THE KANSAS CITY POST:
ITS FOUNDING, GROWTH AND DECLINE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of Missouri

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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June 1958

The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate Faculty, have
examined a thesis entitled THE KANSAS CITY POST: ITS FOUNDING,
GROWTH AND DECLINE

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a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

William H. Taft
Franklin D. Roosevelt
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express sincere gratitude for the advice, counsel and direction of his adviser, Doctor William Howard Taft, throughout this study. He is grateful to Edward Meisburger of Kansas City and Jack Carberry of Denver, Colorado, for the invaluable information they gave relating to this study. Special thanks are given to his wife, Connie Lou Shoemaker, who acted in the capacity of critic, proofreader and typist.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The Kansas City Post for many years was a part of Kansas City itself. The paper shared the fortunes and misfortunes, reaped the profits and suffered the disasters of life along with the citizens of the community. For more than three decades, The Post rendered a service to Kansas Citians by recording the events of history of a great and growing metropolitan area and interpreting those facts in its columns.

Today, Kansas City, a metropolis of more than four hundred fifty thousand people, is a one-newspaper community. The Post no longer exists; an opposition paper has established a virtual news monopoly in the city. Though gone, The Post is not forgotten in journalistic circles, for it made a contribution to modern journalism and to Kansas City. Though often spectacular, some of The Post's newspaper crusades served Kansas Citians well.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. Founded in 1906, just one month before the San Francisco earthquake, The Post for thirty-six years chronicled the daily news events of Kansas City. The paper was established as a mouthpiece

for the Democratic party in Kansas City to oppose the non-partisan Kansas City Star and the Republican Kansas City Journal. In 1909, it was purchased by Frederick G. Bonfils and Harry H. Tamm, publishers of The Denver Post. For thirteen years, Bonfils and Tamm continued to publish The Post, applying the journalistic techniques they had learned in Denver. In 1921, Walter S. Dickey, prominent industrialist and Kansas City millionaire, bought the pioneer Kansas City Journal and the next year he purchased The Post. From 1922 to 1928, The Post was the evening partner of The Journal. In 1928, the two newspapers were merged under the name Kansas City Journal-Post.

As The Journal-Post, the newspaper received cruel treatment at the hands of its owners and was used to further some inglorious causes of big business in Kansas City and the surrounding area. In its final dying days, the paper adopted a more simplified title, The Kansas City Journal. In March, 1942, failure ended a prominent record of journalistic achievement for two newspapers, The Kansas City Journal and The Kansas City Post. The newspaper's end came as a result of many conditions, not the least of them being its betrayal by those who sought to use its news and editorial columns to further their own ends.

It is the purpose of this study to trace the history of The Post, chronicling its contributions to Kansas City journalism, its innovations, additions, editorial position, campaigns and staff. This study is concerned primarily with the period 1906 to 1928 when The Post existed as a separate newspaper apart from The Kansas City Journal. Necessarily, this study must also give a brief sketch of The Kansas City Journal-Post from 1928 to 1942, in order to complete the history of the newspaper.

Importance of the study. During its existence, The Post was a lively and interesting newspaper, with primary emphasis on sensational news, pictures, features and sports. Although under-staffed in proportion to the area and activities to be covered, it gave no ground to opposition newspapers in Kansas City in the coverage of the news. The advent of modern journalism dawned in Kansas City with the founding of The Post. Before 1906, the city's newspapers were dull and uninteresting in appearance. The Post brought to Kansas Citians the first daily comic strip, the first multi-column front page news photographs, the first eight-column page and the first banner headlines. The Post gave front page emphasis to sports stories and issued a special sports edition--a technique never attempted in Kansas City before The Post

began the practice.

Frederick G. Bonfils and Harry H. Tammen brought to Kansas City, accustomed to the restrained news presentation of The Kansas City Journal and The Kansas City Star and Times, the sensational journalism which they had made a success in Denver. The Post established a reputation as a flamboyant, aggressive newspaper, but this characterization also aptly described Kansas City in the early 1900's when the paper was struggling to gain readers. The Post made many friends, and enemies too, for it was a characteristic of the paper that all who read its pages soon formed an opinion of the paper, whether for good or bad. But The Post was not without influence in Kansas City. At its zenith it ranked sixteenth among all afternoon dailies of the United States with a circulation of 177,298 subscribers.

No major work on The Post exists and only a few books and pamphlets give short treatments of the paper. Most important of these are Gene Fowler's Timber Line,¹ Frank Luther Mott's American Journalism² and George

¹Gene Fowler, Timber Line: A Story of Bonfils and Tammen (New York: Covici, Friede, 1933).

²Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 260 Years: 1690 to 1950 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950).

Creel's Rebel at Large.³

Edward Meisburger, former reporter for The Post and city editor of The Journal-Post, wrote a series of four articles recalling incidents which happened during his term with the paper. These brief sketches were published in the Press Club Review, official publication of the Kansas City chapter of Sigma Delta Chi, in the spring and summer of 1957.⁴

Daniel T. Kelliher, former staff member of The Journal-Post, wrote a history of that paper which was published in The Kansas City News-Press in the fall of 1950 and then reprinted in the summer of 1955. Kelliher's article, entitled "The Sentinel on The Hill," was more a compilation of personal recollections of the author than a history of The Journal-Post. It was never published in pamphlet or book form and can only be found in the files of The Kansas City News-Press.⁵

A few magazine articles pertain to limited phases of the study. Will Irwin wrote critically of Frederick

³George Creel, Rebel at Large: Recollections of Fifty Crowded Years (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1947).

⁴Edward Meisburger, Press Club Review, Kansas City chapter Sigma Delta Chi, 1957, Vol. V, No. 7, Vol. VI, Nos. 1, 3 and 4.

⁵Kansas City News-Press, October 15, 1950, to July 8, 1950; July 4, 1955, to October 11, 1955.

G. Bonfils and Harry Tammen and The Post in a series for Collier's Weekly in 1911, entitled "The American Newspaper." Articles in Editor & Publisher report the sale of The Post and merging of the paper with The Journal.

None of the sources listed above deal wholly with The Post nor could any of them be classified as major works on the subject.

Organization of the study. The second chapter of this study must necessarily set the scene in Kansas City in 1906 when The Post was founded. It is essential to an understanding of the newspaper that the conditions which existed in Kansas City be understood because these conditions largely shaped the paper's policies. This chapter will describe the new fledgling and its struggle between 1906 and 1909 to gain a foothold in the city.

Chapter III will be concerned with the opposition newspapers in Kansas City and their influence in the community. It will include a capsule history of those papers and a short discussion of the influence of William R. Nelson and his newspaper crusades in Kansas City. At best it must be a hurried examination, but it is essential to an understanding of The Post to know what characterized the opposition papers.

Chapter IV will take up Frederick G. Bonfils and Harry H. Tammen and their purchase of The Post. It will

also include an explanation of the background and partnership of those two journalists. The founding of The Denver Post will be described to show the journalistic techniques which Bonfils and Tamm developed in Denver and later applied in Kansas City.

In Chapter V the history of the paper from 1909 to 1915 will be discussed. It will include circulation of The Post, advertising and staff members as well as changes in the publications office, news methods and management of the paper.

The Post's treatment of the news of World War I, its services to its readers, a major libel suit and a change in editors will be discussed in Chapter VI which will outline the history of the paper during the years 1916 to 1922.

In Chapter VII, Walter S. Dickey's purchase of the paper will be taken up. Political changes of The Post will be noted, as well as the paper's financial losses under the Dickey regime. The paper's journalistic tone and style for the period 1922 to 1928 will also be discussed.

Finally, Chapter VIII will trace the consolidation of The Post with The Kansas City Journal and the fortunes of the new paper from 1928 until its demise in 1942. In this chapter, Henry L. Doherty's interest in the paper will

be discussed. It will relate the series of events which led up to the bankruptcy and death of the paper. This chapter will complete the history of the newspaper.

II. METHOD OF PROCEDURE AND SOURCES OF DATA

Material gathered for this study came from both primary and secondary sources. Books and periodicals were examined extensively for a general over-all view of the history being studied. In particular, Editor & Publisher was scanned for articles dealing with The Post. Because of the limited number of works referring to the paper, the files of The Post itself yielded most of the material brought together in the pages of this history. The Kansas City Public Library has a complete file on The Post from its founding on March 14, 1906, to the date the paper was consolidated with The Journal in 1928. The Missouri State Historical Society in Columbia has nearly complete files of the paper; only the first month's copies are missing. Anniversary editions of The Kansas City Journal-Post were also helpful. The pages of The Kansas City Star and The Kansas City Journal have yielded much information pertinent to the study.

Books, magazine articles and other references to the history of Kansas City have been examined for any light they might shed on the problem.

Finally, by interview and personal letter, facts were verified and additional facts gathered from men who had special knowledge of The Post by reason of service on the paper. Interviews with Jack Carberry, former Post reporter and now sports editor of The Denver Post, and with Eddie Meisburger, former reporter and city editor of The Post, were especially helpful in solving some of the myths which have sprung up in Kansas City concerning the paper.

Whenever possible, and especially when facts were particularly important or seemed to be of doubtful validity, statements were checked with a second source. In every case, an effort was made to track down pertinent leads on the paper without deviating from the general theme of the study.

CHAPTER II

KANSAS CITY AND THE POST, 1906-1909

In the winning of the West, geography ordained that Kansas City should play a central role. Situated in the bend of an S-shaped turn of the Missouri River, the city lies some 400 miles above the confluence of the Missouri and lower Mississippi Rivers. This community at the head of westward navigation provided the spring-board from which the Western territory was first explored and settled. Because of its location, Kansas City was the logical port of debarkation for future overland trails to New Mexico, Colorado, Oregon and California. Without the West there probably would be no Kansas City.

This city is sometimes referred to as "the most American city." This is due in part to the fact that Kansas City contains a larger percentage of native-born Americans than any other metropolitan center in the United States.¹ Because of its mid-continent location, East meets West and North meets South in Kansas City to form a particularly inclusive national blend of human

¹Henry C. Haskell, Jr., and Richard B. Fowler, City of the Future: A Narrative History of Kansas City 1850-1950 (Kansas City, Mo.: Frank Glenn Publishing Co., Inc., 1950), p. 16.

beings. Midway through the first century of her corporate existence in early nineteen hundred, Kansas City was the largest community between St. Louis and the Pacific coast. Only San Francisco, of all Western cities, boasted a more impressive census showing in 1900.² It had become one of the nation's primary distribution centers and ranked among the largest cattle and grain markets of the world. By 1900, products of Kansas City manufacturers were beginning to obtain national recognition. These included Dickey clay sewer pipe, Dole's corsets, Berry's garters, Harrigan-Zartman carriages, Bauer's power engines, Kismet cleaning powder and Loose-Wiles biscuits.

I. KANSAS CITY IN 1906

Kansas City in 1906 when the Post was founded was the hub of a wheel of progress turning throughout the West. Citizens of vision and daring and aggressive acquisitiveness thrust the city forward by leaps and bounds. In 1900, only one "skyscraper," the ten-story New York Life building reared its head above Kansas City and a few eight-story buildings had pushed up among the rows of three and

²Ibid., p. 78.

four-story buildings of the downtown district. The next five years opened an era of remarkable growth and expansion. In 1907, three large office buildings with a combined cost of nearly four million dollars were completed. They were the R. A. Long building, the Scarritt building and the National Bank of Commerce building.³ That same year a young real estate agent, with horse and buggy for transportation, ventured beyond the city's southern boundaries at Forty-seventh Street to begin developing ten acres of land at Fifty-first and Main Streets; a development which was to grow into the now widely-known Country Club district of more than four thousand acres.⁴

A transportation center. Kansas City at the "Kawsmouth" provided early traders with an access by water to the entire valleys of the Kaw, Missouri and Platte Rivers and their tributaries. The city owes much to its location at the great bend of the Missouri where it makes

³Carrie Westlake Whitney, Kansas City Missouri: Its History and Its People 1880-1908 (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1908), Vol. I, p. 504.

⁴Where These Rocky Bluffs Meet (Kansas City, Mo.: Chamber of Commerce, 1938), p. 65.

its closest approach to the vast Southwest. The river which placed Kansas City on the map has the greatest navigable length of any river in the United States and drains a watershed of 580,000 square miles, one-sixth of the land surface of the entire nation.⁵ In 1906, the Missouri Valley River Improvement Association was founded to prove that the Missouri River could be navigated by ships, to have the river navigated by commercial freight carriers, to secure Congressional appropriations to improve and deepen the channel, to work closely with the National Rivers and Harbors Congress and finally to educate people to the magnificent possibilities and commercial importance of the Missouri River. To prove that the river was navigable, the association chartered the steamboat Lora, pushing the barge Louise, to haul freight from St. Louis to Kansas City during September--the month of lowest water in the Missouri River.⁶ The steamboat, loaded with freight for Kansas City merchants, made a successful trip from St. Louis to Kansas City and back. This trip was regarded as marking the resumption of navigation on the Missouri.

Kansas Citians were aggressive in their search for

⁵Whitney, op. cit., p. 537.

⁶D. M. Bone, editor, Annual Review of Greater Kansas City (Kansas City, Mo.: Business Men's League, 1908), p. 57.

railroads. They exerted influence and spent large sums of money in Washington and in state legislatures to get roads headed in the right direction. One hundred thousand dollars was given to the promoters of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe to make Kansas City, rather than Atchison, the railroad's first big Eastern terminus. Three hundred thousand dollars was given to the Pacific Railroad (now Missouri Pacific) as an inducement to come to Kansas City. The Hannibal railroad was begun with the intention of building to Leavenworth, Kansas, but Kansas City built a bridge over the Missouri River, free of charge for the railroad, and then gave the promoters of the road a large sum of money to put the line into operation.⁷ The efforts paid off, for by 1906, Kansas City had twenty different railroad systems and thirty-six separate lines, making it the second largest railroad center in America. The railroads had an aggregate track span of about fifty thousand miles, nearly one-fourth of the mileage of all the railroads in the United States.⁸ These lines spanned one of the richest, most productive trade territories in the

⁷W. G. Clugston, "Kansas City: Gateway to What?" Our Fair City, edited by Robert S. Allen (New York: The Vanguard Press, Inc., 1947), p. 260.

⁸Whitney, op. cit., p. 246.

world; linking Kansas City with 10,146 other cities and towns. More than two hundred passenger trains and three hundred freight trains entered the union depot daily. It is easy to understand from this description, why one of Kansas City's greatest inducements to new capital was its superior transportation facilities.

A favorite joke among Kansas Citians in the late 1890's concerned the city's muddy streets and a story about a team of horses and a wagon which had disappeared into a large mud hole on Main Street never to be seen again. There was reason for joking about the city's streets in 1890 or even 1900, but by 1906, Kansas City ranked second among cities of the world in miles of paved streets according to population. The city had 240 miles of asphalt paved streets; 11.74 miles of boulevards; and 2.41 miles of stone streets. In 1906, \$568,000 of the city budget went for new paving.⁹ In 1905, the Kansas City Viaduct and Terminal Railway Company began construction of a viaduct more than a mile and a half long providing the central business districts of the two Kansas Cities with a direct connecting link. This viaduct was finished in 1907 at a cost of \$3,225,000.¹⁰ In addition

⁹Bone, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

¹⁰Where These Rocky Bluffs Meet, p. 61.

to many miles of paved streets, the city boasted 222 miles of track in its street railway system used daily by 480 street cars.

A business center. Kansas City is situated in the center of one of the richest agricultural regions on earth; it is bounded on three sides by rich mineral wealth; it is located on a great waterway, at the junction of two rich river valleys; and it lies near the middle of the great overland highways of commerce, midway between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and between the Northern states and the Gulf of Mexico. With eight million dollars invested in its stockyards in 1906, the city ranked second only to Chicago in the livestock markets of the world. Its nine major packing plants processed more than three and a half million carcasses. In 1906, about 90 per cent of all the mules purchased by the United States government was furnished by Kansas City dealers. It was also one of the principal sheep markets of the country and an important hog market. Indicative of the importance of Kansas City as a livestock center, about sixty thousand people flocked to the city in 1906 to view 1,500 head of pure-bred cattle, horses, hogs and goats on exhibit at the annual American Royal Livestock show.¹¹ The stockyards did a \$133,000,000

¹¹Whitney, op. cit., p. 485.

business in 1906. A total of 12,500 workers were employed in the packing business and received an annual salary of seven million dollars.

While Kansas City was predominantly a distributing center of agriculture products and manufactured goods in 1906, new industry gradually moved in during these early years. From 1905 to 1909, thirty-six manufacturing firms began operation in the Blue Valley district. Standard Oil Company built an oil refinery at Sugar Creek to start the boom and by 1907, land values in the Armourdale industrial district had leaped to three times the pre-flood values of 1903.¹² These years also brought automobile assembly plants, a network of crude oil pipelines, Kansas and Oklahoma oil refineries and increased manufacturing of soap and garments.

By 1906, the city could boast a rank of seventh among all cities of the United States in volume of business as represented by bank clearings. Kansas Citians deposited more than one hundred million dollars in city banks during the year. Real estate transfers reached a new peak as forty million dollars worth of property changed hands in one year.¹³

¹²Haskell and Fowler, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

¹³Bone, op. cit., pp. 27, 55.

Recreation and entertainment. The Sam S. Shubert theater, one of the most modern theaters in the West at that time, was built in Kansas City in 1906. With the new building, the city could boast ten theaters and a surging interest in the legitimate stage. In February, the largest audience ever to attend a dramatic performance to that time, sixty-five hundred Kansas Citians, saw Sarah Bernhardt playing in "Camille."¹⁴ The city's most imposing bid to entertainment-seekers was the new convention hall which would seat thirteen thousand persons. In 1907, the first motor show ever held in Kansas City was presented in this hall. The previous year, the Trans-Mississippi Congress had been held in Convention Hall. From 1900 on, there was rapid expansion of the parks and boulevard system in Kansas City. The Epperson Megaphone Minstrels, sponsored by U. S. Epperson and William R. Nelson, raised thousands of dollars for improvements to city parks and for the installation of public baths. By 1906, there were eighteen parks with a total area of 2,199 acres devoted to out-door activities.

The political scene. Kansas City witnessed a bitter political battle in the city election of 1906.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 47.

The quarrel was not between the two major parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, but between factions within the Democratic party itself. The Democrats were usually able to control city hall and the county court house, except when the factional fight got so bitter that the Republicans were able to slip in and gain control. The two factions were labeled the "goats" and the "rabbits." The "goats" were followers of Thomas J. Pendergast, who was already prominent in the Kansas City political arena and who was seeking the post of county marshal in 1906. The "rabbits" were led by Joe Shannon, who controlled the County Court and the city's Ninth Ward. Joe Shannon held the upper hand in 1906 and gained control of the Democratic County Convention. The results of the intra-party dispute between the "goats" and the "rabbits" hit home on November 6, when voters went to the polls and cast a record vote for the Republican candidates. The Republicans swept into office winning most of the posts, including the County Court.

II. THE NEWS OF 1906

The year 1906 will long be remembered for one news event which made headlines around the world. On April 18, an earthquake rocked San Francisco on its very foundations and sent large portions of the downtown area crashing to

the ground. This news story provided hundreds of inches of copy for newspapers as one disaster after another swept over the city. Buildings left standing by the earthquake were reduced to ashes by the fire which followed. Firemen and volunteers made heroic efforts to save what was left of the once-proud city. When the fire was quelled, another disaster struck, this time famine and disease. With three hundred thousand people homeless and wandering about without food or shelter, disease was quick to take a heavy toll of those who somehow managed to escape the earthquake and fire. The efforts of Kansas Citians to raise a fifty thousand dollar emergency relief fund for the stricken city was duly recorded in the pages of the local newspapers.

The year will also be remembered for the many trust suit cases. The government instituted trust cases against Standard Oil Company, the packing houses, better known as the "beef trusts," railroads, drug and insurance companies. United States Attorney General William Henry Moody rated many inches of copy in his efforts to break up the combines and monopolies of the period. Locally, Kansas City was fighting its own suit against the ice trust.

Upton Sinclair's frank and revealing story of the packing industry, The Jungle, was published in 1906. The book was intended as an indictment of an economic system

that allegedly brought hunger and misery to the masses of people who worked in the packing houses. However, The Jungle appealed to the stomachs and not to the hearts of the American people who ignored Sinclair's comments on socialism, but, revolted by his descriptions of the filthy conditions of the slaughtering houses, enacted the first Pure Food and Drug Act.

Another important act passed during the year was the hotly debated Hepburn Act which deprived the railroads of their ultimate sovereignty in the rate-making process. All over America, newspapers blossomed forth with political cartoons as the bill was debated in Congress.

On March 31, United Mine Workers' leader John Mitchell led a half million miners out of the coal mines in a national strike for higher wages.

The crime story of the year was the Harry K. Thaw murder trial in New York. Thaw shot and killed Stanford White, famous architect, because of his alleged seduction of Thaw's actress-wife, Evelyn Nesbit Thaw. The case extended over many months as Thaw stood trial first for murder and then later was tried in a sanity hearing.

Nearer home, two Negroes were taken from jail by a mob of 200 citizens in Springfield, Missouri, and hanged because they were suspected of assaulting a White woman. Subsequent investigation showed that the two were innocent

of the crime.

A famous Missourian and ex-senator, Carl Schurz, died at his New York home in 1906. That same year Henrik Ibsen, Norwegian poet and dramatist, died in Norway.

One of the greatest running stories of the period came to an end in 1906 when Alfred Dreyfus was exonerated of treason charges and released from the infamous Devil's Island prison where he had been held for many years. Captain Dreyfus, of the French Army, had been convicted of treason and court-martialled in 1894, because he allegedly delivered secret papers to German agents. The stories of the Dreyfus case exemplified the plight of every citizen jailed for crimes against the state and Dreyfus was enshrined as a hero in the hearts of men who had never set foot upon French soil.

In other international news, reports came out of Russia of the Odessa massacre, in which all the Jews of the village of Odessa were killed. A resolution was introduced in the United States Congress condemning Russia for her brutality to the Hebrews.

The greatest political figure of the period was President Theodore Roosevelt, who was more consistently page-one news than any other President to that time. He was in the news in a different way in August 1906, when he endorsed the Carnegie spelling technique and ordered

that all White House documents use the list of three hundred simplified words proposed by exponents of the new system. He was immediately criticized from all sides. This was one instance where "Teddy" had to back down.

The airship Eagle, a hydrogen balloon with an underslung steel carriage and propeller, took off from Kansas City's Forest Park for a flight to the R. A. Long building. The craft was in the air thirteen minutes when the propeller broke and the balloon drifted into nearby trees. Pilot of the airship announced that he would make a new attempt as soon as his ship could be repaired.

On August 23, six inches of rain fell on Kansas City in the short span of three hours, flooding all the low-lying areas and causing wide-spread damage.

That was the year Mount Vesuvius erupted; spewing lava and ashes on the small villages at the base of the volcano. The town of Bosco Trecase was completely destroyed and ashes were scattered over Naples, thirty miles away. The volcanic eruption left fifty thousand persons homeless and caused an estimated twenty million dollars damage.

The Republicans dominated the political scene in Kansas City in 1906, winning the city elections in April and then copping the county elections in November. Henry M. Beardsley was elected mayor on April 3. Conspicuous

among the few Democrats who were successful in 1906 was the name of Thomas J. Pendergast, who was elected to the lower house from the city's First Ward.

The most often-quoted speech of the year was the famous address, "The Man With the Muck Rake," delivered by President Theodore Roosevelt at the laying of the corner stone of the new office building of the House of Representatives in Washington. Just one phrase from this speech was to be written into the pages of history, but this one phrase characterized the times. Roosevelt likened the yellow journalists of the period to the muckrakers in Pilgrims Progress, and the characterization stuck.

Two speeding passenger trains collided just outside Pueblo, Colorado, during a blinding snow storm. News reports said thirty-nine were killed and many others injured.

In the sports field, the Baltimore fighter, Joe Gaus, was training for his bout with Mike "Twin" Sullivan for the welter-weight championship of the world. Thirty-four members of the American Olympic team sailed to Naples, Italy, and then went by train to Athens, Greece, where the United States was taking part in the 1906 Olympic games. Jimmy Burke was manager of the Kansas City Blues baseball team. On April 9, the Blues beat the Denver Grizzlies nine to one.

The year 1906 was an eventful one for the world and packed with exciting news for Kansas Citians. Real estate values were on the upgrade, the city's population was rocketing upward, and business was good. Added together, these conditions set the stage for the advent of another newspaper upon the Kansas City scene in March 1906.

