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Old Newspapers and Early Editors of Kentucky.

The introduction of the press in a new country is a most important event, and can contribute more pleasure and happiness than almost anything. That Jefferson said of it. "If I had to choose between a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should prefer the latter."

Napoleon said "A hostile newspaper is more to be dreaded than a thousand bayonets."

The Boston Herald ^{published} ~~said~~ at one time an article entitled don't snub the reporter. In which he pleaded for kind treatment for the reporter. The Detroit Free Press answered, "The reporter is not likely to be snubbed. If he should be the one who does the snubbing needs the sympathy."

The printers, writers, publishers and those connected with the press were a

a remarkable
set who published remarkable papers. They
had their differences and some times lost
their lives for the free use of the press.
But were men of education and ability.

The first newspaper west of the
Allegheny Mts was established in Ky.
August 11th 1787. This was due to a political
necessity. Ky was then a County of Virginia.
The people were debating the propriety of
withdrawing from the parent state
and forming an independent government.

A convention was held at Danville
and adopted the following resolution.
That to insure the unanimous opinion
of the people respecting the separation of
the district of Ky from Virginia and
forming a separate state government
and to give publicity to the proceedings
of the convention it is deemed essential
to have a printing press.

A committee was appointed by the convention.

convention and charged with the duty of carrying out the spirit of the resolution. But it was two years before it was fully accomplished.

Finally John Bradford who had recently moved to Ky. became interested. He agreed to establish a paper if guaranteed public patronage. His offer was accepted. The Lexington board of trustees granted him a public lot free on condition that he establish a printing press in Lexington at that time the most important town west of the Allegheny Mts. This liberal donation was gladly accepted and the paper established in Lexington rather than Hanville the capital.

Bradford sent to Philadelphia for materials, and did not receive them until the following summer. They were transported from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, then by boat down the Ohio to Limestone.

A very dangerous, tedious journey because of the floods and Indians who lurked behind trees. Threw tomahawks and fired rifles at them. But they escaped and arrived safely at last. The paper established was sent on its mission. What the mission was is shown by its files of over 40 years.

The office of this pioneer editor compared with the editors office of the present day would present a strange contrast. His office was a rude log cabin one story high. He printed his paper on an old fashioned hand press he had bought second hand in Philadelphia. His editors easy chair that he sometimes referred to in editorials was a three legged stool he made himself and his table corresponded in style.

When he wrote at night it was by the light of a buffalo tallow candle or by fire light.

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The paper was scarcely as large as a half sheet of folscap and contained two short articles, one ad- and the following from the editor.

My customers will please excuse this my first publication. I am much hurried to get an impression by the time appointed. A great part of the type fell out of position while moving from Limestone to this office & my assistant through an indisposition of the body has been incapable of rendering the least assistance.

Many of his ads were as quaint as his office & equipment. Among them were spinning wheels, knee buckles, gun flints, buckskin for breeches, hair powder, saddle bags and many other articles now obsolete.

A notice appeared in one issue that people who subscribed to the frame meetings

house can pay in cattle or whiskey.

Two of the chief products of the bluegrass

Another early issue contained the constitution of the U. S. with an editorial reference that it is just framed by the ^{conventions} constitution now in session.

Notice through another issue was given a few weeks later, a company would meet at Crab Orchard for an early start through the wilderness to the state convention at Richmond to adopt the constitution of the U. S.

In ^{one issue} another over the signature of Charles Blount. I will not pay a note given to Wm Turner for three cows until he returns my rifle, blanket and tomahawk. I loaned him.

In another was \$50⁰⁰ reward for a runaway negro. And for sale a likely Virginia born negro woman and three children. They must not be separated.

In the 9th issue blank deeds subpœnas and other blanks used in business were advertised by the printers. Also a 1st almanac for 1788.

The early files show little local news but numerous editorials and communications from political antagonists.

Foreign news was from 6 wks to 6 mo's old when received.

There were no post offices and papers were taken by post riders to the different settlements. The best reader in the settlement would mount a stump and read the paper through.

The period of its publication covers some of the most exciting times in the early life of the state. Among them the Spanish intrigue, Burr conspiracy, navigation of the Mississippi.

