

THE HISTORY
OF
THE BELLEVILLE DAILY ADVOCATE

by

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PREFACE

The newspaper in its potentiality has been a tremendous force in the evolution of human civilization. While the great development of human liberty has received its greatest impetus from the march of events right here in Illinois and while our history is an unbroken chain of circumstances leading to the consummation of the political equality of man, the newspapers of the state have been dominant factors in moulding and shaping the course of these circumstances which have produced such beneficial results.

In this fashion the Honorable J. Nick Ferrin dedicated his book History of Illinois. Singling out one of those "dominant factors," I have chosen to recount the history of the Belleville Daily Advocate. In itself this newspaper was a powerful agent of politics in Southern Illinois for more than a century.

Because a newspaper is not a solitary or sterile instrument, its history must be focused on a proper background. As it reflects the national and local scenes, and vice versa, these must be given scope within the narrative. A cursory glance is also given to the more radical influences in journalistic progress, although this does not attempt in the least to be a history of journalism or a history of the city of Belleville.

While the primary purpose of the paper is to determine the Advocate's editorial succession and policy throughout its 118 year life, I have tried to coat that skeletal stack of facts with the fascinating local flavor which pervades the weekly and daily editions.

The Advocate is a descendent of the first newspaper, published in Germany in 1615; of the first American newspaper in 1704 Boston; of the first Illinois newspaper, Matt Duncan's Illinois Herald which appeared in Kaskaskia in 1814.

The founding date of the Advocate was not far removed from the days of screw-down wooden presses and type hand-inked with deerskin swabs. Like other frontier papers, the Advocate took rise from political issues, so dear to the hearts of mid-century pioneers. Expansion and sophistication were not achieved until railroads, the telegraph, and institutions like the Associated Press linked the interior United States with the rest of the country.

Who can deny Edmund Burke's acknowledgement of the reporters observing sessions of the House of Commons: "In yonder gallery sits a Fourth Estate more powerful than the three on the floor of the House."¹ Certainly the editors and reporters of Belleville's "metropolitan daily

¹Thomas Carlyle, Heroes and Hero-Worship, Vol. V of The Works of Thomas Carlyle (London: Chapman and Hall Limited, 1897), p. 164.

with the home personality" were a dedicated and vigorous lot. The fruits of their labors took the form of a weekly paper from 1840 to 1910, a daily from 1898 to 1958, and intermittent semi-weeklies.

To Reverend Joseph P. Donnelly, S.J., whose reverence for Mississippi Valley history is my constant inspiration, I express my gratitude for urging me to fulfill my "destiny" as self-appointed Belleville Daily Advocate historian. Without the advice, research assistance, and endless encouragement of my father, Cyril A. Arnold, I could not have produced this thesis.

My appreciation extends to members of my thesis board for valuable suggestions; to the Belleville Public Library for the use of its microfilm; to my family for abundant patience and faith.

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CHAPTER I

BELLEVILLE - THE BEAUTIFUL CITY

The city of Belleville looks eastward from the crest of the Mississippi River bluffs through the Illinois prairieland. Hers is a heritage uniquely cosmopolitan. Attesting to the traditions that shaped her growth are a French name, English-bred origins, a predominantly German populace, and thoroughly American ideals. The soil has rendered her famous. Beneath it were discovered rich veins of coal; from it sprang robust corn and grain; on it were erected productive breweries. There in the heart of Mid-America her neighbors were historic. Monk's Mound and its myriad satellites marked the ancient burial grounds of the Indians. Cahokia, first of the French colonies in the American Bottoms, was the pioneer spirit personified. The giant in River history, St. Louis, mushroomed from fur-trading post to metropolitan Gateway to the West.

Although Belleville was not officially born until 1814, her settlers had long braved the loneliness and privation of the frontier. The first "American settlers" arrived from Virginia in 1761 and were joined by others from the hill country of West Virginia and Ken-

tucky.¹ Harrassment by the decimated Kickapoo and Kaskaskia tribes was sometimes merely annoying, at other times costly and bloody.

