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THE MISSOURI INTELLIGENCER
and
BOON'S LICK ADVERTISER

A Brief History of the First American
Newspaper West of St. Louis

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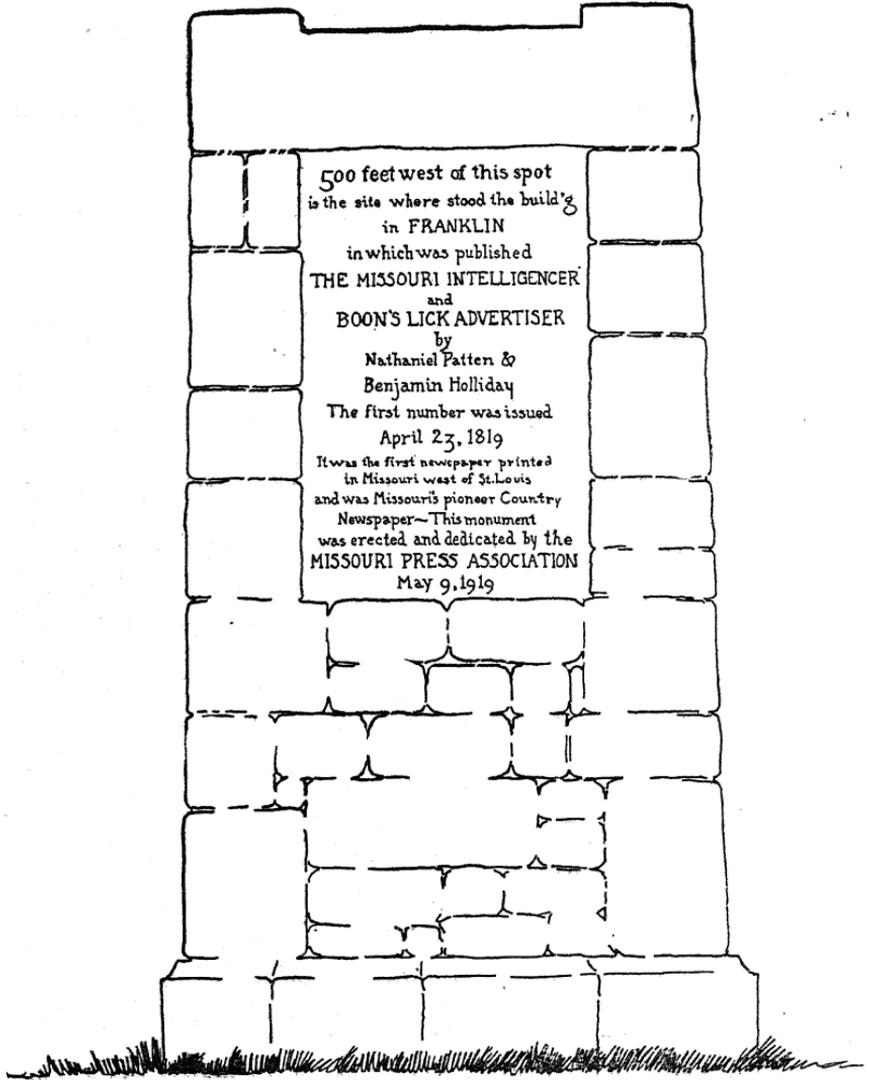
ISSUED THREE TIMES MONTHLY; ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MAT-
TER AT THE POSTOFFICE AT COLUMBIA, MISSOURI—1,500
MAY, 1919

PREFACE

This bulletin, issued in the tenth annual Journalism Week at the University of Missouri, is published in connection with the celebration by the Missouri Press Association of the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Missouri Intelligencer and Boon's Lick Advertiser, the first American newspaper west of St. Louis, whose first number was issued on April 23, 1819. The author, E. W. Stephens of Columbia, Mo., is past president of the Missouri Press Association, and chairman of a special committee named by the association to arrange a centennial celebration commemorating the establishment of this pioneer Missouri newspaper. Mr. Stephens was graduated from the University of Missouri in 1867 and received the honorary degree of LL.D. in 1905.