III. THE FOUNDING

On March 14, 1906, Kansas City gave birth to a lusty infant newspaper, The Kansas City Post. A. Fuller Brooker, editor and general manager, established his afternoon paper on the southeast corner of Tenth and McGee Streets and confidently set out to capture half of the reading public in Kansas City. Brooker frankly announced his intentions to support the Democratic party. The Post's salutatory stated in part:

The Principles of The Post, in its editorial department, will be Democratic. The Democratic party of Kansas City and Jackson County, and throughout the Southwest, has for a long time been in need of a representative organ, so this paper is established in compliance with, and to please an earnest demand.¹⁵

In a history of Kansas City, Carrie Westlake Whitney wrote in 1908, "The newspaper had remarkable

¹⁵The Post, March 14, 1906.

success from the beginning, in two years gaining recognition as one of the leading Democratic dailies of the West."¹⁶ The Post had a guaranteed circulation of six thousand when it published its first edition. Within two years this figure reached nearly forty five thousand. During those two years, the paper assisted the local Democratic party in winning several important victories. From the first edition on, Brooker made overtures to the loyal Democrats of Kansas City to support a Democratic newspaper--The Kansas City Post.

On July 30, a second name was listed in The Post's mast as one of the publishers of the paper. On that date the name of J. A. O'Brien was coupled with Brooker's name to give The Post two publishers and thus more capital with which to finance its rapid growth.

The field. In 1906 there were seventy-seven publications in Kansas City which listed themselves as newspapers.¹⁷ Of this number, only four were of any real significance and two of these were owned by the same man. When The Post invaded the Kansas City newspaper field, there were two morning newspapers and two evening news-

¹⁶Whitney, op. cit., p. 395.

¹⁷Kansas City Annual 1907 (Kansas City: Commercial Club, 1907), p. 74.

papers in the city. Two of these papers were to prove The Post's stiffest competition causing the paper to fight a continuing battle for survival; one of the papers was to die within two years; and the fourth, a respectable, time-worn, Republican sheet was to merge with The Post in 1928.¹⁸ After 1900, The Post was the only daily newspaper to get a foothold in Kansas City and establish itself by gaining a significant circulation.

The content of the paper. The first editorial in The Post announced that the paper would avoid participation in factional disputes and personal quarrels among Democrats and seek the general welfare of the party as a whole. Editorial writers in each department, social, literary and commercial, were experienced and capable and therefore well-qualified to make The Post attractive and pleasing to its readers, according to the salutatory.¹⁹ The Post had a special wire contract with the Hearst News Syndicate which entitled the paper to twenty thousand words a day.²⁰

¹⁸Morning newspapers were The Kansas City Journal and The Kansas City Times. The evening papers were The Kansas City Star and The Kansas City World. William Rockhill Nelson owned The Star and Times. The World stopped publication in 1908 and The Journal was merged with The Post in 1928.

¹⁹The Post, March 14, 1906.

²⁰The Post, April 11, 1906.

In its second month of publication, The Post used multi-column heads over the stories of the San Francisco earthquake. By the end of the year, it was showing banner heads on the front page for the bigger news stories. In addition to local stories, The Post's front page also carried national and international news daily. Page three was devoted to "News of the Sporting World," with items on baseball, track, bicycling, automobiles, boxing and a host of other subjects. On April 9, the first half-tone photograph to appear in The Post was printed on the sporting page. The three-column photo showed Jimmy Burke of the Kansas City Blues baseball team in uniform. The picture was a good reproduction.

Most distinctive of all pages in the paper was the editorial page which was usually page four. Political editorials, set a column and a half wide, filled the left hand side of the page. Also on this page were editorials reprinted from other newspapers, a column of humor and anecdotes and a column headed "Missouri Notes," containing news from around the state. Editorials were largely political and usually partisan. The Post appointed itself guardian of the Democratic party in the Southwest and set about to eulogize the Democrats and deprecate the Republicans. However, the paper did not confine itself solely to local, state or regional politics, but frequently

printed editorials on the national scene. On April 12, The Post had this to say about possible Democratic candidates for the 1908 election:

The probable elimination of the bimetallic question of our circulating medium of exchange has taken from Mr. Bryan all the real opposition he encountered in the East, and has in no wise lessened the regard and confidence which he has always enjoyed from his Western adherents...

In 1908 Democratic states will name the candidate and invite Republican states to join us in the effort to wrest the government from the admittedly corrupt men who have for years controlled its destinies and who actually furnished the money to buy the elections.²¹

This editorial sentiment occasionally spilled over into news stories on other pages.

Even before the ink was dry on The Post's first edition, the paper was directing barbs at all Republicans in general and at President Theodore Roosevelt in particular. Three weeks after its initial edition hit the streets, The Post had this editorial comment in part to make on the President's actions in connection with a bill to regulate railroad rates:

The very proposal of that amendment was a triumph for the senior senator from Rhode Island [Senator Nelson W. Aldrich] and his party coadjutors. But it affords a sad and sorrowful example of a presidential fiasco. However, it is only another instance of our mighty man of

²¹The Post, April 12, 1906.

destiny and duty backing away after one of his spectacular grandstand performances. We may all be sorry but we have no reason to be surprised.²²

For its women readers, The Post printed a full page of fashions and society news, usually opposite the editorial page. Another page was reserved for literature. Here were published short stories complete in one issue or run in series from one edition to the next. On April 6, an article entitled "The Story of the Strike" by Mary Logan Tucker, filled nearly all of page nine. This edition carried Chapter One; subsequent editions contained the rest of the story about the life of the men who worked in stone quarries.

The fledgling Post devoted a full page to comic strips. The strips were divided into panels which were numbered so the reader could follow the action sequence from one panel to the next. Following the comic page was a financial page with the stock market reports, livestock market reports and a column on amusements slipped in for good measure. Page eleven, or the next to last page of the paper, was reserved for The Post's classified advertisements. Page twelve was devoted to local, state and national news.

²²The Post, April 6, 1906.

Before The Post was six weeks old, it was printing photographs on the front page. Shortly after the great San Francisco earthquake, a five-column picture on page one showed the Pacific coast city being swept by flames.²³ Beginning May 17 and continuing until May 28, a full column of the front page was devoted to a plea to "Democrats of the Southwest" to support their party by writing to the editor of The Post for details of a plan by which they could help in upbuilding their party. Although the plan was not spelled out in the article, in all probability it contained as one of its steps a subscription to The Kansas City Post.

By fall of its first year, The Post was publishing editorials on the front page. The first page-one editorial was headed "A Plain Talk to Governor Folk" and was an attack against Joe Shannon whom, The Post lamented, the Governor had unwittingly taken to his bosom:

Mr. Folk, do you not know the history of this man Shannon whom you have taken to your bosom and who, like a snake, will turn and sting you when warmed and nourished?

.....

Repudiate Shannonism before it further besmurches your reputation.²⁴

²³The Post, April 25, 1906.

²⁴The Post, September 1, 1906.

Figure 1. Front page of The Post with the first page-one editorial.

Open letters and front page editorials were to become commonplace in The Post in the coming months and years of its existence.

A change in ownership. This paper, which labeled itself "The only great news representative of the democracy of the Central West," was to suffer reverses at the hands of the party before it had successfully completed one year of publication. Having lost its first bid for fame when the Democrats were defeated in the city elections in April, 1906, The Post made an all-out effort to sweep the Democrats into county offices in the November elections. With good intentions, the paper launched boldly into the pre-election contest which soon developed into more of a factional dispute among Democrats than a contest among major parties.

The fight broke into the open when Joseph B. Shannon, czar of the Ninth Ward, took control of the Democratic County Convention in opposition to Thomas J. Pendergast who controlled the First Ward. Shannon was building up a monopoly in the Courthouse and endeavoring to lower Pendergast prestige in the City Hall.²⁵ The Post

²⁵William M. Reddig, Tom's Town: Kansas City and The Pendergast Legend (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1947), pp. 34-35.

questioned and severely criticized Shannon's political tactics in gaining control of the convention. A three-column editorial on the front page headed "Plain Talk to 'Joe' Shannon" commented in part:

By using certain clubs which you hold, viz., the committee, your county court, and the seventy delegates from your disfranchised Ninth Ward, you have succeeded in intimidating a number of weak-kneed, but perhaps well-meaning candidates, into dealing into your hands such delegations as they could control and thereby you are in possession of the party convention.²⁶

The Post continued to devote more space to criticizing Jo Shannon than it did to deprecating the Republicans. Long before the November 6 election the contest had become a bitter, name-calling fight for control of the Democratic party in Jackson County with The Post constantly supporting the Pendergast faction. It based its stand on the principle that it was only living up to its standards and fighting for purity, honesty and an undefiled ballot in the Democratic party. On October 31, The Post wound up its long campaign against Joe Shannon with this bit of sarcasm entitled "The Rabbits Prayer" printed in red ink in a front page box:

Our father who art in Kansas City, Joe Shannon be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in Jackson County as it is in Jefferson City. Give

²⁶The Post, August 29, 1906.

us this day our daily boodle. Forgive us our bribery as we forget those who bribe against us. Lead us not into defeat or the penitentiary. Deliver us from The Kansas City Post. And thine be the pelf, the plunder and the annuity, forever and ever.²⁷

On November 7 The Post ran a banner headline across the seven columns of the front page announcing "SHANNONISM IN JACKSON COUNTY IS ANNIHILATED AT THE POLLS." This head failed to mention that the Democratic party was practically annihilated along with Shannon. Although The Post claimed the landslide vote for the Republican party was a victory for the paper in its battle against Shannon, this boast had a hollow ring, for the Democrats had suffered a great defeat, a defeat partly of The Post's making.

On November 27, just three weeks after the election, A. F. Brooker's name mysteriously disappeared from the mast although the Kansas City Post Publishing Company, publisher, continued on until December 1. On that date the name of The Sheridan Publishing Company, publishers, appeared in the mast and B. J. Sheridan was listed as editor and manager of the paper. An announcement on the editorial page said The Sheridan Publishing Company had bought all properties of The Post Publishing Company and agreed to pay itemized debts of the old company amounting to

²⁷The Post, October 31, 1906.

thirty-four thousand dollars. Incorporators of the new company were George Kingsley, Orville D. Woodward and Bernard J. Sheridan. The company was capitalized at one hundred thousand dollars with Kingsley owning 330 1/3 and Sheridan 600 2/3 of the one thousand shares of stock. Woodward was a well-known capitalist and businessman of Kansas City and Kingsley was an attorney with offices in the New York Life building. He was to represent The Post in all legal matters as well as continuing his private practice.²⁸

Barney Sheridan, new editor of The Post, had formerly edited The Western Spirit, a country weekly at Paola, Kansas. In his first editorial, Sheridan characterized himself as a "boy that grew on the prairies before the days of colleges, and, therefore, he has no collegiate environments and only knows how to go straight on."²⁹ He outlined the paper's principles thusly:

The Post will continue as a Democratic newspaper but politics will be only part of its calling. Its main mission is to upbuild, to instruct and to entertain. . . .³⁰

An article clipped from another newspaper and

²⁸The Post, December 1, 1906.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

reprinted in The Post had this to say about the new editor and the paper which he would control:

Democrats have looked on The Post to this time with some doubt. The paper had a strong corps of writers, excellent telegraph service and was a good newspaper. Its former editor became involved in a local fight in which he defeated the local Democratic ticket, but it was at a terrible cost to the party. Whether the means justified the end we do not know--but we do know what the result was. On December 1st The Post Publishing Co. sold its materials, franchises, rights, etc. to another company who are known as the Sheridan Publishing Company.³¹

Under Sheridan's tutelage, The Post was to expand its circulation, increase the number of pages in its daily editions, add a Sunday edition with four pages of comics and begin publishing a daily comic strip. The paper celebrated its first anniversary with a forty-page edition March 16, 1907. The first Sunday edition was published November 3, 1907, in two sections of ten pages each. The Post had begun running colored comics in its Saturday edition as early as February 2, 1907. These comics included "The Hall-Room Boys" by H. A. MacGill, "Braggo the Monk" by Gus Mager, "Mr. E. Z. Mark" by F. M. Howarth and another strip by the same cartoonist entitled "Love Will Find A Way."

A fatal incident. On November 23, 1907, almost a year after the Sheridan Publishing Company had taken over

³¹The Post, December 10, 1906.

The Post, O. D. Woodward, president of the company, was shot down in his office by General Richard C. Horne, an editorial writer for the paper. Horne, who had been laid off work because of the financial situation of the paper, strode into Woodward's office in The Post building and without warning began shooting. H. J. Groves, managing editor of The Post, who was in Woodward's office, was wounded during the fracas. One of the three bullets which struck Woodward hit a leather book in his breast pocket and thus probably saved his life.³² Although neither man was considered to be seriously wounded, Groves died of blood poisoning two weeks later. Before coming to The Post, he had owned and edited The Lexington Intelligencer and then had been news editor of The Kansas City Times until December 1906.

Circulation and advertising. The Post was founded as a one-cent evening paper, selling for five cents a week for an edition everyday but Sunday. The paper began life with a circulation of six thousand. This had grown to twenty thousand by the end of the first month and to thirty-five thousand by the end of six months. The Post completed its second year of existence with a circulation of 44,328. By 1909, the paper boasted a circulation of

³²The Post, November 23, 1907.

fifty-five thousand.³³

Although circulation rocketed upward, the paper's advertising did not increase proportionately. The first full-page advertisement appeared on the back page of the July 25, 1906, edition, but these pages were to be few and far between. The railroads were among The Post's best advertising patrons. Other companies which advertised with some regularity in the paper's columns included insurance companies, Jenkins Sons Music Company, automobile firms, and Jones Dry Goods Company. The Kansas City breweries furnished the paper with large advertisements, but on an infrequent basis.

Conspicuous because of their absence were advertisements for the large department stores in Kansas City. The lack of such advertisements in The Post could probably be explained by the fact that twenty years earlier The Star had signed up the infant department stores on annual, self-renewing contracts which thus bound the large advertisers to the opposition paper.³⁴

³³N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual, 1907, 1909.

³⁴William Jackson Bell, "A Historical Study of The Kansas City Star Since the Death of William Rockhill Nelson, 1915-1949." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1949, p. 21.

The Post was not able to attract classified advertisements despite its low price of one cent a word and the offer to insert "wants" for three times free of charge. The paper managed to fill one page daily with its classifieds, but never went beyond this during its early years.

In the summer of 1906, the paper tried several circulation stunts to increase its subscription figures. Beginning in May, it offered a subscription plus one year's issues of William Jennings Bryan's weekly, The Commoner, for two dollars. Regular price of a yearly subscription was three dollars. In July of the same year, The Post offered the famous Charles Dana Gibson pictures free to its subscribers.

Early staff members. Earl Hurd drew political cartoons for The Post during all of this early period. His cartoons, which appeared frequently, were printed on the paper's front page. Richard C. Horne was editorial director of the paper under Brooker and he became an editorial writer for The Post when the Sheridan Publishing Company took over in December, 1906. Hiram Jackson Groves was managing editor from December 1906 until his death in November 1907. The paper's city editor was Horace H. Herr, later president of the Kansas City Press Club in the year

1912.³⁵ Heads of the editorial departments of The Post were: Arthur La Hines, city; Mrs. Lillian C. Hutton, society; L. H. Mitchell, telegraph and dramatics; David D. Downing, commercial; and Frank Ellis, sports.³⁶

The fledgling was understaffed in proportion to the field to be covered in Greater Kansas City and in the face of opposition from rivals already well established in the city when The Post was founded. The paper's single claim to distinction during these early years was its support of the Democratic party. No other newspaper in Kansas City in 1909 hewed to Democratic doctrines as did The Post. Even though one evening newspaper which had rivaled The Post for news in 1906 had succumbed by 1909, Kansas City was still blanketed by the rival Kansas City Star and Times. The influence of rival newspapers was to have great effect on The Post from its first breath in 1906 until its death more than three decades later.

³⁶Whitney, op. cit., p. 395.

CHAPTER III

RIVALS AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN KANSAS CITY

Although there were seventy-seven publications in Kansas City which classified themselves as newspapers in 1906 when The Post was founded, there were only four daily papers of city-wide circulation. One of these, The Kansas City Star, was in a pre-eminent position and dominated the newspaper field.

The Star, in combination with its morning counterpart, The Times, had a circulation nearly double the combined circulation of the other two papers, The Kansas City Journal and The Kansas City World.¹ The Post eclipsed The Journal's circulation before 1912, but it could never quite duplicate the feat of either The Star or The Times.

The Kansas City Star. The Star was founded on September 18, 1880, by William R. Nelson and Samuel E. Morss as a six-column folio sheet. It was an evening paper selling for two cents a copy or ten cents a week. Morss left the paper before the end of the first year, giving Nelson sole ownership. For nearly thirty-five years, The Star was Nelson's mouthpiece, until his death

¹N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual, 1907.

in 1915.²

Before The Star was ten years old, it had taken the lead in circulation in its field. It captured the top rank for subscribers in Kansas City within five years and two years later took the lead in Kansas.³ The paper was prone to boast of the bargain of its advertisements. Even so, the rates were not particularly low. When Nelson established the circulation of The Star as equal to the combined circulation of all rival papers in Kansas City, he increased the paper's advertising rates to equal the combined rates of the other newspapers. In addition, as a safeguard against losing advertisers, he required any local merchant who used advertising space in an opposition paper to purchase an equal amount from The Star, or face the prospect of being barred forever from the paper's advertising columns.⁴ Even though Kansas City merchants were bitter at Nelson's tactics, they had to place a high estimate on The Star's value as an advertising medium because of its large number of readers.

²William Jackson Bell, "A Historical Study of the Kansas City Star since the Death of William Rockhill Nelson, 1915-1949." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1949. pp. 1, 16.

³Ibid., p. 143.

⁴Ibid., p. 107.

During Nelson's lifetime, The Star was probably the only important large-city daily which refused to print half-tone photographs. Nelson greatly opposed them because the process was strictly mechanical, and he believed that the paper's high-speed presses would not print half-tones without blurring the pictures. Therefore, a large staff of artists was employed to make line drawings for the paper.⁵

Nelson also frowned on comic strips in The Star. He believed that comics would have a cheapening influence on the newspaper. The Star did use a few cartoons, but these were largely reprints from other journals. The first syndicated comic strip appeared in the paper six years after Nelson's death. Even then, comics were included only because the staff believed they were the successors of the medieval romances of adventure which were rich in broad humor.⁶

Because The Star founders could not afford a wire service, the paper had to depend on local coverage and reprint material. Matter that was considered only filler in most newspapers received the same priority as good news in The Star's columns. Nelson clipped reprint material

⁵Ibid., p. 30.

⁶Ibid., pp. 94, 95.

from a wide variety of sources including books, magazines, and other newspapers.⁷ In 1882, Nelson moved his paper to a new plant and purchased an afternoon rival, The Evening Mail, for the paper's Associated Press franchise. This franchise enabled him to strengthen what had been The Star's weakest department--its national and foreign news.⁸

In 1901, Nelson purchased The Kansas City Times and made it the morning edition of The Star. The techniques of yellow journalism were sweeping the country that year in the wake of the William Randolph Hearst--Joseph Pulitzer circulation battle in New York and Nelson made a concession to the new challenge by offering his readers thirteen papers a week for ten cents--the former subscription price of The Star alone.

In 1906, The Star looked much the same as it did when the first issue came off the presses in 1880.⁹ The body type was larger and seven columns had replaced the original six, but headlines were practically the same--

⁷Ibid., p. 18.

⁸Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 260 Years: 1690 to 1950 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 470.

⁹This was still true nine years later when Nelson died. See Bell, op. cit., p. 69.

nearly all single column and all capital letters. The paper contained only line drawings, except for occasional photographs in advertisements. Because Nelson did not particularly care for sports news in The Star, only one page was devoted to this department. Society news filled four to six columns of The Star's Sunday edition, but usually not more than one column on week days. Occasionally, a line drawing of some important bride-to-be appeared in the paper.

Never was a newspaper more closely identified with the personality of a single man than The Star was with Nelson. He kept a close watch over news, editorial and business departments alike. Although he wrote little or nothing for the paper and remained almost unknown except as owner of The Star, he constantly gave news leads to others. He was an opinionated and domineering man and as his paper gained influence in Kansas City, he became increasingly arrogant and ruthless, but his employees continued to believe in him and to remain loyal to The Star.¹⁰

Nelson used his paper to promote every activity that he thought was for the welfare of Kansas City and his method of campaigning did not stop with The Star or

¹⁰Mott, loc. cit.

Times. He used his money to bring "experts" to Kansas City to put pressure on prominent officials and to do anything else that seemed to fit his purpose. One of the most persistent of The Star's campaigns was for city parks and boulevards. Nelson hired engineers to make studies and then had a park law drafted and personally pushed through its adoption by the city. When the State Supreme Court nullified his efforts, he started all over again by educating the people to the value of parks and fighting the men who resented increased taxation. In the end, Kansas City got the parks that Nelson wanted. Much of the beauty of the city today is due to the paper's consistent crusade.

The Star was engaged in at least one campaign, and usually several at the same time, during all of Nelson's thirty-five years as editor.¹¹ One historian characterized the paper in this manner:

Nelson made The Star more than a good purveyor of local news; he made it the mentor and monitor of Kansas City. It was paternalistic; it looked after the interests of its readers as few newspapers have.¹²

¹¹Bell, op. cit., p. 47.

¹²Mott, op. cit., p. 471.

The Kansas City Journal. Second-born among Kansas City newspapers was the Kansas City Enterprise, later to become The Journal, which was founded by a group of Kansas Citians in September, 1854.¹³ The infant paper was edited by William A. Strong and published by D. K. Abeel. A year later, Colonel Robert T. Van Horn, scholar, soldier and statesman, met the editor of The Enterprise at the Virginia Hotel in St. Louis. Strong was looking for a printer to take over the newspaper and Van Horn was between occupations. When Strong found that Van Horn was a printer, he urged him to go to Kansas City and look over the paper.

On July 21, 1855, Colonel Van Horn arrived in Kansas City and consulted with The Enterprise's owners. He agreed to buy the paper if he was given until October 1 to raise a down payment of two-hundred fifty dollars.¹⁴ He promised to return on that date with the money and a note for the rest. The attorney for the newspaper's owners was criticized for taking the word of a complete

¹³Kansas City's first newspaper was the Kansas Ledger begun in 1851 and suspended in 1853. See Leonard Joseph Lea, "The News in The Kansas City Journal of Commerce 1865-1880." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1955, p. 23.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 23, 24.

stranger, but the attorney stuck by his bargain. Van Horn returned to Kansas City on a boat which docked on October 1 and astonished even the attorney by calmly producing the money and the note.¹⁵

When Colonel Van Horn took over The Enterprise, Kansas City was a struggling village of four-hundred seventy-eight hardy pioneers. The circulation of the paper came within one hundred papers of reaching every man, woman and child in the community.¹⁶ D. K. Abeel continued as foreman of the paper's small mechanical department and purchased a half interest in the paper in 1857. This was the beginning of an association which spanned more than three decades of history in Kansas City.

The following year, the two owners enlarged the paper and changed its name to Western Journal of Commerce. With growing business, the paper expanded again and the name was changed to The Kansas City Journal of Commerce. In June, 1958, the publishers began a daily edition, printing six days a week including Sunday and closing shop on Monday. A telegraph line had been completed between St. Louis and Boonville, Missouri, that year and the paper

¹⁵"Memory of R. T. Van Horn is Still Revered in Kansas City." Editor & Publisher, 67:316, July 21, 1934.

¹⁶Ibid.

made arrangements to receive news reports from Boonville by stagecoach.¹⁷

Van Horn was originally a Democrat and his paper supported the Democratic party in Missouri. In the campaign of 1860, the paper fought for the election of Stephen A. Douglas against Abraham Lincoln, the young lawyer from Illinois. Van Horn, however, did not favor the Southern cause nor the extreme sectional views of the North. When Fort Sumter was fired on, he declared his loyalty for the Union and The Journal became the leader and consolidator of Union sentiment in Kansas City. From that date on, the paper was to support the Republican party.

As the chief supporter of the Union's cause in Missouri, the paper was bitterly attacked by the pro-Southern element in Kansas City. The Journal weathered the storm and was one of two newspapers in the city to survive the Civil War.¹⁸ Prior to the war, The Journal had been important in encouraging civic improvement,

¹⁷Lea, op. cit., pp. 25,26.