First efforts by a young and ambitious federal government to organize its vast domain were feeble. In 1795 the River settlements of this corner of the Northwest Territory were loosely gathered by General Arthur St. Clair into a 684 square mile county which bore his name.² Frontiersmen hewed white oak for their cabins and fitted their beds with indispensable mosquito nets. Their uniform was buckskin leggings, moccasins, and a French capote. The moneyless but sociable community dined on johnnycakes of corn, wild turkey, and deer meat.

When George Blair conducted a settlers' meeting on his land on March 10, 1814, it was in the interests of commerce, protection, and sociability. Toward the creation of the town of Belleville, Blair himself donated the one acre that was called Compton's Hill and earmarked for the public buildings of the new city. To insure the stability of his infant project and with unmistakable optimism for its growth, he also offered the twenty-five

¹Belleville Daily Advocate, Centennial Edition, October 25, 1939, p. 15. (Hereinafter referred to as Centennial Edition.)

²Illinois in 1837 (Philadelphia: S. Augustus Mitchell, 1837), p. 49.

surrounding acres gratis.³

Every city has its pivotal point. In the East the pulse of the community was felt around the commons; in the Midwest it was the market place or public square. Belleville's Market Square was officially the site of the log city hall and the \$360 log jail -- through whose walls the piglets squeezed, much to the dismay of the incarcerated! Unofficially, Market Square was the scene of haggling housewives at the vegetable carts, walnut trees doubling as whipping posts, and the beat of the town constable who also discharged the duties of street commissioner, tax collector, and hog-catcher.

When Belleville was formally incorporated in 1819 under first president Daniel Murray,⁴ it was already a village four years the senior of the state of Illinois. The admission of Illinois to the Union in 1818 under the guidance of Governor Shadrack Bond and Lieutenant Governor Pierre Menard was not without repercussions in the communities to the south.

What little progress had been made in Belleville by the slave-holding Virginians came to a rumbling halt. The Illinois constitution and the Black Laws of Illinois, patterned on the French Le Code Noir, came to grips with

³John Hincheliffe, Historical Review of Belleville, Illinois (Belleville: Kimball and Taylor, Printers, 1870), p. 8.

⁴Ibid., p. 12.

the problem of slavery. The fifty-four articles of Le Code Noir were originally formulated by Louis XV for Louisians in 1724 and covered such aspects as burial, punishment, marriage, and religious education of slaves.⁵

Section Sixteen of the Illinois Code illustrated the manner in which the French ideals were incorporated in United States legislation. This section made a master responsible for the life and conduct of his slave and bound him to respect certain rights of his servants such as the possession of gifts and household items.⁶

"Little Egypt" won her nickname in the bitter contest which ensued. A five to four decision in the state legislature in 1824 ended the question and the Virginians threaded a path to St. Louis or left their slaves free and sought work in the Galena lead mines.⁷ Fortunately for Belleville, the setback was short-lived.

A gazetteer of the next decade labeled Belleville a "neat flourishing village" with an 1837 population of seven hundred, conveniently re-classified as one hundred Germans, twenty French, and five hundred and eighty Amer-

⁵Walter Fritchard, "Black Code," Dictionary of American History, Vol. I, ed. James Truslow Adams (2d ed. rev.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. 407.

⁶J. Nick Perrin, History of Illinois (Springfield: Illinois State Register, 1906), p. 166.

⁷Frederic L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier 1763-1893 (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924), p. 199.

icans.⁸

The basic occupations were represented: blacksmith, carpenter, shoemaker, miller, wagonmaker, silversmith, printer. Markets flourished with a gamut of products: oil, bed cords, cheese, ammunition. A bargain hunter chose Rio coffee beans at sixteen cents over Havana beans at twenty cents. Chickens were available at one dollar a dozen and the affluent might lavish sixty-two cents on spermacetti candles.⁹

Itinerant teachers conducted "blab schools" for the few who wanted or could afford to attend. A handy pail of brown sugar produced rewards for the "scholars" and a balancing log insured ridicule for the "dunces" forced to teeter precariously for punishment.

