

# THE FRONTIER GUARDIAN.

BY OLSON HYDE.

KANESVILLE, IOWA, WEDNESDAY-MORNING, SEPTEMBER 5, 1890.

VOLUME I.—NUMBER 16.

## The Frontier Guardian.

Published weekly, except on Sundays, at Kaneshville, Iowa.

TERMS OF THE GUARDIAN.

One year in advance, \$1.00; six months, \$0.50; three months, \$0.25; single copies, \$0.05.

Advertisements at the rate of \$0.05 per line per week.

Agents for the Guardian.

W. H. Hyde, Kaneshville, Iowa.

# ANNALS OF IOWA

VOL. XVIII, No. 1

DES MOINES, IOWA, JULY, 1931

THIRD SERIES

## THE FIRST PRINTING AT COUNCIL BLUFFS

By DOUGLAS C. MCMURTRIE

In undertaking to compile a chronology of printing points in Iowa, I found considerable conflict of testimony regarding the date of the beginnings of printing in Council Bluffs, formerly known as Kanessville.

The standard authority on Iowa newspaper history is the contribution by David C. Mott appearing in the ANNALS OF IOWA for January, 1928 (Vol. XVI, No. 3). In this study it is stated that the *Frontier Guardian* was "established in 1848 by Orson Hyde who also was the editor. He discontinued it in 1852, removing most of his material to Utah."<sup>1</sup> Reference is here made to an article in the Council Bluffs *Nonpareil* of July 24, 1910, and to the two histories of Pottawattamie County.

Other authorities state the year of the establishment of this newspaper as 1849. In all instances, no files or copies of the *Frontier Guardian* are referred to. As the original copies of a newspaper constitute the final authority regarding dates of publication and personnel, I therefore endeavored to locate a file.

During the past summer I did some research in American printing history in the remarkable library of the Historian's office of the Church of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City, and became familiar with the resources there to be found. In this collection, as one might expect, there is preserved an almost complete file of the *Frontier Guardian* which establishes beyond

<sup>1</sup>This statement can hardly be correct. When Jacob Dawson took over the *Guardian* in March, 1852, he purchased from Orson Hyde what must have been the essential parts of that newspaper's equipment, giving a mortgage in which the purchase price was stated to be \$1,153.92. The equipment included "one Imperial printing press (Cincinnati make); two news chases; one long book chase, two job chases, fifteen pairs cases, two double stands for cases, one cast iron roller mold, one imposing stick and frame, five large and two small composing sticks, one inking apparatus, one bank and two tables, five brass galleys," with rules, furniture, and news and job types. The original mortgage is quoted by J. Sterling Morton, *Illustrated History of Nebraska*, p. 349. If Orson Hyde removed any of the *Guardian's* materials to Utah, it must have been a few odds and ends that Dawson did not have use for. Furthermore, the Mormons already had a press in operation at Salt Lake City.

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question the facts regarding the beginnings of printing at Kanesville.

The first issue of this newspaper (Vol. I, No. 1) appeared February 7, 1849. It had originally been planned to start publication late in 1848, but circumstances prevented, according to the following note which appeared in the first issue:<sup>2</sup>

The "Guardian," so long looked for and so long delayed, is now before the public. On our part, we were ready to have issued at the time proposed in our prospectus. But the printer, whom we engaged in St. Louis last fall, was detained there by ill health of his family until the winter sat in with all severity, and rendered a journey to this place almost impracticable. He, however, has arrived, and his face was skinned by frost and cold. But his health is good and face getting smooth again. We trust, now, that we shall be able to proceed without further interruption or delay. Send in your subscriptions, therefore, from all quarters, and your business shall be done with fidelity and dispatch.

In the beginning, the *Frontier Guardian* was "published semi-monthly by Orson Hyde, Editor and Proprietor." It was a four-page, six-column paper. The printer was John Gooch, Jr. The equipment came from Cincinnati.