¹⁸The other newspaper was a German paper, the Daily Kansas City Post. See Carrie Westlake Whitney, Kansas City Missouri: Its History and Its People 1808-1908 (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1908), Vol. I, p. 365.

printing plans for the betterment of Kansas City and encouraging railroad building, and fostering other civic projects. With the end of strife in Missouri, the paper stepped up its campaign for the improvement of Kansas City. Van Horn took a personal part in this crusade by making numerous public addresses, attending conventions and writing intelligent editorials for The Journal. He furthered every material, commercial, intellectual and moral interest by which the people of the city and the entire surrounding area would be benefitted.¹⁹

Van Horn founded the Kansas City Association for Public Improvement which later became the city's famous Commercial Club. The Journal was instrumental in the reorganization of the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce which had ceased to exist during the Civil War.

While yet just an infant, The Journal scooped the world on a story that stayed in the headlines of hundreds of newspapers for months. Three prospectors who had been exploring in the Cherry Creek region near the settlement now known as Denver, Colorado, returned to Kansas City bearing goose quills filled with gold dust as evidence of the nuggets they had found along the banks of the stream. When other editors scoffed at the prospector's story,

¹⁹Col. Robert T. Van Horn, "The Missouri Historical Review, 4:170, April, 1910.

The Journal ran a full account of the tale.²⁰ The article aroused bitter resentment in newspapers at St. Joseph, Missouri, and Leavenworth, Kansas, towns which were vying with Kansas City for the trade of Western prospectors and settlers. So high did feeling run that there was talk of raising a mob to hang editor Van Horn. But the mob never materialized and for three months The Journal continued to print exclusive articles that resulted in a large exodus of prospectors to the Rocky Mountain region.

From these early pioneering days, Colonel Van Horn continued to edit the paper until The Journal had seen Kansas City develop into the metropolis of the Southwest which Van Horn had predicted for the city. The paper maintained a constant vigil against retrogression in Kansas City's struggle from a dusty, mud-splattered cow-town to the modern community of wide boulevards and numerous parks of nearly a century later. Colonel Van Horn's career was indelibly interwoven with the history of Kansas City. His life embraced numerous civic and political positions including alderman, postmaster, mayor of Kansas City, soldier, member of the state legislature, and many times district representative in Congress. He was, at

²⁰"Memory of R. T. Van Horn is Still Revered in Kansas City," loc. cit.

all times, one of the city's foremost citizens.²¹

For nearly half a century, Colonel Van Horn was part of The Journal except for short lapses of time when he was serving his country as a soldier or legislator. During this time, the paper was enlarged from its traditional four pages of five columns each to eight pages of six columns. In 1872, it was incorporated under the laws of Missouri and the name simplified to Kansas City Journal. Eleven years later it became a member of the Western Associated Press and in 1893 acquired membership in the Associated Press. The paper moved into a new five-story building at Tenth and Walnut Streets in 1887.²²

Colonel Robert T. Van Horn retired from the newspaper business in 1896 and sold his interest in The Journal to a company headed by Charles S. Gleed and Hal Gaylord. For the next twenty-five years, from 1896 to 1921, the paper was under the direction of these two men.

In 1906, The Journal had a circulation of 65,370, about half the circulation of its morning rival, The Kansas City Times.²³ It was the primary organ of support for

²¹Ibid.

²²Lea, op. cit., pp. 39,40.

²³N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual, 1907.

the Republican party. The Journal published ten to twelve pages daily with seven columns to the page. It printed an infrequent half-tone, usually on an inside page. The paper did not carry a daily comic strip, but printed comics in its Sunday edition which had a circulation about equal to the weekday editions. The Journal was a respectable sheet and maintained its circulation by reason of its good morals and past record of achievement for the development of business interests in Kansas City. One historian, writing in 1908, credited the paper with having done more than all other agencies up to that time in encouraging a commercial development in the city.²⁴

The Kansas City World. The World was founded on January 11, 1894, by the World Publishing Company with Hal K. Taylor, Ohio capitalist, as the controlling spirit of the organization. The young paper was guided by Managing Editor Nain Grute, who later joined the New York Herald, and Business Manager L. V. Ashbaugh, who later left Kansas City to manage the St. Paul News in St. Paul, Minnesota.²⁵

One year after its founding, Bernard Corrigan and

²⁴Whitney, op. cit., p. 368.

²⁵Ibid., p. 395.

Dr. W. S. Woods bought a controlling interest in the paper and installed Arthur Grissom as managing editor. Grissom, a well-known writer of verse and short stories, was one of the founders and editors of The Independent in Kansas City and The Smart Set in New York City.

Two years later, the Scripps-McRae League, headed by Milton A. McRae and E. W. Scripps, acquired The World and added it to their chain of newspapers with the hope of edging into a rich territory long dominated by William R. Nelson and his Star.²⁶ This venture was not entirely successful and after struggling along for nine years, longer than any previous publishing company had been able to endure on the paper, Scripps-McRae sold The World to the Clover Leaf League.²⁷

In 1906, the paper had a circulation of 62,935, and was independent of any party affiliations.²⁸ But The World was not a financial success. It continued to publish for a short span after 1906, during which it again came under control of E. W. Scripps and his son, J. G.

²⁶George Creel, Rebel at Large: Recollections of Fifty Crowded Years (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1947), p. 35.

²⁷Whitney, loc. cit.

²⁸N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual, 1907.

Scripps. The World was abandoned in 1908.

The Kansas City Times. Published as the morning edition of Nelson's Star, The Times was a replica of its evening counterpart. In 1906, the paper boasted of a circulation of 127,172, about one thousand less than The Star's circulation.²⁹

The Times was established in September, 1868, and for two years barely survived. Under new management in 1870, the paper gained strength and readers. As the official organ of the Democratic party of Kansas City, The Times waged a spirited battle against the Republican Kansas City Journal.³⁰ Dr. Morrison Munford was secretary and manager of the company during this period. In 1875, Dr. Munford and his uncle, J. E. Munford, bought a controlling interest in The Times and a new company was formed. With Dr. Munford came real prosperity for the paper for the first time. Although he had little journalistic experience, Dr. Munford was a born newspaper man. As editor of the paper, he was a forceful writer and possessor of an uncanny news sense.³¹

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Lea, op. cit., p. 21.

³¹Whitney, op. cit., p. 377.

Under Dr. Munford's management, the newspaper had remarkable success, winning a national reputation as originator of the movement for the settlement of Oklahoma and the Indian territory. For a short while beginning in 1880, Eugene Field was managing editor of The Times. Under Field's direction, the paper became the most widely quoted newspaper west of the Mississippi River.³²

The paper was greatly affected by the real estate boom in Kansas City in 1886. Dr. Munford had unbounded faith in the city and invested heavily in property. When the boom subsided and values dropped, he lost most of the money he had invested. For the next several years, Dr. Munford concentrated all his efforts on recovering his losses, but was unsuccessful. In 1891, creditors forced him to resign as editor of the paper, and in 1895, The Times was put into receivership. Journalistic chaos prevailed at the paper as Wiley O. Cox, president of the Kansas State bank, took over as receiver and endeavored to pay off the paper's debts of two hundred thousand dollars. When the paper was ordered sold, Cox bought The Times and published it for three years.³³

³²Ibid., p. 379.

³³Ibid.

Under Cox's management business declined rapidly and subscriptions fell off. Finally, The Times was sold in 1899 to a company headed by Judge G. L. Chrisman. During the next eighteen months, the new company lost about one-hundred thousand dollars in publishing The Times. The paper went on the market again in 1901, and was sold for about one-hundred forty thousand dollars to William R. Nelson, owner and editor of The Star.³⁴

Under Nelson's tutelage, The Times dropped its former political moorings and became independent of any party alignments in the tradition of The Star.³⁵

Thus, The Post was launched upon its journalistic career in a city already saturated with newspapers. With less than three-hundred thousand population, the city was supporting four newspapers with a combined circulation of more than three-hundred eighty thousand. The Star and Times maintained that they were non-partisan, The World was independent and The Journal was a staunch supporter of the Republican party. That left only the Democratic party without a guardian and The Post stepped in to fill

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Roy Ellis, A Civic History of Kansas City, Missouri (Springfield, Mo.: Elkins-Swyers Company, 1930), p. 44.

the void until 1909 when two outsiders from Denver, Colorado, took over and made radical changes in the paper including changes in its Democratic editorial doctrine.

CHAPTER IV

BONFILS AND TAMMEN BUY THE POST

In October, 1909, Frederick Gilmer Bonfils and Harry Heye Tammen, characterized by their biographer as "The Katzenjammer Kids of the Rockies," stormed into Kansas City to establish a newspaper. Giving little thought to the giants which were already firmly established in the community, the two Denver Post publishers bought the three-year-old evening Kansas City Post. They set their paper up on "the junk-pile remains of a traction-managed newspaper," and promptly set about shocking Kansas Citians into an awareness of the new Post.¹ These two publishers brought to staid and restrained Kansas Citians, used to the modest news presentation of The Star's columns, all the wild and wooly techniques of yellow journalism which had made The Denver Post's circulation soar upward so quickly.² For thirteen years "Bon" and "Tam," as they were known to Post staffers, continued to publish The

¹Gene Fowler, Timber Line: A Story of Bonfils and Tammen (New York: Covici, Friede, 1933), p. 276.

²Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 260 Years 1690 to 1950 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 566.

Kansas City Post, matching their red headlines and sensational news techniques against The Star's traditionally conservative make-up.

Circulation of The Post in 1909, when it was purchased by Bonfils and Tammen, was fifty-five thousand and this circulation rose steadily, if not sensationally, to 154,161 in 1922, when the paper was sold.³ Although The Post reached the one-hundred thousand mark within a few short years and consistently maintained a large subscription list, The Star always received the heavier volume of advertising throughout the thirteen-year period that The Post was under Bonfils' and Tammen's domination.⁴

Yellow journalism, which began with The Journal and World in New York in 1896, and spread rapidly among other newspapers of the United States, finally reached its height about the opening of the twentieth century. Bonfils and Tammen bought The Denver Post just a month after William Randolph Hearst purchased the New York Journal and they followed in the master's footsteps in

³N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory, 1922.

⁴Darrell Garwood, Crossroads of America: The Story of Kansas City (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1948), p. 165.

the development of the yellow press.⁵ When the two Colorado publishers invaded Kansas City in 1909, they brought with them the same yellow journalistic techniques which had made The Denver Post so popular. These techniques included scare-heads printed in excessively large type in either red or black ink over relatively unimportant news as well as big stories; the lavish use of pictures on all pages where heretofore pictures had appeared infrequently and largely on the sports page; the Sunday supplement with colored comics, pseudo-scientific stories and superficial articles; a more compact eight-column page; and campaigns against abuses suffered by the little people who were the "underdogs" in the fight against the powerful rich.

Although the general effect of such news techniques was startling to refined Kansas Citians, The Post planted the seeds of modern journalism in the "City on the Kaw;" seeds which in later years were to sprout forth into general and respectable news procedures in use throughout the nation. While The Post may have jarred the reading sensibilities of the average Kansas Citian, it made a contribution to the field of journalism in that community which cannot be overlooked in sketching the history of

⁵Mott, op. cit., p. 568.

newspapers in the city. For good or bad, in October, 1909, Bonfils and Tammien planted their feet in Kansas City and vociferously announced their intentions to stay.

I. BONFILS AND TAMMIEN, THE MEN

To the people of Kansas City, Bonfils and Tammien were incredibly hard to fathom. They were a completely unmatched pair, who had somehow formed an enduring and lasting partnership.⁶ For more than a decade, this strange journalistic duo was a part of the life of Kansas City and thus became woven into the history of the city. As Mott pointed out, "To sift out the facts from the mass of mythology which quickly grew up about these paternalistic pirates of journalism is difficult, because the truth is often more incredible than the legends."⁷

Frederick G. Bonfils was born in Troy, Missouri, in 1861, the son of a probate judge whose original name was Eugene Napoleon Buonfiglio--a name which had been changed to Bonfils for purposes of simplification.⁸ His mother was Henrietta Lewis Bonfils. When Bonfils' father retired from the bench, he became an executive of the

⁶Garwood, loc. cit.

⁷Mott, op. cit., p. 569.

⁸Fowler, op. cit., p. 84.

Triple Alliance, an insurance company in Troy. Bonfils was nominated to West Point in the late 1870's and entered a class which produced such notable soldiers as John J. Pershing and Enoch H. Crowder. While at West Point, he met a young, blond girl from Peekskill, New York, named Belle Barton. In his third year at the academy in 1881, Bonfils either dropped out because he was intending to marry and knew he could not finish, or he was dropped from the academy.⁹ Bonfils' first job was in the Chemical National Bank in New York City. Then, in 1882, he married Miss Belle Barton and moved his new bride to Canon City, Colorado, where he became drill master and instructor of mathematics at a military school. After a short stay, Bonfils packed up his wife and returned to Troy where he entered the insurance business with his father.¹⁰

Bonfils, with his clipped, black mustache, possessed a dash, a charm, a poise which he used skillfully

⁹One authority is undecided on this point. He says Bonfils either dropped of his own free will or was dropped from the academy in 1881. See Fowler, op. cit., p. 85. A promotion pamphlet published by The Denver Post says Bonfils resigned from West Point so that he might be married. See Lawrence Martin, Elvon L. Howe and members of The Denver Post staff, So The People May Know, Denver, Colorado, no date, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰Fowler, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

to win the confidence of others. He had an erect and military bearing, piercing blue eyes and a voice biting or kind, soft or harsh, according to his mood at the moment. He had tremendous physical drive and kept himself in perfect condition through self-denial and by practicing his favorite pastimes of fishing and playing golf.¹¹ A perfectionist's passion for detail never cramped Bonfils' ability to look ahead and think and plan in the most sweeping of terms.

Harry Heye Tammen, "the little Dutchman," was a roly-poly, clear-skinned blond youngster with large blue eyes. When full grown, he attained a stature of only five feet seven inches. This height deficiency, coupled with a weight of 210 pounds, made Tammen look like an overstuffed doll. He often deliberately concealed his true nature by a rough and ready speech which might break forth at any moment. His own austere childhood was his source of affection for children, just as the rugged years of his younger manhood gave him a sympathy for all types of people, but particularly for those to whom life was a burden.¹²

¹¹Martin, et al., loc. cit.

¹²Ibid., p. 10.

Tammen's parents came to this country from Herdun in Hanover, Germany. He was born in Baltimore, Maryland, where his father was a pharmacist attached to the consulate of the Netherlands government. On March 6, 1856, Hey Henrich and Caroline Henrietta Piepenbrucker Tammen became the parents of a son whom they named Harry Heye.

During his early childhood, Tammen was a student in Kapp's Academy in Baltimore. This, his only formal schooling, ended when his father died in the 1860's. Mrs. Tammen, who was left penniless, was unable to support herself and her son who refused to go into an orphan's home.¹³ Thus, before he had celebrated his eighth birthday, Tammen was outfitted in a new suit of clothes and sent out to make his own way. He could not speak English, only his native tongue of German. His first job was as a porter's helper in a beer garden. Here he continued his education by reading newspapers left on the saloon tables. He learned to speak English by listening to bar patron's talk.¹⁴

Tammen slowly worked his way up tending bar in saloons. Before he was twenty-one, he had become head

¹³Fowler, op. cit., p. 44.

¹⁴Ibid.

bartender in Chicago's famous Palmer House. In 1880, Bill Bush, owner of Denver's Windsor Hotel, saw Tammen performing behind the Palmer House bar, hired him, and brought "the little Dutchman" to the West.

A partnership is formed. From his experience with patrons at the Windsor Hotel, Tammen discovered that people liked to handle bits of mineralized rock, veined with quartz or some shiny metal. Even more to his interest, he found that tourists would pay money for these bits of stone. He bought Taylor's Free Museum on Larimer Street in Denver and began creating one of the largest curio businesses in America.¹⁵ He built up a good mail-order trade in souvenirs and even published a pamphlet called The Great Divide to publicize his business. This pamphlet was Tammen's first venture into the field of journalism.

Prior to 1893, his business was estimated at a value of one hundred fifty thousand dollars, but when the panic of that year hit he lost half his business, the other half going to creditors to cover his debts. He might have declared bankruptcy and saved some of his fortunes, but Tammen refused to be known as a bankrupt.¹⁶

¹⁵Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 69.

A struggling young newspaper, The Denver Evening Post, was for sale in 1894 and Tammen needed an organ to help him on his way back to riches. But in that year, Tammen was broke and he needed cash to buy a newspaper. He decided then to leave Colorado and seek money in the East. Tammen took his inventive mind and his schemes for making fast money to Chicago where he accidentally met the backer he needed.

Bonfils was thirty-four when he first met Harry Tammen in Chicago. He was operating a lottery in Kansas City called the "Little Louisiana Lottery" and making money fast. But William R. Nelson was working hard to rid Kansas City of lotteries and Bonfils could see the "handwriting on the wall."¹⁷ The two men agreed to form a partnership, but no formal agreement was ever made or any contract signed. Theirs was a partnership of words and it was the beginning of as strong and lasting a friendship as the West would ever witness. Commenting on this strange partnership, Fowler had this to say:

The obscure meeting of these men of opposite temperament, of opposite behavior, was apparently unimportant to anyone but themselves. Yet, it was to affect the lives and thoughts of hundreds of thousands of person, shape the destiny of a

¹⁷Mott, op. cit., p. 567.

city, a state--and, within certain limits, a nation. For, from this friendship was born a blatantly new journalism, called by some a menace, a font of indecency, a nuptial flight of vulgarity and sensationalism; by others regarded as a guarantee against corporate banditry, a championing of virtue and a voice of the exploited working man.¹⁸

Founding of The Denver Post. On October 28, 1895, Stephen W. Keene, Albert Smith and Charles J. Hughes, Jr. sold The Denver Evening Post to Harry H. Tamm for \$12,500. Bonfils had provided Tamm with the necessary money for the purchase in return for which Tamm was to be the newspaper's publishing brains. The three former owners of the paper had put one-hundred thousand dollars into its operation since June 1894; they were glad to get out from under the burden with \$12,500.¹⁹

The infant Denver Evening Post had been anemic from its first breath August 3, 1892. On August 29, 1893, the Evening Post was suspended; there were no mourners except the paper's investors. The second go-round for the paper began June 22, 1894, in the midst of a national panic. A group of Democratic sponsors with one-hundred thousand dollars capital bought the paper to ensure the regular Democratic organization of a voice against the

¹⁸Fowler, op. cit., p. 87.

¹⁹Martin, et al., op. cit., p. 5.

wild Populists who had swept into state office. These backers fared little better than the paper's founders. The Denver Post fifty years later characterized the infant in this manner:

Their Evening Post had high ideals, sonorous diction, a notable dullness, few subscribers and even fewer advertisers. It was trembling on its last legs when Bonfils and Tammen appeared with real money in their hands and acquired a virtually readerless newspaper.²⁰

When Bonfils went to Denver he was 34, his partner Harry Tammen, 39. These two looked, talked and behaved differently but nevertheless in certain essentials their lives were amazingly twinned. As individuals they supplemented and complemented each other in such a way that they were to become one of the most astonishing teams in American journalism. Tammen was the idea man, the dreamer of this duo. Blond and plump, he was constantly bubbling over with schemes. He loved to coin slogans and acrobatic phrases, to upset custom and tradition and to capture the attention of others. He basked in the physical luxuries which his money brought and was a lover of indoor comforts. In contrast, Bonfils was a fierce and untiring worker, austere and brooding but dynamic. He was leanly athletic and a preacher of outdoor sport. Spartan in his personal

²⁰Ibid., p. 7.

habits, he kept a watchful eye on his bankroll, believing that money meant power and that power was the ultimate goal of life.²¹ Both of them were good newspapermen with a lively news sense. Without it they could not have made their Denver Post pay.

Bonfils and Tammen had three rivals in the Denver newspaper field: the Republican, a conservative, old-time journal; the evening Rocky Mountain News and morning Times, lively organs owned by Thomas M. Patterson. The corporation-loving Republican, by virtue of support from the upper classes, was able to stand firm against the Post's onslaught, though it made mild concessions in its Sunday supplement. The News and Times, comparatively free organs, engaged in a desperate fight for circulation, trimmed and changed month by month until they were almost as yellow as The Denver Post.²²

In their struggle to keep the paper alive, Bonfils and Tammen attracted attention by tearing into anything and everyone. They sent for some of Hearst's best writers and soon began to out-yellow Hearst himself. To make the paper different from other Denver journals, the two pub-

²¹Fowler, loc. cit.

²²Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper," Collier's, 46:18, March 4, 1911.

lishers ordered bigger headline type and red ink for the front page. "You've got to turn Denver's eyes to The Post every day, and away from the other papers," Tammen told the managing editor.²³ If in nothing else, The Denver Post was successful in its quest to capture the attention of readers.

The Denver Post was an eight-page paper doing a business of thirty-five dollars a day when Bonfils and Tammen took over in 1895. Under their management the paper prospered and grew. By 1897, the paper's annual income was \$122,000, the expenses \$117,000, leaving a profit of \$5,000. Circulation was up from six thousand to 24,599. By 1901, the circulation had climbed to more than thirty thousand, exceeding for the first time the circulation of The Rocky Mountain News, Denver's oldest newspaper.²⁴ Bonfils refused to let Tammen have more capital than the purchase price of \$12,500, insisting that the paper pay its own way. When The Denver Post began to make money after the first difficult years, every cent of its earnings was put back into the paper's development until 1908. In that year, Bonfils and Tammen began paying

²³Martin, et al., op. cit., p. 15.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 13, 19.

themselves salaries of one thousand dollars a week and also took enough out of the profits to buy The Kansas City Post the next year.²⁵

The return to Kansas City. In 1909, Bonfils and Tammen dominated the Rocky Mountain region with their Denver Post. The bankrupt newspaper which they had acquired in 1895 had come to be a ten million dollar asset. With their paper on its feet and returning a profit, the two publishers felt they could afford to expand.

Bonfils had not left Kansas City voluntarily, forsaking a business which netted him a total of eight-hundred thousand dollars.²⁶ He had left in the face of a barrage of articles in The Star condemning lotteries and pressing for blue laws outlawing gambling. Nelson campaigned so vigorously against lotteries that eventually they were barred from the state. It was probable that Bonfils, in 1909, had not forgotten the way he was treated in Kansas City, nor Colonel William R. Nelson's campaign in The Star and Times to rid Kansas City of lotteries.²⁷

²⁵Mott, op. cit., p. 568.

²⁶Irwin, op. cit., p. 19.

²⁷One authority said Bonfils was drawn back to Kansas City by a desire to avenge himself upon the publisher who had driven him out nearly twenty years before. See Mott, op. cit., pp. 566-67.

It was also true that Bonfils was a Missourian, that he knew Kansas City and that he was a shrewd businessman. He was too shrewd in his business dealings to spend money for a newspaper solely to avenge himself against one man.²⁸ Bonfils was reluctant to part with his money, believing that money meant power and that power was the ultimate goal of life.

The facts seem to indicate that Bonfils purchased The Post for two reasons: (1) to invest his money in a profit-making enterprise, and (2) to avenge himself on William R. Nelson and his Kansas City Star. When his Denver paper began returning a profit, Bonfils started casting about for a business in which to invest his money. He sought out Kansas City and invested in a business which he understood. No doubt the revenge motive played a part in Bonfils' purchase of The Post, but it was not the only motive.²⁹

In October 1909, the two Denver Post publishers bought the three-year-old evening Kansas City Post for

²⁸ Jack Carberry, who worked under Bonfils and Tammen on both The Denver Post and The Kansas City Post, said the primary reason the two publishers bought the paper was to make money. Personal interview, December 24, 1957, in Denver.

²⁹ Ibid.

\$165,000.³⁰ Bonfils had other holdings in the city; he owned real estate in Kansas City valued at one million dollars. Among his properties was the southeast corner of Walnut and Tenth Streets and the southwest corner of Twelfth and Grand Avenue. News stories printed the day of the purchase said new equipment had been ordered for The Post, including twelve type-setting machines, a type-casting machine and a Hoe straight-line press costing sixty-eight thousand dollars.³¹ A story in The Denver Post announcing the purchase said The Post's policy would be "the greatest good for the greatest number--a square deal for all."³² Bonfils announced that the publications office of The Post was to be moved from Tenth and McGee Streets as soon as desirable temporary quarters could be found. Later a permanent home would be built, Bonfils said, probably on his own property at the southwest corner of

³⁰There is disagreement on this point. Two writers said the purchase price was two-hundred fifty thousand dollars. See Fowler, op. cit., p. 276, and Mott, op. cit., p. 566. News stories in both The Kansas City Journal and The Denver Post quoted the price at one-hundred sixty-five thousand dollars. See The Kansas City Journal and The Denver Post, October 29, 1909. It is probable that the latter figure, which was reported in Bonfils' own paper, is correct.