Coal, source of heat and power for many decades, was probably discovered when burning tree roots ignited the subterranean deposits. As early as 1823 it was mined for use by a Belleville blacksmith. The crowning achievement, however, was the first railroad in 1837 which spanned the six miles from the mines to the bluffs. For passenger transportation the traveler utilized the services of the stage coach at approximately six cents a mile and thirty-seven and a half cents for the meal stop. But river towns

⁸John M. Peck, A Gazetteer of Illinois (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Grigg and Elliot, 1837), p. 156.

⁹Centennial Edition, p. 18.

thrived on steamboats and the Louisville - St. Louis run, for example, provided a fourteen day ride for a mere thirteen dollars, assuming the passenger brought his own bedding and kitchen utensils.¹⁰

For the ailing, the drugstore was stocked with patent medicines, roots, ague or anti-bilious pills. Competition between the medical and tonsorial professions was razor-sharp. Either might perform the dubious healing process called cupping.¹¹ Doctors soon cooperated in standardizing a fee scale to corner the business due their professional skill. Letters of advice cost three to six dollars; tooth extractions were performed for one dollar; amputations soared from twenty to fifty dollars.

A news-hungry village of seven hundred considered a newspaper a prime necessity. The first attempt in 1826, the Western News, was the short-lived project of Doctor Joseph Green who sought to use it as a tool in the advancement of his political career.¹² The St. Clair Gazette, a sporadically appearing sheet of Jacksonian persuasion, was first published in 1833 by Robert K. Fleming. Fleming, before locating in Belleville, had been the official ter-

¹⁰Peck, Gazette, p. 326.

¹¹Cupping was the process of drawing blood to or from the surface with warm cups. The subsequent cooling induced suction. Centennial Edition, p. 42.

¹²Belleville Daily Advocate, April 13, 1907, p. 1.

itorial printer in the capital city of Old Kaskaskia.¹³ The Gazette did not hiss from a spinning press. More correctly, it squeaked from a manual contraption at the leisure of its editor.

During this decade of the 1830s, the concept of newspapering underwent a fundamental change. The United States became a nation of readers. Waning illiteracy, improved lighting, and cheaper news sheets aided a public acutely aware of its position in the democratic system. London clippings or stale New England items were scorned by a populace which clamored for local and human interest stories, exposés, or commentaries by politically-aware writers.

The single cylinder flat bed press which, manually cranked, produced two thousand impressions an hour, was gradually surpassed by steam powered two-cylinder instruments which doubled the hourly output. Logically, larger and fewer pages were preferred in this process.¹⁴ In this state of flux, advertisements found their way to page one, rates lacked any semblance of standardization, and the verbless headlines were mere labels.

¹³Belleville Daily Advocate, April 13, 1907, p. 1.

¹⁴Before their size equalized to today's standard, newspapers ranged from tabloid to elephantine dimensions. Extremes were measured by such examples as an eleven column wide sheet or a four and one-sixth by eight and one-third foot spectacle. Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism: A History of Newspapers In The United States Through 250 Years, 1690 to 1940 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 294.

CHAPTER II

CREATION OF THE BELLEVILLE ADVOCATE

In 1837 Belleville became a two-paper town when Edward S. Cropley's Representative and Belleville News appeared to rival Robert K. Fleming's four-year-old St. Clair Gazette.¹ Those days of kaleidoscopic publishing fortunes witnessed the frequent birth of local papers -- and just as frequent deaths. Amalgamation was simple and often the only escape from bankruptcy. Under Cropley, the merged Belleville papers became the Representative and Gazette in 1838. The horizon failed to brighten.

