

# ANNALS OF IOWA

VOL. XIX, No. 1

DES MOINES, IOWA, JULY, 1933

THIRD SERIES

## THE BEGINNINGS OF PRINTING IN IOWA

BY DOUGLAS C. McMurtrie

17m 11, 1946 - 1st ed. - 1000

The honor of establishing the first press in what is now the state of Iowa must be awarded to John King, who was responsible for the first printing at Dubuque in 1836. King was not a practical printer himself. He had come to the village of Dubuque in 1834 and decided soon thereafter that this was a fertile field for a newspaper. So he returned to Ohio in the fall of 1835 to procure equipment and enlist technical assistance. At Chillicothe he contracted for the services of William Cary Jones, an experienced printer, and the two proceeded to Cincinnati, where a Washington hand press and an assortment of types were purchased. Another printer, Andrew Keesecker, of Galena, Illinois, was also employed. The equipment of this pioneer office was shipped by boat to Dubuque, where it was set up and used to print the *Du Buque Visitor*,<sup>1</sup> the first issue of this weekly appearing May 11, 1836.

Iowa had originally been a part of the vast Province of Louisiana which had been successively under French, Spanish, again French, and finally United States sovereignty. Missouri Territory was given jurisdiction over this area in 1812, but lost this in 1820 on its admission to statehood. From that date until 1834 Iowa was a "no man's land" so far as the exercise of governmental authority was concerned, but this was of small consequence because there were few white people resident there.

On June 28, 1834, the area was assigned to Michigan Territory and a few months later Dubuque and Des Moines counties were created, both embracing a very large area. Dubuque was the leading community, largely because of the lead mines located there and its accessibility by water, and boasted a population of nearly a thousand souls. Wisconsin Territory was created

<sup>1</sup>David C. Mott, *ANNALS OF IOWA*, Third Ser., Vol. XVI, p. 177; John C. Parish, "Three Men and a Press," *The Palimpsest*, Vol. I, pp. 59-60.

July 3, 1836, and the land which is now Iowa came within the boundaries of this new territory, which chose for its capital first Belmont (within the present limits of Wisconsin) and, second, Burlington (now in Iowa)—Dubuque's rival. Iowa Territory was created in 1838, Burlington becoming the capital of this new state in the making, and so continued until 1841, when Iowa City was chosen as the seat of government.

To return to the infant *Du Buque Visitor*, its first date line designated the place of publication as Du Buque (Lead Mines), Wisconsin Territory, May 11, 1836, though at that time the town was a part of Michigan Territory. The act establishing Wisconsin Territory had, however, been passed, although it was not to become effective until July 3, 1836. The enterprising publisher was thus anticipating the approaching political sovereignty of this frontier town.

John King's two assistants and even his printing press had interesting histories. William Cary Jones was hired for the sum of three hundred and fifty dollars "with suitable board and lodging during one year" to act as foreman of the printing office and general editorial assistant. He later edited and published a paper in New Orleans and practiced law in San Francisco, where he died about 1880. During the Civil War he served as a captain in the Union Army and was captured and held prisoner at Selma, Alabama. While in prison he printed a paper by hand on the walls of one of the rooms.<sup>2</sup>

Andrew Keesecker remained in Dubuque most of the time from his arrival there with King until his death in 1870 while he was working at the case in the print shop of the *Dubuque Herald*. Keesecker was a member of the *Du Buque Visitor* staff until the paper changed its name in the summer of 1837. He was later co-publisher of the *Dubuque Miner's Express* most of the time from 1842 till 1854. In 1847 he introduced the press to Andrew, Iowa, when he established the *Western Democrat* there, continuing it until 1849. He became co-publisher of the *Dubuque Herald* in 1860 and remained with that paper until his death.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>See Parish, *op. cit.* Perhaps William Cary Jones was the same W. C. Jones who published the Lexington, Kentucky, *North American Literary and Political Register* in 1826. In 1854 the *Rock Bottom*, printed at Kanesville (now Council Bluffs), Iowa, for Florence, Nebraska, was published by W. C. Jones.

<sup>3</sup>For a poem in memory of Andrew Keesecker, who died while working at the case on the *Dubuque Herald*, see *Fourteenth Annual Session of the Wisconsin Editorial Association, 1870* (Madison, Wis., 1870), pp. 29-31.

Keesecker had a considerable reputation as a typesetter, being able to compose an editorial as he set it up in type without bothering to reduce it to manuscript, and he also acted as pressman in printing the first issues of the *Du Buque Visitor*. Once he engaged in a typesetting contest with A. P. Wood, another Dubuque printer. A printer's devil acted as umpire, and the two men were to set up the Lord's Prayer. The winner was to announce his success by saying "Amen." Keesecker finished first, but he stuttered so badly that Wood also completed his work and was able to announce its completion while Keesecker was still stammering with excitement. The umpire finally awarded the decision to Keesecker.<sup>4</sup>

The first Iowa press was a Washington hand model, made in Cincinnati by Charles Mallet. For six years it was used in Dubuque, and then it was sold and removed to Lancaster, in western Wisconsin, where the *Grant County Herald* was published on it.<sup>5</sup> In a few years J. M. Goodhue bought the press and, after printing with it a while at Lancaster, carried it by ox team up the Mississippi on the ice to St. Paul. Here he used it in printing the first Minnesota newspaper, the *Minnesota Pioneer*. So far it had printed the first papers in two states, and the *Grant County Herald* was the first publication in the western part of Wisconsin.