³¹The Kansas City Journal, October 29, 1909.

³²The Denver Post, October 29, 1909.

Twelfth Street and Grand Avenue. The new plant would be a skyscraper and "one of the handsomest buildings in Kansas City."³³

New personnel. Bonfils and Tammien summoned their favorite writers from Denver to bolster up The Kansas City Post's staff. Managing editor of the paper was Charles A. Bonfils, brother of the owner, who had previously managed the editorial and news department of The Denver Post. The famed Otto Floto, one of the country's top experts on the prize fighting ring, became sports editor for The Post. Floto, who also doubled as sports editor for The Denver Post, had been a prominent fight manager before becoming a sports writer. He had managed such famous fighters as Jack Burke, Abe Attell, Fitzsimmons, McAuliffe, Corbett and Tommy Warren. As a result of his forty years of experience with the sporting world, Floto had a mental sports encyclopedia which furnished him with material and anecdotes for his daily column.³⁴ Winifred Black, wife of Charles Bonfils and "sob-sister" reporter for The Denver Post and Hearst newspapers, was to be a reporter for The Post. Cartoonists were W. C. Spencer and Frank "Doc Bird" Finch. While with The Denver Post, Finch was the working

³³The Kansas City Journal, loc. cit.

³⁴The Post, November 28, 1916.

mate of Damon Runyon. Earl Hurd, cartoonist for The Post since 1906, continued on with the paper after Bonfils and Tammen took over. Griff Jay was chief of The Post's four-man art staff. He had attended Nebraska University majoring in art and then had gone to work for Chicago newspapers as an artist. Editor of The Post was Willis King. He wrote a humor column which appeared on the editorial page daily and also directed the Sunday editorial page.

David Downing, The Post's market editor, joined the paper in 1906 and was continued on the staff when the new owners took over. Paul Thieman, formerly editorial writer for The Denver Post and the Hearst papers in New York, took charge of the editorial page of The Post on November 2, 1909. A native Kansas Citian, Thieman was a well-known newspaper writer. He developed a distinctive editorial page for The Post, probably the most attractive page of the paper. A. B. McDonald, veteran newspaperman formerly with The Star, joined The Post staff as city editor on December 13, 1909. Bonfils had lured McDonald, one of Nelson's best reporters, away from The Star with the promise of higher wages.

George K. Wallace, reporter, joined the staff in 1909, shortly after Bonfils and Tammen purchased the paper. He had come to Kansas City with the sole intention of

getting a newspaper job. When he applied at The Post, there was no opening, but Wallace reported for work at eight every morning just as if he were on the staff. Finally a big story broke and there were no reporters in the city room. Wallace was assigned the story and did such a good job that he was put on the payroll.³⁵ E. N. "Dick" Smith, reporter, joined the staff in 1910. He soon became the paper's star reporter and then was promoted to city editor.

Ralph Baird, Post photographer, attended art school in Denver. When he was eighteen, he left school to tour the world with a camera selling pictures to The Denver Post, Collier's Weekly and a New York picture syndicate. He joined the staff of The Denver Post in 1906 and was summoned to Kansas City in 1909.³⁶ Another staffer brought from Denver by Bonfils and Tammen was newspaperwoman Elizabeth Kelly. She covered some of the more sensational murder trials in Kansas City. George Creel, who later became famous on the national scene, was another ex-Denver Post staffer who worked on The Post for a short while.

Other members of The Post's reporting staff included Will J. Hobin, police reporter, who joined the

³⁵The Post, November 10, 1916.

³⁶The Post, November 7, 1916.

paper in 1906; James E. Craig, weatherman for The Post; L. V. B. Rucker; Garnett Eubank; Frank Ellis; and Thomas A. Till. Lillian Hutton was woman's editor for the paper. Nell Brinkley, premier artist of The Denver Post who had gone to New York and begun a syndicated feature, drew illustrations accompanied by sketchy essays for The Post's woman's page. Paul Gregg, Denver Post artist, had left Joseph Pulitzer's famed New York World to return to his beloved West. His paintings began appearing in The Post's Sunday supplement in 1910. L. H. Mitchell was drama editor for The Post.

Bonfils had announced when he purchased the paper that men employed on the old Post would be retained in accordance with their competency and he was true to his word.³⁷ The reorganized paper was a replica of The Denver Post although with smaller headlines. Policies and politics of the new paper were developed as The Post grew.

³⁷The Kansas City Journal, October 29, 1909.

CHAPTER V

THE POST, 1909-1915

The Star was pre-eminent in Kansas City journalism in 1909 when Bonfils and Tammen bought The Post. The most difficult task faced by the new publishers was to overcome the sacred traditions which The Star had instilled in the city's advertisers and readers. The Post was considered an outside invader by most advertisers who remained faithful to The Star. Over the years, Kansas Citians had become accustomed to The Star's restrained one-column headlines and small type. When The Post came howling onto the streets with its sensational headlines and emphasis on crime and crisis, the city's populace was shocked.¹

A contemporary journalist characterized The Star's position in Kansas City in these years in this manner:

A newspaper may, by iteration, create public opinion and public taste for almost anything--provided some rival does not contradict its iterations. . . . Nelson, with his Star and Times, for years had the Kansas City newspaper field almost to himself. He educated the readers to a taste for a calm, conservative and well-written type of reporting. When Tammen and Bonfils broke into Kansas City with their

¹Icie F. Johnson, William Rockhill Nelson and The Kansas City Star (Kansas City, Mo.: Burton Publishing Company, 1935), p. 117.

Post the publishers' hardest task was to overcome Kansas Citians' taste for Nelson's brand of journalism.²

The business merchants of Kansas City were slow in responding to the circus-poster antics of the new publishers. So great was the prestige of The Star that Nelson was in a position where he could dictate to the paper's advertisers. This enabled him to charge the advertising rates he wanted and to tell advertisers how much space they would buy.³

In mapping a campaign against Colonel Nelson, Bonfils also had figured without the realization that The Star was well entrenched in Kansas agricultural centers as well as Greater Kansas City and the surrounding community. The Post gave The Star its most lively competition for circulation and news, but it was never able to make much of an inroad on The Star's advertising. For thirteen years Bonfils and Tammen continued to publish The Kansas City Post, matching their red headlines and large type against The Star's conservative make-up. Throughout the period, The Star always received the heavier volume of advertising and the higher rates.

²Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper," Collier's 46:18, January 21, 1911.

³W. G. Clugston, "Kansas City: Gateway to What?" Our Fair City, edited by Robert S. Allen (New York: The Vanguard Press, Inc., 1947), p. 268.

I. THE POST VIOLATES JOURNALISTIC CUSTOMS

In early years, The Post was published primarily for street customers. As many as seven or eight editions a day were run off the presses printed on white, green or pink paper. A single news announcement coming in after an edition was already on the streets was an occasion for an extra with leather-lunged newsboys trooping out into the community to roust Kansas Citians out of bed.⁴ From the start, The Post's headlines and news display violated many of the journalistic customs of the day. Beginning in July 1910, the paper used red ink for front page headlines. The combination of red ink, huge headlines and a dozen different faces of type strewn about the front page dressed up the paper so that even the most nearsighted reader had no difficulty spotting The Post across the street. The red heads caused conservative Kansas City journalists to view the paper with disdain, but Tammen's philosophy was, "They sell papers, don't they?"⁵ There

⁴Edward Meisburger, "Fish, Coal, Circus, Reporters, Ballyhoo: Add Them Up and You Have the Old Post," Press Club Review, 5:2, May, 1957.

⁵Lawrence Martin, Elvon L. Howe and members of The Denver Post staff, So The People May Know, Denver, Colorado, no date, p. 25.

was also liberal use of by-lines in The Post. One reporter might have his name over four or five stories in the same edition.

Shortly after Bonfils and Tammen purchased the paper, one of the most sensational news stories in the history of Kansas City broke in the pages of The Star. Colonel Thomas H. Swope, millionaire and city benefactor, died of mysterious circumstances after a short illness. He had been treated during his sickness by his son-in-law, Dr. B. Clark Hyde. Swope was buried in the family burial plot and the story faded from the pages of the newspapers. Then Colonel Swope's body was secretly exhumed and examined for traces of poison in his system. The Post's correspondent in Independence, Missouri, where Swope had been buried, was a Colonel F. Forsha Brightman. When the story broke in The Star reporting that the body had been exhumed, The Post's city editor immediately contacted Brightman and asked how he had missed the story. Brightman said he had known about the story before The Star reporter, but since it involved some of the best families in the city he did not believe the paper would want to print it.⁶ Not to be outdone by The Star, which had a head start on the

⁶Personal interview with Edward Meisburger, former Post reporter, February 15, 1958, in Kansas City.

story, The Post assigned three reporters and a cameraman to cover the inquest and the murder trial which followed. This story called forth The Post's first large banner heads on the front page. On January 31, 1910, a triple banner ran across page one reporting that the official medical report showed that Swope had died of poisoning. Later, during Dr. Hyde's trial for murder, Post photographer Ralph Baird shot scenes in the courtroom which were printed three or four to the page as the paper maintained a running account of the trial.

On May 16, The Post devoted the entire front page to a picture of Dr. B. Clark Hyde. Aside from the paper's name plate, nothing but the picture appeared on the page. On page two, a banner in three-inch type proclaimed that Dr. Hyde was guilty and had been sentenced to prison for life. This page had a three-column picture, running the full-length of the page, of Mrs. Hyde. On page three was a facsimile of the jury's verdict with the life imprisonment sentence. Seven columns at the top of page three were devoted to pictures of the judges which heard the famous trial.⁷

The Post's treatment of the Swope case was an indication of the path the paper would follow in covering

⁷The Post, May 16, 1910.

[illegible]

Figure 2. Front page of The Post showing the first large banner headlines shortly after Bonfils and Tammen bought the paper.

other news stories of the period. It stressed the reporting of crime news, divorces, sex and disasters and gave front page emphasis to sports. In their first edition, Bonfils and Tammen ran a story on car racing on the front page under a three-column head.⁸ This was the first time sports had been given such prominent mention in The Post. Always before, these stories had been reserved for the sports page of the paper.

II. A NEW BUILDING

Bonfils and Tammen said in the announcement of their purchase of The Post that the publication office would be moved to a temporary headquarters until a new skyscraper home could be built for the paper. On March 1, 1910, The Post reported that the Mitchell Dry Goods Company building at 1009-1011 Main Street had been leased by the publishers and the paper would move into the building by May 1. The story boasted that The Post would have new and faster presses, a new art department, a new business office and new linotype machines. A gain of twelve thousand new subscribers in the last seven weeks had made the move necessary, the story stated. Remodeling of the building was delayed and The Post did not move

⁸The Post, October 30, 1909.

to its new location until June 25.

The first edition off The Post's new presses was an eight-column paper fulfilling the publishers' promise that the paper would be changed from its traditional seven-column format as soon as the new presses were installed. The new presses also gave The Post a capacity of 144,000 twelve-page papers an hour. For the first time, the paper began using red headlines. The first spectacular color display came just one week after The Post settled in its new building. On July 4, an American flag printed in red ink overlaid the entire front page.

The newsroom was on the third floor of the new five-story building and the presses were in the basement. From basement to roof, The Post's building offered everything the imagination could conjure as fitting surroundings for production of a newspaper which was self-advertised as "The Paper with a Heart and Soul." Always the show-off, the paper endeavored to be the life of the party with crowds gathered around to make up what the publishers called the "big Post family." A big plate glass window on Main Street allowed passersby to peer down into the basement where the inky pressmen tended the roaring machinery. This five-story building is now occupied by the Bond Clothing Company of Kansas City.⁹

⁹Meisburger, "Fish, Coal, Circus, Reporters, Ballyhoo: Add Them Up and You Have the Old Post," p. 2.

III. POST CRUSADES

The Post's first campaign came soon after Bonfils and Tammien had taken over the paper. This crusade pitted the paper against The Star in a fight over the extension of a franchise to the metropolitan street railway company. The Star had consistently fought extension of franchise to the railway company and The Post campaigned lustily, dubbing the opposition Star and Times the "anti-franchise heavenly twins." It even offered to sell street car tickets for four cents if the franchise passed. As the campaign moved toward a conclusion and the election loomed, The Post began a series of daily editorials on the front page under the heading "So The People May Know." One three-column editorial listed the advantages of adopting the proposed franchise and then concluded with this jab at the opposition:

There would be practically no opposition to this Street Car Franchise were it not for the malice, hatred and misrepresentation of the opposition newspapers. They want you to sacrifice your own money and your own city to help them crucify and destroy one of the most important interests in your city.¹⁰

The Post offered to deposit ten thousand dollars

¹⁰The Post, December 15, 1909.

to prove it was right about the franchise and that The Star had distorted the truth. It challenged The Star to make a similar deposit to back up its statements. The Star remained discreetly silent in the face of The Post's challenge, but maintained a constant barrage of articles against what it labeled "the franchise grab." The Post made a valiant effort, but it was fighting insurmountable odds--a newspaper which blanketed Kansas City with two daily editions.

An inconspicuous story on the front page the day after the election announced that the metropolitan franchise extension proposal had been voted down in every ward of the city but two. Never before had the city polled so large a vote in a special election. A small box in the lower right corner said The Post still believed that the street car franchise was a good thing for Kansas City and that a serious mistake was made in its defeat.¹¹

Still reeling from the defeat suffered at the hands of The Star in its first campaign, The Post began advocating another, but less explosive, issue. Theodore Roosevelt had finished his hunting trip in Africa and was making plans to sail home. The Post suggested that

¹¹The Post, December 17, 1909.

the mayors of fourteen western cities hold meetings of the chamber of commerce and other groups to adopt resolutions urging Roosevelt to return to the United States by way of the West and not the East as he planned. The Post, in cooperation with The Denver Post, agreed to pay all of the expenses of delivering the invitation. Frederick G. Bonfils and George Creel went to Khartoum with the invitation, but Roosevelt could not accept because he wanted to return by way of the East so he could attend the wedding of his son. The Post did get some good political stories from Creel, but otherwise this campaign was as fruitless as the railway franchise campaign.

The Post's most consistent and persistent campaign in this period was against The Star and William R. Nelson's crusades. The Post used cartoons, front page editorials, statements from prominent people and slanted news stories to oppose the schemes which Nelson proposed through his papers. Most important of Nelson's schemes which the paper attacked was a plan for a ten-million dollar union station park proposed in The Star in 1914. The Post pointed out that each property holder would be assessed three hundred dollars on one thousand dollars assessed land valuation if the gigantic park scheme were approved.

When Nelson sought a paved road to his newly-purchased Sin-a-Bar Farms near Grain Valley, Missouri,

The Post opposed the road, charging Nelson with the use of political influence for his own private gain. Later, when a grand jury began investigating corruption in county road work, The Post gave full coverage to what it labeled the "big steal on the William R. Nelson Road." The Post continued to snip away at the powerful Star, but Nelson chose to ignore most of the attacks, refusing to answer any of them, refusing even to admit the existence of the paper. No story appeared in The Star announcing the arrival of a new paper in Kansas City when The Post was established, nor did The Star announce Bonfils' and Tammen's invasion of the city three years later. Nelson refused to give any sign of recognition to the new paper until January of 1912, nearly six years after The Post's founding.

Nelson first took notice of the sensational newcomer in Kansas City during the pre-election rivalry of 1912, as William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt jockeyed for position on the national slate. From 1900 on, The Star had supported Roosevelt with an almost fanatical loyalty.¹² The paper's support of Roosevelt was no casual thing, but took on the nature of a real crusade. The Star never

¹²William Jackson Bell, "A Historical Study of The Kansas City Star Since the Death of William Rockhill Nelson 1915-1949." Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1949. pp. 50-51.

missed an opportunity to call its readers' attention to Roosevelt's activities and to publicize his merits long before the party convention met. When The Post began to lambast The Star's favorite of the political world, Nelson could ignore the paper no longer. The Star broke the long tradition of silence and came out with an attack on the Bonfils-Tammen organ which was heartily supporting Missouri's own Champ Clark for the election and just as heartily criticizing Roosevelt, The Star's candidate. The Post was quick to celebrate this left-handed recognition by The Star and loudly proclaimed its new-found status on its own front page. The day after The Star's attack, a four-column editorial on the front page said in part:

Of course we are tickled to have a confession from Col. Bill Nelson that The Post got his "Goat" and so was nearly everybody in town, except a few toadies. You see, folks, no man can rule or ruin a city or any one of its people at his will forever.¹³

To capitalize on the situation, Harry Tammen bought an old goat and put it in the front window of The Post building at Tenth and Main Streets, with a sign hanging around its neck reading: "The Star's Goat." In the following weeks, The Post's headlines, stories and cartoons frequently referred to Nelson's goat. Although

¹³The Post, February 13, 1912.

the health department was favorable to The Post, it was compelled by numerous citizens' complaints to order Tammen to remove the animal from the window.¹⁴ The Post asked its readers to submit suggestions on what should be done with "Bill's goat peaceably feeding on timothy hay in its front window." The comic replies were good for several humorous columns and sarcastic attacks on Nelson. Finally, the paper announced that the goat would be given to a Higginsville, Missouri, boy who was quarantined in bed with scarlet fever. The boy, Clyde Prewitt, wanted "Bill's goat" to haul a wagon which he used to deliver Post's to his Higginsville customers.

By 1914, The Post had gained a foothold in Kansas City, circulation-wise, and its influence was greater than in any previous year. It launched into the pre-election campaigns of that year with great confidence. In the summer of 1914, The Star went all out in a campaign to defeat a streetcar franchise extension. At the same time it was campaigning for a nonpartisan commission form of government for Kansas City and for a nonpartisan ticket.¹⁵ The first major set-back came for The Star this year when

¹⁴Gene Fowler, Timber Line: A Story of Bonfils and Tammen (New York: Covici, Friede, 1933), p. 282.

¹⁵Bell, op. cit., p. 53.

all three of its campaigns were defeated, largely because The Post had opposed them so bitterly. In April, The Post threw its full support behind Mayor Henry L. Jost's bid for re-election in opposition to the nonpartisan slate supported by Nelson in his Star. When the voters cast a majority of votes for Jost and the entire Democratic ticket, The Post claimed credit for the victory. A red banner across the front page announced, "The People Have Spoken." A story set four-columns wide, which covered the top quarter of the page, expressed these sentiments:

The votes of the home-owner and the tax payer have repudiated W. R. Nelson and his party.

The voters have expressed in a landslide of ballots their belief in the honesty and integrity of Henry L. Jost, The People's Mayor. . . .

Election day is past and gone. Let's forget it. The people took a peek at Burton and one peek was enough.

Now, altogether! Let's make Kansas City a bigger, better place than ever. Let's forget politics for the while and combine all our efforts to give every man, woman and child the best city in the world. Let's make the workman able and proud to own his little home.

Nothing is too good for Kansas City and her people. Here's to you, Mayor Jost! Here's to you, Good People! The Post fought your battle and is glad. The Post is going to continue to fight your battles--and make Kansas City even greater and better than ever.¹⁶

This taste of success was sweet to The Post and it made every effort to capitalize on its newly-won

¹⁶The Post, April 8, 1914.

prestige. On the day after the election, a telegram from F. G. Bonfils was printed on page one. He congratulated Charles Bonfils and Josiah M. Ward of The Post on their victory won for the people of Kansas City commenting, "It was a Post and a people's victory, and it means the passing of Boss Nelson and his personal graft, greed and selfishness."¹⁷

The Post's victory wagon rolled on during the summer and in July the people went to the polls to extend the metropolitan street railway franchise in the face of The Star's bitter opposition. The Post also won its fight against a nonpartisan commission form of government for Kansas City.

Other Post campaigns included a successful crusade to bring the cracked Liberty Bell to Kansas City for exhibit, a fight against the city's tax dodgers who falsified their property valuation statements to the tax assessment board, a crusade to find homes for the war orphans of Europe, a half-hearted fight against the evils of liquor, and a successful crusade to bring Billy Sunday to Kansas City.

¹⁷Ibid.

IV. POLITICAL SUPPORT OF THE POST

The first casualty of The Post when it came under the management of Bonfils and Termmen was the paper's front page slogan, "The West's Greatest Democratic Newspaper." Bonfils announced that the policies and politics of the paper would be developed as the paper grew. The publishers characterized their paper as being independent, but never neutral and this phrase appeared in The Post's front page editorials. The paper was even listed in Ayer's newspaper annual and directory as an independent.¹⁸ But for all its bragging, The Post was fairly consistent in its support of the Democratic party. In the city elections of 1910, 1912 and 1914, it supported the Democratic slate. In 1910, the Republicans won the city offices, but in the next two elections the Democrats were victorious. In 1912, The Post was the only daily newspaper in Kansas City to support Democrat Henry L. Jost for mayor. The Star, Times and The Journal supported the Republican's candidate. In 1912, The Post commented editorially that it owed allegiance to no political party, faction, individual or boss.¹⁹

¹⁸N. W. Ayer and Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory, 1912.

¹⁹The Post, April 1, 1912.

On the national scene, The Post might have backed Theodore Roosevelt in the 1912 election if Roosevelt had been more susceptible to The Post's invitation to visit the West in 1910 on his way home from an African hunting trip. If Roosevelt had accepted the invitation, The Denver Post would have launched him as the Republican candidate in 1912 and begun a fight for all of the reform measures which Roosevelt wanted.²⁰ It is probable that The Kansas City Post might have followed suit, but Roosevelt refused the West's hospitality to return East for his son's wedding and The Post supported Champ Clark for the nomination in 1912.

The Post heaped ridicule on William Howard Taft, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson, the three most prominent candidates in 1912, in its fight for Missouri's own Champ Clark. In early skirmishes it predicted that Clark was the only candidate who could win the election for the Democrats. When Clark could not muster the strength to gain the Democratic nomination, The Post gave its half-hearted support to Woodrow Wilson. In the same election, the paper supported Elliott W. Major, Democrat, for governor of Missouri. Teddy Roosevelt and his pro-

²⁰George Creel, Rebel at Large: Recollections of Fifty Crowded Years (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1947), p. 87.

gressive Bull Moose party were the subjects of much derision in The Post during all of the pre-election campaign. When the Republican convention met in Chicago, The Post's old enemy, Colonel William R. Nelson, was on hand to direct The Star's reporting staff and take a hand in politics. The Roosevelt group bolted the convention to organize one of its own and Nelson became national committeeman for Missouri.²¹ With Nelson and The Star actively supporting Roosevelt, The Post stepped up its campaign against the Republicans, loosing daily barrages against both Roosevelt and Nelson. In the closing weeks before the November election, the paper's front page blossomed forth with a multitude of red headlines, political cartoons and editorials. When Wilson won the presidency and Major the governorship of Missouri, The Post ran four banner headlines and a large crowing rooster on page one.²²

V. CIRCULATION AND ADVERTISING

When Bonfils and Tammien purchased The Post from the Sheridan Publishing Company, the yearly subscription

²¹Bell, op. cit., p. 51.

²²The Post, November 6, 1912.

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WILSON CARRIES 37 STATES

JACKSON COUNTY GOES DEMOCRATIC 12,000 PLURALITY

MAJOR'S PLURALITY IS GROWING

DEMOCRATS ARE WINNING IN KANSAS

The Circulation of THE POST Yesterday Was: CITY, 88,749; TOTAL, 138,146

THE KANSAS CITY POST

FIFTH YEAR KANSAS CITY, MO.—HOME EDITION—TWELVE PAGES—WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1912 PRICE ONE CENT

ON THE FIELD AT ARMAGEDDON

WILSON BY GREATEST PLURALITY

Carries 37 States for 405 Electoral Votes.

DEMOCRATIC DAY

and Senate Elected with the Next President.

DEFUNCT

Result Means for the Republic.

FALL OFF LADDER FATAL TO FORMER KANSAS CITY MAN

Thomas A. Cantrick Killed After Being Struck by Electric Trolley in St. Louis.

WILSON AND MAJOR WIN IN MISSOURI BY 65,000

Wilson and Major carried Missouri by the largest plurality ever given to presidential candidates in the state. Their plurality will be about 65,000. That heavy margin leaves no room for anything but complete victory, and there were big Democratic gains in several of the counties. However, notwithstanding the fact, due to the vast majority of votes, the president elect for the United States is Woodrow Wilson.

WILSON AND HODGES HOLD KANSAS LEAD

Wilson, Thompson and Hughes are the victors in Kansas, carrying 100 of the 110 counties. The Democratic majority in the state is about 10,000. The Republican majority in the state is about 10,000. The Democratic majority in the state is about 10,000. The Republican majority in the state is about 10,000.