The editor addressed his "Respected Friends and Readers" in a salutatory a column and a quarter in length. As this gives considerable information regarding education, business, and religion at Kanesville and as, in all probability, no copy of this paper exists in Iowa, it is here quoted in full:

In assuming the duties of an Editor at this period and under existing circumstances, in a region remote from the usual circles of intelligence, where the facilities for interchange are "few and far between," particularly in the winter, when the snows are so deep as they now are, and have been since the 20th of November last, the difficulties and obstacles that we must, of necessity, contend with, are not a few. In assuming the duties of Editor, we must also assume the responsibilities of the same. The press is a powerful engine, for good or for evil, and calculated to make a deep and lasting impression upon the community where it is. The actions of both old and young, male and female, to a great extent, are directed and controlled by this agent that speaks with a thousand tongues. A wise head, a mind that knows not fear, and that will not be fettered, and a heart stored with "good will to man" should be the fundamental qualifications of him who is destined, through the press, to give tone and color to public sentiment. Feeling our own

<sup>2</sup>In this and all other quotations from the *Frontier Guardian*, we follow the original in its peculiarities of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and so forth.

deficiency in this respect, it is with a trembling hand and a faltering knee that we step forward to our seat in the Editorial Chair.

The matter that flows from our pen will lodge in the columns of our sheet to meet the eyes of thousands, and pass under the scrutiny of both friend and foe. It will be regarded, and justly too, as a facsimile of our own heart, and will form the basis of that sentence that will be pronounced upon our head at the bar of public opinion. Were this, however, the only ordeal that our words are subject to pass, we should rest comparatively easy. But there is yet another and higher tribunal at which all men must appear and be justified or condemned by the words which they have spoken. It is, therefore, not without the most ardent wish, and sincere prayer that the words we employ, and thoughts we record may be the dictation of that Spirit, that is destined to bless the world, make an end of sin and triumph gloriously over all things, that we engage in the arduous labors that our station requires us to perform. Should we fail to realize this, in consequence of any momentary excitement or vexation, we hope to find forgiveness with both God and man.

The principles of our religion will always have a conspicuous place in our columns. And we shall labor with all care and patience to illustrate and enforce them by every reason and argument that we can bring to bear on the subject, both original and borrowed. With us, this is a matter of conscience and not of speculation. We desire to discharge our duty as a faithful watchman, and to clear our garments from the blood of souls. Whatever motive others may ascribe to us for our course, it matters little to us; but it is highly satisfactory to know that our Supreme Judge knows and understands our motive, and can appreciate the causes of our action.

We shall spare no pains or labor to keep up a healthy moral atmosphere so far as our words and influence may extend, ever bearing in mind this noble sentiment: "His religion cannot be far wrong whose actions are right," and his religion can never save or benefit him whose actions are wrong. Still, correct views are more likely to induce just and proper actions, and when the mind has given birth to a noble thought or a just principle, it should be as eager to adorn it with a chaste and virtuous life, as the mother is to adorn her newly born infant with fabrics of the finest texture.

Being situated upon the extreme borders of civilization, in a wilderness country, where the means and facilities for improvement in science and learning are not so available as in many other sections, it will give us great satisfaction to aid, by all laudable means in our power, in an enterprise so important as that of the education of our youth. It affords us unwearied pleasure to see the favorite results of some limited exertions not long since made in favor of education. Two flourishing schools in our little town of about eighty scholars each, conducted by a principal and an assistant in each one, with many others in various parts of the county that have sprung into being, and may be continued

with increased zeal and numbers, by giving to the subject of education that attention which, we trust, it may be in our power to bestow. On the rising generation will rest the responsibility of completing the work which we have begun. How necessary, then, that the juvenile mind be fed with food to cause it to expand, flourish and become qualified, not only to meet, but to remove those obstacles that may oppose themselves to their carrying forward the designs of their parents to perfection and glory. The history of the world has left this sad and mournful truth on record, in bold relief, that where education has been a minor or secondary consideration, tyranny and oppression have been the primary objects. True light and knowledge are most fatal to all the selfish schemes of worldly policy, and will expose to view every dark and intricate spot in the science of government.