Two stories are told concerning the history of the press after it reached St. Paul. One story is that it was taken westward in 1858 by ox team across the prairies to the Sioux Falls settlement in South Dakota, where it printed the *Dakota Democrat*, the first newspaper in that state. In 1862 a band of Sioux Indians raided and burned the town, destroying the press in the fire. Its twisted and warped remains are still preserved in the Masonic Museum at Sioux Falls as a memento of the first paper in South Dakota, and of the first papers in Iowa and Minnesota as well. This story is supported by the statements of Samuel J. Albright of St. Paul, who operated the press there and later in Sioux Falls, and who insisted that the Dakota press was the same one which had begun its wanderings in Ohio and then came through Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota to Dakota.

<sup>4</sup>Parish, *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup>Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Early Printing in Wisconsin*, pp. 54, 95.

Another version of the story is that the press was removed from St. Paul in 1855 to Sauk Rapids, Minnesota, and used in printing the *Sauk Rapids Frontiersman*. It was used by several other papers and in 1897 was moved to Lindstrom and used to print a Swedish newspaper. A press, claimed to be the original press used by John King in Iowa, is today in the Minnesota Historical Society, sharing honors with its sister in the South Dakota Masonic Museum of Sioux Falls. The authenticity of this press is vouched for by Frank Moore, formerly pressroom foreman of the St. Paul *Pioneer Press*.<sup>6</sup>

When the first issue of the *Du Buque Visitor* was published on Wednesday, May 11, 1836, it carried the names of J. King as editor, and Wm. C. Jones as printer, but did not mention Keesecker. The office of publication was "Corner of Main and Church streets." The inaugural address said:

"We lay the first number of the '*Du Buque Visitor*' before the public, and ask for it a favorable reception. In all matters, our paper will be free and untrammelled. Whatever sentiments we may entertain, shall be fearlessly expressed, whenever we conceive any good end requires it. Those who differ from us in opinion, will not, for that reason, be considered our enemies, or the enemies of the public; but will be treated with respect and courtesy.

"We respectfully invite original communications from our literary friends, at home and abroad, upon all subjects of interest and importance; and shall ourselves spare no pains to make the paper, in all its departments, acceptable and useful to its readers. To persons abroad, who think of emigrating to this finest country in the world, we think it cannot but be a desirable medium of information.

"With these remarks, we present our paper to the public, and return our thanks for the liberal patronage already afforded, and promised, to our hazardous enterprise; and at the same time beg leave to state, that there is yet room and to spare, on our subscription list and in our advertising columns, which we shall be glad to fill."

<sup>6</sup>Both sides of the question are discussed in Dr. Parish's "Three Men and a Press." William Nelson in his *Notes Toward a History of the American Newspaper*, New York, 1918, p. 114, gives only the story favoring the South Dakota press. He credits his information to John Springer's *Memorandum Relating to the Early Press of Iowa*, pp. 12-17. Babcock gives an account favoring the claims of the Minnesota press.

The first number also gives the terms as three dollars a year, in advance, or four dollars if paid at the end of the year, in spite of "A Prospectus for our paper having been circulated in Ohio, sometime ago, putting the price at \$2 per year, payable on the reception of the first number, otherwise \$3." Subscriptions already received at that rate were to be accepted, but all others were to be taken at the higher rate, made necessary by the heavy expenses of publication.

During the year from May, 1836, to June, 1837, while John King published the *Du Buque Visitor*, he was also favored with a portion of the official printing for the Territory of Wisconsin. James Clarke and John B. Russell, publishers of the *Belmont Gazette* at Belmont within the present borders of Wisconsin, had been chosen as public printers by the first legislative assembly of Wisconsin Territory. Clarke and Russell printed the documents of the first Wisconsin legislature at Belmont in 1836, but it was also decided to hire John King at Dubuque to print there a pamphlet edition of the journal of the legislative proceedings.<sup>7</sup> No copy of this "pamphlet," however, can now be found, and it is not clear that it was ever actually printed.

June 3, 1837, the *Du Buque Visitor* became the *Iowa News*, owned by John King, W. W. Coriell, and John B. Russell, formerly of Belmont, Wisconsin. Late in 1838 John B. Russell and Edwin Reeves became the publishers and editors, continuing the paper until its suspension March 7, 1840. May 5, 1840, Reeves and Coriell revived the paper for a few issues. It was then suspended for a year, to reappear in May, 1841. The next year it was permanently suspended, and the materials were removed to Lancaster.

If we consider the *Visitor* and *News* as one publication, the second Dubuque paper was the *Miners' Express*, established August 1, 1841, by Lewis A. Thomas. In 1842 he sold the paper to

<sup>7</sup>The *Journal of the Council of the First Legislative Assembly of Wisconsin*, Belmont, 1836, records under October 31, 1836, the resolution: "That John King, of the Du Buque Visitor, at the town of Du Buque be employed to print the Journal of the proceedings in pamphlet form, and that he be paid the same prices as are paid to the printers to Congress for such work." It was also, "Resolved, if the House of Representatives concur, that the laws which may be passed at the present session of the Legislative Assembly, be published in the Belmont Gazette, in the Du Buque Visitor, Milwaukee Advertiser, Wisconsin Democrat and the Wisconsin Republican; and that the publishers thereof be paid the sum of seventy five dollars each for the same." The name "Wisconsin Republican" seems to have designated a proposed newspaper at Burlington. Also see McMurtrie, *Early Printing in Wisconsin*, pp. 35-37.

Andrew Keesecker and D. S. Wilson. George Greene became the publisher in 1845, and three years later he was succeeded by the pioneer Andrew Keesecker in partnership with Harrison Holt. There were various other owners, but Keesecker remained associated with the *Miners' Express* until it was absorbed by the *Dubuque Herald* in 1854.