THE VOTE IN KANSAS CITY

The following table shows the vote cast for each candidate in Kansas City. The figures are based on the official returns from the city clerk's office. The figures are based on the official returns from the city clerk's office.

Candidate	First Ballot	Second Ballot	Third Ballot	Total
Wilson	40,000	10,000	5,000	55,000
Major	35,000	5,000	2,000	42,000
Hodges	10,000	2,000	1,000	13,000
Thompson	5,000	1,000	500	6,500
Hughes	2,000	500	200	2,700

WILSON AND MOOSERS IN FULL FLIGHT

Voters Answer Bryan's Attacks on Judge Martin.

TICKET SWAMPED

Every Star Candidate and Lower Means Crumbling Defeat.

STRONG FOR WILSON

Democrats Plurality in Jackson County Placed at 12,000.

TOTAL CITY VOTE FOR PRESIDENT

Candidate	First Ballot	Second Ballot	Third Ballot	Total
Wilson	40,000	10,000	5,000	55,000
Major	35,000	5,000	2,000	42,000
Hodges	10,000	2,000	1,000	13,000
Thompson	5,000	1,000	500	6,500
Hughes	2,000	500	200	2,700

Figure 3. Front page of The Post reporting the victory of the paper's candidates in the state and national elections of 1912.

rate was five dollars. The new owners lowered the price to two dollars and sixty cents a year in 1910 and the price never went above three dollars during this period. The paper sold for a penny a copy on the streets or five cents a week delivered to the home. This included the Post's Sunday edition.²³ In August 1910, the paper was boasting a circulation of 52,758. By 1915, The Post had more than doubled this figure, with 126,646 readers of its daily edition and 114,000 for Sunday.²⁴ This phenomenal increase of nearly fifteen thousand readers a year for the five-year period 1910 to 1915 was not matched by a corresponding increase in advertisers.

In 1914, The Post faced the facts and admitted editorially that advertisers were aloof. It charged that this was a result of a conspiracy between the merchants and Nelson's Star. This year, the paper filed a damage suit for two-hundred thousand dollars against The Star charging that advertisers in Kansas City had been intimidated and coerced by Nelson through the columns of his newspaper. The Star attempted to have the suit dismissed on the basis that The Post had not named a single adver-

²³The Post, December 4, 1910.

²⁴N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory, 1915.

tiser who had been intimidated by a member of its staff.

The Post countered with an editorial claiming that The Star was seeking to dodge the suit on a technical point.

The editorial concluded:

That the Star was plainly seeking to keep out of court--apparently afraid to go before the people--was evident. The Post brought this suit several weeks ago and every effort has been made by the Star to keep from facing the real issue-- THAT ADVERTISERS IN KANSAS CITY HAVE BEEN INTIMIDATED AND COERCED BY MR. NELSON THROUGH THE COLUMNS OF THE STAR.²⁵

The judge was not sympathetic to The Post's plea and the case was thrown out of court. Failing to gain satisfaction via the legal avenues, The Post began a series of front page editorials headed "So The People May Know" exposing the conspiracy between Nelson and the city's merchants. The paper pointed out that it carried as much foreign advertising as The Star and that the railroads and advertisers outside Kansas City supported The Post even more heavily than The Star. The Post claimed a larger local circulation, within Kansas City itself, than the opposition Star, but in spite of this fact the paper said:

The merchants still continue the quiet, secret boycott of The Post all at the suggestion and demand of Mr. Nelson, and they still trot down to his office and give him their money, not once

²⁵The Post, March 4, 1914.

a day but twice a day, and so The Post is tired of this kind of a one-sided, unfair boycott. . . .²⁶

There were fifty-seven members, firms and corporations in Kansas City which belonged to the Merchant's Association in 1914.²⁷ Twenty-two of these merchants used The Post's advertising columns, but the other thirty-five did not patronize the paper at all. Included among the merchants using The Post were: Geo. B. Peck, Dry Goods Co.; Appenstein Jewelry Co.; B. Adler Millinery Co.; G. Bernheimer Bros. & Company; Bunting Stone Hardware; Cady & Olmstead Jewelry Co.; Emery, Bird, Thayer Dry Goods Co.; W. M. Federman Drug Co.; Guernsey and Murray Grocery Co.; Carl Hoffman Music Co.; Nat. D. Jones; Kahn Clothing Co.; May-Stern Co.; Niles-Mosher Cigar Co.; North-Mehornay Furniture Co.; Rothschild & Sons; Schmelzer Arms Co.; Van Dyke Furs Co.; Fred Wolferman Grocery Co.; Woolf Bros. Co. and Standard Furniture Co.²⁸ These merchants were not exactly liberal supporters of The Post. Therefore, the paper had to rely on the railroads, patent medicines and the beer and liquor industry for the greatest amount of its advertising copy.

²⁶The Post, April 16, 1914.

²⁷The Post, April 17, 1914.

²⁸Ibid.

The Post even went so far as to accuse the merchants who used its columns of inserting small advertisements just to maintain space rates while giving the bulk of their business to The Star. Most frequent recipients of these charges were Emery, Bird, Thayer Company and the Jones Dry Goods Company. On May 14, half of the front page was devoted to an editorial on this theme. The Post charged that Emery, Bird, Thayer Company occupied the position of strangler for William R. Nelson. The editorial commented in part:

For years this firm has tried to strangle every other newspaper that ever was started or printed in Kansas City, giving practically all of its advertising to the Nelson papers and starving to death, by degrees if possible, Mr. Nelson's competition. They did this to the Kansas City World, they have done this to the Kansas City Journal and are now trying to strangle The Kansas City Post.²⁹

The Post tried a variety of stunts to bolster up its lagging classified advertisement lineage. It offered a free pound of butter, a loaf of bread, a can of Log Cabin syrup, a pound of coffee, Roi Tan cigars and a pound of chocolate cremes during successive weeks for one Sunday classified advertisement. The want ads poured in and The Post gave away hundreds of premiums. In one month.

²⁹The Post, May 14, 1914

The Post published 10,274 more want ads than for the same month of the previous year.³⁰ The number of want ads in the Sunday edition increased to twelve full pages while free gifts were being offered as incentives. In the daily edition, with no free incentive, the classifieds continued at about the same rate throughout the period--one page a day.

Advertising took a noticeable upturn after The Post's victory in the election campaigns of 1914. Advertisements increased in size and frequency from such reputable firms as Woolf Brothers, Morton's, Larkins, The Kahn Company, Bentley's and Rothschilds. The Post had gained 93,016 lines of advertising in 1913 over the previous year.³¹ For 1914, its gain jumped to 428,232 more lines of advertising printed than were printed in 1913.³²

By the end of this period, The Post was claiming a circulation of eighty thousand within the city limits of Kansas City. It estimated that there were sixty-two thousand homes in Kansas City, so the editors figured each home was receiving at least one paper.³³ The Post had

³⁰The Post, November 2, 1914.

³¹The Post, January 4, 1914.

³²The Post, January 2, 1915.

³³The Post, April 15, 1914.

finally blanketed the city with its daily edition.

VI. A CRUSADE ENDS

During 1914, The Post had made one charge after another against the publisher and editor of The Star. During this entire period, the paper's most persistent campaign was against Nelson and his influence in Kansas City. Victory in the election campaigns of 1914 encouraged the paper to strike out more boldly against its prime enemy. It accused Nelson of dodging city real estate taxes and pointed out that if he were successful in evading taxes other rich men might think they had the same right. In one particularly biting attack the paper commented, "If Nelson would make an honest return, more people would feel like doing the same."³⁴

This was to be The Post's last campaign against Nelson, the man, for early in the morning of April 13, 1915, he died of uremic poisoning. He was seventy-three years old.³⁵ On this date a modest one-column head discreetly pushed to the bottom of The Post's front page announced, "William R. Nelson, Veteran Editor, Called by Death." The story said that until his recent illness, Nelson had taken great interest in the editorial campaigns

³⁴The Post, August 18, 1914.

³⁵Bell, op. cit., p. 55.

of his paper for relief of the poor in winter, building of roads, changes in the election laws and the introduction of jitney service by motor cars.³⁶ No picture accompanied the brief story. An editorial on the back page of the paper had this to say about the famed publisher:

Out of the life of Kansas City there has passed a great force, a power--a personality that so multiplied itself as to almost raise itself to the dignity of an institution.

For William R. Nelson is dead!

.

What measure of worth, what measure of good was contained in the principles he advocated, and for which he fought, will live--and this will be his real monument.

For the memory of his mistakes--and he was as human in his errors as in his triumphs--will pass with the passing of the man.

Only the good lives on!³⁷

VII. A NEW EDITOR

On October 15, 1915, The Post carried a three-column picture of Attorney Frank P. Walsh on the front page with this announcement underneath:

So that the public may be informed, I desire to announce that, as attorney for the owners of The Kansas City Post, I have assumed sole direction of the editorial, news and business policies of the paper.³⁸

³⁶The Post, April 13, 1915.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸The Post, October 15, 1915.

This same announcement appeared on the editorial page for the next five days. Boyd F. Gurley became managing editor under Walsh, who was listed in the paper's mast as publisher and editor of The Post.

Walsh, a nationally prominent attorney, was fifty-one when he took over editorship of The Post. The son of a wholesale grain dealer of St. Louis, he had attended Christian Brothers Academy and public night school in St. Louis. He was admitted to the bar in 1889 and entered practice as a member of the firm of Douglass and Walsh. In 1892, he was appointed assistant city councilor and he served the city of St. Louis for three terms. A strong Democrat, he took an active part in many political campaigns. He was a member of the Democratic State Central Committee in 1898 and 1900 and a member of the Executive Committee in 1906.³⁹

He was trial attorney for the Metropolitan Street Railway Company of Kansas City and acted as president of the civil service board to institute municipal civil service in the city. On June 10, 1913, he was appointed by President Woodrow Wilson to the chairmanship of the

³⁹M. L. Van Nada, editor, The Book of Missourians (Chicago: T. J. Steele and Co., Publishers, 1906), pp. 46-47.

United States Commission on Industrial Relations.⁴⁰ Walsh was admitted to the New York Bar in 1919. He was chairman of the St. Lawrence Waterway Commission and president of the Society of Medical Jurisprudence. He died in New York City, May 2, 1939. "Mr. Walsh was one of the nation's outstanding lawyers."⁴¹

Walsh was quoted in The Post as saying, "All my days I have wanted to be the editor of a great newspaper. This is to be the biggest and most enjoyable adventure of my life."⁴² The Post had been considered an outsider when it came under the ownership of Bonfils and Tammien, two men who lived and spent most of their time in Denver. During all of this period, it was managed by outsiders transplanted in Kansas City solely to direct a newspaper. Walsh was a Missourian and a prominent attorney. He had been in and around Kansas City since 1896 when the Metropolitan Street Railway Company hired him to fight its legal battles. In 1915, the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations, which Walsh had headed, had just

⁴⁰Walter B. Stevens, Missouri, The Center State 1821-1915 (St. Louis J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915), pp. 774-775.

⁴¹"Historical Notes and Comments," The Missouri Historical Review, 33:592, July, 1939.

⁴²The Post, November 5, 1915.

submitted its report to the president. The report gained national recognition. But for his lack of newspaper experience, Frank P. Walsh was a perfect choice to take over the direction of The Post in its struggle for acceptance among Kansas Citians.

During the six months Walsh was editor of the paper, there was some noticeable improvement in its general journalistic content and approach to the news. The Post's editorial page was expanded to cover a broader field of subjects, particularly labor relations. Walsh's hand was noticeable in the national labor reforms which the paper supported during these few months. The tone and style of editorials was more sophisticated and less vindictive. There were fewer banners across the front page and more one and two-column headlines. A conspicuous change was the absence of red headlines in The Post. Although better written, editorials continued a scathing attack on The Star and August Seested, the paper's general manager. Otherwise, The Post continued the journalistic techniques which had been successful in gaining it nearly seventy-five thousand readers in the five years from 1910 to 1915.

Six months after Walsh came to the paper, an announcement on the back page reported his retirement as publisher of The Post. The announcement stated that he

would continue with the organization as attorney for the paper and legal representative of Bonfils and Tamm.⁴³ Thus it was that Frank P. Walsh, Kansas City's most prominent attorney, left The Post as he had come, with no fanfare, only a small announcement on the editorial page.

VIII. POST STAFF MEMBERS

Some of the more important members of The Post's reportorial staff at the close of this period in 1915 included: Boyd Gurley, managing editor; Dick Smith, city editor, who had moved up from reporter when he was only twenty-three years old thus making him one of the youngest editorial bosses in the country; the famed Otto Floto, sports editor; David Downing, market editor and W. Ross Slaughter, financial editor.

In The Post's sports department was Benson "Bugs" Hardaway, Freeman Alford, Jack Hellman, Walter C. Hoban and Thomas A. Dorgan. Reporters included Miss Vina Lindsay, who began working on The Post immediately after graduation from the University of Missouri School of Journalism in 1913; George K. Wallace, court reporter; William G. Secrist, Kansas City, Kansas, correspondent;

⁴³The Post, May 1, 1916.

Miss Francis Davis, music editor and news reporter; Will J. Hobin, police reporter and oldest employee of the editorial staff in point of service in 1915; Fred T. Barton, special writer; Guy Housley, rewrite and special feature writer; and Harry S. Davis, editor of The Post's school page.

Griff Jay was chief of the art staff. Under him was Paul Gregg, the "Frederick Remington of the newspaper world"; Charles Fred Rapp, layout artist; and Frank "Doc Bird" Finch, cartoonist. Ralph Baird was the paper's photographer and Fay King wrote a column of humor and philosophy for The Post.

During the six years of this period, The Post used all of the yellow journalism techniques which Bonfils and Tammien had practiced in Denver. Toward the end of the period, in 1915 and early 1916, The Post reached the height of its sensational news tactics. As the paper gained circulation and influence in Kansas City, it could afford to begin discarding some of its more blatant ways. The first to go was the paper's red headlines, a Post innovation that so shocked Kansas Citians that the readers never fully adjusted to a front page splashed with red ink.

Other journalistic techniques introduced by The Post in Kansas City were of more practical value and

remained a part of the paper during all of the Bonfils-Tammen regime. Such innovations as the financial edition on pink paper, daily comic strips, an eight-column page, multi-column pictures on the front page, banner headlines throughout the paper and an increased emphasis on sports news were instituted during this period. Though considered sensational techniques at the time, some of these methods have become the general practice of newspapers today.

CHAPTER VI

THE LATER YEARS, 1916-1922

For the first part of this period, under Frank P. Walsh's editorship, The Post was more sedate, frequently with one-column headlines on the front page over big news stories. There were more editorials and they were more skillfully written. Most noticeable of all, there were few, if any, red headlines in the paper. Stories were less scandalous; sex, murder, rape, death appeared less frequently in headlines and stories. Only a few stories received banner headlines on page one.

With Walsh's hasty departure from the journalistic field, The Post changed rapidly to blatant headlines emphasizing murder, crime and human emotion. Banner heads began appearing frequently on page one and most headlines ran at least two columns with some four or more columns. The Post's front page became cluttered with stories, each one vying for the reader's attention. As if to atone for its sedate ways of the previous six months, The Post became more sensational than ever before.

I. THE POST REPORTS THE WAR NEWS

The First World War had broken out in June 1914, when Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian

throne, was assassinated at Sarajevo. But in Kansas City in 1916, the war was yet only a European conflict and people were hoping it would soon be over.

Nearer at home, the United States had become engaged in a conflict with Mexico. Pancho Villa had rebelled against Venustiano Carranza's Mexican government and taken control of the northern part of Mexico in defiance of Mexican officials. This erupted into a near-war in March 1916, when Villa raided the town of Columbus, New Mexico, and wantonly massacred American citizens. The Post carried a running account of the punitive expedition under General John J. Pershing which was sent into Mexico to capture the bandit-rebel and his small army. In June, the front page was covered with reports of the ensuing battle expected when the seventeen thousand Mexicans commanded by Villa would finally meet Pershing's forces. This same month, The Post printed six American flags in red ink on its front page accompanied by a photo of Kansas City boys leaving for training at Camp Clark.¹ General Pershing did not capture Villa and his army, but he did crush the Villa power and the threat to the Southern United States.

¹The Post, June 19, 1916.

Domestic news of the election campaign pushed news of the war in Europe to the inside pages for a while in 1916. That was the year Kansas City hit the sawdust trail with Billy Sunday and The Post carried a full account of his crusade. Sunday was in Kansas City partly because of The Post's urging. During the religious revival, the paper invited Sunday to meet another great champion, Jess Willard, in its offices. A four-column picture on the front page showed the "world's two greatest fighters" meeting at The Post building.²

As war clouds loomed and it became increasingly evident that the United States could not escape war with Germany, The Post joined in the patriotic fervor which was sweeping the country. A red American flag captioned with the pledge of allegiance appeared in the upper left corner of the front page. This two-column flag became a regular fixture of the paper's front page in 1917. In April 1917, The Post reported the passage of the war declaration in Congress and commented:

We are at war--a holy war in defense of liberty, equality, the rights of man.

This is a war to the finish, no mere giving of moral sympathy. This is a war for peace--to end all wars so men may live unmenaced.³

²The Post, May 1, 1916.

³The Post, April 3, 1917.

THE 21 AC. BUDGET

EACE OFFER OR BULGARS ND TURKS

Deal Probably Will Be Made at Allied Conference in Washington—Both Nations Have Asked Russia to End War—Crushing of U. S. Debt and Big Loans Also to Be Considered

D. JOHN EDWIN HUNTER

WAR COMMISSIONS WILL GO TO EUROPE GERMAN ARMY FORCED TO RETREAT

PUBLISHED IN THE HEART OF AMERICA—MOST PROSPEROUS DISTRICT OF U. S. A.

THE KANSAS CITY POST

TWELFTH YEAR **Eight Pages** **KANSAS CITY, MO., SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 1917.** **4 o'Clock Edition** **PRICE 10c** **THE KANSAS CITY STAR**

KAISER WILHELM REPORTED IN HOLLAND ON SECRET MISSION HAIG'S MEN PUSH TEUTON FRONT BACK

All Good Americans!

**GAS CO. IS SUED
FOR \$5.50 FOR
STOPPING SUPPLY**

1. W. Thacker Alleges Conspiracy To Force Payment of Another's Bill

**British Closing In on Laos With Other Soldiers
and the French on Outskirts of St. Quentin.
More Villages Are Taken in Big
Smash**

EXTENSION, August 14.—(Continued previous) in shorting the railroad company
held in favor of the committee and of the Senate. Senate. In August
from Washington, the attention was held in holding.

**GERMAN RAIDER
SEEN OFF BRAZIL**

AMERICAN MUNITION FACTORIES' OUTPUT IS ALMOST UNLIMITED

M
... Shows at Least 10,000 Bag Shells
Continuous Suppliers of Smaller Calibers
as He Manufactured

WEATHER FORECAST

CITY WORKERS RENEW AT MOVING PROTEST

Subscription List for Trainer Withdrawn After Overburdened Employees Protest

PARTIES IN HOUSE UNITE TO RUSH BOND BILL TO A VOTE

Speakers Declare It Is Immaterial Whether Allow
Repay Loan of \$3,000,000,000—Declare They
Are Enthusiastic Builders of the United States.

MOOSE TO MERGE WITH PROTESTANTS

© 2000 Blackwell Science Ltd, *Journal of Internal Medicine* 247: 391–397

**JUSTIFIES KILLING
OF A PRO-GERMAN**

Board Members Freed of Mur- der Charge in Slaving of N. O. Paoletti

ATTEMPT TO BLOW UP N. Y. GLOBE'S OFFICE IS FOILED

Huge Shell Placed So That Starting of Piers Would Have Caused Blast, Minnesota Guards Attacked by Sows.

FREE GARDEN SEEDS

[illegible]

12.251 AUTOMOBILES
ARE REGISTERED IN E. C.

The sign was a strong and the state
of the law is different from the state.

POST'S "BEAUTY PARTY" COUPON

MONDAY FOR WOMEN MEMBERS OF
THE POST BEAUTY CLUB **2 O'CLOCK**

The Coupon Wins Adult Age Group Winner of The Post to the
"Beauty Party" to be Given by

MISS VERA ROENN

The "FASHION SHOW" Room, at The Postman Theater
WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 14, 2 P.M.

NOTE:—This coupon is good only with the regularity of the Standard
Life Open membership—see early to get a seat.

Figure 4. Typical front page of The Post during World War I with an American flag captioned by the pledge of allegiance in column one.

President Woodrow Wilson's complete war message to Congress was printed on the back page under a series of red flags printed across the top of the page.⁴

The Post began a regular feature called "War Preparedness in the Garden" with tips on the best methods of growing vegetables. Front page cartoons by Paul Gregg symbolized the American spirit as people prepared for an all-out war. The complete list of names and draft numbers of men inducted in the first selective draft ever held in Kansas City covered most of the front page and seven inside pages of The Post on July 20, 1917. Josiah M. Ward, former managing editor of The Post and for many years editor of The Denver Post, left for Europe as a special war correspondent to give The Post a first-hand account of the conflict from the battlefields.

The paper started a campaign for funds to send cigarettes to the boys at the front. Red, white and blue barrels were placed on the street so Kansas Citians could contribute to the "Smokes for ~~the~~ Sammies" fund. A daily column listed the contributors and the amount of cigarettes sent overseas. When members of The Post staff were called into service, they took their typewriters with them and began daily columns from the army camps. David E. Dexter

⁴Ibid.

wrote frequent stories on the activities at Camp Funston, Kansas.

A series of war maps appeared charting the progress of the allied advances in Europe. Another feature of The Post during the war years was war stories run in serials. These included such articles as Brand Whitlock's eye-witness account of the war in Belgium, a book by Arthur Empey entitled Over The Top, relating the tragedies, sacrifices and dangers of war at the front lines, and an article by a soldier wounded in battle entitled, "How It Feels to Be Bayoneted." The last article was accompanied by photographs and illustrations.

Bylines were as frequent as ever in The Post during these years, but the specific reporter was not always named. Stories frequently carried the byline "By Post War Expert" or "By Post War News Editor" or simply "From the Battlefields."

With a war raging in Europe, The Post became embroiled in a conflict in Kansas City. As the war hysteria mounted during 1918, a momentary hatred of aliens swept over the country. Americans forgot mercy and tolerance and compassion and launched a legal witch-hunt against German-Americans, all things German and anti-war radicals and progressives. Many states forbade the teaching of German or church services and other activities conducted

in German.⁵ The Post supported the patriots in Kansas City who were fighting to have German banned from the public schools. Front page editorials demanded that the school board take action to purge the schools of any contact whatever with the enemy nation. When the school board was reluctant to act, it was characterized by the paper as being too timid, greedy or political to do its duty. The campaign raged on for several months during the spring and summer, but news of the impending victory in Europe soon pushed this crusade from the pages of the paper.

The Post viewed with suspicion German overtures for a peace settlement which would be liberal to the Reich. As the war drew to a close the paper urged the President not to accept any settlement unless it was an unconditional surrender of all German forces. A front page editorial pointed out in part:

Peace with a people who have shown such brutality and lack of honor is possible only when they surrender their weapons, only when they are powerless for evil, only when they place themselves where never again can they destroy and murder and ravage.⁶

⁵Arthur S. Link, American Epoch: A History of The United States Since the 1890's (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, pp. 214-216.

⁶The Post, October 14, 1918.

When news of the signing of the armistice broke, The Post issued an extra with a banner head on page one announcing, "GERMANY IS FORCED TO HER KNEES."⁷

II. A HOLY ALLIANCE

Shortly before The Post was sold by Bonfils and Tammen in 1922, to be merged with Walter S. Dickey's morning Kansas City Journal, the paper assumed an aura of respectability befitting its eventual betrothal to the staid and venerable Journal. This happened in January 1919, when Dr. Burris Jenkins, pastor of the Linwood Community Church, became publisher and editor.

Dr. Jenkins was a native Kansas Citian. He had graduated from Bethany College in West Virginia in 1891, and then had gone to work on the old Kansas City Times as a cub reporter before entering the ministry a few months later. He spent four years in post-graduate work at Harvard and Yale, then accepted a pastorate in Santa Barbara, California. He was president of Transylvania University in Kentucky from 1901 to 1907, when he became pastor of Kansas City's Linwood Community Church.⁸ In

⁷The Post, November 11, 1918.

⁸"Historical Notes and Comments," The Missouri Historical Review, 39:571-572, July, 1945.