With political questions it is not our present design to interfere to any great extent. Still, when duty calls us to raise our voice upon this subject, we know our constitutional rights and privileges, and we dare to assert them. It must needs be, however, that offences come; and if our law makers will take away our rights, or deprive us of their enjoyment, (which we are unwilling to believe of them,) because we have conscientiously voted for General Taylor, and if, for the same cause, they have magnified our faults with a malicious spirit, only surpassed by that of the tragedy at Carthage Jail in '44, we must submit to it because we cannot help ourselves; and in turn, public opinion will compel them to submit to the disgrace of making us the objects of their vindictive displeasure, and shear the locks of their power like a Samson was shorn in the lap of Delilah. Generosity extended to an opponent when in your power, not unfrequently disarms him, and converts him to be your friend; but oppression, never! We feel to be content, however, let these matters turn as they may. It is our firm conviction that all earthly governments will soon be laid aside like a garment that is worn out, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our God, and He alone reign King of nations as he now does King of saints. Why, then, should illiberality exclude a portion of human beings from being shielded from a thousand disadvantages by the waning-folds of worldly power?

It is our intention to spare no pains or labor to make the Guardian both interesting and useful to all classes of our citizens, by giving them the foreign and domestic news, and publishing all matter that may be offered which we may esteem interesting and beneficial to the community.

The season of emigration will soon open, and outfitting for the mountains and "gold regions" will soon commence. Our business men in all parts of the county would do well to advertise their business and prices, and if possible, put them so low as to induce new comers to postpone their purchases till they arrive at the Bluffs. "A nimble sixpence is better than a slow shilling," and we would gladly encourage the home trade, if we can do it without doing injustice to the new comer and

emigrant. We are willing that the trade of one part of the county should succeed and prosper just as well as that of another, provided it is honorable and just. Farmers that wish to go west can avail themselves of the opportunity of advertising their farms and property for sale,—cattle, horses, mules, wagons, &c. &c. Come then with your advertisements and support the Guardian! Come one, come all!—Lend us your aid, and in turn the Guardian will sustain you.

It is desired that every person who feels interested in the foregoing sentiments and principles should become a subscriber to the Guardian. We shall labor incessantly to give all a word in due season, and we trust that none will feel that their money is thrown away or lost by patronizing this sheet; and it is hoped that few are so poor that they cannot, in some way, pay for the paper and have it to themselves without being under the disagreeable necessity of borrowing from their neighbors.

The terms are stated to be payment in advance. "We should be glad to accommodate our friends with the Guardian on time, but our circumstances require ready pay. We have established this rule as the one most likely to ensure the continuance of our paper. Let no one feel slighted therefore, if he does not receive his paper in due course, unless he has first deposited with us the amount of his subscription."

The first page of one of the earliest issues (Vol. I, No. 16, September 5, 1849) is here reproduced in considerable reduction.

The publisher offered in this issue to exchange subscriptions for lumber and produce. Under the heading of "Wanted on subscriptions for the Guardian" we read:

10,000 good hard wood rails, ten feet long at \$1.25 per hundred.

10,000—18 inch shingles at \$3.00 per thousand if good.

10,000 pounds best fall wheat flower at \$2.50 per hundred, or the market price.

10,000 feet good lumber at \$2.00 per hundred.

100 cords good fire wood, four feet long, well split and corded at or near this office, (hard wood,) at one dollar a cord.

Besides cheese, eggs, chickens, fresh beef, mutton, veal; and even gold and silver or good current paper in quantities to suit the subscriber. Also three feet clabboard.

The issue contains an account of the arrival of the mail from "the Salt Lake" on Monday evening, September 3. It is interesting to note that it was brought by A. W. Babbitt, who had spent thirty-six days in the journey from the Valley of the Salt Lake, having been water-bound enroute eight days. "He came

safely through with one man and seven horses and a light wagon in which he brought the mail."