The third paper was the *Iowa Transcript*, founded by H. H. Houghton in May, 1843. Before its suspension in 1845, when the office was moved to Rock Island, the paper was owned by Royal Cooper, W. W. Hamilton, Henry Wharton, and Orlando McCraney. The *Dubuque Tribune* was established early in 1847 by A. P. Wood. W. A. Adams and A. W. Hackley became the publishers in 1854, and Hackley was sole owner and editor the following year. In 1857 the *Tribune* acquired the *Dubuque Republican*, begun two years earlier, and the combined papers continued as the *Tribune* until about 1860. The *Democratic Telegraph* was another early Dubuque paper, established in 1848 by Orlando McCraney and continued until 1852, part of the time with editorial assistance from W. W. Coriell. In 1852 it was absorbed by the *Tribune*, and the materials were taken to Fairfield.

Iowa, it will be remembered, was a part of Wisconsin Territory at the time that printing began at Dubuque. The Wisconsin territorial legislature was in special session at Burlington in June, 1838, when the act which created Iowa Territory was passed. The first session of the territorial legislature of Iowa met at Burlington in November, 1838, and the earliest printed document of the new government which is now extant was printed in connection with that session. This interesting document will be noted below, in connection with the establishment of the press at Burlington. But the Dubuque firm of Russell & Reeves, already mentioned as publishers of the *Iowa News* in John King's pioneer printing establishment, received appointment as official printers for the Iowa Territorial Council. Thus the *Journal of the Council of the First Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa*, "begun and held at the city of Burlington, on the twelfth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight," appeared with the imprint "DuBuque: Russell & Reeves, Printers. 1839." It contained 226 pages. In the same year this firm

also printed *The Statute Laws of the Territory of Iowa*, enacted at the first session of the territorial legislature—a book of 597 pages. (See frontispiece for reproduction of its title page.)

In 1841 part of the territorial printing was again done at Dubuque when the journal of the *House of Representatives of the Third Legislative Assembly* was published with the imprint: "Dubuque: W. W. Coriell, Printer. 1841." This was done during a period of suspension for Coriell's *Iowa News*. The journals of the House of Representatives for the Fourth and Sixth legislative assemblies were also printed at Dubuque, in 1842 and 1844 respectively, by Wilson and Keesecker, of the *Miners' Express*. Their successor with the *Miners' Express*, George Greene, did the last of the territorial printing which was done at Dubuque when he issued the Council journal for the Eighth Assembly, in 1846. It was also George Greene who "Printed at the Office of the Miners' Express, Dubuque, August, 1846," an interesting *Masonic Oration, delivered by S. Hempstead, Esq., on St. John's Day, June 24, 1846*.

Dubuque is on the Mississippi just opposite the dividing line between Wisconsin and Illinois, but the next printing point in Iowa was Montrose, also on the Mississippi, but in the extreme southeastern corner of the state. Montrose was only just laid out and was a town in the making rather than an established community when Dr. Isaac Galland, later famous for his Mormon activities, established the *Western Adventurer and Herald of the Upper Mississippi* on June 28, 1837. The motive for its establishment was real estate development, and as it was issued in answer to no real demand, its life was short. It suspended about a year later.

Dr. Galland had purchased Thomas Gregg's *Carthaginian* and brought it and Mr. Gregg from Carthage, Illinois, to publish the new paper. The prospectus published in the first number of the *Western Adventurer* announced: "The 'Carthaginian' published at Carthage, Illinois, has been discontinued. In the month of June next will be commenced by the same Editor and publisher, at Montrose, (late Fort Des Moines) Wisconsin Territory, (Head of the Des Moines Rapids of the Mississippi) a new paper with the above title [Western Adventurer]. It will be devoted to a history and description of the Western country.

Terms. The *Western Adventurer* will be published Weekly on a large Double Medium sheet, (about the same as the Alton Observer, and the Louisville City Gazette,) printed with good type, and making weekly 28 columns of matter, at Three Dollars per annum, in advance, or Four Dollars if payment be delayed six months."

The first number of the *Western Adventurer* also carried proposals for two other publications to be issued at Montrose by Gregg and Galland. These were *The Western Emigrants' Magazine*, and *Historian of Times in the West*, "A New Monthly Periodical about to be commenced at Montrose, (late Fort Des Moines) Wisconsin Territory," and *Chronicles of the North American Savages*. Gregg was to edit the *Emigrants' Magazine*, which was to be "printed on a Double Mediant Sheet, of good quality, in the Octavo form, making a yearly volume of about 200 large pages of three columns [*sic*] each, with a title page and Index at the close of the year." Galland announced himself as editor of the *Chronicles*, to be "published monthly, in pamphlet form, containing sixteen octavo pages to each number." Both these publications seem to have been temporarily issued at Carthage<sup>8</sup> before Galland moved the press to Montrose, and according to the first number of the *Western Adventurer*, the *Chronicles* "were published some time since at Cincinnati."<sup>9</sup>

After the *Western Adventurer* was suspended in 1838, no paper was published at Montrose until 1847, when Dr. Galland established the *Iowa Advocate and Half-Breed Journal* on August 16, continuing it as late as December of 1847. Thereafter no papers were issued at Montrose during the early period.

Burlington, a few miles above Montrose on the Mississippi, acquired a press about the same time as Montrose. The printer

<sup>8</sup>R. L. Rusk, *The Literature of the Middle Western Frontier* (New York, 1926), v. 1, p. 202, says the *Chronicles* first appeared at Carthage in May, 1835, and that the *Emigrants' Magazine* was begun there in May, 1837.