Cognizant of the political power of the newspaper, a young circuit rider named Abraham Lincoln advocated the establishment of a permanent newspaper in Belleville. The Reverend Mr. John Mason Peck, a resident of Rock Spring, St. Clair County, determined in 1837 to write a gazetteer of Illinois. In search of materials, he made the grand tour of Illinois, being particularly impressed by the

¹Franklin W. Scott, Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois 1814-1879 in Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, Vol. V (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1910), p. 20.

growth of Springfield and Salem. It was undoubtedly during these travels that Reverend Peck heard of Lincoln's admonition for, upon his return to Belleville, he approached some interested friends.² By 1839 James L. Boyd and John T. C. Clark entered into an eventful partnership. Their acquisition of the ill-starred Representative and Gazette resulted in the birth of the Belleville Advocate. From rooms above the Thomas Reynolds store at the corner of Main and High Streets, the first issue of the weekly was published on April 4, 1840.³ A five column folio, the Advocate was printed each Saturday morning at an annual subscription rate of two dollars.

Advertising space could be procured at the nominal rate of one dollar per square (twelve lines or less) for three insertions, and twenty-five cents per additional insertion.⁴

Under the masthead proclamation: "Democrats of the Old School of Jeffersonian Politics Versus Monopolizing Hamiltonian Aristocracy," the editors printed their Prospectus.

We promise our Patrons that all discussions shall be conducted with dignity, decorum, and candor; that no scurrility shall disgrace our columns.

²James Gray, The Illinois in The Rivers of America, eds. Stephen V. Benet and Carl Carmer (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1940), p. 111-3.

³Belleville Advocate, April 4, 1840.

⁴Ibid.

A portion of our columns shall be devoted to literature, agriculture, and the fine arts -- to the commerce, resources, and productions of the Great West.⁵

In spite of its Lincoln patronage, the Advocate mirrored the prevalence of the Democratic party and sought to fill its needs as the local party organ. Vigorous and vocal support was obvious in an early Letter to the Editor.

Messrs. Editors:

I have read your 'Prospectus' for publishing a real Democratic paper in Belleville, and hope that you will 'tce the mark' and redeem your pledges to the letter in the advocacy of the true principles of Tom Jefferson...particularly a few plain observations on the effects and causes of the present diseased state of the so much eulogized paper currency, together with the consequent evils which have ensued from the operation of the paper system, to the disadvantage of the working classes, who are directly interested in having a uniform and un-fluctuating currency.⁶

Such appeals to partisanship were not unheeded by the editors. Of a local Whig celebration, they asserted, "As we anticipated, a more perfect farce has rarely been exhibited in this or any other country..." Mr. Lincoln's speech during the rally could only be described as "weak, puerile, and feeble."⁷

James L. Boyd became sole owner of the paper on November 7, 1840, and a dissolution-of-partnership notice was duly printed in that day's issue. Political

⁵Belleville Advocate, April 4, 1840.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Belleville Advocate, April 18, 1840.

war continued unhampered. The text of the address to the Democratic National Convention was printed in full as was the platform adopted by the local choice -- Martin Van Buren.

The opposition was neatly classified by reprinting a "typical" letter from William Henry Harrison. In answer to an abolition society seeking his views on that subject, General Harrison might be expected to reply in this manner.

Gentlemen:

Yours, etc.
 William H. Harrison⁸

Belleville was jubilant when the election day majority returned seven hundred and sixty-two for Van Buren and four hundred and twenty-six for Harrison.⁹ "Victory! Victory!" screamed banner Advocate headlines -- but four months later the editors were rolling the presses to reprint President Harrison's Inaugural Address!

The "jacket" or first and last pages of the Advocate folio was largely patented, that is, pre-printed with general interest articles. Local news and late national news, being printed by the individual small town offices,

⁸Belleville Advocate, June 20, 1840.

⁹Belleville Advocate, November 7, 1840.

appeared on the inside spread. Marriage announcements could be located under the saccharine headline, "The silken cord that binds two willing hearts." The death notices were labeled more philosophically, "In the midst of life we are in death." A list of letters newly arrived at the Post Office was printed faithfully each week, as were the Business Cards of service and professional men offering their talents to the reading Belleville public.

The remainder of the folio was liberally sprinkled with florid poetry, clever witticisms, and news datelined from Springfield to Tokyo. With a penchant for axioms and famous quotations, the Advocate masthead adopted a Thomas Hart Benton saying in 1840. Henceforth the paper would promote "Union, Harmony, Self-Denial, Concession -- Every Thing For the Cause, Nothing For Men."