This messenger was undoubtedly the Alman W. Babbitt who, in May, 1851, established the *Kanesville Bugle*, the second newspaper in the community known now as Council Bluffs.

Regarding the transmission of the mail, the editor of the *Frontier Guardian* makes this graphic comment: "Mr. Babbitt certainly deserves our thanks and praise for his perseverance in swimming rivers, and towing over his wagon on rafts made with a hatchet and tied together with larrietts. It cannot be a very pleasant job to freight a rude sort of raft with a wagon and push off into a rapid current and pull out about one-quarter of the distance across, then take one end of a rope in your teeth while the other is attached to the raft, and plunge into the stream like a spaniel and swim over with craft and cargo in tow, being swept down stream over snags or sawyers for a quarter or half a mile as Mr. B. informs us has been his lot in two or three instances."

The usual advertisement regarding job printing appears on the fourth page. This reads as follows:

#### GUARDIAN BOOK & JOB PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT

We are prepared with new and beautiful type, from the Eastern foundry's, to execute all the varieties of Printing, such as Books, Pamphlets, Circulars, Blank Deeds, Blanks of all Kinds, Handbills, Notices, Labels &c. &c.

We have been to great expense in purchasing a dry press, and we flatter ourselves that we can execute all kinds of Printing better and at lower rates, than at any other office this side of St. Louis.

Persons wishing Printing done will do well to call and examine specimens and prices.

Orders from abroad will be promptly attended to and done with neatness and taste.

The last issue of Volume I is No. 26, dated January 23, 1850. The second volume opens with the issue of February 6, 1850, and closes with No. 26, dated January 22, 1851.

Up until this time the paper had been published on Wednesday, but the first issue of Volume III is dated Friday, February 7, 1851. No. 26 appeared January 22, 1852, Orson Hyde having continued as editor and proprietor.

The fourth volume started under the same proprietorship with

the issue of February 6, 1852. This and the succeeding issue were still "semi-monthly" which appears to have really meant "fortnightly." The third issue of this volume, however, came out as a weekly with Jacob Dawson as editor, and the name of the paper changed to *The Frontier Guardian and Iowa Sentinel*, and a new style of heading. It was dated Thursday morning,

## The Frontier Guardian AND IOWA SENTINEL.

JACOB DAWSON, EDITOR.

KANESVILLE, IOWA, THURSDAY MORNING, NOV. 11, 1852.

VOLUME IV.---NUMBER 39

March 4, 1852. The paper continued to be published by Jacob Dawson and Company through No. 39 of Volume IV, November 11, 1852. M. H. Hathaway was at this time the printer.

The following valedictory by Dawson<sup>3</sup> appeared in that issue, announcing the transfer of the editorship to A. C. Ford:

Having sold the Office of the "Guardian and Sentinel," not from choice, but on account of family afflictions, it is with reluctance that we retire from so enviable, yet fearfully responsible position, as Editor of a public journal that has such an extensive circulation throughout all parts of the Union, and such a flattering prospect for the future, and has (in all human appearances) the confidence and best wishes of its numerous readers, and especially those of the Western country. This reluctance is not because we feel ourself equal to the task, and have done honor to the profession, or even justice to the patrons of the "Guardian and Sentinel," but because we feel grateful to our numerous patrons for their liberal support, and the kind manner in which they have treated us during our editorial term in the Guardian office. We return them our sincere thanks, and part with them with reluctance. But we are resigning the post (as we trust) into more competent hands. The editorial department will hereafter be conducted by A. C. Ford Esq., whose talents and ability to discharge that duty is well known to the citizens of Western Iowa. We resign the tripod to friend Ford, with the full confidence that the readers of the "Guardian and Sentinel" will loose nothing by the change, but hope they will gain much.

During our editorial career, we have used our best endeavors to make our paper instructing and interesting to its readers; but have been, for some portion of the time, prevented by misfortunes from paying that strict attention to the business that we could wish: but

<sup>3</sup>We later find Jacob Dawson as publisher of the *Wyoming* (Nebraska) *Tele-scope* in 1856.

under the circumstances, we think our patrons will excuse, in some degree, the delinquency.