<sup>9</sup>After his Iowa venture, Dr. Galland is known in connection with the *New Citizen*, an anti-Masonic paper issued at Nauvoo, Illinois, which he edited in 1846 for Samuel Slocum.

Thomas Gregg had published the *Carthaginian* in 1836 and 1837 before moving to Iowa, and he afterwards returned to Illinois to publish a series of papers at Warsaw: the *Message*, in 1843 and 1844; the *Signal*, from 1847 to 1853; and the *Temperance Crusader*, in 1854. In 1845 he returned to Iowa long enough to publish the *Iowa Morning Star* at Keokuk for a few weeks. He edited the Plymouth, Illinois, *Locomotive* in 1857, and the Hamilton, Illinois, *Representative* from 1859 to 1862. From 1873 to 1875 he published *Gregg's Dollar Monthly* and *Old Settler's Memorial* from 1873 to 1875 at Hamilton and Plymouth. In 1876 and 1877 he published the *Dollar Rural Messenger* at Hamilton and Plymouth, Illinois, and at Keokuk, Iowa. See Franklin W. Scott, *Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois, 1814-1879* (Springfield, Ill., 1910), pp. 45, 195, 286, 348.



was James Clarke, a man with antecedent experience in pioneer newspaper publishing. He had been the territorial printer of Wisconsin and had established the *Belmont Gazette* at Belmont when the capital was moved to that isolated spot for one legislative session. He was assisted in this enterprise by John B. Russell, who was later to help John King found the first Iowa newspaper. On July 10, 1837, after it had been decided that the next session of the Wisconsin territorial legislature should be held at Burlington, Clarke began the *Wisconsin Territorial Gazette and Burlington Advertiser*. Cyrus S. Jacobs edited the paper until April, 1838. On June 12, 1838, on the erection of Iowa Territory, Clarke changed the name of his paper to *Iowa Territorial Gazette*, and John H. McKenny became his assistant. They continued the paper together until 1842, when Bernhart Henn and James M. Morgan became the owners. Clarke in 1845 became the third and last territorial governor of Iowa. In 1845 and again from 1848 until his death in July 1850, Clarke was associated with the *Territorial Gazette*. As the *Burlington Gazette*, this paper is still published and is the oldest in Iowa.

Burlington's second paper was the *Iowa Patriot*, established June 6, 1839, by James G. Edwards, previously a publisher at Jacksonville, Illinois, and Fort Madison, Iowa. In September, 1839, the *Iowa Patriot* became the *Hawk-Eye and Iowa Patriot*, which at the end of 1844 became the *Burlington Hawk-Eye*. Burlington's third independent paper, the *Burlington Telegraph*, established in 1850 by James M. Morgan and John H. McKenny, was absorbed by the *Hawk-Eye* in 1855, and the combined paper is still being issued as the *Hawk-Eye*.

As the temporary seat of the territorial governments first of Wisconsin and then of Iowa, Burlington was quite naturally the first place in Iowa at which official documents were printed. In fact, the first Iowa printing other than newspapers, so far as existing evidence shows, was done at Burlington. James Clarke, in his capacity as official Wisconsin printer, issued there the *Acts Passed at the First and Second Sessions of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Wisconsin* with the imprint: "Burlington, W. T. James Clarke, Printer to the Legislative Assembly. 1838." The library of the Wisconsin State Historical Society, at Madison, contains one of the few surviving copies of

this rare volume. The Wisconsin legislature, as has been indicated, met at Burlington in the winter of 1837-38, and again for a special session in June, 1838. The acts of these sessions were printed at Burlington in 1839, but by James G. Edwards, founder of the *Iowa Patriot*. The journals of later sessions of the Wisconsin territorial legislature disclose that Edwards had some difficulty in collecting payment for this work.<sup>10</sup>

Soon after the establishment of the territory of Iowa, printers at Burlington were busied with printing for the newly created government. The first session of the Iowa territorial legislature met in November, 1838. In his excellent "Bibliography of the Iowa Territorial Documents" Thomas J. Fitzpatrick lists the printing ordered by the first session of the Council.<sup>11</sup> On November 13, 1838, the Council "Resolved, That fifty copies of the law of Congress organizing the Territory of Iowa, be printed for the use of the Council." Of this document, no surviving copy has been found.

On the same date the Council also "Resolved, that five hundred copies of the Governor's Message be printed for the use of the Council, to be paid for out of the contingent fund." No existing copy of this message was of record until early in 1933, when I had the good fortune to discover a copy in the Iowa Masonic Library, at Cedar Rapids. As the earliest extant printed public document of Iowa, it is reproduced herewith.

The governor's message was printed in the form of a broadside about 15 $\frac{1}{4}$  by 20 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches, but with no imprint. However, we can assume that it was printed by James Clarke and John H. McKenny, publishers of the *Territorial Gazette* at Burlington, to whom the new Council seems to have entrusted its printing. For on November 15, 1838, the Council "Resolved, That Messrs. Clarke and M'Kinney [*sic*], publishers of the *Territorial Gazette*, be employed to print on slips, daily copies of the Journal of the proceedings of the Council for the use of the members." None of these ephemeral daily journal slips of this session seems to have survived.

The *Journal of the House of Representatives* of this first ses-

<sup>10</sup>*Journal of the House of Representatives*, first session of the second legislative assembly of Wisconsin (Madison, 1838), pp. 127-128; same, second session of the second legislative assembly (Mineral Point, 1839), pp. 258-259. The fault lay partly with Edwards, who had been unable to complete the work on time.