In preparing this brief history, in which he has confined himself to the period in which the paper bore the name, the Missouri Intelligencer and Boon's Lick Advertiser, the author desires to give due credit for valuable information obtained from the "History of Boone County," by Colonel William F. Switzler, and from "Nathaniel Patten," a bulletin issued by Prof. F. F. Stephens of the history department of the University of Missouri; also to Mrs. Anna B. Korn of El Reno, Okla., and to Floyd C. Shoemaker, secretary of the State Historical Society of Missouri.

The files of the Missouri Intelligencer and Boon's Lick Advertiser, from its first to its final number, are to be found in the library of the State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia. So valuable were these files that the society protected the pages of each issue by a Japanese silk covering which does not obscure the reading matter but which makes the paper impervious to wear or water. This was the first newspaper in the United States to be so preserved.



This monument, the purpose of which is stated in the inscription upon it, has been erected at Kingsbury Station near the track of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad, about one thousand feet from the north end of the bridge across the Missouri River at Boonville. It is paid for by personal contributions of members of the Missouri Press Association. The architect is Mr. Egerton Swartwout of New York City, who was the architect of the Missouri State Capitol. He generously made no charge for his architectural services in designing and preparing the plans and specifications for the monument.

THE MISSOURI INTELLIGENCER
and
BOON'S LICK ADVERTISER

No period of Missouri's history is more intensely interesting than the story of the two decades covering the early settlement of the Boon's Lick country. From 1806, when Nathan and Daniel Boone, sons of Daniel Boone, and possibly the elder Daniel, himself, started the manufacture of salt at the licks in Howard County opposite Arrow Rock and the shipping of it down the Missouri River in keel boats, to 1826, when the Missouri Intelligencer was removed from Franklin to Fayette, and Franklin, the magic city of the wilderness, began to yield to the encroachments of the Missouri River, and after ten years of brilliant history had to fade under the shifting tides of a fickle emigration—this was an era of pioneer settlement and hardship, of chivalry and adventure, of suffering and achievement, the parallel to which is hardly to be found in the history of any state.

The War of Independence had ended less than twenty-five years before, and the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark expedition had been but three years past, when the boldest and hardiest spirits of Virginia and Kentucky and Tennessee and the Carolinas, the flower of the civilization that had won freedom to the Republic, began to pour into this western El Dorado; lured by the stories of its great rivers, its noble forests, its broad prairies and its exhaustless resources.

The Coopers, Benjamin and Sarshall and Braxton, with other emigrants, came first in 1810, and settled upon the fertile bottoms opposite Boonville. In 1811 the war broke out with the Indians, and the settlers were driven into forts, of which there were some six or seven, all along from the Moniteau to a point opposite the present site of Arrow Rock. The story of these forts, Cooper, Hempstead, McClain, Kincaid, McMahan, Arnold and Head, and perhaps others; and the experiences of

their inmates during the four years of war with the savages is a tale of suffering, heroism and romance that would fill a volume and must forever illumine the pioneer history of Missouri.

Peace having been declared in 1815, the tide of emigration flowed in a steady and ceaseless stream. The Boon's Lick trail was blazed, and such was the influx of emigrants that in 1816 Howard County, extending from St. Charles to the western boundary of the state, one-third the present size of Missouri, was organized. A town was laid out upon the Missouri River opposite the present site of Boonville and called Franklin.

The story of Franklin reads like fiction. Within four years it had a population of from 1,200 to 1,500. It had a public square of two acres and streets eighty-seven feet wide. It contained between two hundred and three hundred buildings, among which were five stores, a tobacco factory, two academies, a carding machine, a market house, several churches, four warehouses, a jail and a public library.

Its most notable feature was its population. In culture and ability and public spirit it was distinguished above any other community of its size that has existed in this state. Lawyers, scholars, physicians, educators, business men, artists, artisans of the highest class, many of whom have afterward become eminent in public life in this and other states, were among its citizenship in large numbers, while those who engaged in farming pursuits in the immediate vicinity were no less notable.

The fertility of the soil, as described by the historians of that period, surpasses belief. Near by, one Thomas Hardeman laid out a flower and vegetable garden, which in luxuriance and beauty rivaled the most noted in this or other lands.

Franklin was an ambitious and formidable rival of St. Louis. When the capital of the new state was located, Franklin was a strong candidate for that honor, being one of the three or four competitors. It was the seat of government of Howard County from the county's organization in 1816 until the seat was removed to Fayette in 1826.