1919, he was nationally known as a minister, author of popular novels, public speaker and intellectual politician.

On January 7, 1919, The Post covered its front page with the announcement of Dr. Jenkins' acceptance of direction of the paper. William M. Barton, publisher of the paper since 1916, had died in December, 1918, and the owners had been deluged with applications for the vacancy. All other applicants were automatically eliminated when Dr. Jenkins indicated he was available. The owners boastfully commented:

In this appointment The Post assumes greater responsibilities to the Nation, to the State and to the People. His coming with us is a cause for great joy and pride. It means to you a bigger and better paper; a greater power for the achievement of higher ideals, and of greater service to this community, and with the splendid record of Doctor Burris Jenkins The Post can but believe that no man or woman in this marvelous city and surrounding country can feel that he or she has quite done his full duty without reading the inspiring messages that Doctor Jenkins will have for all mankind.⁹

During World War I, Dr. Jenkins had tried to enter the service, but was rejected because of a stiff knee which later resulted in amputation of a leg. He went overseas nevertheless as a worker for the Young Men's

⁹The Post, January 7, 1919.

Christian Association.¹⁰ From the war he came back a militant champion of President Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations. His coming on as editor of The Post had mutual advantages to both him and to the publishers of the paper. Dr. Jenkins wanted to make a fight for the League of Nations and The Post wanted to make a front of respectability for Kansas Citians.¹¹

Dr. Jenkins maintained editorship of what was often labeled a rowdy outlaw newspaper without relinquishing his pulpit in the large and respected Linwood Community Church. A staff member of The Post commented on the advent of the new editor-publisher:

It was no surprise, and no shock either to The Post staff that the good doctor came to the office in a low-slung, red Stutz Bearcat, immensely enjoying a cigaret as he flew along at 35 miles an hour.¹²

Although some of the more conservative members of his congregation frowned upon his editorship, calling it an "unholy alliance," for three years he directed the editorial policy of The Post.

¹⁰Edward Meisburger, "Always the Show-Off, Post Summoned Most Spectacular Minister as Editor," Kansas City Press Club Review, 6:2, August, 1957.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

Dr. Jenkins frequently contributed an intelligently written page-one editorial to the paper. In addition, he wrote a daily front-page column which he entitled "Nubbins," meaning runty ears of corn as designating humble paragraphs on philosophy, anecdotes and comments on the news of the day. This column closely resembled another column carried in The Post written by Arthur Brisbane and called "Today." Dr. Jenkins also printed contributions from staff members in his "Nubbins" column. Writers received vouchers for amounts ranging from two dollars and fifty cents to ten dollars for a single contribution.¹³

That the new editor had high aspirations for The Post was evident in his salutatory which stated:

We believe a newspaper belongs to all the people, should be advised by all the people, and is not the property of its owners to do with what they will. The editorial doors of this paper, then, are to be wide open to all comers who have honest advice to offer. We shall need all the help we can get. . . .¹⁴

Dr. Jenkins ended his first message by commenting that he believed in Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations.

While Dr. Jenkins was editor, The Post launched a campaign to present General John J. Pershing with a gold sword. The idea was conceived by the paper and it started

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴The Post, January 7, 1919.

the campaign by donating five hundred dollars. The finished sword, which cost five thousand dollars, was set with eighty-three precious stones, including diamonds, rubies and sapphires, mounted in eighteen-karat gold.¹⁵ A colorful character, Steve O'Grady, was assigned to the story and he wrote daily columns for several weeks in building up to the climax, which was the presentation of the glittering sword to General Pershing in old Convention Hall. On the day of the event there was a packed house and the stage was filled with local and national celebrities. Dr. Jenkins had met General Pershing in Europe, and, being editor of The Post, as well as an accomplished public speaker, he was chosen to present the sword. A six-column photograph covered most of the front page of the paper that day showing the people who jammed Convention Hall to see General Pershing receive a gold sword.¹⁶

It was during Dr. Jenkins' regime that a famous actress, author and movie star joined the staff. Miss Gene Gauntier, who had acted in and produced moving pictures in Canada, Mexico, Ireland, England, Scotland and Germany, became Post dramatic editor. She had pro-

¹⁵The Post, January 4, 1919.

¹⁶The Post, January 11, 1919.

duced the first motion picture, "From the Manger to the Cross," ever to be shown at prices higher than a dime. In addition, Miss Gauntier had discovered David W. Griffith and given him his first instruction in directing a moving picture. He later became famous for his picture "Birth of a Nation."¹⁷ Miss Gauntier wrote a column on the amusement world and reviewed stage plays in Kansas City for the paper during a few months of 1919 before she moved on to greater heights.

Because of his love for writing and his early experience as a reporter for the old Kansas City Times, Dr. Jenkins was always sympathetic to the man who was out of work and looking for a job on The Post's staff. He recommended Albert Robinson, now of The Star's Sunday staff, to The Post's city editor as a good prospective reporter.

There were some evident changes in the paper's general content and journalistic approach during the first year of Dr. Jenkins' regime. The Post's front page make-up became almost static with a "Nubbins" column occupying the left-hand column, a seven-column banner across the top of the page leading down into the big story at the extreme right, an editorial headed "As We See the Right" in the

¹⁷The Post, January 19, 1919.

lower right corner, two or three stories with two-column headlines and the rest of the stories with one-column headlines.

During Dr. Jenkins' tenure, The Post announced a seven-point program for the improvement of Kansas City. The points which were listed daily on the editorial page included:

- (1) Wider streets, better paved
- (2) A million people in ten years
- (3) A new city charter
- (4) Factories for Kansas City
- (5) Ozark water
- (6) Adequate transportation facilities
- (7) Public comfort stations and drinking fountains

The Post also featured a Washington column by David Lawrence and a column by Arthur Brisbane called "Today."

Throughout his editorship, Dr. Jenkins campaigned vigorously for the League of Nations. He often pointed out that to oppose the League was to oppose Americanism, commenting:

And the little two-by-four, hide-bound envious and self-seeking politicians of both parties, as well as the purblind newspapers, who cannot see through the grime of their cobwebbed brains, would better either get into the band wagon or get out of the way before they are run over. The League of Nations is a-coming.¹⁸

¹⁸The Post, January 9, 1919.

Nubbins
© 1930 J. H. NUBBINS**BLAST WARNING A HOAX**

PUBLISHED IN THE HEART OF AMERICA—MOST PROSPEROUS DISTRICT OF THE WORLD

KANSAS CITY POST

1 Fourth Year

12 Pages

Kansas City, Mo., Tuesday, September 21, 1930

4 o'Clock Edition

Price Two Cents

**CROWD AWAITS
HOUR SET FOR
N. Y. EXPLOSION****POLICE LAY
SIEGE TO
BLACK BELT
IN CHICAGO**

PRIEST HALTS MOB IN GRAY MURDER

**BABY, FOUND IN LOFT,
RETURNED BY BURGLARS****BLOOD STAINS ON
DEATH BAR MAY
SOLVE MYSTERY****HAMLET HARDING.**

"To London or Not to London, That Is the Question."

Nervously Expectant Throng Lines the Streets Around U. S. Customs House Until 2 o'Clock, Then Turns Away Almost Disappointed; No Sign of Trouble

**PLASTERERS' STRIKE
IS CONDEMNED BY
K. C. LABOR UNIONS****GULF ZONE NERVOUS
AS STORM NEARS**See Page 1, Column 1
**LOOKS FOR EXPLOSION IN
OLD STUMP POND****THE WEATHER****HOLD-UP VICTIM IS
ROBBED AT HOME**BY MIRRORS, CROWD WATCHES
MAN DIE AT BOTTOM OF WELL**POLISH WOMAN IN AMERICAN HOME IN
K. C., K., CALLS U. S. 'HEAVEN ON EARTH'**Mrs. A. Gustava, With Three Children, Counts Her Fate
Laid After Separation of Seven Years; Describes
Life of Jew in Poland as That of Dog, Assure Her
Laws Were Saved by Payment of \$400. Army Of
Last Day's Murder of Five**LENGTHEN ODDS
ON HARDING, 4-1**See Page 1, Column 1
Many Voters, Making the Best
of a Bad Situation, Are in a
Mood of Despair**FORD SLASHES CAR
PRICES TO FORCE OUT
HOARDED MATERIALS**Manufacturers' Association
Reduces on Average
\$1.10 a Month**CALL K. C. DEMOCRATS
TO ARRANGE FOR COX****MAYOR APPROVES
CANOPY TO TRAHS
AT UNION STATION**See Page 1, Column 1
Narrow Protection Needed at
South Terminal; No Head
Apparent Idea**BURGLAR'S TOOLS FOUND
IN BOOM OF SUSPECT****AS WE SEE THE RIGHT**

Charles Harding is a native son of the State of Kansas. He was born in the town of Lawrence, Kas., and is now a resident of the city of Kansas City, Mo. He is a member of the United States Senate, and is the only member of the Senate from the State of Kansas who has been elected to the office of President of the United States.

It is the duty of every citizen to support the President of the United States, and to uphold the Constitution of the United States. It is the duty of every citizen to support the President of the United States, and to uphold the Constitution of the United States.

**POLES SMASH AWAY IN GALICIA
AND LENGTHEN BATTLE LINE**See Page 1, Column 1
The Polish army has been defeated in the battle of Galicia, and the battle line has been lengthened. The Polish army has been defeated in the battle of Galicia, and the battle line has been lengthened.

Figure 5. Typical front page of The Post during Dr. Burris Jenkins' editorship.

In the summer of 1920, Dr. Jenkins went to San Francisco as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention, accompanied by his wife, who was Democratic national committeewoman for Missouri. His bylined stories from the convention were daily features of the front page. Dr. Jenkins was in the forefront of the "McAdoo for President" boom and he made the nominating speech which put him in contention. William G. McAdoo was the son-in-law of President Woodrow Wilson and was regarded as a staunch advocate of the League of Nations. His defeat in the convention of 1920 was the handwriting on the wall foretelling the defeat of Jenkins' cherished League of Nations the next year.¹⁹

An important addition was made to the paper during Dr. Jenkins' control. In the summer of 1920, arrangements were made to add the complete United Press Service to the paper's other two leased wire services--the International News Service and the Universal Service. Thus, for the first time, The Post received news from one of the two major sources supplying newspapers. The paper could not get an Associated Press franchise because The Star had the power to control these grants in Kansas City by virtue

¹⁹Meisburger, op. cit., p. 3.

of its early membership in the Associated Press.²⁰ The Post also used stories from the Newspaper Enterprise Association and had correspondents in Washington, D. C., Topeka, Kansas, and Jefferson City, Missouri.

During the last two years of Dr. Jenkins' tutelage, The Post slipped back into its former ways. In August and September of 1921, the paper became even more sensational than during the pre-Jenkins regime. Stories in the headlines during these months reported the exposures made by The Post of a vice school in Kansas City, brutality by the police department, wanton murder, poisonous liquor and a running account of the scandalous Fatty Arbuckle murder trial. The calming influence which Dr. Jenkins exerted when first joining the paper seemed to have no effect this summer. Jenkins' daily front-page column was the only reflection of higher standards set in earlier Post editions. The paper reached a low when in September of 1921, it tried to justify its front page reports of the lurid details of the Arbuckle trial on the basis that the revelations printed in the paper had caused adverse publicity which promised to bring about a reformation of the motion picture industry. Just a few weeks later, a

²⁰Personal interview with Jack Carberry, former Post reporter, December 24, 1957, in Denver, Colorado.

statement appeared on The Post's front page announcing that Dr. Jenkins was quitting the paper. The statement said simply:

I have found it necessary to sever my connection with The Kansas City Post, very much to my personal regret.

It has been borne in upon me that a choice was necessary between the church on one hand, and the newspaper on the other. There could be no hesitation in such an emergency. The church is and has always been my first consideration.²¹

Dr. Jenkins' declining years before his death in 1945 at the age of seventy-five were spent near two sons in California, Paul and Logan, who owned newspapers in that state. Another son, Burris Jenkins, Jr., who contributed occasional cartoons and stories to The Post while it was under his father's direction, has been nationally famous for years as a newspaper cartoonist.²²

III. A LIBEL SUIT

In the winter of 1918, while the war in Europe was pushing toward a climax, The Post dug a skeleton out of The Star's closet and proceeded to display it for all Kansas Citians to view. August Seested, general manager of The Star, had come to this country from Germany, but

²¹The Post, November 3, 1921.

²²Meisburger, op. cit., p. 3.

had not filed naturalization papers until shortly after the United States entered World War I in April, 1917. Prior to April 6, Seested signed an affidavit that he was then a subject of Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm. Shortly after the United States' declaration of war on Germany, Seested was made a citizen of the country in which he had lived for nearly forty years.²³ The Post hinted that Seested had taken out citizenship papers to avoid internment in the alien enemy camps of the United States. The paper conducted its campaign against Seested in the old-time crusading fervor it had used on William R. Nelson, with news, features, editorials, pictures, cartoons--practically every means that a newspaper has for conducting a crusade. Coal was heaped on the editorial fires when The Post invited Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, who was a frequent contributor of political articles to national magazines, to use The Post to push for his progressive reforms and Roosevelt declined to accept an invitation made by The Star. The Post commented editorially upon this affront:

We are prepared to the minute as no other American newspaper seems to be, and so--as a suggestion and offer, should you at any time feel that you are a misfit with The Star, The Kansas City Post would like to avail itself

²³The Post, December 29, 1917.

of your services, and for every dollar of salary that they are paying you, or have agreed to pay you, The Kansas City Post will pay you two dollars. . . .²⁴

When Colonel Roosevelt continued to contribute articles to The Star, The Post broadened its crusade against Seested in an attempt to discredit Roosevelt too. The new theme of the campaign was to be an attack against the former president "for choosing The Kansas City Star as the organ to spread his propaganda--a paper whose general manager was so lately a subject of the kaiser that the ink is scarcely dry upon his naturalization papers."²⁵

The crusade increased in intensity as the battle in Europe raged on through 1918. When The Star printed an editorial which pictured German citizens in a favorable light, The Post charged it was a subtle appeal to every former subject of the kaiser. In April, Theodore Roosevelt wrote an article for The Star attacking an espionage bill before Congress. The Senate demanded that Roosevelt apologize for his attack and The Post noted the fact that the article emanated from Kansas City would hardly bring a thrill of pride to loyal Kansas Citians.

²⁴The Post, September 25, 1917.

²⁵The Post, December 27, 1917.

During the winter of 1918, a Mrs. Rose Pastor Stokes wrote a letter to the editor of The Star, which, after it was printed, was charged by the government as being seditious. When the woman came up for trial, The Post pointed out that it was The Star which had made her letter potent with evil when it printed it in four-hundred thousand copies. The Post asked its readers, "Will the district attorney be content to let the burden of this crime fall on a woman--for a crime based on publicity confessed by the Star?"²⁶ The answer in this case was to be "yes." Mrs. Rose Pastor Stokes was sentenced to prison and the matter slipped from the pages of the newspapers. No charges were ever pressed against The Star.

The Post gave a full account of the actions of certain patriotic groups in Missouri to have The Star banned. On June 14, 1918, it printed an article relating the actions of the trustees of the Fulton, Missouri, public library branding The Star disloyal and banning it from the Fulton library. The president of the library board was quoted as saying that the action had been taken to prevent persons in Fulton from reading the paper because

²⁶The Post, June 9, 1918.

of its efforts to divide the people in time of war.²⁷ That same month, one hundred members of the Tenth Ward Democratic club in Kansas City passed a resolution labeling The Star as an enemy of the government. The entire resolution was set in large, bold face type on the front page of The Post. It urged all members of the club to cease their subscriptions to The Star at once. James Pendergast, county inspector, presented the resolution to the club.²⁸

The bitter campaign continued throughout most of the summer and fall of 1918, and then was pushed from the pages of The Post by news of the armistice in Europe. During Dr. Burris Jenkins' editorship, attacks against The Star diminished in volume and ferocity. Then, in the fall of 1921, The Post dealt what it believed would be the knock-out blow to The Star.

In November 1921, approximately one hundred thousand ex-service men and members of The American Legion converged on Kansas City for the Legion's annual convention and accompanying festivities. Such important dignitaries as Vice-President Calvin Coolidge and General John J. Pershing were on hand. As the convention was coming to a

²⁷The Post, June 15, 1918.

²⁸The Post, June 21, 1918.

close, The Post fired a barrage at the opposition purporting to show that the management of The Star was disloyal to the United States during World War I. A front page editorial headed "So The People May Know" stated that The Post would be remiss in its duties if it did not again call attention to the pro-German record of August F. Seested, general manager of The Star.²⁹ The editorial reiterated The Post's earlier charges that Seested had lived in this country for forty years without becoming a naturalized citizen until the war threatened him with internment and loss of property. The article concluded with this damaging statement:

The Post now desires to complete the case by reproducing records of Seested's contributions to the kaiser's war chests.

.

Records show that Seested contributed at least \$26,000 and his brother Frank, circulation manager of The Star, \$11,000 to the imperial German government.³⁰

The next day, August Seested filed two suits for damages totaling four-hundred thousand dollars. The suits were brought against The Post and F. G. Bonfils and Harry Tamm, owners. Dick Smith, managing editor, was jailed

²⁹The Post, November 2, 1921.

³⁰Ibid.

when he refused to divulge the source of information quoted in the editorial which he admitted writing. He testified that he had written all similar articles attacking The Star and had ordered them printed.³¹

As the court battle continued, The Post stepped up its campaign against The Star. A banner headline on page one two weeks after the suits were instituted related that Frank Seested had assaulted a Kansas City Man, Charles F. Jackels, who had taken part in a discussion concerning The Post-Star fight. A sworn affidavit printed on the front page signed by Jackels and witnessed by his office secretary set forth the incidents leading up to the assault which took place in Jackels' office. According to the statement, Seested had threatened to kill Jackels after pushing into his office with a gun in his hand.³²

Frank Seested then joined his brother in suits against The Post, bringing the total to six hundred thousand dollars damages being sought by the two Star men. A long and drawn-out legal battle followed through four separate trials. The first case resulted in a hung jury,

³¹The Post, November 4, 1921.

³²The Post, November 26, 1921.

but subsequent trials brought a verdict favorable to the Seesteds.³³

Finally in 1926, four years after Bonfils and Tammen had sold The Post to Walter S. Dickey, and after numerous appeals, a jury returned a unanimous verdict in favor of Frank Seested assessing one hundred thousand dollars actual and one hundred thousand dollars punitive damages against the Post Printing and Publishing Company, former owners of the paper. The jury found that there was no foundation for the charges printed in The Post's November 2, 1921, editorial. A deposition read during the trial quoted J. A. Russell, chief clerk of the Department of Justice in Washington as saying that there were no records in the government's files which showed that any member of the Seested family had contributed to the kaiser government.³⁴

The Post's attorneys made virtually no effort to defend the charges which the paper had printed, contending that the article complained of facts which did not constitute libel. The damages awarded to Frank Seested were

³³"Seested Wins \$200,000 Libel Verdict," Editor & Publisher, 59:4, November 27, 1926.

³⁴Ibid.

the largest libel verdict ever given to that time in a Missouri court.³⁵

IV. THE POST AND ITS READERS

Even before 1916, The Post had begun its special services to readers. Some of these services were intended as stunts to amuse Kansas Citians and draw attention to the paper. Others were of more practical value to readers.

During this period, passersby on Main Street might have looked up to see Harry Houdini struggling to escape from a straight jacket while hanging head down suspended from a rope attached to The Post building, or a human fly scaling the building's brick walls, or watched The Post's electric scoreboard with its ringing bells and flashing lights tabulating the results of a national election or World Series baseball game. All of these stunts fitted in with the management's belief that it was a mark of success to be talked about.³⁶

During the thirteen years the paper was under the domination of Bonfils and Tammen, it not only peddled the news of Kansas City and the world, but peddled coal, apples, fish and Christmas trees as well. All these items

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Meisburger, op. cit., p. 2.

were advertised liberally in The Post as bargains made available to the big Post family by the thoughtful publishers who were trying to pull down the high cost of living, or the "HC of L" as it was stated in the paper's headlines. On special bargain days, the advertising and business offices on the first floor of The Post building were crowded with customers who came to buy iced fish wrapped in spare copies of The Post, bushels of apples, sacks of coal or receipts for coal purchased by the ton.³⁷

Beginning as early as 1912, The Post offered coal to its readers at reduced prices. This service continued right on through the winter of 1921. The paper's business office was open everyday from eight in the morning to ten-thirty at night to accommodate customers who wanted to buy Post coal. This coal was in great demand during the war-time shortages of 1917 and 1918. During all this time, The Post's coal sold for one to two dollars a ton less than the prevailing price on the coal market.

In 1920, the year the paper celebrated its fourteenth anniversary, The Post editors found that fish were selling for thirty cents a pound on the Kansas City market. The Post purchased a carload of fresh fish at

³⁷Ibid.

the Boston harbor and shipped fish, packed in ice, to Kansas City. Those fish were offered to Kansas Citians at thirteen cents a pound.³⁸ This same winter, the paper was advertising sweet potatoes for one dollar and ninety-five cents for fifty pounds and apples for a dollar a bushel. Stories related that this was The Post's way of attacking the high cost of living.

Interest in baseball was high in Kansas City in 1915, so the paper had the first electric scoreboard ever constructed in Kansas City installed on the front of its building at Tenth and Main Streets.³⁹ This scoreboard, which adorned the front of The Post building nearly ten years before The Star built a similar one, was used to flash the results of the World Series of 1915 to Kansas Citians.⁴⁰ Late season games of the Kansas City Blues when they were away from home and the results of national elections were reported on the scoreboard with large crowds standing in front of The Post building to get the latest information. In March of that year, sports editor Otto Floto was sent to Havana, Cuba, to cover the Jack

³⁸The Post, February 17, 1920.

³⁹The Post, July 15, 1915.

⁴⁰The Star built a scoreboard for its building in 1923. See Bell, op. cit., p. 278.

Johnson-Jess Willard world championship fight. The Post gave a full account of the fight by megaphone from the second-floor window of its building. An estimated fifteen thousand fight fans stood in the street blocking traffic to hear an account of Willard's defeat of Johnson.⁴¹

When an influenza epidemic swept the country and Kansas City in 1920, The Post offered twenty-five thousand dollars in gold to the first doctor, scientist or other person to discover a cure or preventive of the dread disease.⁴² When a Greeley, Colorado, chemical firm sent one thousand packages of its guaranteed flu preventive called "Noflu" to The Post, the paper offered to give the packages away free to the first one thousand persons in Kansas City who needed it the most.

The Post used a variety of stunts to inform its readers of the outcome of national political elections. None were probably more spectacular than the methods used in the elections of 1912 and 1916. In 1912, The Post announced the results of the Republican national convention by firing a series of dynamite blasts from the top of its building. The paper had previously printed the code which it would use to inform all Kansas Citians within earshot

⁴¹The Post, April 6, 1915.

⁴²The Post, February 3, 1920.

of The Post's building of the nomination of either William Howard Taft or Theodore Roosevelt. When the news was flashed that Taft had been nominated and Roosevelt had bolted the party, a blast rocked Kansas City's business section announcing the results to Post readers. Windows caved in, people on the street were in a panic and business men talked of forming posses to lynch the editors of The Post.⁴³

In 1916, The Post was more refined in its display, but nevertheless the stunt was just as ingenious. With the cooperation of the Kansas City Railways Company and the Light and Power Company, The Post worked out a code whereby electric lights in the homes and on the streetcars would blink to indicate which candidate was elected in the November election. If President Woodrow Wilson were elected, the lights were to be dimmed for thirty seconds. If Charles Evans Hughes were elected, lights would be dimmed twice, thirty seconds each time. The Post also looked after those people who still had gas lights in their homes; a motion picture machine projected the returns on the front of The Post building.⁴⁴

⁴³Gene Fowler, Timber Line: A Story of Bonfils and Tammen (New York: Covici, Friede, 1933), p. 284.

⁴⁴The Post, November 4, 1916.

When the government began urging people to plant war gardens, The Post announced it had gotten two thousand packets of seeds which it would distribute free to Kansas Citians. In addition, the paper conducted a contest for the most beautiful garden in Kansas City and offered prizes totaling two-hundred and fifty dollars in the various divisions.

In 1919, The Post began aerial delivery of papers to Olathe, Kansas, and St. Joseph, Missouri. The Post's aerial newsboy was Richard C. Allen, who flew an American Curtiss airplane. Within thirty minutes of the time after they left the presses, The Posts were in the hands of Olathe readers, according to the story.⁴⁵

For a while in 1918, The Post conducted a soldiers' employment bureau to find jobs for returning veterans. Businessmen who needed employees were invited to contact the paper and the jobs were filled with Kansas City soldiers who needed work. A daily column was run in the paper listing jobless soldiers and their occupations.