<sup>11</sup>Fitzpatrick, pp. 258-259.

sion of an Iowa legislature made a volume of 314 pages. It appeared with the imprint "Burlington: Clarke & M'Kenny, Printers, 1838," but it could hardly have been issued until 1839, as the legislative session lasted until January 25 of that year. The same printers in 1839 printed the *Rules of Practice, in the Supreme & District Courts, for the Territory of Iowa*, "adopted at the July term, 1839," a pamphlet of 8 pages. The Council journal for the first legislative session and the acts of that session were sent to Dubuque to be printed, as has been already noted.

James Gardiner Edwards, founder of Burlington's second newspaper, the *Iowa Patriot*, seems to have been entirely overlooked by the first Iowa legislature in the distribution of its printing work. However, in 1839 one of the most interesting early Iowa imprints, a *Catalogue of the Iowa Territorial Library*, was issued with the imprint: "Burlington: Printed by James G. Edwards, 1839."

In 1840, McKenny used his name alone, without that of Clarke, in the territorial printing, of which he seems to have had almost a monopoly. But Edwards got the printing of the journals of the two houses of the second legislative session of 1839-40. After 1841 the legislature ceased to meet at Burlington, and the imprints of Iowa City printers began to appear on the printed official documents.

Fort Madison, another Mississippi River town, between Montrose and Burlington, was the next Iowa community to establish a press, the first issue of the *Fort Madison Patriot* appearing on March 24, 1838. It was the first Whig paper in the territory. Its founder was James Gardiner Edwards, later of the *Iowa Patriot and Hawk-Eye* at Burlington. He had previously been publisher of the *Western Observer* in 1830 and of the *Illinois Patriot* from 1831 to 1837, both published at Jacksonville, Illinois.<sup>12</sup> In December, 1838, Edwards moved his plant from Fort Madison to Burlington, where he continued to publish until 1875.

Printing was not re-established at Fort Madison until July 24, 1841, when the *Fort Madison Courier* was begun by R. Wilson Albright. At the end of 1841 Albright was joined by William E. Mason, and the paper became the *Lee County Democrat*. Albright, with various partners, continued the *Democrat* until

<sup>12</sup>Scott, pp. 202-203.

1847, when he sold it to George H. Williams, who changed its name to the *Iowa Statesman*. This became the *Plain Dealer* in 1852 and was published until 1897. The *Journal of the House of Representatives, of the Seventh Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa* was published with the imprint "Fort Madison: Printed by R. Wilson Albright. 1845." Five years later *Strictures on Dr. I. Galland's Pamphlet, entitled, "Villainy Exposed"* by D. W. Kilbourne was issued with the imprint "Fort Madison: Printed at the Statesman Office, 1850."

The fifth printing point in Iowa was Davenport. Here was published on August 4, 1838, the initial number of the *Iowa Sun and Davenport and Rock Island News* by Andrew Logan, a printer from Beaver, Pennsylvania.<sup>13</sup> There were eleven projected Iowa towns clamoring for a newspaper at the time that Logan moved to the state, and he was somewhat put to it to decide whether Davenport or Rockingham, slightly to the south, was the more likely spot for a new publication. Both towns offered inducements, but Davenport finally won by promising the printer several free lots and a subscription list of 500. This number probably represented more than enough papers for every citizen of the town, and it is said that Colonel George Davenport, for whom the new settlement was named, and Antoine Le Claire each took fifty subscriptions to help guarantee the existence of the *Iowa Sun*. Andrew Logan was assisted in printing the paper by his sons, August, aged twelve, and Andrew, aged eight. "Although the new community did well by the new paper, the editor awoke to the attractions and independence of the farmer's life, took up a claim six miles from the city out Allen's Grove way and discontinued his paper in 1842."<sup>14</sup> Logan sold his materials to the firm of Henkle and McClelland, of Buffalo, south of Davenport on the Mississippi. They were the first printers there and issued a Mormon publication known as *The*

<sup>13</sup>Mott, *op. cit.*, p. 210, gives August 4 as the date of establishment. According to him, files of the *Iowa Sun*, beginning with that date, are in the Historical, Memorial and Art Department of Iowa at Des Moines. The *Davenport Democrat, Half-Century Edition*, sec. 1, p. 3, col. 1, gives the date of establishment of the *Iowa Sun* as August 15, 1838.

<sup>14</sup>*Davenport Democrat, Half-Century Edition, loc. cit.* This article, the source of considerable information concerning Logan and the first Davenport paper, is based on a series of articles by David N. Richardson, founder and publisher of the *Davenport Democrat* for many years, which appeared in the *Democrat* in 1879. Richardson wrote this series at the request of the historical department of the Davenport Academy of Sciences.

*Bride and the Lamb's Wife*, during 1842 and 1843. This became the *Buffalo Ensign*, discontinued in about two years.<sup>15</sup>

The second Davenport paper had been established before the suspension of the *Sun*. This was the *Davenport Gazette*, founded August 26, 1841, by Alfred Sanders. He was a native of Ohio who had toured the upper Mississippi in 1840 and decided on Davenport as a fine situation for a new paper. When he returned to Iowa in 1841 he brought with him as an assistant Levi Davis, who had worked with him in Ohio on the *Dayton Journal* when both were boys. They brought with them a printing outfit worth \$700. It was transported by water to Davenport, and in landing the press it was dropped into the river. This accident was afterwards referred to as a fortuitous baptism for the new venture.<sup>16</sup> Davis purchased an interest in the paper in 1854, which passed to Addison H. Sanders in 1857. In 1862 the new Sanders partner gave up his interest and entered the Union Army. His older brother, the founder of the paper, sold out later in the year and retired. The paper was continued until 1887, when it was merged with the *Davenport Democrat*.