Missouri Intelligencer, AND BOON'S LICK ADVERTISER.

FRANKLIN, (MISSOURI TERRITORY), FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 1819.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY,

PATRICK HOLLADAY, EDITOR.

Three Dollars per annum, in advance...

No paper will be distributed gratis...

Subscribers at a distance must pay in advance...

LIST OF LETTERS TO BE RECEIVED AT THE POST OFFICE AT FRANKLIN, MISSOURI, ON THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 1819.

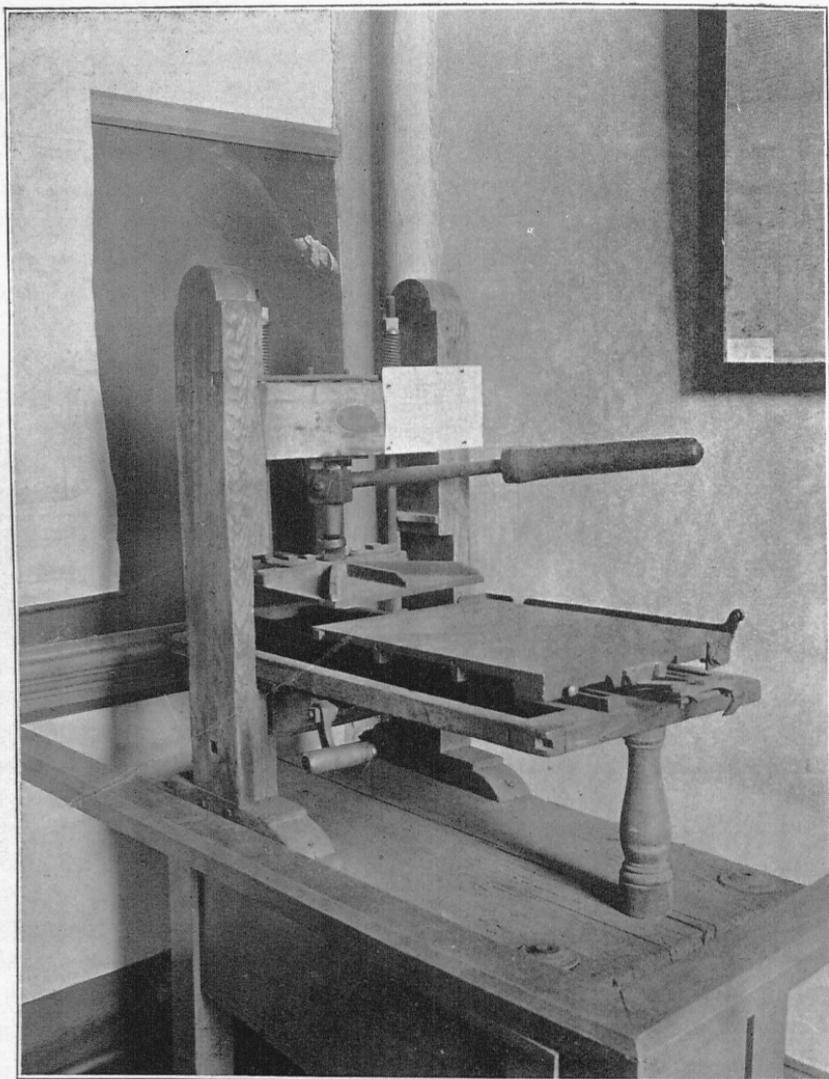
- Adams A. Long James
Austin Joseph
Barnes John
Barnes William

- Robert Jesse
Roberts Gady
Rosen David
Rosen Henry
Rosen Daniel
Rosen Joseph
Rosen John
Rosen James
Rosen James
Rosen Joseph

- Loose John
Loose William
Loose John

- Phelps

THE TREATY. It is solemn that we have had to accept an office in our hands...



A Ramage hand printing press, similar to that upon which Benjamin Holliday and Nathaniel Patten "jerked off" the 100 to 400 copies of the *Intelligencer* which they printed each week. The press illustrated here is on exhibition at the School of Journalism of the University of Missouri. It was built in 1796.