Its last years witnessed the war with Mexico. And its career ended with that war.

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John Bradford was editor of The Ky Gazette until early in 1802, when he turned its management over to his son Manich, who sold it in 1809 to Thos Smith.

In 1814 it again passed into the hands of the Bradfords, and Fielang Bradford was its editor. In 1840 he sold it to Joshua Cunningham. Under his management it declined in power and influence and its publication ceased after over 60 yrs.

John Bradford, pioneer editor of The west was a native of Virginia. He served in the revolution. Came to Ky in 1785. His father was a printer and trained all his sons in the same business.

Bradford was a man of sterling honesty. Held many positions of trust and honor. Was president of The Board of Trustees of Lexington. Chairman of The Board

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of Trustees of Transylvania University. And
the first public printer after Ky became
a state in 1792

The Ky Gazette was edited at times
by very able men. It entered fearlessly
into political questions.

Under the great leaders, Clay and
Jackson, it was a strong democratic
or Jackson organ. Writers were very
personal and several duels were fought.
The Gazette through it all maintained
its part. And eventually Thos Banning
an editor was shot on the 9th of March
1829 by Charles Wickliffe for refusing
to disclose the name of the author
of a violent communication published
in his paper. He did not say. This
led to a duel between Wickliffe and
George James Trotter who had succeeded
Banning as editor.

Lexington, first capital after Ky became a state, also the principal town, contained a large proportion of the wealth and intelligence and culture of the new state. It was here that the second newspaper in Ky was established 1795.

The Ky Herald, James H. Stewart was the editor.

Little is known of this paper or editor. One copy is in the public library in Lexington.

Washington, a village of Mason Co. about four miles from Maysville and in early history of Ky a very important and enterprising place was the birth-place of the 3^d N. paper published in the state. The Mirror, Edited by Hunter and Beaumont.

Hunter was quite a noted publisher in his day.

A copy of The Mirror has been

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preserved. Dated Sept. 9-1797. It published no local matter except ads. It is filled with foreign news, political clippings and congressional proceedings. Has 4 columns to each 4 pages.

It is printed in old fashioned f for 3 style type. And bears the motto Firm Free & Temperate.

The Mirror was short lived. The proprietors moved their office to Frankfort in Autumn 1797. They established The Palladium which was a continuation in Frankfort of The Washington Mirror.

The last days of The Palladium are obscured by missing records.

The Patriot a paper of a later period refers to it as still in existence to 1826

But its last years were dull and lifeless

Finally passed to The Frankfort N-paper grave yard where it ^{has been} followed by many others.

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Colonel H^m Hunter was born in New Jersey and when quite young was captured with his parents by a French Man of War and taken to France. He was early left an orphan. He learned the printing business. He returned to this country 1793. Emigrated to Ky in 1797.

He became a noted publisher of books as well as news papers and was for several years a formidable rival of the Bradfords.

He was a Jeffersonian democrat a supporter of Jackson in politics.

He moved to Louisville in 1806 and established the Gazette. But it was not a success. He had not kept up with the times. He had heavy financial losses. And a friend Amos Kendall Fourth auditor of U.S. Treasury gave him a clerkship. A position which he

held until his death 1854. at the age of 54 yrs.

This brings the record of the press to the first news paper published in L-rille 1807. A village then of not more than 800 inhabitants. It was called the Farmers Library. From fragmentary files of the Farmers Library and private papers in possession of Col. Hurrett the paper was established Jan. 7-1801 By Samuel Vail a little 4 page sheet. printed in old fashioned long primer type. It contained much foreign news and very little local except ads.

Samuel Vails father, ^{Sent Thos. Vail} served in the French & Indian war (overs) (put it here)

Samuel grew up in the woods of Vermont. He had few social or literary advantages. Through some chance he met the celebrated Mather Lyon and came with him to N.Y.

He remained in the falls of the Ohio when Lyons went on to Western Ky.

Mathew Lyons fills a large space in the history of Western Ky. He was born in Ireland, of a family very active in politics and of strongest partisan feelings. His father suffered death on the scaffold for engaging in a conspiracy against the British Crown.