Alfred Sanders shared in the widely distributed public printing favors of the territorial days. The *Journal of the Council of the Fifth Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa* was issued with the imprint "Davenport: Alfred Sanders, Printer. 1843." *Introductory Lecture delivered in the College of Physicians and Surgeons of the Upper Mississippi Session of 1847-50*, by Dr. John F. Sanford, carried the imprint: "Davenport: Sanders & Davis, printers. 1849."

Davenport's third paper was the *Democratic Banner*, established in 1848 by Alexander Montgomery. Theodore Guelch began *Der Demokrat* in 1851, and the *Davenport Bee* was begun in 1854 by De Witt Carey. Nathaniel Hawthorne Parker founded the *Davenport Commercial* in 1854, and the *Iowa State Democrat* was established in 1855 by James T. Hildreth, David N. Richardson, and George R. West.

Muscatine, then known as Bloomington, was the sixth town in Iowa to have a press. A printer by the name of James T. Campbell as early as the summer of 1838 had proposed establishing

<sup>15</sup>*Op. cit.*, and Mott, p. 211.

<sup>16</sup>*Davenport Democrat*, *Half-Century Edition*, *loc. cit.*

here in October of that year a paper to be known as the *Iowa Banner*,<sup>17</sup> but there is no indication that he was successful in his venture. The next attempt was made two years later. On October 23, 1840, William Crum and W. D. Bailey began at Bloomington the *Iowa Standard*. By April, 1841, Crum became sole owner; the paper was then discontinued and the plant taken to Iowa City, where Crum began the first paper in that town.

Four days after the *Standard* was begun, Thomas Hughes and John B. Russell founded a second Bloomington paper, the *Herald*, first issued on October 27, 1840. Hughes left Muscatine for Iowa City and the *Iowa Capital Reporter* in 1841. Russell was the Wisconsin printer who had published the *Iowa News* at Dubuque from 1837 to 1840. The public printing followed him from Dubuque; the journals of the Third and Fourth territorial assemblies were published there, the former with the imprint: "Bloomington: Russell & Hughes, printers. 1841," and the latter: "Bloomington: Jno. B. Russell, printer. 1842." Russell later became publisher of the *Keokuk Dispatch*.

Iowa City became the seventh printing town in Iowa with the establishment of William Crum's *Iowa City Standard* on June 10, 1841. Iowa City had been selected by the territorial legislature as the new capital, and it naturally became a mecca for printers because of its official position. It was also the first Iowa town not located on the banks of the Mississippi to have a press. A. P. Wood became editor of the *Standard* in 1842. In 1846 it was purchased from Crum by Silas Foster, who made Easton

<sup>17</sup>The *Iowa Territorial Gazette and Burlington Advertiser* of August 25, 1838, carried the following notice:

"Prospectus of the 'Iowa Banner'."

"A weekly newspaper to be published in Bloomington, Muscatine County, Iowa Territory; to be devoted to General Politics, Literature, the Arts and Sciences, Humour, Sentiment, Poetry, &c. &c. &c."

"The subscriber, being fully aware of the many difficulties to be overcome, in establishing a Press in so young a village as Bloomington, has ventured to submit this prospectus to the public, believing it to be the only proper method of ascertaining the sentiments of those from whom he expects support."

"The 'Banner' will be conducted upon the broad and independent principles of free discussion, which the laws and institutions of our glorious country have guaranteed to every citizen. To be brief, we will only add, that it is our intention to publish just such a paper, as the wants and interests of the people of Iowa Territory require; abstaining from partizan vulgarity, and using our best exertions to render unto each subscriber an equivalent for that which he gives us."

"The first number of the 'Banner' will be issued on the 1st Saturday in October next by which time, it is hoped, all prospectuses containing signatures will be returned to the subscriber."

"The Banner will be printed upon a fine Super-Royal sheet, with beautiful new type, at Three Dollars per year, to be paid invariably on the receipt of the first number."

"James T. Campbell."

"Bloomington, I. T. August 8, 1838."

Morris editor. It was temporarily suspended in 1848, but was revived by Dr. S. M. Ballard, who changed the name to *Iowa City Republican*.

Two other papers were established at the new capital in 1841. Dr. Nathaniel Jackson began the *Iowa City Argus* in the latter part of July, and the *Iowa Capital Reporter* was founded December 4, 1841, by Verplanck Van Antwerp and Thomas Hughes. The *Reports of the Decisions of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Iowa*, July term, 1841, were published with the imprint "Iowa City: Printed by Van Antwerp & Hughes," and this firm also printed the territorial laws enacted at the session of December, 1841. Jesse Williams became Hughes's partner in 1843, and together they printed part of the public documents in that year, sharing the work with William Crum.

The editorship of the *Iowa Capital Reporter* seems to have been a fair guarantee of trouble, for its first three editors were all involved in quarrels ending with blows. Van Antwerp made various attacks in the columns of his paper on Bainbridge, a Democratic member of the territorial Council, denouncing him as a "hybrid politician." A discussion over the Miners' Bank of Dubuque brought forth more verbal attacks, and one morning in February, 1842, Bainbridge called Van Antwerp to account for his words. According to one story, Bainbridge struck the editor over the hat and head with his cane, seized a pistol which Van Antwerp tried to draw, and struck him in the face with such force as to draw blood. Van Antwerp gave another version of the affair in his account, by which he did not come off so badly. Jesse Williams, Van Antwerp's successor, continued the attacks on the bank and directed his attention to George H. Walworth, chairman of the investigating committee. They came to blows in the library of the Capitol, and poor Williams was getting the worst of it and bleeding freely when the fight was stopped by Stull, secretary of the territory, who objected to blood getting on a carpet which he had recently purchased. In 1846 A. H. and G. D. Palmer became owners of the *Reporter*, and one of them ran foul of Mr. Nelson King, a member of the first state legislature, in an investigation directed against corruption in the legislature. The *Reporter* made considerable fun of some ungrammatical statements of King's, and although he was disposed

to forget the matter, his wife urged him to action. When he encountered one of the Palmers in the Capitol he undertook to give him a thrashing and finally produced a loaded pistol. Friends intervened before any blood could be shed and the carpets in any way damaged.<sup>18</sup>

