year carried
articles on his "preserving contest" in which blue ribbons were awarded to those sending in the best preserves, which the editor reserved the right to judge and use.

Although several Kentucky editors envisioned the establishment of chains of newspapers during the years since the Kentucke Gazette made its appearance, few were successful in assembling more than two or three. One of the earliest moves in Kentucky toward establishment of a newspaper chain came in 1927 when owners of the Pineville Sun purchased the Corbin Times-Tribune with the idea of adding other weekly publications in southeastern Kentucky. The move had to be abandoned because of the battle that erupted over efforts of the Samuel Insul power empire to build a power dam at Cumberland Falls.

The reader's indulgence is asked for a bit of "personal journalism." I feel that this newspaper story, here told for the first time, will be of interest to other newspapermen who from time to time have challenged the power of special interests. At the time, in the late 1920s, my partner in the Pineville Sun was Tilman Ramsey, a prominent physician-surgeon in Pineville, who took no part in the running of the newspaper. After the purchase of the Times-Tribune, Dr. Ramsey decided that he would dispose of his interest in the Corbin paper because of a difference of opinion over that paper's editorial policy in relation to the building of a dam at Cumberland Falls. Kentucky Utilities Company, a member of the Insul group, was Pineville's biggest employer and Dr. Ramsey thought the Corbin paper should support the dam. We did not agree.

The newspapers of Kentucky, almost as a unit, fought the efforts to convert the Falls into a power plant. The Courier-Journal and Times were leaders in the conservation movement; however, some weeklies in the area supported the dam. The Corbin Times-Tribune led the
fight locally against the destruction of the scenic area through the building of a dam and power plant.

At this juncture an Indiana woman, Mrs. Marie Peffer, came to Pineville and expressed a desire to purchase Dr. Ramsey’s interest in the Times-Tribune. Before I agreed to the sale a side contract was signed transferring control of the paper’s policy to me. The policy of the Times-Tribune was to continue in opposition to the dam. At this time the Cumberland Falls Preservation Association was formed. Frederick A. Wallis, who some time earlier had come to Kentucky after serving as New York City’s police commissioner, was president of the association. Tom Wallace and I were vice presidents of the conservation organization. The bitter fight, similar in most ways to the controversy later waged over a dam in the Red River Gorge, continued with the Times-Tribune battling the vast power holdings of Insul.

Upon receipt of the October 21, 1927, copy of the Corbin Times-Tribune, a short time after Mrs. Peffer married Charles Trammell of Corbin, I was shocked to see headlines supporting the construction of a dam at the Falls. I boarded the first Louisville & Nashville train for Corbin (road conditions of that date and lack of an automobile making this means of getting about more desirable) and challenged the Corbin paper’s position in direct opposition to its established policy. Mrs. Trammell responded that she was running the paper and would publish what she wished. She was reminded of the stock-control contract but replied that it meant nothing to her. I learned years later in a conversation with Robert M. Watt, then an official of Kentucky Utilities, that he had given her $250 after her appeal that she needed that sum for personal matters. The paper’s policy, under her control, continued to favor dam construction.

When the Times-Tribune was purchased, a suboffice was established in Pineville so that owners of the Sun would have access to local courts in case of trouble at the
Corbin newspaper. After consulting with conservation leaders I filed suit in the Bell Circuit Court to enforce the stock agreement. The trial date was set and Mrs. Trammell, through her attorney, agreed to sell her stock to me within thirty days. In the meantime she launched a circulation campaign for the Corbin paper, also accepting job printing and advertising due-bills prepaid by merchants in Corbin and deliverable within a year. This action, along with loss of numerous accounts from ledgers, created a debt load for the weekly paper that was all but insurmountable.

Noting the mounting due-bill debt, I consulted with Tom Wallace, editor of the *Louisville Times*, who suggested that Robert Worth Bingham, publisher and owner of the Louisville newspapers, might be willing to extricate me from the predicament of having undoubtedly bitten off more than I could chew. Judge Bingham responded quickly, took me to the Louisville Trust Company, and told Richard Bean, the president, to “let this young man have up to $10,000 on call and I’ll sign the note with him.” This he did and the note finally was paid in full in 1958. Renewals without principal payments through the terrible depression years, together with unpaid interest, had created an overall debt of more than $20,000.