While advocating the Whig cause, we have done it from principle, believing that the measures advocated by that party to be the true American policy, we have also studiously endeavored to treat with due respect those who differed in opinion from us.

To our friends of the press generally, we would return our hearty thanks for their courtesy to us as a member of the "corps editorial," and it is with the best of feeling towards them that we retire, and they all have our best wishes for their prosperity in future.

Having now seen friend Ford fairly installed in the editorial sanctum, and wielding the quill, we will make our bow, but will always contribute to the columns of the "Guardian and Sentinel" as often as circumstances will permit; and friend Ford has our especial thanks for his friendly treatment toward us, and we wish him abundant success in his new position, and we will give the old establishment all the assistance in our power, hoping our friends will join us in sustaining it amply.

Ford's salutatory appearing in the same issue, read as follows:

It is with no small degree of diffidence that we assume the editorial chair of public journal, knowing, as we do, the responsibility and importance of the station we occupy when we take upon ourself that important duty. But we shall endeavor by strict attention to our business, to render the "Guardian and Sentinel" acceptable and interesting to our numerous readers and patrons. We shall devote a portion of our columns to the agricultural interests of the country, and give especial attention to the interests of Western Iowa, and the interest of its inhabitants. We shall devote a portion of our columns to the arts and sciences, and the cause of education, and do all in our power to raise to its foundation that apparently gilded temple of ignorance, and build up in its stead truth, morality and virtue; and shall, to the best of our ability, strive to advocate the principles of the Whig party, believing that their prosperity and success will enhance and enlarge the prosperity of our Government. Towards our brethren of the press we shall be courteous and attentive, never descending to personalities except to repel those that are thrown at us, unprovoked and uncalled for. If we should be called upon to perform this disagreeable task, then, and not till then, will we descend to it. Our columns will be open at all times for all communications which are respectable, and possess sufficient merits to be interesting to our readers.

It will be our aim to meet out to all persons even-handed justice, and hope that with these principles inscribed on our Banner, which we unfurl to the breeze, and strict attention to our business we shall receive a liberal share of public patronage.

Tendering our thanks to friend Dawson for the flattering terms in which he has thought proper to speak of us, and his kindness to us

while he occupied the chair now occupied by us, we now launch our bark upon the sea of public opinion.

It may be noted at this point that both Dawson and Ford were practicing attorneys, as we learn from advertisements in this issue, both giving as the address of their law offices, Sidney, Iowa. A. W. Babbitt, who had established the *Kanesville Bugle* the preceding year, is also listed in the same column as "Attorney & Counsellor at Law, and Solicitor in Chancery," with office at Kanesville.

The 40th issue came out with the name of A. C. Ford as editor and publisher in the masthead, M. H. Hathaway carrying over as printer. Ford continued in the editorial chair through No. 13 of the fifth volume, this issue being dated May 12, 1853. This is the last issue located and, to judge by other circumstances, it is probable the *Frontier Guardian and Iowa Sentinel* suspended at just about this time.

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#### NO RAIN IN IOWA

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We have hardly had what may be called a rainstom in central Iowa for the past six months. There was a shower or two after harvest last summer, and hardly a sprinkle since. But for the snow that has fallen freely at intervals this winter, the roads would be dry and dusty as in midsummer. Three-fourths of the wells and cisterns have been dry for weeks, and great inconvenience is experienced in obtaining a supply of water. We have enjoyed a great deal of clear, beautiful weather this winter; more sunshine than is usually enjoyed in a half dozen winters in the middle and eastern states. During the past month the weather has been quite warm most of the time, carrying off the snow and preventing the enjoyment of our accustomed sleigh rides. The dry weather has extended over a large portion of the state.—*Daily Iowa State Register*, Des Moines, February 14, 1860. (In the Newspaper Division of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department of Iowa.)

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