Other stunts brought the readers and The Post closer together. There was an annual fun-for-all at one of the city's amusement parks for all of the paper's

⁴⁵The Post, June 30, 1919.

readers. Special movies for newsboys, children, Boy Scouts and women were shown at downtown theaters. An annual cooking school was held with experts on hand to help out Kansas City housewives who wanted to improve on the culinary art. At Christmas there was the Raggedy Stocking Club for the poor children of the city who might not have received gifts if it had not been for the paper's generosity in purchasing and delivering small gifts to the members of the club. The Post issued special editions on important occasions, such as the World Series baseball games when sports extras were published each day of the series. Then, too, there was the paper's regular financial edition at five-thirty every evening for the Kansas Citian who was money-minded or buying on the stock market.

In 1921, The Post established radio station WRW, operating on a frequency of three-hundred sixty megacycles, to compete with The Star's station WDAF. Radio equipment was located in Dr. Burris Jenkins' office and his reception room was utilized as a broadcasting studio. One of the first programs broadcast over The Post's station was the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra's concert in Convention Hall. Jack Carberry was in charge of programs and Ed A. Fetting was the station's technical director.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Fowler, op. cit., p. 285.

The Post served Kansas City in a variety of ways. It amused its readers with its stunts; it served Kansas Citians by its crusades; it protected the little man against the abuses of big business and big government. But most of all, The Post performed a service by chronicling the events of history and preserving those events in a day-by-day account of the development of a great city--the city at the "Kaws Mouth." In The Post's bold headlines Kansas Citians read the history of a bold and daring period of growth of a booming metropolis.

Bonfils once said that a newspaper should be like an ancient oracle--it should speak to every man in his own language. He believed a paper should enter intimately into the daily life, the hopes, fears, ambitions, business, pleasures, and ideals of its readers. He said a paper must be more than informative and educative, it must also be amusing, entertaining, helpful, inspiring and economically beneficial.⁴⁷ Under Bonfils and Tammien, The Post strived mightily to meet all those conditions.

⁴⁷Lawrence Martin, Elvon L. Howe and members of The Denver Post staff, So The People May Know, Denver, Colorado no date, p. 29.

CHAPTER VII

BONFILS AND TAMMEN SELL THE POST

In 1922, The Post was cast loose in Kansas City without a guiding hand. Dr. Burris Jenkins had resigned the publisher's post in November of the previous year to devote full time to the pulpit of Kansas City's Linwood Community Church. The lease on the paper's temporary plant at Tenth and Main Streets was due to expire soon; Bonfils' and Tammen's boast of 1909 that the paper would soon have a modern skyscraper plant had not materialized.¹

The two Denver publishers were tiring of their decade-old battle to capture the rich Kansas City advertising field from The Star. For thirteen years, Bonfils and Tammen had given the opposition lively competition for news and circulation but had never been able to make much of an inroad on The Star's heavy volume of advertising.

Despite The Post's frequent spectacular stunts to attract attention, the paper's numerous crusades for the "Little People" and the paper's claim that it circulated

¹Gene Fowler, Timber Line: A Story of Bonfils and Tammen (New York: Covici Friede Publishers, 1933), p. 387.

as widely within Kansas City as did the opposition, Kansas Citians persisted in patronizing The Star. The answer to The Post's dilemma was The Star's traditional position of respect in Kansas City and the thirteen papers which it offered weekly for ten cents. Not even the master showman, Tammen himself, could sell advertising to Kansas City merchants because they knew that advertisements printed in The Post were duplicating The Star's subscription list.²

These events set the stage in Kansas City in the spring of 1922 for the advent of Walter S. Dickey, millionaire industrialist, into the role of editor and owner of The Post.

I. A KANSAS CITY TITAN

Walter S. Dickey was born in Toronto, Canada, in 1862, the first of eleven children of Nathaniel Dickey, prominent Canadian businessman. In 1880 the Dickey family moved to Kansas City, but Walter stayed behind at his account's job in a wholesale jewelry firm in Toronto. Five years later, Dickey's father wrote to his son asking

²Interview with Jack Carberry, Denver Post sports editor and former Kansas City Post reporter, in Denver, December 24, 1957.

him to come to Kansas City and join him in a new concern, the Kansas City Sewer Pipe Company, which Nathaniel Dickey had helped organize a few years before.³ Walter Dickey was an instantaneous success in Kansas City and the founding sewer pipe company took on new life under his management. He leased a second plant at Deepwater, Missouri, and set up the W. S. Dickey Clay Manufacturing Company with himself as sole owner and proprietor. He had no backing in the new venture but was possessed of a willingness to gamble on the future of the rapidly expanding Middle West. He was a top-flight business manager and this, coupled with his ability to organize and select good men for the company, made the business successful. In 1889, Dickey returned to Canada to marry Catharine L. McMullen, the daughter of Parliament member James McMullen, and brought his bride to Independence, Missouri, to set up housekeeping.⁴

Business in Kansas City continued to grow and expand in every direction. The Middle West was booming with new industries, new towns, new railroads, and new people moving in every day. Sewerpipe could not be

³"Historical Notes and Comments," Missouri Historical Review, 25:517, April, 1931.

⁴Kenneth McMullen Dickey, A Man With Clay Feet (Kansas City: Mount Forest Press, 1953), pp. 6-8.

manufactured fast enough to meet the demands for new sewers to serve growing communities. Dickey bought additional clay plants in Illinois and traded his new home for a plant in Pittsburg, Kansas. Slowly but surely he acquired a near monopoly in clay products in the Middle West as he bought up plants in Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Alabama, Georgia, Arkansas, California and Mexico.⁵

By 1905, Dickey had established himself as a business, civic and political power in Kansas City. He devoted himself with great zeal to all his varied responsibilities. He owned twenty-six manufacturing plants scattered throughout twelve states with ten branch offices in principal cities. In 1905, the Dickey Manufacturing Company was doing an annual business volume of nine million dollars which gave Dickey a net profit of almost one million dollars yearly.⁶ He also owned other businesses in Kansas City, but which were not quite so profitable. For ten years, he was proprietor of the Western Cabinet and Fixture Company, one of the stockholders in the Home Telephone Company, owner of a target plant which made

⁵Floyd C. Shoemaker and Walter Williams, Missouri Mother of the West (New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1930), pp. 96-97.

⁶Dickey, op. cit., p. 12.

targets for trap shooters, and holder of six hundred pieces of real estate in and around Kansas City.

Dickey began his political career on the bottom rung of the political ladder and gradually climbed to the top position in party management. In his first political job, he went from door to door in Independence, Missouri, checking the politics of each voter and then seeing that those who were Republicans went to the polls to cast their ballots.⁷ In 1900, Dickey was a delegate to the National Republican Convention and in 1908 he was chairman of the Republican State Committee. Missouri swung to William H. Taft for President in 1908, the second time in history that the state had cast its electoral college vote for a Republican. This victory made Dickey more ambitious for political office. Commenting on Dickey's part in the election in 1908, his son said:

This success was his party crown and he wore it with ease and confidence. His money, which he ladled out for years, was the cement that held the coronet precariously balanced, and he was titular head of the party in Missouri.⁸

Eight years later Dickey saw a chance to realize his ambitions for political office. In 1916, he was

⁷Walter B. Stevens, Missouri The Center State (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915), pp. 712-717.

⁸Dickey, op. cit., p. 4.

nominated for the United States Senate to oppose the redoubtable James Reed, Democratic candidate. Dickey ran a stout race buttressed by nearly one hundred thousand dollars in campaign funds from his own pocket for his effort and the lesser names on the Republican ticket. Reed won the Senate seat despite all of Dickey's money and efforts.⁹ However, he made such a good showing against the Democratic champion that he never quite got over the notion that he was destined to be a statesman.

In the election four years later, political activity consumed all of Dickey's time. In the late spring of 1920, Kansas Citians went to the polls to elect a mayor and members of the City Council. Dickey was running for Fourth Ward Committeeman. He did not want the office, considering it beneath his dignity as a leader in the Republican party to accept such a lowly post. But the Republican Old Guard requested that he condescend. The Fourth Ward was Dickey's home-ward and party leaders believed no one would dare oppose him, a man who had been state chairman, former candidate for the Senate and long-time financial backer of the Republicans in Missouri.¹⁰

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

Dickey had opposition though; a political office seeker, hearing that Dickey planned to run, announced that he would be the candidate of the "Anti-Boss" wing of the party. That immediately gave Dickey's opponent the support of The Star, and the political battle was on.

Since Colonel Nelson's days, The Star had opposed political organization of any kind in either party. Dickey was supported by Tom Marks, Republican boss in Kansas City, in his bid for the Fourth Ward post. The Star labeled Marks' faction of the party the Democratic Aid Society because it threatened to eclipse the Republicans supported by the paper. With The Star's backing, anti-Marks' candidates seized control of the party's city convention in 1920 and nominated their own slate of officers.¹¹ A political writer for The Star heaped insult upon injury when on the morning after Dickey had been defeated for Fourth Ward Committeeman the paper said that Dickey and his men had left the meeting and gone across the street to the bar. Dickey was not a drinking man and he resented the implied criticism of The Star's report of the meeting and his actions afterward.¹²

¹¹William M. Reddig, Tom's Town: Kansas City and the Pendergast Legend (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1947), pp. 99-100.

¹²Dickey, loc. cit.

II. DICKEY BUYS THE KANSAS CITY JOURNAL

The year 1920 was a memorable one in politics for Walter S. Dickey and for Kansas City. During the spring, the Anti-Boss faction backed by The Star defeated Dickey's efforts to become Committeeman and the same Star-supported clique won the mayoralty election which followed. During the summer, Dickey was a delegate to the Republican national convention in Chicago and he and Missouri's Republican Old Guard supported Governor Frank Lowden of Illinois for the Presidential election. The Star was heartily supporting Leonard Wood, a Theodore Roosevelt man. The paper charged that Dickey was throwing money about, freely buying votes for his candidate. This increased Dickey's contempt for The Star.¹³

Warren G. Harding, Marion, Ohio, newspaper publisher, was nominated in a "smoke-filled" room during an all-night conclave. Dickey was on intimate terms with the Republican nominee and when Harding was elected President in November, he believed his political hey-day had arrived.

¹³Dickey, op. cit., p. 18.

Dickey was strong-willed, honest and full of political aspirations. He believed the Republican party owed him a Senatorial seat for all the money he had poured into its campaign coffers. With the Republican administration taking over in Washington, Dickey saw a second chance to fulfill his political ambitions and at the same time to get even with The Star for the barbs it had thrown his way.

Dickey made overtures for the purchase of The Kansas City Journal, a medium by which he could further his political ambitions and combat adverse publicity in The Star. The Journal, which had a long, honorable and conservative career behind it, was at that time in the throes of bankruptcy.¹⁴ It had slowly lost circulation, slipping during the early nineteen hundreds from a high of 71,698 readers in 1911 to a low of 40,266 in late 1921.¹⁵ The main factor causing the paper to drift into bankruptcy was the competition from The Star. The Journal was under joint control and editorship of three men: C. S. Gleed, Charles S. Jobs and Hal Gaylord. In 1921, the

¹⁴Daniel T. Kelliher, "The Sentinel on the Hill," Kansas City News-Press, October 15, 1950.

¹⁵N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory, 1911, 1922.

once-famous Journal had small circulation, little influence in Kansas City, limited home delivery and but a token of advertising. The paper depended upon advertisements which were restricted from The Star's columns, such as patent medicines, cancer cures, whiskey, beer, and cure-all doctors' advertisements. Gaylord, managing editor, had tried several times to interest Dickey in buying the paper.¹⁶

On April 30, 1921, Dickey purchased The Journal for one hundred thousand dollars and established himself as sole owner of the paper with no corporation being formed; Dickey had an intense dislike of stockholders. The Journal building, at the northeast corner of Eighth and McGee Streets, was in disorder and filthy from basement to roof. Presses were old and some lay idle, shut down because of the limited circulation or because they needed repair. The most valuable possession-of The Journal was the paper's Associated Press franchise. Such a franchise would have been impossible to buy in Kansas City in 1921, because of the powerful influence of The Star in the Associated Press organization.

A banker friend warned Dickey against the purchase, pointing out that he might lose everything in the venture,

¹⁶Dickey, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

but Dickey went ahead with the purchase despite the plea of others. When his oldest son told him he would rue the day he entered the newspaper field, Dickey waved the opposition aside, commenting that the paper might cost him one hundred thousand dollars before it was back on its feet but he could afford it and the turning point would come within six months.¹⁷

On May 1, 1921, the masthead of The Journal carried the words "Walter S. Dickey, Editor and Owner." Almost overnight new and larger advertisements began appearing in the paper. Among them were advertisements for the Dickey Clay Manufacturing Company and the Western Cabinet and Fixture Company. The Santa Fe, Missouri-Pacific and other railroads bought large advertisements in The Journal because the paper's new owner was on intimate terms with many railroad executives and because Dickey concerns brought good business to the railroads.

Dickey appointed Ralph Ellis, former assignment editor of The Chicago Tribune, as managing editor of The Journal and his son, W. Laurence Dickey, as publisher. Circulation increased slightly in the first few months of the Dickey regime largely because of promotion advertisements on billboards throughout Kansas City, an increase

¹⁷Ibid.

in the number of news pages, the addition of comic and rotogravure sections, features for women readers and other tricks known to newspapermen.¹⁸

This minor success in his first venture in journalism set the stage for the next scene in Dickey's newspaper career.

III. A NEW REGIME FOR THE POST

Because the opposition Star published both a morning and evening newspaper, Walter Dickey felt that he too needed to be heard twice daily in Kansas City. Bonfils and Tamm were willing to sell for a price and Dickey had sufficient money to meet that price.

In May 1922, with no prior notice of any sort, an announcement appeared on The Post's front page headed simply "The Journal-The Post" and stating in part:

Unexpected but most welcome developments enabled me Wednesday night to acquire The Kansas City Post, after arrangements virtually had been completed for the publication of an afternoon newspaper from The Journal's plant.¹⁹

This announcement was signed Walter S. Dickey, owner and editor. The new owner stated that his son, W. Laurence Dickey, would take over as publisher of The Post and The

¹⁸Kelliher, loc. cit.

¹⁹The Post, May 18, 1922.

Journal; Edwin O. Syman would be general business manager; Ralph Ellis, general managing editor of the two papers; Dick Smith, managing editor of The Post; and J. Mora Boyle, advertising director of the two newspapers. The purchase announcement set forth Dickey's newspaper credo in these terms:

The Kansas City Journal and The Kansas City Post will not set themselves up bumptiously as self-appointed attorneys for Kansas City.

The efforts of these newspapers will be directed toward printing the facts, in order that the people may read and act upon their individual conclusions.

I am making this solemn pledge--the same broad tolerance toward all, regardless of race, religion, political persuasion or personal beliefs; the same faith in and ambition for our common city, state and country, which have characterized The Journal for more than half a century, will be the dominant principles of The Kansas City Post under my direction. . . .²⁰

Dickey had been attracted to The Post by the fairly large circulation and the figures which were reported on the profit side of the paper's account ledger. In 1922, The Post was making a profit of between five hundred and a thousand dollars daily under the astute tutelage of Business Manager Max M. Levand.²¹ Before 1915,

²⁰The Post, May 18, 1922.

²¹Letter from Max M. Levand, president of The Wichita Beacon and former Post business manager, March 11, 1958.

when Levand took over in Kansas City, The Post was losing money and had to be subsidized by Bonfils and Tammen with profits from The Denver Post. When The Post began showing a profit, both Bonfils and Tammen were put on the payroll receiving as much as five hundred dollars a week.²² What Dickey did not know when he bought the paper was that The Post made a large part of its profits from the sale of fish, apples, sugar, coal, Christmas trees and a half dozen other items which the paper purchased in huge quantities at wholesale and sold to Kansas Citians in small quantities at retail prices. This scheme not only netted a good profit for The Post but was also a method of retaliation against dealers in those commodities who refused to advertise in the paper.²³

Dickey offered a million and a quarter dollars for The Post. Not even Bonfils' hatred for The Star and its management, his conviction that he still could whip the opposition and that his Kansas City Post would dominate the field, could stand in the way of that offer. Before the deal was closed, Dickey had paid an additional one hundred thousand dollars for newsprint stored in The Post's warehouse.²⁴

²²Ibid.

²³Kelliher, loc. cit.

²⁴Levand, loc. cit.

The Post's new owner announced that both papers would be published in their respective plants for the present, but the ultimate aim was to consolidate the papers in one building. A few months later, Dickey bought a three-story building at Twenty-second and Oak Streets which had housed the Sweeney Auto School before the school went broke. He ordered a press room addition built on the building and installed a battery of new presses. In May 1923, the two papers moved into the new building and began an around-the-clock operation. Dickey finally achieved one dream: thirteen papers a week, delivered to Kansas Citians' doorsteps for fifteen cents.

IV. THE NEW POST

Dickey was true to his pledge that The Post would follow in the footsteps of The Journal. Slowly but surely, beginning in late May of 1922, The Post's front page was changed to a more somber, decorous make-up befitting the evening partner of a respectable and staid morning newspaper. Headlines were decreased from four to three to two columns and eventually page one carried mostly one-column headlines. Occasionally, as if the staff could not restrain itself, a banner headline broke forth on The Post's front page over a large news story, but this was the only vestige of the old paper to remain. Stories were less

PRICE: £49.95

MATLAND HALTS WATER REPORT

**Will Not Sign Until
Changes Are Made, He
Indicates**

See report with the number in the first
and second columns. The difference in
columns 3 and 4 is the difference in

Mr. Sullivan has no objection to my going and collecting the specimens that I wish to collect.

Opposed to Lawton

I am opposed to lawmaking the order of our government. There are gentlemen here who are right, but I think you are wrong. There is no such thing as a free lunch. We will

The system with the maximum mean for growth in diameter at 12 hours after operation was the 10° group. Results for the other 3 groups are shown in Table 1. The 10° group had the best

NEED 200 WOMEN
FOR P O P FLOATS

Must be Over 18, Not
Under 18.

PUTTING CHANGE IN MOTION
February 20 & 21, 1997

[illegible]

NOT ASSIGNED TO RESULTS

The first 3 of these groups were
majority for the 1990s. The
last 3 groups were for the
years 1991-1993, 1994-1996, and
1997-1999. The 1990s group was

IRENE GETS INVOLVED
Married, Active, Sexy, Shown in
Paris Court

[illegible]

FORMER AGENT HELD
Narcotics Charge Against Dr. Brown
C. B. & C. W.

In South Park, each year more and more of the youngsters enthusiastically swim in Spanish City. The water is so warm that it was estimated Sunday night a

LAST AND FORTH.
 PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 10.—(Special Telegrams to the Associated Press.)—The following are the results of the election for the office of Mayor of Philadelphia, held on August 9, 1900.

1990

Figure 6. Typical front page of The Post after Walter S. Dickey became owner and editor.

sensational and headlines smaller and set in new light face type.

When The Post moved into the new building on Hospital Hill and consolidated with The Journal, the size of the paper was changed to a smaller more compact page-size with a greater number of pages. The new presses gave The Post a capacity of three hundred thousand papers an hour. In February 1923, the paper began a special mid-week feature, printing a four-page colored comic section in the home-delivered papers. During the summer of the same year, an editorial page appeared in The Post. This was the first editorial page as such that the paper had printed in several years; usually front-page prominence had been given to all editorial comments. The new editorial page carried four to seven short, concise editorials on local and national subjects written by members of the staff, and one "editorial of the day" clipped from another newspaper. Post crusades were just as frequent but more discreet. The paper urged such reforms as uniform automobile laws for the entire nation, roadside trees, a statewide system of good highways, a Kansas City aviation corps and a clean-up of the diploma mills of the state. In its crusade against a fake medical ring which was operating out of Kansas City, The Post cooperated with The St. Louis Star in exposing a statewide diploma mill

which granted medical degrees for money. As a result of The Post expose, the police raided the fraudulent Kansas City college of medicine, and the Missouri Board of Health launched an immediate investigation of the situation.

The Post staff. Dickey took over most of the paper's staff when he bought The Post. Dick Smith remained as managing editor at an increased salary. Paul Lucas Jones was city editor and Maurice Schunick night editor. Dickey soon realized something new had to be attempted to build up the paper's circulation and increase advertising. He decided to appoint a general manager from a larger field over both newspapers. He advertised in Editor & Publisher, trade magazine of the journalism world, and selected Edwin O. Syman from a throng of applicants. Thus, Business Manager Max Levand was fired and Syman took over.

Otto Floto, veteran sports writer, left The Post soon after Dickey purchased the paper and Edward W. Cochrane became sports editor. Parke Carroll wrote a column for the sports page.

Other staff members of The Post included George Wallace, reporter, who went on to handle political news of The Star; Jack Carberry, who stopped at the paper for a few years during a circuit of newspapers in the larger cities and who is now sports editor of The Denver Post;

Milton Mackaye, now a top writer for The Saturday Evening Post; J. B. "Bugs" Hardaway, who went to Hollywood where he drew "Bugs Bunny" and "Oswald the Rabbit"; Wade Mountfortt, Jr., Post photographer; Herbert Corey, nationally famous columnist; and Goodman Ace, who wrote a movie column, "Lobbying," for The Post and later went on to fame with the Three Aces radio program and now is a writer for top entertainment stars including Danny Kaye, Milton Berle and Perry Como.²⁵

Dave Dexter, Sr., later vice-president of Rogers and Smith, Potts Turnbull Advertising Company in Kansas City, was one of the rewrite men in The Post's city room. J. W. McCammon was a headline writer for the paper. Dave Dexter, Jr., now with Capital Records in Kansas City, worked as a reporter for The Post.

The paper always had some feminine members on its staff. Two top-flight newspaperwomen were Francis (Fannie) Davis, who later married Dick Lockridge of The Star and became famous on radio and television for her portrayal of Mrs. North on the Mr. and Mrs. North mystery thriller, and Vina Lindsay, later columnist for The Washington Post.

²⁵Edward Meisburger, "Old Journal Post Had Its Quota of Good Reporters; Some Later Became Famous," Kansas City Press Club Review, 6:2,3, September, 1957.

She was woman's page editor of The Washington Post for many years and now writes a column for that paper's editorial page under her full name, Malvina A. Lindsay.²⁶

W. Laurence Dickey, publisher of The Post, did not learn the newspaper business from the ground up. The third son of five Dickey children, he had attended Phillips Academy and Yale University from which he graduated during World War I. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Embarkation Office in Washington, D. C. After the war he worked as a clerk in Dickey's Texarkana Clay manufacturing plant until he was called to Kansas City to supervise The Journal and The Post.²⁷ Laurence seemed to possess little of his father's business acumen, but all of his obstinacy and disinclination to listen to persons who were more experienced in the newspaper game.

Post circulation. As soon as Dickey purchased the paper he employed a large crew of solicitors to comb the city for new subscribers. For fifteen cents a week, people were willing to gamble for a while but many cancelled their subscriptions in a short time. The goal in

²⁶Edward Meisburger, "Where Did Hollywood Get Its Impression of Newspapers? Maybe From Old Post," Press Club Review, 6:2,3, June, 1957.

²⁷Dickey, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

The Journal-Post circulation department was to equal The Star in home delivery regardless of the cost. Bundle after bundle of Dickey's newspapers was thrown away, sold for waste paper or burned in the city dump as press runs continued to increase week by week. Bayard Taylor was circulation manager of both papers during this period.

Post circulation reached its zenith, 177,298, under Dickey's management in 1923.²⁸ After this date, the number of Post readers began to slowly decline as The Journal's circulation climbed upward for a short time under the impetus of a barrage of promotion stunts. Subscriptions ran on despite the fact that many were cancelled without a cent having been collected. Taylor made a good record for both papers circulation-wise, but as press runs increased, the papers' heavy newsprint bill soared upward too.

Business on the paper continued as a procession of top management men, business doctors and new editors were employed to make the venture a financial success. In 1927, after five years ownership of The Post and Journal, Dickey's losses totaled seven million dollars including

²⁸N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory, 1923.

purchase of both papers, new building and equipment and higher salaries for staff members.²⁹

In 1926, Marion B. Sharp, Dickey's son-in-law and formerly a clerk in a grain company, became business manager of The Post and Journal, replacing Edwin O. Syman whose newspaper tactics had failed to pay off in dividends. In 1927, on a business trip to New York, Sharp met Jason Rogers, former publisher of the New York Globe and author of several books on newspaper management. Dickey, at Sharp's suggestion, went to New York to talk over his papers' problems with Rogers. The outcome of these talks was for Rogers to be employed as a trouble shooter in Kansas City to cure the failing financial health of the two papers.