The editorial policy of the *Times-Tribune* immediately was reversed, Mrs. Trammell departed Corbin, and I was highly fortunate in obtaining the services of John L. Crawford, then with the *Whitesburg Mountain Eagle*, to guide the destiny of the *Times-Tribune*, now a daily, and make it one of the state’s outstanding publications. Hard hit by the economic depression in the coalfields, I gave up all thoughts of a newspaper chain, sold my holdings in the Corbin paper, and continued to publish the *Pineville Sun*.

Incidentally, within a short time conservationists won their fight to save Cumberland Falls. T. Coleman du Pont offered about a quarter of a million dollars for the pur-
chase of the Falls and surrounding lands to create what is now Cumberland Falls State Resort Park, but he died before the deed could be signed. Later du Pont’s widow and members of the family paid $400,000 for the property.

While several Kentucky editors over the years have envisioned the establishment of chains of newspapers, few have been successful in carrying out their dreams. The first chain that brought together a large number of papers in central and eastern Kentucky was owned, after its beginning in the 1950s, by Lexington banker and financier Garvice Kincaid. Problems of operation developed and rising costs in an unfamiliar field soon convinced Kincaid that he had better stick to banking, and he speedily disposed of his chain.

The most successful Kentucky chain of newspapers was the Shelbyville-based group formed in 1968 as Newspapers, Inc. The original chain had been formed through the merger of eight community newspapers, which through steady expansion grew to twenty-four by the time it was merged with Landmark Communications, Inc., in September 1973. It was the first group of weekly or semiweekly papers to join Landmark, but that corporation has since acquired others in Kentucky and Indiana, as well as in other states.

Landmark publishes morning, afternoon, and Sunday newspapers in Norfolk and Roanoke, Virginia, and in Greensboro, North Carolina. The firm has radio and television facilities in Norfolk and a television station in Greensboro. The company also is heavily committed to cable television, operating thirty-seven such community systems in ten states. Landmark Community Newspapers, Inc., publishes twenty-four newspapers and operates printing plants in Elizabethtown, Cynthiana, Shelbyville, Kentucky; in Tell City, Indiana; and in Cincinnati.

Each paper enjoys local autonomy in editorial policy and advertising, with the Shelbyville central office pro-
viding administrative support in the area of accounting, purchasing, solicitation, or regional and national advertising and overall coordination of corporate effort.

Since joining Landmark the group has acquired the Tell City News and the Cannelton News in Indiana. In June 1974 it purchased the Hardin County Enterprise and merged it with the Elizabethtown News in the same city to form a new daily newspaper. It was the first daily to be established in Kentucky since 1966, when Somerset’s two weeklies were merged into the daily Commonwealth-Journal. In addition to its corporately owned papers, Landmark prints forty-two other newspapers for publishers of weekly, semiweekly, and daily papers in Kentucky, southern Indiana, and southern Ohio.

Numerous small dailies in Kentucky in recent years have been purchased by out-of-state chains. Some of these papers are the Richmond Daily Register, the Harlan Daily Enterprise, the Middlesboro Daily News, and the Paris Daily Enterprise, many of which have continued operation under the same staffs and have pursued the same editorial policies.

The merger of eight community newspapers in 1968 to form Newspapers, Inc., was worked out by William E. Matthews, who in 1962 purchased the Shelby Sentinel. Matthews later served as president of Landmark Newspapers, Inc., based in Shelbyville, as an affiliate of Landmark Communications, Inc., Norfolk, Virginia.

Today’s semiweekly Sentinel-News of Shelbyville traces its ancestry back to 1840. It was then that Henri Middleton founded a Whig weekly at Shelbyville to support his idol, Henry Clay, for president. Middleton’s Shelby News changed its name to the Sentinel in 1865 when it came under the ownership of John T. Hearn. Hearn changed the paper’s politics to Democratic. The Sentinel in 1904 was purchased by Michael O’Sullivan, who operated it until his death in 1935. His sons, Daniel and James, assumed management then and operated the
paper for twenty-seven years until its sale in 1962 to Matthews.