Such was the town to which Benjamin Holliday brought a Ramage printing press and less than five hundred pounds of type with which to start a newspaper in the spring of 1819. Holliday had come to the Boon's Lick country with the Coopers in 1810 and had been an inmate of Cooper's fort during the war. He afterward went to Kentucky. While there he bought the newspaper outfit in Louisville, and with his brother, Stephen Holliday, who was a printer, brought it to Franklin. There upon lot No. 49, which he had bought of Abraham Barns, he erected a frame building and in it he installed his plant. This lot was located 500 feet west of the present line of the M. K. & T. Railroad and about 1500 feet north of the north bank of the Missouri River at this time (1919).

In 1818 there came to Franklin Nathaniel Patten. He was a native of Roxbury, Mass., born in 1793. With his family he had come to Mount Sterling, Ky., in 1812, where he had separated from them and, probably obsessed with the prevalent passion for the West, had gone alone in 1818 to Franklin. He was a bachelor, 25 years old, very deaf, of delicate mould, small of stature, well educated, of quiet nature, of pure morals, conservative, of high ideals, industrious and tenacious in purpose. He had had some experience in the printing business. He was a practical printer and the newspaper business appealed to him. Whether Holliday's purchase of the plant had been at Patten's instance or whether there had been any previous understanding between them is not known. But Patten entered into partnership with Holliday and together they issued the first copy of the newspaper in Franklin on April 23, 1819, and called it the Missouri Intelligencer and Boon's Lick Advertiser.

The paper was set in large faced, long primer and bourgeois type. It consisted of four pages, five columns to a page, and the size of the pages was 12x18 inches. The sheet was 18x24. The total number of ems was 40,000. The presswork for the first six years of the paper's history was excellent. The typographical arrangement was tasteful. The first issue contained three columns of advertisements and seventeen columns of reading matter. The number of columns of advertising was subsequently increased to five and seven.

The first issue contains a column of letters in the post-office, of which there were more than two hundred, signed by Augustus Storrs, postmaster; an account of the ratification by the United States Senate of a treaty with Spain; an announcement of the daily expectation of the arrival of a Yellowstone expedition, consisting of two steamboats, loaded with troops; an article on a prospective stage service from Franklin to St. Louis; a list of toasts at a public dinner at Franklin on the preceding twenty-second of February. A large amount of space is devoted to proceedings in Congress. A notable feature is an absence of local news and of all editorial comment, except a column salutatory.

There are advertisements of Dr. J. J. Lowry, practicing physician; of Peter B. Harris, hatter; of W. V. Rector and Lilburn W. Boggs, merchants; of a divorce case; of the sales of land near Franklin, Smithton (the present site of Columbia) and Cote San Dessien; of a list of drugs just received from Baltimore for sale by Dr. N. Hutchinson.

In a subsequent issue of the paper is quite a large advertisement by Patten & Holliday, the newspaper proprietors, of a storage, commission and land agency business in which they had engaged. The newspaper profits evidently not being satisfactory, the new business was found necessary to bolster it up. Among articles offered for sale were 130 barrels of fine flour and a number of barrels of "excellent whisky." In this advertisement the Missouri Gazette (St. Louis) and the St. Louis Enquirer are requested to copy the same, these two papers being the only other papers in the state.

The issue of May 28, 1819, contains an announcement of the arrival of the first steamboat that had ever ascended the Missouri River. It was the Independence, Captain Nelson, commander. There was a great public dinner and speeches by Colonel Elias Rector, one of the passengers; Duff Green, J. H. Benson, J. C. Mitchell, Major Thompson Douglass, L. W. Boggs, Stephen Rector, John W. Scudder, Doctor Dawson, Augustus Storrs, J. B. Howard, Major Richard Gentry, L. W. Jordan and Nathaniel Patten.

The same week there also arrived from Frankfort, Ky., a keel boat and the two steamboats of the Yellowstone expedition, hitherto announced.

On July 13, 1819, the *Western Engineer*, a steamboat resembling a sea monster, arrived. It was upon a scientific expedition to the sources of the Missouri. Among the passengers were a number of scientists.

On June 17, 1820, Patten disposed of his one-third interest in the *Intelligencer* to Holliday for \$450, but it does not seem that he retired from service. He had been made postmaster, and while in that position lost \$200 from bad debts for postage and was robbed of \$800, which probably made it necessary for him to recoup his finances by sale of his interest in the paper.