Keosauqua, in southeastern Iowa on the Des Moines River, was the eighth town to have a press. Jesse M. Shepherd and J. L. T. Mitchell set up the *Iowa Democrat and Des Moines River Intelligencer* at Keosauqua in 1843 to serve that rapidly developing section of the country. The next spring James Shepherd, father of Jesse, and financial backer of the new paper, bought out Mitchell. Mitchell then established the Keosauqua *Border Pioneer*, which lasted only a short time. The *Journal of the House of Representatives, of the Eighth Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa* was published with the imprint "Keosauqua: Printed by J. and J. M. Shepherd. 1846."

Keokuk, at the juncture of the Des Moines River and the Mississippi, in the very southeastern tip of the state, had the ninth press. The *Iowa Morning Star and Keokuk Commercial Advertiser* was begun in April, 1845, by Thomas Gregg, who had been printer of the first paper at Montrose, a short distance above Keokuk. The *Morning Star* lasted, however, for only a few weeks.

In January, 1846, William Pattee's Keokuk *Iowa Argus* was started on its short life, and in 1847 the town's first paper of any permanence was begun when J. W. and R. B. Ogden established the *Keokuk Register*. Keokuk's fourth paper was the *Keokuk Dispatch*, established in 1848 by John B. Russell, formerly of the Dubuque *Iowa News* and the Bloomington (Muscatine) *Herald*, and Reuben L. Doyle. This firm published the *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, at the fifth grand annual communication . . . June 6th, A. L. 5848, A. D. 1848*, with the imprint: "Keokuk: Russell & Doyle, Printers. 1848."

Andrew, about twenty-five miles south of Dubuque, had the next press, when Andrew Keesecker, pioneer printer from Dubuque, established the *Western Democrat* in 1847, with M. H. Clark as editor. Ansel Briggs became the owner in 1849, and

<sup>18</sup>Parish, "Perils of a Pioneer Editor," gives the details of all these difficulties of the various *Iowa Capitol Reporter* editors.



the journal of the Senate, for the second session of the Iowa state assembly, was printed at Andrew in 1849 "at the Jackson County Democrat Office."

Fairfield was the next and eleventh town to have printing. A. R. Sparks, Ezra Brown, and R. B. Pope began the *Iowa Sentinel* there in June, 1847. Two years later there was a rival publication, the *Fairfield Weekly Ledger*, established by Orlando McCraney. The *Sentinel* expired in 1856, but the *Ledger* is still being published.

Fairfield was followed in 1848 by Ottumwa, also in the south-east part of the state. The *Des Moines Courier* was established there on August 8, 1848, by J. H. D. Street and Richard H. Warden; it is continued today as the *Ottumwa Courier*. The arrival of Ottumwa's first press caused a great furor. The entire male population of the town and farmers from eight and ten miles around came to view the new wonder. On the day of the *Courier's* first issue there was so large a crowd around the printing office that the light was shut out and it was almost impossible for Mr. Warden to work.<sup>19</sup>

In 1846 Iowa had become a state and there was a rapid expansion immediately thereafter. The thirteenth printing site in what was now a state rather than a territory was at the extreme western boundary, on the banks of the Missouri where it separated Iowa from Nebraska. Omaha in Nebraska was then a small settlement and Kaneshville, now Council Bluffs, Iowa, was the metropolis of the region. It was at Kaneshville on February 7, 1849, that Orson Hyde started the *Frontier Guardian*, a Mormon publication.<sup>20</sup> The paper was to have been established earlier, but circumstances prevented. The first issue announced:

"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, how-

<sup>19</sup>Glenn B. Meagher and Harry B. Munsell, *Ottumwa, Yesterday and Today*, Ottumwa, Iowa, 1923.

<sup>20</sup>Mott, *op. cit.*, p. 208, and all the other authorities are vague on the date of establishment and later history of the *Frontier Guardian*. A detailed study of this paper, based upon the original files in the Historian's office of the Church of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City, is given in McMurtrie, "The First Printing at Council Bluffs," in *ANNALS OF IOWA*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 3-11.

ever, 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."

The equipment for the *Frontier Guardian* had come from Cincinnati, and the printer with the skinned face was John Gooch, Jr. The paper was issued fortnightly until March 4, 1852, when it became a weekly and passed into the hands of Jacob Dawson.<sup>21</sup> M. H. Hathaway was now printer of the *Frontier Guardian*, to whose title Dawson added "*and Iowa Sentinel*." In November, 1852, A. C. Ford became the owner, with Hathaway continuing as printer. The paper was continued as late as May of 1853.

Two historical documents of considerable interest were products of Orson Hyde's press at Kanesville. The *Constitution of the State of Deseret* carried the imprint: "Kanesville. Published by Orson Hyde, 1849." Two years earlier the first Mormon immigrants had reached Utah, and although that territory became officially United States property six months later, no laws had been enacted for its government. The Mormons took matters into their own hands, organized the State of Deseret with Brigham Young as governor, and printed at Kanesville their first constitution. The second known document was a printed broadside giving the rules of order of the Beloit Company, a group of emigrants chiefly from the southern part of Wisconsin who were headed for California, issued with the date, "Kanesville, May 7th, 1850," and the imprint: "Frontier Guardian, Print."<sup>22</sup>

The *Guardian* had a rival in May, 1851, when Alman W. Babbitt established the *Kanesville Bugle*, which in 1852 passed into the hands of Joseph E. Johnson and Daniel W. Carpenter.