The Shelby News, which is now combined with the Sentinel, was founded back in 1886 as the new News, as distinguished from the 1840 Whig paper. John P. Cozine established the new News and operated it until his death twenty-five years later. His two sons, Ben and Claude, took over ownership and management and continued until Ben Cozine later became owner and editor. In 1941, after Ben Cozine’s death, the paper came under the joint ownership of Bennett Roach and Mrs. Mason Cozine; and after her death Roach acquired the paper. His daughter, Sally Bond Fay, became editor-in-chief of the Sentinel-News, which resulted from the merger of the two newspapers in January 1972 by Newspapers, Inc.

Shelbyville has had many other newspapers, dating back to pioneer times. All but the Sentinel-News had their day and passed into history. No less than twenty-six papers have served the Shelbyville community since the first one, the Kentuckian (1814–1816), began the long parade that has included such names as the Courant, the Times, the Impartial Compiler, Advocate of Popular Rights, Political Examiner and General Recorder, and Public Ledger. Editors besides those named earlier have included Morgan Torr, Truman S. Vance, T. F. Poynter, Charles W. Harwood, Ed D. Shinnick, George L. Willis, and Charles M. Lewis. The Sentinel and the News are the only papers that survived until the age of offset printing. They also were among the last two competing county-seat weeklies in Kentucky until their 1972 consolidation.

There appears little likelihood that any other newspaper chains, other than the Landmark group or the Walt Dear chain started in recent years by the publisher of the Henderson Gleaner-Journal, will be formed. Chains may start other newspapers and existing papers may become allied with the existing chains, but as of now other groupings seem highly improbable.
Kentucky newspapers, expressing a wide range of opinion, are not hesitant to speak out on matters of public interest, as they did in the early 1930s when communism came to southeastern Kentucky. The newspapers of the area united to do battle with this doctrine and carried on relentless warfare until the menace was driven from the coalfields. It may be difficult for readers today to realize what was going on in Bell, Harlan, and Knox counties at that time, but had it not been for the activities of the newspapers and their editors, not only in the coalfields but elsewhere, communism might have gained a foothold in southeastern Kentucky.

Leading the fight were the Pineville Sun, the Middlesboro Daily News, and the Harlan Enterprise. Help came too from the Mountain Advocate of Barbourville and the Whitley Republican of Williamsburg. Among dailies aiding in the movement to stifle communism were the Knoxville (Tenn.) Journal and the Lexington Herald. Special writers from some of the largest daily newspapers across the country came to cover the activities, their stories sometimes helping, sometimes hurting, the cause for which the small-town papers fought.

In early 1931 a group from New York City, mostly women, arrived unannounced in Pineville, county seat of Bell County. They set up headquarters opposite the courthouse and began to distribute Communist-oriented literature. The coalfields were suffering from the effects of the worst depression in history. Coal was selling, in many instances, at fifty cents a ton, loaded in railroad cars. Mines were going broke daily and pay for the miners had been cut to the minimum. Mine owners were extending credit to employees far beyond the business-recognized limit. Mine commissaries were charging high prices, hoping thereby to cover losses in other departments. The American Red Cross had set up offices in the Bell County courthouse and was feeding thousands who were unable to find employment. All this provided a fertile field for communism.
The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) had made sporadic efforts to organize the miners in Bell and Harlan counties. They had had little success, particularly since demand for coal was so low that strikes were ineffective as a weapon. The Communist workers moved in quickly to establish what they called the National Miners’ Union, attacking the UMWA and ridiculing that organization’s past efforts to get wage increases and benefits for the men. Men signed up as members of the National Miners’ Union and received little black books which entitled them to all the benefits and privileges of the Communist Party of America. Within months after the group arrived in Pineville the Communist Party of America claimed that it had some 8,000 members in the coalfields. This number was disputed by local editors and coal operators. One thing was certain, however; the influence and standing of the UMWA was diminished greatly.