From June 17, 1820, until May 28, 1821, Holliday appears as sole publisher; then for two months no publisher or editor is mentioned. On July 23, 1821, Holliday resumed charge of the paper and John Payne, a young lawyer, became the editor. Payne died within three months. Holliday continued as publisher until June 18, 1822, when his name disappears from the paper. A month later, July 18, 1822, he disposed of the paper and the building and lot it occupied, to Nathaniel Patten for \$1,200. Patten at once took into partnership John T. Cleveland, a school teacher, and these two continued in charge until April 17, 1824, when Cleveland retired. Patten became sole proprietor and so continued until the suspension of the paper in 1835.

Patten removed the paper to Fayette in June, 1826, where for a year John Wilson was editor, Patten continuing as proprietor and publisher. He married Miss Matilda Gaither, an accomplished woman, in 1827. He had the usual editorial wisdom of knowing how to select a wife, but she died in 1829.

Up to that time the *Intelligencer* had been nonpartisan, but the starting of the *Monitor* in Fayette by James H. Birch, an aggressive editor, formerly of the *Enquirer* at St. Louis, and the persistent assaults upon the *Intelligencer* led Patten to change his policy. He came out for John Quincy Adams for President in the bitter contest between Adams and Jackson.

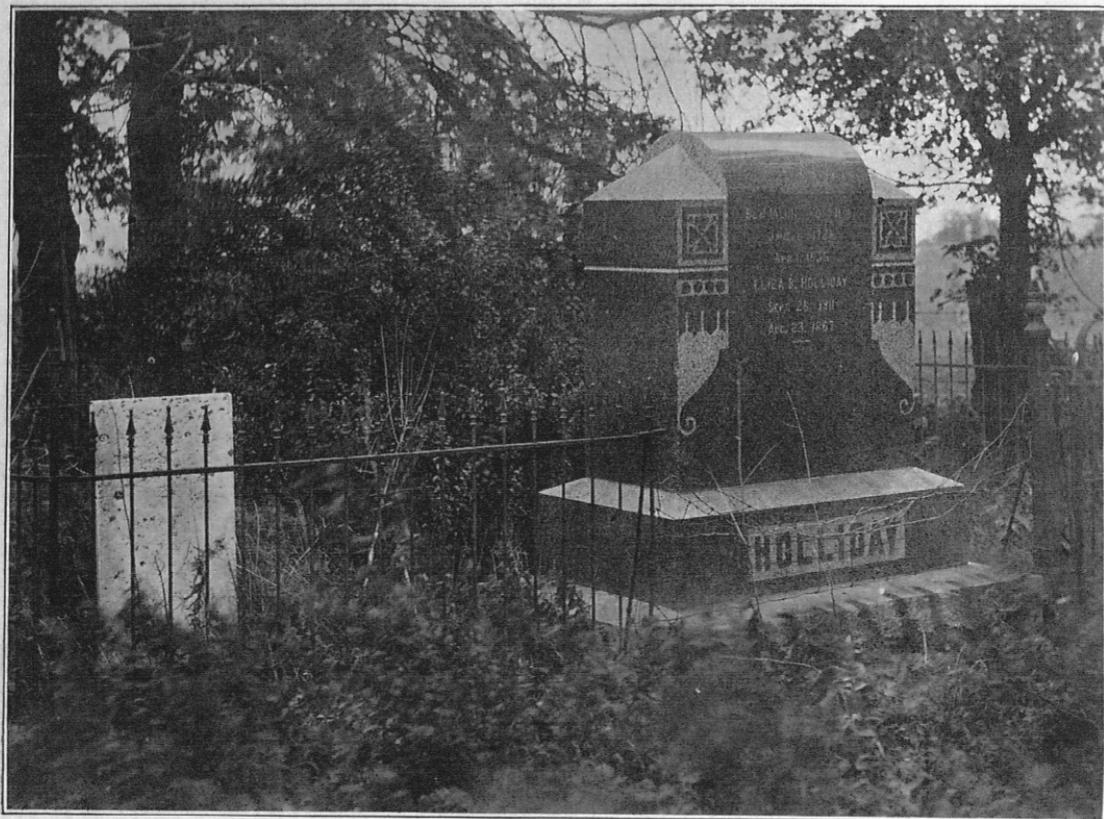
Sensitive in nature and constitutionally averse to newspaper controversy, Patten grew restive under the attacks that were made upon him. This, together with the death of his wife and the fact that his paper was not prosperous financially, led him to accept an attractive proposition from the citizens of Columbia, to move his paper to that town. The last copy of the paper issued in Fayette was dated April 9, 1830. How he succeeded in conducting his paper at all under the adverse conditions with which he had struggled for ten years is beyond explanation. Until he left Franklin the circulation of the *Intelligencer* was only a little more than a hundred subscribers. He increased it about 1826 to 400. The subscription price was \$3 in advance, or \$4 when paid at the end of the year. It was announced that subscriptions could be paid in wood, corn, flour and vegetables, and especially pork. The price for advertisements was \$1 an inch.