His mother married again. He rebelled against the constraint of a step-father. At the age of 19 he ran away and came to America.

The captain of the vessel that brought him over, sold him to a Vermont farmer for a yoke of oxen to pay for his passage over.

The sum was soon refunded and he was free.

He learned the printing business and in that profession laid the foundation

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of a fortune.

He was sent to congress 1797, where his irish temper often got him into difficulty. He gave up journalism and became a politician. He came to Ky in 1801. He settled in what was then Livingston Co. Afterward Caldwell, and later Lyon Co. after his oldest son.

He founded the town of Eddyville, Ky. in Arkansas Territory where he had been sent by President Monroe as agent to the Indians. He died there and his remains were brought back to Eddyville for burial.

About all that is known of Mr. Vail is obtained from the Farmers Library which was discontinued 1808.

After discontinuing the news paper business Samuel Vail joined the army as an ensign. He served with the 7th regiment in the south. Fought in the battle of New Orleans.

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He was a fine soldier as is shown by his advancement in rank. Was promoted to 2nd. Lieut. 1809, First Lieut 1811 and Capt. 1814. Was brevetted major Jan 8-1815 - for gallantry in the battle of New Orleans. Was honorably discharged 1815 -

He bought a large sugar plantation near Baton Rouge, owning and employing a number of slaves. He was engaged there when last we hear of him. There is no account of his death.

Bardstown was the first point in the commonwealth to support a paper.

In August 27-1803 The Western American was established by F. Peniston. Its general make up was much like that of its predecessors. Its publication continued at Bardstown three years, when Mr. Peniston moved it to L. ville. He was not successful there and moved to St. Louis. Its final fate is not known.

The Western World established in Frankfort July 1st - 1846 is the next paper in the state.

The World was first published by Col. Hunter of The Palladium, for Wood & Street. It was printed in the usual style of the day except it furnished an excess of reading matter. It was contemporaneous with the Burr conspiracy.

Little is known of Wood. His aggressive style of writing made him very unpopular, and he very abruptly departed from Frankfort.

Street was bold, aggressive and reckless in his writing. Was assaulted many times but fearlessly returned blow for blow. He was challenged by Mr Preston Brown for an editorial criticising his brother John Brown U.S. Senator from Ky and James Brown U.S. minister to France.

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The World accomplished wonders in the first year of its existence. Its bold assaults led to the arrest of Aaron Burr and overthrow of his treasonable projects. It exposed a conspiracy to render the valley of the Mississippi tributary to the Spanish Monarchy, and impeachment of Judge Sebastian Chief Justice of Ky. as pensioner of Spain.

The World's bitter style in political discussions did not entirely disappear until the era of good feeling in Ky politics after the close of the civil war.

Patrick Henry a Tenn. lawyer located in Frankfort about 1821 and became editor of The Constitutional Advocate. There was a contest for a seat in legislature. Solomon P. Sharpe and John J. Crittenden were the candidates. Henry championed Crittenden and disgusted almost every one by his attacks on the private life of Sharpe.

not only in his columns but on the stump. The county was entitled to two representatives. So both men were elected.

On the morning of the meeting of the assembly, Sharpe just having reached the height of his popularity was most shockingly assassinated. He was not supposed to have had but one enemy. Warby's efforts to turn suspicion from himself led to the detection and conviction of the real murderer, Beauchamp.

Beauchamp, on his way to the gallows refused Warby's appeals to him to acquit him of complicity in the murder.

Warby was forced to give up his editorial work and move to a state where he was not known.

Thus died the Constitutional Advocate.

There was no big N-paper there until the Civil War. Then there papers Western World, Harbinger and the Advocate.

They were ably conducted by Humphrey Marshall. But had little influence because of his unpopularity.

Humphrey Marshall came from Va. to Ky. in 1780. His love for political excitement soon brought him into public notice. He was a member of the Danville Convention of 1787 for the formation of Ky into a state.

A member of the lower house of the Ky. Legislature from Woodford Co., Was N.S. senator from 1795 - 1801. The last named position was won over no less competitor than John C. Breckinridge. First of that distinguished family in Ky.