The year 1841 was a listless one for the infant Advocate. On April 17 James Boyd accepted as co-editor Phillip B. Fouke, destined later to sit in the state legislature. Rates were listed as one dollar for a six month period. By May 15, within a month of his arrival at the editorial desk, Fouke found himself in full charge when Boyd withdrew from the partnership.¹⁰ Financial distress must have haunted the little office for the new publisher found it necessary in November to publicly deny the rumor

¹⁰Belleville Advocate, April 17, 1841.

that the newspaper would cease. It would, in fact, enlarge its Volume Three editions in the coming year, he noted. In the midst of the great Western depression, when many Illinois banks and businesses failed, Fouke and his Advocate clung tenaciously to life.

CHAPTER III

FAME STIRS THE FURY OF "SECOND STORY" EDITORS

Should one be asked to choose the most controversial incident of 1842 in Belleville, that choice would indisputably rest on the publication of the American Notes by Charles Dickens. In gathering materials for his book, Dickens had determined to visit the Looking Glass Prairie near Belleville. Arriving from St. Louis, Dickens' introduction to the famed American Bottoms was far from cordial. "The previous day had been, not to say hot, for the term is weak...The town had been on fire."¹ Torrential rains during the night converted the road into "one unbroken slough of black mud and water" in which Dickens complained the coach sank almost to the windows.

It is doubtful that he would have appreciated the popular joke of that era. It recounted the plight of a gentleman sinking chest-high in the mire. To a solicitous passerby he made assurances that he was indeed

¹Charles Dickens, American Notes and Pictures From Italy, Vol. XXVIII of The Works of Charles Dickens (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 212.

all right, but he feared for the wagon and team beneath him!

To Dickens, Belleville was "a small collection of wooden houses huddled together in the very heart of the bush and swamp."² His hotel, the Mansion House established in 1825, bore a sad misnomer. An "odd, shambling, low-roofed outhouse, half cowshed and half kitchen, with a coarse brown canvas tablecloth, and tin sconces" to hold the supper time candles,³ the hotel at least offered two menus. Dickens, of course, preferred "wheat bread and chicken fixings" to corn bread and common doings."⁴ Having straddled such hurdles, it is small wonder that glistening Looking Glass Prairie was scorned by the weary author as boring flatland and barren monotony.

Such citations could not pass the town fathers unnoticed. Letters to the editor multiplied. Under the not-too-original pen name of "Junius," one writer denounced the Dickens pages as a "tissue of lies" by an "English vagabond" with a "heart of blackest malignity."⁵

In a vein considerably more calm, another reader admonished Dickens and his Pickwickians to "never forget

²Dickens, American Notes, p. 211.

³Ibid., p. 213.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Belleville Advocate, December 1, 1842.

that the citizens of inland towns are quite civilized if not so gaudy, as the inhabitants of the city."⁶

Ruffled editorial feathers were soon smoothed. To be singled out for praise by the Chicago Democrat was decidedly ego-inflating. The Advocate, said its Northern appraiser, had been blessed by rapid growth, was "conducted with great vigor of thought," and was "highly spirited in the course of Democracy...Harmony with such a paper it will always be our pride to cultivate."⁷

Minor crises annoyed the Advocate. The paper, now being published on Thursday, noted on February 24, 1842, that a stove pipe fire on the previous Saturday evening had threatened the small office. Detected early and extinguished rapidly, the fire had no opportunity to damage the type or press.

The promise of an enlarged Volume Three was, indeed, theoretically accomplished. No paper appeared on March 31 or April 7, but the April 14, 1842, edition (Volume Three, Number One) showed conversion to smaller type and consequently increased space for news items. A spring housecleaning on the premises was the signal for a similar revitalization of policy. "We believe that Democracy is practical Christianity," avowed Publisher

⁶Belleville Advocate, April 14, 1842.

⁷Belleville Advocate, December 8, 1842.