Columbia had a population of 600 in 1830. On February 27, 1831, Patten married Mrs. Eliza Holman, widow of Dr. John Holman. They had one son. She assisted her husband in mechanical work upon the paper. After his death she married Major Wilson Overall of St. Charles, by whom she was the mother of three sons.

Patten continued to publish the *Intelligencer* at Columbia until 1835, issuing the last copy of his paper there on December 5 of that year. He removed to St. Charles, where for a year he published the *Clarion*. He died November 24, 1837, at the age of 44, having spent eighteen years as newspaper publisher and proprietor in Central Missouri. He is easily entitled to the honor of having been Missouri's pioneer country editor. In many respects he was a good exemplar to those who have followed him. He published a neat paper typographically and printed it well. There were few typographical errors and the grammar and English were excellent. He got it out on time and regularly, although the difficulties of obtaining paper at such a remote and obscure location where means of transportation were so limited, were great; so much so that at times he was compelled to issue only half a sheet. But he never missed an issue. Mail was not received oftener than once in two



The only building in Old Franklin which still stands, the rest of the town having been washed away by the Missouri River, which later receded. This brick structure was originally the home of Franklin Academy. It is now used as a residence.



The grave of Benjamin Holliday, near Boonsboro, Howard County. Holliday was one of the founders of the Missouri Intelligencer and Boon's Lick Advertiser.

weeks and then by horseback. At times it was delayed a month. His thrift, industry, irrepressible tenacity and perseverance were illustrated in that with such a narrow field and meager income he continued to overcome every obstacle successfully and to pull through without failure or suspension for sixteen years, although his health was poor and the difficulties were almost insurmountable.

Patten had high ideals. The news and editorial and advertising columns were clean and unobjectionable. He never indulged in abuse, although often provoked and despite the fact that the period was one of rancorous political bitterness and the spirit of the times was characterized by constant animosity and strife.

He was nonpartisan and impartial and managed to steer his course in such way as to provoke few enmities. His paper stood at all times for peace and harmony and purity. In his salutatory in his first number in 1819 he used these words, "Truth being the first principle of virtue, and virtue being the sure basis upon which any government can rest, it will be the first object of this paper to make truth on all occasions its polar star." And he stood by this pronouncement during his whole career.

The Missouri Intelligencer and Boon's Lick Advertiser ran largely to politics. It contained scarcely any editorials, little local news and hardly ever an announcement of a death or a marriage. Mr. Patten was married twice during his management of the Intelligencer. He did not announce either one of his marriages. Rarely was there a death notice, and never a personal item, never a piece of poetry. Rarely a flash of humor enlivened its columns. The following attempt at the humorous appears in one issue of the Intelligencer. It is the only material of any kind to relieve the dolorous gloom of the paper during all that year. Those were great times for public dinners and for toasts and speeches. The fact that this is in the form of a toast is probably the reason it appealed to the humorous fancy of the editor:

Mathematical Toast

The fair daughters of Columbia
 May they add virtue to beauty
 Subtract envy from friendship
 Multiply amiable accomplishments by sweetness of temper
 Divide time by sociability and economy
 And reduce scandal to its lowest econimation.

This may have made the "old fellows of those solemn times" laugh, but there is little in it to excite the risibilities of the present day, unless the humor be found in the last word of the toast.

Nearly every part of the paper not occupied by advertisements was given up to reports of proceedings of Congress, to extended speeches, or to anonymous communications. The long-winded orator, usually a member of Congress, would sometimes occupy every reading page, or even consume two editions of the paper.