In the senate he defied public sentiment and refused to obey instructions of legislature to oppose the Jay Treaty with England.

His unpopular views of religion & politics were distasteful to Kentuckians. He adopted English customs and dress when the heads

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of Kentuckians were scarcely safe from Hessian bullets and Indian scalps. He fought a duel with Henry Clay because of sarcastic criticism of Clay for effecting homespun clothes and advocating Jeffersonian bargo and non intercourse policy.

He went back to the Co. in which he lived. ^{Frankfort} He was first patentee of land on which the principal part of Frankfort was located and was to the end of his life a friend to that town. His friendship was appreciated and he held many positions of trust there despite the hostility of many democratic leaders.

His last labors were given to completion of his History of Ky.

As a writer, he had no equal in the period in which he lived.

~~The Argus of Western America was established in Frankfort 1806 by whom it is not known. But the Hon. Amos Kendall occupied an editorial position on the Argus.~~

He was a writer of more than ordinary brilliance. But it was as stationman & politician he was best known to the people of Ky.

Next paper in order is one that for more than $\frac{1}{2}$ century held a prominent place in the history of the Ky. press. The Lexington Observer & Reporter. It was established in 1807 under the name of Ky Reporter by Wm H. Harsley and Samuel H. Overton.

Wm Harsley was a Virginian and learned the printing business in Richmond. He came to Ky about the time Henry Clay came. He came as an adventurer, but we soon find him engaged in the work he loved, printing business in L-ville.

On his way to L-ville he stopped at Shelbyville and met Mr. Buchanan there. They arranged to establish a paper in L-ville in opposition to Shadrach Penn whom they thought was having things too much his own way in the editorial field.

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They established the Focus.

Mr. Worsley was one of the most enterprising men of his day. He arranged with a party in Washington to send him by mail the latest news to Frankfort. He owned a negro man who was always waiting in Frankfort for the mail. He would hurry off to L-rille with it. It was hastily put in papers and sent out by post-riders. The negro who took such an active part in the news delivery finally became known as Worsley's man Friday. Mr. Worsley died in L-rille in 1852.

Mr. Overton's connection with the press was brief. He gave up editorial work and went back to the Co. in which he lived.

After his retirement Mr. Worsley took into partnership his brother-in-law Thos. Smith at one time president of the Frankfort and Lexington R.R. Smith bought Worsley's interest and in 1828 took Jas W. Palmer as partner. In 1832 it passed into the hands

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Edwin Bryant and N. S. Finnell who united with it the Lexington Observer. The consolidated paper was called the Reporter and Lexington Observer. And Bryant was editor. In 1838 he was succeeded by Robt. N. Wickliffe. In 1838 W. C. Wickliffe became the editor & proprietor which position he held until his death 1870.

Col. W. C. P. Breckinridge succeeded him.

In 1868 Geo. W. Rauch succeeded Col. Breckinridge.

In 1873 the publication of the Observer and Reporter ceased, after an existence of 66 yrs.

The Observer & Reporter had many able ~~✱~~ editors & contributors in its long career. Perhaps the most prominent were Judge Edwin Bryant Robt. N. & W. C. Wickliffe.

The Wickliffe belonged to one of the most distinguished families in Ky.

Robt. N. was a graduate of Transylvania University and was said to equal Prentice as editor and Clay as orator. He died 1855 - at the age of 50 yrs.

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A number of papers were established in 1818 but nothing is known of their ^{exact} names and fact of their existence.

An amusing story is told in Collins History of Ky. in his biography of Col. Hodges. He & Wm. Tanner were associate editors of L-ville Morning Post. They stood on opposite sides of the political fence at a time when the conflict between the Old & New Court parties was at its height. Two pages were filled by Tanner's doctrines of the New Court & Relief.

The other two by Hodges who championed the Old Court & Anti Relief.

They agreed that one must sell out, so threw heads & tails for ownership. Tanner won and Hodges sold to him on favorable terms.

We come now to a new era in the history of the press of Ky. The daily N. paper. The Public Advertiser, a paper that eventually became the first daily in the West.

Established in L-ville 1819 by Shadrack Penn

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The oldest copy of This paper was in Col. Hurrett's collection. Dated July 3rd 1830.