Fouke, and thus, "the polar star of our editorial course will be truth."⁸ From that date began the century-long reputation of the Advocate as a family journal.

A plague of financial embarrassment still stalked the editor. The Advocate had most certainly not been sold to Robert Smith for fifty dollars gold, stated a notice on June 8, 1843. In truth, the exchange transpired as payment for debts incurred by Mr. Smith in a private printing contract.⁹

Political opposition also became more pronounced in the expanding municipality. Adhering to its Democratic ideals despite some degree of community heckling, the Advocate reiterated its position on September 2, 1843. The toiling millions were the "real sovereigns of the land," and the paper would afford them "an opportunity, without taking too much of their hard earnings, to read and acquire knowledge, that they may speak and act knowingly, and in some degree compete with the proud and aristocratic portions of our community."¹⁰

Advertising began appearing in German, editorials raged against the bank system, and a new river ferry was slashing expenses for county farmers. By special request an account of the legendary figure Mike Fink the

⁸Belleville Advocate, April 14, 1842.

⁹Belleville Advocate, June 8, 1843.

¹⁰Belleville Advocate, September 2, 1843.

boatman was printed.¹¹

One problem continued to be insoluble. Readers of Peck's Gazetteer should have anticipated this perplexing situation when they read, "Thousands of hogs are raised without any expense [In the American Bottoms], except a few breeders to start with."¹² Now an aggravated citizen who signed his name "Rolon" complained to the Advocate, "Dead hogs are to be seen in various parts of the town, festering and rotting."¹³ But live ones housed at the Market Square pound were just as irksome and odorous since few people welcomed the expense of a fee to claim their strays.

An upward trend was evidenced in 1844 statistics. Belleville was thriving with two thousand citizens, Main Street was a mile and a half long, and a four horse stage of the Great Western Mail Route called daily. Four schools, twenty-five doctors and lawyers, fourteen stores and two flour mills marked a buzzing community. Half a dozen religious denominations held regular services.¹⁴

A milestone in Advocate history was reached when Robert K. Fleming and Company acquired the newspaper.

¹¹Belleville Advocate, September 21, 1843.

¹²Peck, Gazetteer, p. 28.

¹³Centennial Edition, p. 11.

¹⁴Ibid.

Typical of the roving printers of the day, Fleming had come from Erie County, Pennsylvania, by way of Pittsburg, St. Louis, and Kaskaskia. His earlier venture, the St. Clair Gazette, was an Advocate ancestor.

From that position he proceeded to dabble in hotel management and job printing.¹⁵ Fleming and Company, referring generally to Robert's five sons, remained associated with the paper for two decades. A year's subscription was now available at one dollar and a half and a policy of staunch Democratic support was continued. Witness the April 18, 1844, attack on "Whig Logic" which decried the narrowmindedness of men who would uphold protective tariffs on the grounds that the United States might become dependent on foreign nations. With the vast national wealth the States possessed, retorted the Democrats, such dependence was impossible.¹⁶

In the following year, 1845, Miss Adelia Smith commenced a school for young ladies with a four dollar tuition rate, but "infant scholars" would be accepted for instruction at two dollars.¹⁷ The Mail Coach left the Mansion House at 6:00 A. M. for those interested in the twenty-five cent ride to St. Louis.¹⁸ In the vein of the

¹⁵ See advertisements in Belleville Advocate, March 13, 1841, and March 27, 1841.

¹⁶ Belleville Advocate, April 18, 1844.

¹⁷ Belleville Advocate, December 20, 1845.

¹⁸ Belleville Advocate, July 26, 1845.

unusual, Belleville saw one of its first Advocate Extras on August 18, 1845, when the United States declared war with Mexico.

Not the least of the year's events was the projected move of the Advocate offices. The old location of the Belleville Banner, above O'Brien's store on Main Street, was the new Advocate home.¹⁹ The expense and disruption prompted by frequent relocation was not an easy knot to untangle. A building of their own, the ideal solution, was pushed far into the future by Advocate publishers perpetually confronted with rental and equipment payments and complicated by a backlog of unpaid advertising and subscription fees.