The anonymous correspondent was in repeated evidence. Many persons wrote for the paper and upon every variety of subject, but rarely would one of them sign his name to what he wrote. Some of these diatribes were fierce, abusive and bitterly personal, but most of them were made from the safe ambuscade of an anonymous name. An interesting feature of this anonymous journalism was the variety of *nom de plumes*. Here are some of the signatures copied at random: "Gracchus," "Brutus," "Junius," "Epaminondas," "Cato," "Plato," "E Pluribus Unum," "Justice," "Many Voters," "Many Citizens," "Fair Play," "Jacobus," "Laocoon," "Fabricious," "A Friend to Truth," "Shinney on Your Own Side," "A Freeman," "Mentor," "Coulter Broadfurrow," "Philo," "Constitutionalist," "Cohu Culpepper," "Darby Buckeye," "Double Trigger," "Bolivar," "Aristides," "One of the People," and so on.

Patten was kept in continual hot water by this use of his paper by those who in this covert manner were venting their spite upon those against whom they held grudges or dislikes. His paper was made a constant maelstrom of venom and envy by those who had not the courage to come out and make their attacks in the open. He was constantly being set upon to di-

vulge their names, but with a mistaken sense of editorial ethics, would not do so until he himself was held responsible for offences of which he was innocent and about which he had no concern.

Yet those were the days of duelling, when men settled their differences upon the field of honor. The man who refused to do so was set down as a coward. Yet those who would face the pistol or sword in mortal combat had not the courage to place their signatures to their attacks through the newspapers, some of which led to duels afterward. A fine illustration of the difference between physical and moral courage!

This sort of journalism continued in Missouri with more or less variation for more than fifty years, and even after, as the writer of this has occasion to know to his sorrow, for he himself was the victim of no little of it after he entered journalism. One of the worst features of it was that these cowardly bushwhackers hid behind the editor, who, simpleton that he was, permitted himself to be made the shelter from which they did their firing.

It must be said to the credit of modern journalism that it has taken a great step forward in that it has stopped this absurd and pusillanimous abuse of newspaper columns, and that when a man would attack another, if permitted to do it at all, he is required to do so over his own signature.

Political and personal animosity ran high in those days and the vituperation indulged in through newspapers was characteristic. Some of these writers were masters of English and past masters of invective. In that respect, also, the newspaper of the present day has greatly advanced.

In fact in all respects—editorially, in news, literary quality and ethical standard—there is about the same comparison between the present and the pioneer newspaper as there is between the stage coach and the automobile. Why should it be otherwise? Has not this been the greatest century of progress in all history? Why should not the newspaper have kept pace with it? It has. Even more, it has led it.

But the pioneer journal was a reflex of the age in which it was published, as is the modern journal of the present age.

It did its duty fully as well, and more than all other agencies led the way for all that we have today.

When we consider its environment, the difficulties that surrounded it, its immense load of disadvantages, the wonder is that it was published at all. During the sixteen years that the *Missouri Intelligencer* was issued there was not a telegraph, a railroad or a rock road in the state. Its nearest source of supplies was St. Louis, nearly two hundred miles distant, and the only means of transportation was by ox team over roads that were impassable a third of the year, and by steamboats that were few and far between. Even St. Louis was not a manufacturing center, but purchased type and paper and printing machinery and material from New York or Philadelphia, from which the transportation was as slow and difficult as it was from St. Louis to Franklin.

Prices were high, and money was scarce. Readers were few. While there were some who were cultured and appreciative, there were many who were ignorant. The population was turbulent and passionate, knowing but little of the restraints of law. Party and personal feeling, where the struggle for existence was so intense, was jealous and bitter. The newspaper, being the only medium of public communication, was misused and misunderstood. In such a state of society the editor carried his life in his hands. Local news was scarce and foreign news scarcer, because but little was happening within the small area of population adjacent to its place of publication, while it required more than a month to receive reports from the East, and nearly six months from Europe.

Journalism was in a crude and formative age. The editor had no guide or model, and the school of journalism had not been born in the dreams of the most imaginative.

Under these conditions, in this primitive wilderness, Patten and Holliday started their newspaper, and to it Patten, after Holliday's retirement in three years, clung for thirteen years with a courage and an energy and an intelligence that cannot be too highly honored or too long commemorated.

He deserves to be canonized as the pioneer, the pathfinder, the founder, the Moses of country journalism in Missouri.