Theodore Dreiser wired the governor of Kentucky, Flem D. Sampson, at Frankfort asking for military protection by a unit of National Guardsmen on his proposed visit to the coalfields. The governor told the author that no such protection was required. Dreiser then led his group to Pineville, establishing headquarters in the Continental Hotel. He was greeted warmly by the citizens. Prior to his arrival civic leaders in this little town of 3,500 had met and agreed to extend a welcome to the visiting group and offer whatever help was needed for them to get at the truth of the situation in the coalfields. It was soon discovered that the mission of the writers had been established beforehand. They talked only with coal miners or others with grievances until late in the hearings when a few others were invited to talk to the committee.

Dreiser, despite protestations from others in his party, had brought from New York an attractive young woman, Marie Pergain, who was introduced as his secretary. One night after midnight Dreiser called the upstairs room of his secretary and told her to “get down” to his room. The
acting night clerk, Harry Isaacs, and another man thought this an unusual call and employed what was known as the "toothpick watchman" to determine whether the nocturnal visitor departed from Dreiser's room after the time they felt would be needed for taking dictation. They placed several toothpicks against the door. Sometime the next morning they found the wooden detectives still leaning uprightly. A grand jury then in session apparently agreed that something more than dictation had occurred in the room and returned an indictment charging Dreiser and his friend with adultery. Dreiser promptly denied the charge; he declared that he was impotent and had been for some time. The courts reached an agreement with the defendants that if they would leave Pineville immediately and not return, the charges would be filed away. Both sides kept the agreement. Dreiser shortly thereafter wrote a book about his investigation called *Harlan Miners Speak*, which contained chapters by other members of the group.

After his hurried return to New York, Dreiser and other members of his party, including John Dos Passos, Charles Rumford Walker and his wife Adelaide, Marie Pergain, Samuel Ornitz, Celia Kuhn, George Maurer, and M. P. Levy, were indicted on charges of criminal syndicalism. (At that time there was a state law covering efforts to overthrow the governments of Kentucky or of the United States. Years later the law was declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court.) Dreiser's visit and activities got nationwide publicity for the sixty-year-old novelist.

Kentucky newspapers reacted speedily to the Dreiser story. "But it is the radical, un-American views as preached by Dreiser and his motley followers that have caused conditions in these hills to reach the breaking point," declared the *Harlan Enterprise*, according to an article in the *Literary Digest* of November 28, 1931. "Now it is another Scopes trial and all the attendant monkey business," said the *Pineville Sun*. And the Mid-
The Delphos Daily News, fearing such a spectacle, thought "it would be much better for everybody concerned if these people were never brought back to our county for trial. We are sick of his philosophies and investigations. These head-line seekers are anathema to the people of Bell County." "In their present plight," said the Paducah Sun-Democrat, "the coal fields would probably prefer Mr. Dreiser's check to his presence." As another Kentucky daily, the Lexington Herald, saw it, the situation called for the "mediation of a Louis D. Brandeis, not the partisanship of Theodore Dreiser." National newspapers, while conceding that things were bad in the coalfields and that something should be done to alleviate conditions, generally took the position that Dreiser's visit was largely for publicity and that little good was accomplished.

Group after group continued to come to Kentucky to "investigate" conditions in the coalfields. Many followed the modus operandi of the Dreiser group, wiring the governor for protection and suggesting they feared for their safety once they arrived in Bell and Harlan counties. Local committees varied their attitude with each group. Some were told they were welcome to come in; others were warned it might be better if they forgot the idea. One group, reported as the president and faculty members of Commonwealth College, an allegedly Communist educational institution of Mena, Arkansas, was met at the Pineville courthouse upon arrival to test freedom of speech. They were picked up, escorted to Virginia, and reportedly horsewhipped enroute somewhere in Harlan County.