<sup>21</sup>Mott, *loc. cit.*, quotes various authorities for his statement that Hyde discontinued the *Guardian* in 1852, removing most of the materials to Utah. Hyde did not take the printing outfit with him to Utah, for when Jacob Dawson took over the *Guardian* in March, 1852, he purchased the office from Hyde, 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 new 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.

<sup>22</sup>These two Kanesville imprints are described in McMurtrie, "Two Early Issues of the Council Bluffs Press," *ANNALS OF IOWA*, Third Ser., Vol. XVIII, 1931, pp. 83-86.

The name of the town was changed in 1853 and the same year the paper became the *Council Bluffs Bugle*.

Des Moines, future capital of the state, also acquired a press in 1849. Barlow Granger & Co. began the *Iowa Star* at what was then called Fort Des Moines on July 26, 1849; it continued for over half a century. Two short-lived papers, the *Fort Des Moines Gazette*, published by Lampson P. Sherman, and the *Iowa State Journal*, published by Peter Myers & Co., were begun in 1850 and 1851 respectively, but when Fort Des Moines became simply Des Moines and the capital of the state, there was only one paper being issued there. This was the *Iowa Citizen*, begun in February, 1856, by Thomas H. Sypherd. It is continued today as the *Des Moines Register*. The *Iowa Star*, then the *Iowa Statesman*, was being published across the river in East Des Moines during 1856 and 1857, but in the latter year it was returned to its original place of publication.

The only other Iowa town to have a press before 1850 was Mount Pleasant, in the southeastern part of the state. D. M. Kelsey began the *Iowa Freeman* there in 1849. Samuel Luke Howe became editor in 1850, and the paper was changed to the *Iowa True Democrat*, being suspended in 1852. It was followed by the *Mount Pleasant Observer*, established by G. G. Galloway in 1856.

During the first fourteen years of Iowa's printing history the press and all that it signified clung rather tenaciously to settlements on the Mississippi River, and particularly to the southeastern part of the state, below Davenport. The removal of the seat of government to Iowa City and later to Des Moines compelled the press to move inland, and the Mormon migrations brought it to Council Bluffs. In Iowa, as elsewhere in new communities, the press, through the pioneer newspapers, contributed to moulding a new state. Aside from newspapers, the Iowa press of the early years was concerned almost exclusively with utilitarian matters. Communications were so far developed that for the cultural products of the press the population of pioneer Iowa could call on the more developed publishing centers to the east of them for what was required.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALDRICH, CHARLES. "Journalism of Northwest Iowa," *ANNALS OF IOWA*, Third Ser., Vol. XIII, 1923, pp. 509-28.

BABCOCK, WILLOUGHBY M., JR. "The Goodhue Press," *Minnesota History Bulletin*, Vol. III, 1920, pp. 291-94.

*Council Bluffs Nonpareil. Golden Anniversary.* September 2, 1906, sec. 3, pp. 18-23.

*Davenport Democrat. Half-Century Edition.* October 22, 1905, sec. 1, pp. 1-3.

FITZPATRICK, THOMAS JEFFERSON. "Bibliography of the Iowa Territorial Documents," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, Vol. V, 1907, pp. 234-69.

McMURTRIE, DOUGLAS C. *Early Printing in Wisconsin.* Seattle, 1931.

"The First Printing at Council Bluffs," *ANNALS OF IOWA*, Third Ser., Vol. XVIII, 1931, pp. 3-11.

"Two Early Issues of the Council Bluffs Press," *ANNALS OF IOWA*, Third Ser., Vol. XVIII, 1931, pp. 83-86. (Also reprinted, Chicago, 1932.)

MOTT, DAVID C. "Early Iowa Newspapers; a contribution toward a bibliography of the newspapers established in Iowa before the Civil War," *ANNALS OF IOWA*, Third Ser., Vol. XVI, 1928, pp. 161-233.

*Ottumwa Courier. Diamond Jubilee Edition.* August 4, 1923.

PARISH, JOHN C. "Perils of a Pioneer Editor," *The Palimpsest* (Journal of the State Historical Society of Iowa), Vol. II, 1921, pp. 233-39.

—"Three Men and a Press," *The Palimpsest* (Journal of the State Historical Society of Iowa), Vol. I, 1920, pp. 56-60. (Reprinted in "Newspapers of South Dakota," *South Dakota Historical Collections*, Vol. XI, 1922, pp. 412-15.)

SCOTT, FRANKLIN WILLIAM. *Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois, 1814-1879.* Springfield, 1910.

SPRINGER, JOHN. *Memorandum Relating to the Early Press of Iowa at Iowa City and Dubuque.* Iowa City, 1880.

STEELE, LAVINIA. *Check List of Public Documents of the State of Iowa.* Des Moines, 1904.

WILKIE, FRANK BANGS. *Davenport Past and Present.* Davenport, 1858.

The most important single source on Iowa printing history is undoubtedly Mott's detailed study of the early newspapers. This is supplemented by Fitzpatrick's fine *Bibliography of the Iowa Territorial Documents*, which is based in part on the work of Miss Steele. Mr. Parish's two articles give interesting side lights on the history of the press.

Copyright of *Annals of Iowa* is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.