Rogers spent a week looking over the situation in Kansas City. He finally decided that Dickey's papers needed increased circulation so they could entice more advertisers. In turn, the papers would then have more income to pay for better writing and more newsprint. At the end of the week's investigation, Rogers delivered his report to Dickey who was so impressed that he employed

²⁹Dickey, op. cit., p. 30.

the New York management specialist for three years at a salary of fifty thousand dollars a year.³⁰

Rogers tacked up business graphs and charts over all available wall space in the circulation and accounting department showing the trend in business. Despite the fact that Rogers' graphs always showed an upward trend, The Post and Journal continued to lose money. Various circulation stunts were tried to stem the tide of outward flowing money. Dolls were given away to little girls, dress patterns to their mothers and the boys got scooters, bicycles and wagons.

Rogers stayed with Dickey's newspapers only a year, but his salary continued for two more years in fulfillment of his contract. In 1927, when Rogers left, The Post's circulation had dropped more than twenty thousand from the 1923 peak. In 1928, when The Journal was consolidated with The Post to continue on as The Journal-Post, the paper had dropped to a low of 154,494.³¹

IV. DICKEY'S NEWSPAPER LOSSES

Dickey's financial troubles began in 1925 when he fell deeply in debt as a result of shrinking profits from

³⁰Dickey, op. cit., p. 31.

³¹N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory, 1928.

the Dickey Clay Manufacturing Company and increasing losses on his two newspapers. A local bank called on Dickey to pay off his short-term loans and refused to renew his note. Dickey had borrowed money from banks all over the country. All told, he was in debt about three million dollars in 1925 and the only way he had to raise the money was to place a bond issue on his clay plants, the only profit-making business he owned. The bonds were issued and sold for four and one-half million dollars. Dickey used this money to pay off his debts and the rest went into his newspapers.³²

The residue from the bond issue and decreased profits of the Dickey Clay Company carried the two papers from 1925 to 1927. For 1928, Dickey floated a supplementary issue for eight hundred thousand dollars on two brick plants in California in which he owned an interest. The papers ate up this sum in one year and in 1929, Dickey was forced to borrow from the banks again to keep The Post and Journal going. He soon was in debt for nearly one million dollars at the height of the depression in early 1930. When the Old Colony Trust Company of Boston, Massachusetts, demanded that Dickey repay a loan for one

³²Dickey, op. cit., pp.34-35.

hundred fifty thousand dollars, he had to admit that he was broke. Dickey's last asset, his clay manufacturing company, was thrown into the hands of a bankruptcy receiver and he was removed from the management of his affairs. Dickey died on January 22, 1931, a beaten and broken man.

Dickey's son, writing in 1953, estimated that his father had invested ten million dollars in The Post and Journal from 1921 to the day he died in 1931. In addition, all profits from the Dickey Clay Manufacturing Company, estimated at five million dollars by his son, were spent on the two papers. This brought the total loss to an estimated fifteen million dollars for the ten years Dickey owned the papers.³³ Commenting on the failure of the papers to make money, his son wrote:

One may say, however, that failure of The Journal-Post came mostly through mismanagement plus a superabundance of cash. If. W. S. [Dickey] had had less money, much less, the enforced econ-

³³H. J. Haskell, former editor of The Star, estimated in 1949 that Dickey had lost seven million dollars as owner of The Post and Journal. See William Jackson Bell, "A Historical Study of The Kansas City Star Since the Death of William Rockhill Nelson, 1915-1949." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1949, p. 145. Reddig estimated the loss at eight million dollars. See William M. Reddig, Tom's Town: Kansas City and the Pendergast Legend. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1947), p. 103. Dickey's son says these estimates were all too low. See Dickey, op. cit., pp. 41-43.

omy would have had a salutary effect. He tried to buy his way too quickly into newspaperdoms Hall of Fame.³⁴

Dickey had three primary interests in life in Kansas City: (1) a newspaper--The Journal-Post, (2) politics--Republican, (3) business--clay pipe. He paid great attention to the first two and consequently lost the last one.

³⁴Kenneth McMullen Dickey, Tycoon In Trouble (Kansas City: Mount Forest Press, 1954), p. 47.

CHAPTER VIII

In a desperate bid for a solution to his financial plight, Walter S. Dickey suspended The Journal on October 3, 1928. He killed the morning paper and allowed the more sensational Post to live because he believed The Journal was the millstone that was dragging him down into financial poverty. Figures showed that expenses in The Journal's composing room far exceeded those of The Post. Also the morning paper had consistently lost more money than its evening partner.¹

No member of The Journal's staff had an inkling when they left the publication office early the morning of October 3, 1928, that they would not have jobs when they returned. The first the paper's staff heard of the consolidation was an announcement in the afternoon Post. This statement said simply:

The Journal and The Post will be consolidated into a seven-day newspaper, The Kansas City Journal-Post, issued afternoon and Sunday.

Speedier transmission of news and pictures and improved printing methods make possible this consolidation, which is in keeping with the increasing tendency to give readers the day's

¹Daniel T. Kelliher, "The Sentinel on the Hill," The Kansas City News-Press, August 19, 1955.

news the same day in an afternoon newspaper.

The new Journal-Post, afternoon and Sunday, will continue the same energetic news gathering and editorial policies that have marked its progress in the past. . . .²

Top management of the paper continued on without change. This included W. Laurence Dickey, publisher; Marion B. Sharp, business manager; Ralph Ellis, editor; and Dick Smith, managing editor.

The consolidation announcement said the paper would be a modern, independent Republican newspaper. Price per copy of The Journal-Post was two cents daily on the streets and ten cents on Sunday. The seven copies, including Sunday, were delivered by carrier to subscribers in Greater Kansas City and its suburbs for ten cents a week.

Editors of the paper bragged that the consolidation would bring to Kansas City the finest collection of writers, cartoonists, humorists, pictures and comics ever assembled in any newspaper between Chicago and the Pacific Coast. The new paper had the services of the United Press, Consolidated Press, International News and, on Sunday, the Associated Press news services.

From the time The Journal-Post was born of this consolidation in 1928, until the paper expired in 1942,

²The Post, October 3, 1928.

the publication ran the gauntlet of changes in ownership; fumbling by self-advertised, high-salaried experts imported from the East; lip service support which was not exchangeable for money at the bank; formidable competition from The Kansas City Star and Times; and political moorings which failed to hold when the clean-up of corrupt government came in Kansas City.

Nevertheless, during the next fourteen years of its precarious existence, The Journal-Post was a lively and interesting newspaper devoting a relatively great amount of space to features and pictures. Despite great effort, the paper was not successful in its bid for more readers. The circulation of the combined papers dropped to 139,211 in 1929.³ The same year The Star made one of the greatest circulation gains in the history of the paper. The daily circulation average of The Star in December, 1929, was 290,232.⁴ The Journal-Post's circulation continued to slump each year after 1929, until a low of 82,879 was reached in 1934.⁵ Despite slight gains in the

³N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory, 1929.

⁴The Kansas City Star, January 1, 1930.

⁵N. W. Ayer & Son's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals, 1934.

number of readers during 1935 and 1936, the paper never had as much as one hundred thousand circulation after 1930.

I. HENRY L. DOHERTY AND THE JOURNAL-POST

In 1930, The Star began a campaign to slash natural gas rates in Kansas City and in Kansas to make the rates commensurate with twenty-five cent wheat. George B. Longan, president of The Star, told a reporter that the paper had always been opposed to high gas rates and would continue to fight the battle until the rates went down.⁶

When Walter S. Dickey died in January, 1931, his son, W. Laurence Dickey, and son-in-law, Marion B. Sharp, were successful in gaining control of The Journal-Post from the trustees of the estate and they continued as the paper's top management. The paper was in rocky financial straits with declining circulation and advertising and increasing costs of production. Dickey and Sharp believed they had found a solution to their financial dilemma in the summer of 1931 when H. L. Doherty, president of the Cities Service Gas Company, became embroiled with The Star in a battle over reduction in gas rates.

⁶George A. Brandenburg, "K. C. Star's Gas Rate Fight Carries on Policy Established by W. R. Nelson," Editor & Publisher, 64:6, July 18, 1931.

Doherty felt he had been grievously wronged by certain stories written for The Star by reporter Wallace Casey. In July 1931, Doherty sought to have The Star barred from the mails because of the paper's campaign against him and the Cities Service Gas Company. When Postmaster General Walter F. Brown dismissed his request for lack of evidence, Doherty made an appeal for action to the Secretary of the Department of Commerce and to Kansas Governor Harry Woodring.⁷ When these tactics failed to bring the desired results, Doherty filed a suit for libel and conspiracy against The Star on July 10, 1931. He brought suit for twelve million dollars, the largest single libel action ever filed to that time against a newspaper in the United States.⁸ Among other charges, Doherty alleged that Star officials sought to damage his business by campaigning for lower gas rates in Kansas in order to benefit a competing gas company owned by The Star. By July 6, 1932, Doherty had four suits pending against the paper and its owners seeking total damages of

⁷"H. L. Doherty, Angered by K. C. Star Attack, Would Have It Barred From Mails," Editor & Publisher, 64:5-6, July 11, 1931.

⁸Alfred McClung Lee, The Daily Newspaper in America (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), pp. 194-195.

fifty-four million dollars. He also tried to frighten the W. R. Nelson Estate trustees into canceling their agreement with the employee-purchasers of The Star in an effort to oust The Star's editors.⁹

While the suits were still pending in the summer of 1931, Doherty made overtures to the owners of The Journal-Post for an interest in the paper. In August the paper announced that Doherty would become contributing editor with freedom to express his own views in The Journal-Post's editorial columns without committing the paper. He was also given the right to buy advertising space on the same terms with the paper's most honored customers.¹⁰

Doherty bought a fifty per cent interest in The Journal-Post, but his contract did not give him control of the paper since ten per cent of his stock could not be voted. The utilities magnate turned editor in an effort to arouse Kansas Citizens with his charges that The Star was more interested in putting Cities Service Company on the spot and its stock out of the state than in lowering Kansas gas rates.¹¹

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰"Doherty Crusades For 'Press Freedom'," Editor & Publisher, 64:7, August 15, 1931.

¹¹"Doherty Battles Newspaper From Editorial Desk," The Business Week, 6:25, August 19, 1931.

The Star's crusade for cheaper gas rates had always been a popular issue in Kansas City, but in the summer of 1931 it was particularly so because Kansas' neighboring state of Oklahoma had waged a successful fight for reductions in the price of gas to about half the prevailing rate in Kansas City and 35 per cent below the average Kansas rate.¹²

Doherty's suit against The Star and his purchase of an interest in The Journal-Post brought a storm of protest from the American press. Newspapers charged that the paper had bartered its birthright and whether Doherty won or lost in Kansas City he would survive, but The Journal-Post could not. William Allen White, famous Kansas editor, gave Doherty this sage advice:

Now Mr. Doherty is in a fair way to learn a few fundamental facts about newspaper business. He will discover for instance that a newspaper run for the purpose of airing a private grouch is a heavy financial liability, as contrasted with one whose function is only to print an unbiased account of news. . . . He will discover that the function of a newspaper is to find and to print the facts as such and that it is an expensive form of medical treatment to use a newspaper as a mustard plaster for a private bellyache! ¹³

¹²"Doherty's Fight in Kansas Mobilizes Foes of Utilities: He Focuses Hostile Attention on Rates, Regulation, and The Controversial Commerce Issue," The Business Week, 6:21, July 22, 1931.

¹³Icie F. Johnson, William Rockhill Nelson and The Kansas City Star (Kansas City: Burton Publishing Company, 1935), p. 176.

This advice proved to be prophetic, but Doherty was too deeply involved in his "get even" campaign to heed the warning of his critics. His crusade against The Star failed to arouse the popular support of Kansas Citians and The Journal-Post continued to slide downhill suffering the consequences.

II. THE JOURNAL-POST'S POLITICAL MOORINGS FAIL

From the early days of the Civil War, The Journal had been the mouthpiece of the Republican Party in Kansas City. When the paper was purchased by Walter S. Dickey, an aspirant for Republican office, it became even more militantly Republican. The Post had supported the Democratic party while maintaining it was independent under ownership of Frederick G. Bonfils and Harry Tamm. When Dickey purchased the paper it labeled itself an independent Republican and this was the label retained by the paper when it was consolidated with The Journal in 1928. As long as the name of Walter S. Dickey was attached to The Journal-Post it could be nothing but a backer of Missouri's Old Guard Republicans.

Then, in 1931, Dickey died. Soon after, public utilities magnate H. L. Doherty bought his way into the paper's editorial columns. With Doherty's money pouring into The Journal-Post operation, the paper began to swing

away from its Republican tendencies. Beginning in 1932, it stated in the mast that it was an independent newspaper. This change in political faith became more pronounced as the years passed.¹⁴

In the spring of 1934, The Star launched an all-out campaign against the Thomas J. Pendergast political machine which controlled Kansas City's government. In the long and bitter crusade which followed, The Journal-Post found itself on the wrong side of the political fence. Pendergast was the Democratic boss of Kansas City and when the investigation of corrupt government first began, The Journal-Post supported Pendergast against the opposition's claims. Then, as Pendergast's political machine began to tumble, The Journal-Post staff had to admit that there was corruption in the city government. By then the long chain of indictments and prison sentences of the political bosses had begun and the paper joined the band wagon of the expose' too late to redeem itself.

By the time The Journal-Post shifted from supporter to critic of the Pendergast regime in Kansas City, it had lost several thousand readers to the crusading opposition

¹⁴Daniel T. Kelliher, "The Sentinel on the Hill," The Kansas City Daily News-Press, September 16, 1955.

paper.¹⁵ The circulation dipped to a new low of 83,826 in 1939 at the height of the clean-up campaign of the city's government.¹⁶ Key men in the machine were indicted and sentenced to prison, including Pendergast, City Manager H. F. McElroy and Director of Police Otto P. Higgins. The Journal-Post was never able to quite rid itself of the taint of once having supported the Pendergast machine.

III. THE JOURNAL AGAIN

Doherty interests, dissatisfied with the results Dickey and Sharp were getting, began looking around for new management to take over The Journal-Post. Orville S. McPherson was the man selected to nurse the paper back to good financial health. When McPherson came, Dickey and Sharp were ousted from control. This severed all Dickey interests with the paper and ended an era which had begun in 1921.

In August 1938, McPherson purchased the stock owned by Dickey and Sharp and took over management of the paper. The new company included McPherson as president

¹⁵Interview with Edward Meisburger, former Journal-Post city editor, in Kansas City, February 15, 1958.

¹⁶N. W. Ayer & Son's Directory of Newspaper and Periodicals, 1939.

and publisher of The Journal-Post and Russell H. Miles, vice-president and general manager. J. W. West, managing editor of the Raleigh (North Carolina) Times and Brewster P. Campbell, formerly feature editor of the Detroit Free Press, joined the staff as executive directors of the paper.¹⁷

McPherson's group held a fifty per cent interest in The Journal-Post and Doherty controlled the other half of the stock from his desk in New York. Under the new management, McPherson and his partners controlled the policies of the paper.

The new president was a specialist in efficient newspaper operation. He insisted that all deadwood and boiler-plate material be removed and that local and state coverage be improved. McPherson was a strong advocate of local art work in the newspaper. Miles, the new manager, had a career in newspaper work almost wholly built around promotional activities.

On October 4, 1938, the paper dropped its hyphenated name and became simply The Kansas City Journal. McPherson believed The Journal had always been known as a

¹⁷"W. Laurence Dickey and Marion B. Sharp Interest in Kansas City Journal-Post Sold To Group Headed by Newspaper Analysts," Missouri Press News, 6:3, September, 1938.

conservative newspaper and that The Post was known for its sensationalism. He wanted to be as far as possible from The Post's reputation for yellow journalism.¹⁸

On October 4, a typographically renovated Journal hit the streets of Kansas City. For its newly streamlined pages it adopted a new type family in medium, medium condensed, medium italic and bold face for its headlines. Book critic Tom Collins introduced a new feature on the editorial page, a column entitled "This One's On Me." Other columns in The Journal were written by John Cameron Swayze, Parke Carroll and Kenneth McMullen Dickey. Swayze was radio editor and motion picture critic for the newspaper.¹⁹

In a series of swift changes, McPherson announced that henceforth The Journal would support the Democratic party. But the new management did not make the paper Democratic--others had accomplished that long before McPherson took over.²⁰

Despite McPherson and Miles' attempt at livelier make-up and better news presentation, more features,

¹⁸Kelliher, op. cit., September 30, 1955.

¹⁹"Kansas City Journal Changes Name, Face," Missouri Press News, 6:6, October, 1938.

²⁰Kelliher, loc. cit.

liquor advertisements and New Deal ax-grinding, The Journal did not make money. All attempts to spruce up the paper were futile. By 1940, the circulation had slumped to 78,149.²¹

IV. THE END OF A NEWSPAPER

In 1940, the newspaper business was in a ten-year downward economic spiral which had begun soon after the stock market crash. Newspaper production and personnel costs in 1941 were frozen at all-time high levels while the papers maintained the same advertising rates they had charged during the 1929 period. The total American advertising budget had shrunk about \$680,000,000 between 1929 and 1941 and the total advertising lineage in newspapers sagged 33 per cent, dropping back to World War I levels. The number of daily newspapers in the United States had shrunk by 8 per cent between 1923 and 1941.²²

In Kansas City in 1941 The Journal was in a precarious position. Long the "second paper," it was competing for the shrinking advertising dollar against one

²¹N. W. Ayer & Son's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals, 1940.

²²"The Vanishing Newspaper," Time, 38:38, September 8, 1941.

of the most formidable foes of the newspaper business, The Kansas City Star.

In October 1941, Harry Newman became editor and publisher of The Journal in a final desperate attempt to buoy up the paper's profits. Brewster Campbell continued as managing editor with Russell Miles general manager. Daniel T. Kelliher was appointed city editor.

Even before Newman took over, Kansas Citians were predicting the end of The Journal. Staff members began resigning as early as 1940 because they felt the paper was nearing the end of its rope and they did not want to be left jobless.²³

Events moved swiftly after Newman joined the staff. On March 23, 1941, a Baltimore, Maryland, lawyer, Morton H. Rosen, purchased the property of The Journal at a foreclosure sale on the steps of the Jackson County Court-house. Rosen bid \$250,000 for the paper. He did not disclose his backers. The foreclosure sale had been called for by the holders of \$500,000 in bonds issued by the newspaper in 1931, when, as The Journal-Post, it had faced financial difficulties under ownership of Walter S. Dickey. The attorney for the hapless bondholders said the entire

²³Letter from Hal A. Grayson, former Journal city editor and presently director of public relations for Braniff Airways in Kansas City, January 20, 1958.

\$500,000 issue was in default.²⁴ The sale of The Journal was subject to a \$4800 prior claim of the Ludlow Typographical Company. Left in doubt was the status of a bankruptcy suit against the newspaper for \$216,283 for newsprint bought from the International Paper Company in 1937, 1938 and 1942.

Editor and publisher Newman announced that the foreclosure sale had been ordered as part of an agreement between the bondholders, stockholders of the paper, its former owners and its two major creditors. Purpose of the sale was to clarify the top-heavy financial position of The Journal.²⁵ Soon after the paper was sold, Newman boasted to his staff that the paper was again in good financial shape and would continue to do business in Kansas City.

One week later, on March 31, 1942, The Journal went to the newspaper boneyard of Missouri's second largest metropolis. When the paper ceased publication, some three hundred staff members and employees, including more than fifty on the editorial staff, were thrown out of jobs. For those who had served in the bitter newspaper wars of

²⁴"K. C. Journal Continues After Foreclosure Sale," Editor & Publisher, 75:32, March 28, 1942.

²⁵Ibid.

Kansas City, The Star's final mention of The Journal was significant.

For years The Star had ~~exposed~~ its rival. The other paper was always the opposition and its name was kept out of stories. Or, if The Journal had to be mentioned in print, it was referred to as "an evening newspaper," but never by name. In The Journal's final dying days, The Star's attitude softened slightly. Few Kansas Citians were prepared for the benevolent attitude of The Star's editorial tribute to The Journal or the letter which George B. Longan, Star company president, sent to the members of his staff the day the paper died. This memorandum stated in part:

The announcement of the discontinuance of The Journal should not be made an occasion for gloating on the part of any member of The Star's organization. First, it should be regarded as a business failure--and that seldom is a matter of rejoicing, whether it be your competitor or not. Second, it creates unemployment, adding to the already large number of jobless, in the newspaper field. We must have sympathy for those who are deprived of a means of livelihood, even though it may only be temporary.²⁶

Under one name or another, The Journal had chronicled the news of Western Missouri and Eastern Kansas for eighty-eight years beginning with its founding in 1854.

²⁶"Kansas City Fadeout," Newsweek, 19:70, April 20, 1942.

After The Star invaded the field, The Journal was never able to successfully buck the competition of William R. Nelson's organ.

The Journal's end came as a result of many conditions, not the least of them being its betrayal by those who sought to use it to further their own ends. The eight major factors which played a prominent part in bringing about the paper's demise were:

- (1) a large newsprint bill
- (2) fierce competition from The Star and Times
- (3) Dickey's subsidy of the paper for ten years which plunged the paper into near bankruptcy when the subsidy ended abruptly
- (4) The Journal-Post's support of the wrong party in the Kansas City political clean-up
- (5) frequent changes in ownership and policy which discouraged advertisers and confused the paper's staff and the general public
- (6) advertising which was unable to pay its own way
- (7) top level management which was not competent and thus could not instill confidence in others
- (8) the paper's location on Hospital Hill which made it difficult to get editions downtown quickly.²⁶

Of the many newspapers established in Kansas City, only a handful survived for any length of time. The

²⁶ Interview with Edward Meisburger, former Journal-Post city editor, in Kansas City, February 15, 1958.

Journal outlasted them all. When it ceased publication in 1942, it was in its eighty-eighth year of nearly continuous service to the people of Kansas City. Even The Star in 1958 has not equalled the publication mark set by The Journal when it expired. The paper rendered a unique service to Kansas Citians by recording the events of history and making them public from the early struggle of the city's pioneers down to the day when Kansas City was established as one of the most important cities of the Middle West.

Numerous other newspapers came and went in Kansas City, began the story of history late and invariably gave it up in a few years. But one newspaper, The Journal, recorded the whole story, day in and day out, through eighty-eight years brimming full of significant episodes, to deliver the record down to the citizens of today who want to study the history of an epoch in Kansas City.

That final day of March, 1942, loomed large in the history of two newspapers, The Journal and The Post. Although The Journal received the eulogies, the death actually marked the end of two Kansas City papers. In many respects, The Journal and The Post were opposites. In other ways those two newspapers were amazingly alike. For most of its life, one of the papers was a staunch supporter of Missouri's Old Guard Republicans; the other

backed the Democratic party. One achieved a reputation for a staid, respectable news presentation; the other was known as a sensational yellow journal. One began the history of events in Kansas City early; the other invaded the newspaper field late. But for all their many differences, The Journal and The Post met the same fate and largely as a result of similar conditions under the same management. Both papers received cruel treatment at the hands of their various owners and both were used to further the inglorious causes of novice journalists who were more interested in achieving their own ends than in producing a good newspaper.

The death of any newspaper is a tragic thing, but particularly so when its passing leaves a modern metropolis in the grips of a virtual news monopoly established by the opposition. Today, Kansas City is a one-newspaper community. The Star reigns supreme. It has a monopoly in its territory--perhaps not quite a perfect monopoly because of radio and television--but a real monopoly nevertheless. The guardian of the "opposite views" in Kansas City is gone.

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F. LETTERS

Letter from Hal A. Grayson, former city editor of The Kansas City Journal and presently public relations director for Braniff Airways in Kansas City, January 20, 1958.

Letter from Edward Meisburger, former Post reporter and Journal-Post city editor and now retired and living in Kansas City, February 3, 1958.

Letter from Max M. Levand, former business manager of The Post and presently president of The Wichita Beacon, March 11, 1958.

G. INTERVIEWS

Interview with Jack Carberry, former Post reporter and presently sports editor of The Denver Post, in Denver, Colorado, December 24, 1957.

Interview with Edward Meisburger, former Post reporter and Journal-Post city editor and now retired and living in Kansas City, in Kansas City, February 15, 1958.

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