Well into 1932 investigations continued. The New York Times in March reported that thirty colleges and universities were planning to send representatives to Kentucky, but letters to heads of those institutions brought back prompt replies that their institutions were not recognizing the proposed visit and were not sending any representatives on the trip. Students from numerous eastern
educational institutions did organize a trip, but their buses were stopped at Cumberland Gap, at the Kentucky-Tennessee line, and they were advised that it would be most unwise to proceed into Kentucky at that time. They left immediately.

In February of 1932, according to a story in the Knoxville Journal, a group of writers led by Waldo Frank came to Pineville to distribute paper cartons of milk to the people. They also sought to test the freedom of assembly, which they claimed had been denied them. Late that night they were rounded up in their hotel and escorted by a sort of "vigilante committee," made up of Pineville and Harlan men, to the Tennessee line. There Frank was struck on the head by an unidentified individual and received a deep gash. The group left for Knoxville and then stopped at Washington, D.C., where they appeared before a Senate committee and told of their treatment. Members of the party included Frank, Quincy Howe, editor of Living Age; Edmund Wilson, novelist, poet, and playwright; Malcolm Cowley, editor of the New Republic; Mary Heaton Vorse, novelist; Dr. Elsie Reed Mitchell, New York physician; Harold Allan Taub, Polly Boyden, Lewis Coleman, Allan Max, Benjamin Leider, and Liston Oaks.

Later a group of churchmen from the East, led by Reinhold Niebuhr and containing many well-known churchmen, arrived. They were greeted cordially, local ministers looked after them, and they soon departed. W. B. Spofford, C. P. Hall, and C. R. Barnes, all of New York, were with this group.

By this time citizens of Pineville had had enough. Word went out that no more investigators were welcome. The last group to come was made up of Arthur Garfield Hays, attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, and Dudley Field Malone, an assistant secretary of state under Woodrow Wilson, with a Louisville attorney as guide. They were stopped at the Bell-Knox County line and told they could not come in to hold a meeting. They
sought, and were denied, an injunction from Federal Judge A. M. J. Cochran at London. They then filed suit in Federal Court for $100,000 damages, and a hearing was held in London. Judge Cochran presided, and after all testimony was in he ruled in tones that became almost a shout: "There is such a thing as 'freedom from' as well as 'freedom of' and 'freedom to.' " He declared, according to the May 13, 1932, edition of the Middlesboro Daily News, "that there is a right of 'freedom from' annoying, uninvited, pesterling investigations. What right has any one person to investigate another?" He then threw the case out and the matter was ended insofar as any further legal steps were concerned. The "Communist invasion" soon came to an end. It is doubtful that any other issue created such wide readership of Kentucky and national newspapers during the two-year run of events in southeastern Kentucky's coalfields.

Newspapers of Kentucky, particularly the weeklies of the coalfields, played a major role in preventing the spread of communism in a critical period of the state's history. Communism, which was gaining a foothold in the area, was driven from the coalfields never to return in our time.

The question often arises in group discussions whether this or that editor is controlled by this or that person or organization. Owners of newspaper chains have recognized the importance of having each paper stand on its own feet and not be controlled by some central office. Kentucky editors, regardless of the chain ownership, always have been given editorial freedom based on local conditions.

"Who controls the Messenger?" asks the Monroe County Messenger, and the editor-publisher, Silas N. Barrow, answers his own question:

The Monroe County Messenger is a corporation with over a dozen stockholders. The editor and publisher, Silas Barrow, is the largest of these stockholders.
As an individual the editor has a contract with the corporation to manage the operation and establish the editorial policy of the Messenger. This contract states, complete control. The editor has informed all of the stockholders and the members of the board of directors that not only does he have the legal right but the moral obligation to publish a newspaper that serves only Monroe County as a whole. If anyone should try to dictate editorial policy, that person will be picked up by the scruff of his neck and the seat of his pants and thrown out of this office. Unless, of course, it be a lady, in which case she will politely be asked to leave.

The editor will either publish a fair and independent newspaper for Monroe County, or he will publish none. The editor cares not about being liked by politicians or stockholders. However, he does care about the respect that the readers have for the Messenger. This is how a newspaper should be judged.