Mr. Penn was an experienced politician a forcible writer and man of wonderful fact. His paper soon took the position of political leader all over the west. The acknowledged Jackson organ and both city & state recognized its power & influence. He was acknowledged champion of a party victorious in a political struggle as bitter as had ever agitated the state.

In the interval between the advertiser & the journal a number of papers were established in different parts of the state. Nothing is known of them beyond the acts of the general assembly authorizing ads inserted in their columns. The list is as follows - The Wasp & Independent Gazette, Georgetown Christian Advocate, B. S. Columbian, Henderson Chronicle, Glasgow, Republican ^{Centinel} Centinial Winchester, Western Herald Barstow Christian Herald Spirit of '76 Frankfort.

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The L-ville Journal whose influence was felt more than $\frac{1}{3}$ century was established 1830 By Geo W. Prentice. Its success was assured from the circulation of the first issue. Prentice & Sharrock Penn at once became rivals. The Journal soon obtained political leadership, and as long as the Whig party existed piloted it to victory in Ky in all state & national elections.

Mr Theodore Bell said of Mr. Prentice. The wit & humor of Prentice were daily feasts to readers of the Journal.

Mr. Prentice was born in New London Co Conn. Dec. 18 - 1802. Came to Ky in 1830 to write the life of Henry Clay. This led to the ^{manuf-}established of the L-ville Journal and made Mr. Prentice a citizen of Ky. A N. York Journal once said L-ville is on the south bank of the Ohio river is significant of nothing except the place where L-ville Journal is published.

Mr. P^{re}ntice was a loyal Union man though his sons and many friends fought in the

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Confederate army. He died Jan. 22 - 1870 at the country residence of his son Clarence J. Dunton, where he had gone to spend Xmas holidays.

The history of the Journal would be incomplete without a notice of the Courier & Democrat. The Courier was established 1844 by H. N. Haldeman, afterward president of the Courier Journal Co. Mr. Cassady in his sketch of the L-riller press said Mr. Haldeman brought to his task inflexible will and energy and his enterprise soon ^{awakened} ~~wake up~~ sleepy old journalists all over the west.

Up to the civil war Mr. Haldeman had as partners at different times F. B. French, W. D. Gallagher, Col. Reuben J. Hurst & Major Walter G. Orenton. Maj. Orenton was his partner in summer of 1861 when the Courier was suppressed for disloyalty.

At B. G. Mr. Haldeman was requested by Albert Sidney Johnson commanding the Confederate army to resume its publication

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He considered it a necessity. At that time
 he was still uncertain on which side
 of the Mason & Dixon line she would fall.
 In order to influence her decision the
 C. J. was dated at B. G. but typing & printing
 were done in N-ville.

Col. Robt. McKee was stationed in B. G.
 as editor while Mr. Haldeman remained
 in N-ville to look after the publication.

When the Confederate army fell back to
 N-ville the journal fell with it. It at once
 became the favorite of the army & people of the
 South. It attained a circulation limited
 only by its ability to supply the demand.

No event in N-paper history of L-ville or Ky.
 created the surprise & interest that did the
 consolidation Journal & Courier Nov. 8-1864.
 Its editor Mr. Watkinson was one of the ablest
 in Ky. the country and a worthy successor to the
 Talented Prentiss. Tho it can scarcely be claimed
 that the Courier & J. belongs to the pioneer ^{papers} press.

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yet being comprised in part of the old
Journal and I ^{now} daily in the state
a brief sketch of it could not be omitted.
So ends the chapter on ~~Pioneer Press~~
and Early Editors of ^{Old News Papers} 1844.

Mr. Denton through the long, desperate struggle between the North & South was a strong man. He used all his energies to avert the war. He failed in this but the vast influence he wielded through the Journal prevented the secession of Ky.

He survived his two great L-rille rivals Shadrach Lewis & John H. Harney. And wrote a most touching & eloquent memorials of each of them. Of Mr. H. he wrote Farewell old friend the green earth is above thy mortal body but the blue sky is no longer above thy immortal soul.

So ends the chapter of the pioneer press and early editors of Ky.