Who controls and dictates editorial policies in Monroe County? Why, nobody but the editor of the Monroe County Messenger! You have his word for it.
After more than half a century of newspapering, practically all of it in the editorial field, I have an irresistible urge to do a little editorializing in bringing this story of Kentucky newspapers to a close. Almost eight years of retirement from the editorial chair of the *Lexington Herald* have not deadened the urge to "have my say."

Is the newspaper of today, once dominant and all-powerful in the field of communication, now just another division of what we refer to as the "media"? Television and radio have entered the communication field in a big way in the last generation. The EXTRA that once brought the latest news to subscribers and the man-on-the-street is a thing of the past. Newspapers just cannot compete with airborne stories, they must await their regular times of publication. News "on the hour" and often at shorter intervals fills the air day and night. While awaiting your newspaper you can hear, two or three times, most of the stories that will be in it.

Despite this competition on the air, newspapers continue to build circulation and to increase advertising revenues. People, though they often disagree with the editorials in their newspapers, seldom get worked up over radio or television editorializing. If one "writes to the editor" one must have the written word at hand in order to frame a reply. The printed picture, too, seems to be of more interest than the fleeting glimpse of the same thing on television. Almost instant reproduction of pictures through the offset process has increased the use of pictures by the weekly press in Kentucky.

Newspapering in Kentucky is on the up and up. You
have only to look at some recent sales of newspaper plants in the state—some in the hundreds of thousands, some in the millions of dollars—as proof positive that newspapers still rank high among the recognized media and that they are good investments.

It may be heresy to say so, but most newspapers do slant the news. Few newspapers adhere strictly to the policy of complete objectivity in their news columns that they proclaim with such vehemence in their editorial columns. This is true of both the weekly press of Kentucky and the big dailies. It always has been so and it will continue to be so as long as members of the human race write the material that goes into their papers.

Editorial positions are reflected time and again in news stories. A news story on a certain topic on page one follows the thinking of a policy or position editorial on page two, where editorials often are found. The practice is not being condemned; it is simply being noted. It is such an everyday occurrence that the fact goes unnoticed unless one is vitally interested in some controversy or project written up in the news columns. In the case of the dailies, where news stories are written by someone other than the editors, editorial viewpoint somehow creeps into news stories. Any smart, alert reporter knows how to slant his story so that it conforms with the viewpoint or thinking reflected by the editorial page. He knows what the paper stands for, what the publisher likes, and he manages to go along with the tide. Most stories can be tilted, if not actually slanted, to conform to editorial viewpoints. Headlines, position in the paper, and other methods of presenting viewpoints are used. Careful readers seldom fail to spot the editorializing that invariably creeps into some news stories.

Kentucky newspapers by and large support the tobacco industry. Although cigarette smoking has been labeled a cancer cause, few, if any, newspapers in Kentucky support this contention. They easily find ways to dodge the inflammatory issue in their editorial columns while play-
ing up any statement or report that takes the other side. Papers in coal-producing counties support the coal industry. Even though they know that coal trucks are being overloaded and that roads are being destroyed, they seldom editorially or through pictures or news stories point up that fact. Anti-strip-mining stories or editorials also seldom appear. The courageous editor, not afraid to incur the enmity of some readers, is in the minority.

This does not imply that there is anything wrong in newspapers' support of projects which they favor and condemnation of projects which they oppose, but is merely a statement of fact to question their oft-repeated contention that “objectivity” is paramount in the handling of all news stories.

Thomas D. Clark in his book *The Southern Country Editor* said: “More sophisticated scholars in the history of journalism have dismissed the country paper in the shortest possible space. Unfortunately this plain little journal often has been damned for its prostitution to proprietary medicine companies and for using stereotyped patent sides. Although much of this adverse criticism is deserved, the country journal has been far more virtuous than such an attitude would indicate. Its pages tell a rich human story which can be duplicated nowhere else.”

I find myself in complete agreement with Dr. Clark’s summation. The pages of your newspaper do tell a rich, interesting, entertaining human story that you will not find duplicated anywhere else. Newspapers, by their very nature, print today what will be tomorrow’s history.