Thus another move in 1846 found the paper being printed above J. W. Pulliam's store.²⁰ At the same time Editor Fleming quietly relinquished his duties to his son William S. Fleming whose co-editor was William H. Snyder. Snyder, an attorney-at-law associated with F. A. Snyder in offices at the Post Office Building, remained at the Advocate only a month. On September 24, 1846, E. H. Fleming joined his brother in the publication of the Advocate.

On the local scene cheers were raised over the first macadamized road which plied the fourteen miles from

¹⁹Belleville Advocate, August 23, 1845.

²⁰Belleville Advocate, July 23, 1846.

Belleville to the Mississippi River. And fears were rising over the tide of counterfeit money sweeping the Midwest. The brothers Fleming, however, evinced greater interest in the national scene.

Sessions of the national Congress were opened to reporters, censorship becoming largely a personal matter of duels and cane-whipping.²¹ The Advocate voiced its support of agitation for an elective judiciary, but unconditionally opposed the National Bank, which it accused of creating a reckless and ruinous spirit of speculation. Most severe judgement was passed by Advocate editors on the Oregon Treaty. Printed in full in the Advocate, it was depicted as a crushing defeat for America which had cowered back to the Forty-ninth Parallel.²²

Verbalizing a statement of policy became a kind of hobby and duty and, inherited by the Flemings, appeared with surprising regularity.

...as independent men, we shall calmly, dispassionately and impartially, examine the qualifications and pretensions of all aspirants to office -- Whig or Democrat. Fearlessly, too, shall we examine and scrutinize the acts of our State and National Legislatures. Whatever is wrong we shall oppose -- whatever is right, Advocate.²³

²¹Mott, American Journalism, p. 308.

²²Belleville Advocate, August 6, 1846.

²³Belleville Advocate, September 17, 1846.

CHAPTER IV

EMERGENCE OF A FREE SOIL JOURNAL

Immeasurable influence was brought to bear on Belleville by the introduction of the "Latin peasants." Seeking refuge when their quest for freedom in Germany had been repulsed, these cultured and intellectual newcomers trickled in from 1832 until their peak influx in the late 1840s. The language barrier and pronounced appreciation of intellectual pursuits forced them into their own colonies and led to an unjust designation of them as "provincial."

A notable project was the land venture of Theodore Erasmus Hilgard, recent chief justice of the court of appeals Zweibrucken, Rhenish Palatinate. Buying fifty-four lots on the highway to St. Louis at three dollars a parcel, he plotted the territory as West Belleville and profitably resold the sections to his compatriots.¹

Henceforth, the Richland Creek which now separated Belleville from its western suburb became the city's

¹ Helmut Hirsch, "Early Days in West Belleville, Illinois -- Letters from Theodor Erasmus Hilgard," The American-German Review IX (June, 1943), p. 12.

Rhine. Boys of the rival communities engaged in free-for-alls at the Richland bridge and West Belleville girls were jealously sheltered from the encroaching attentions of Belleville boys. By 1849 the census compared the strength of Belleville -- 3,118 -- with West Belleville -- 3,900 -- and credited the suburb with phenomenal growth.²

From 1852 to 1882 the towns remained distinct. With the Latinische bauer came the German waltz, the gallopade, and hitherto unheard of printed dinner invitations. The Saengerbund of 1853 endured for decades and the German Circulating Library, begun with Jared Sparks' Life of Washington, formed the nucleus of today's Belleville Public Library.

So, too, came the German skill in brewing.

"The ale and beer of Belleville are known all over the West, and are drunk [sic] on and near the Mississippi from St. Anthony's Falls to the Gulf of Mexico."³ Among the numerous breweries were "two immense distilleries manufacturing chained lightning of the potency of sixty-four fights to the barrel."⁴

Confirmed abolitionists and devotees of republicanism in governmental structure, the Germans were bound to influence the ideas of their neighbors. Newspapers

²Centennial Edition, p. 112.

³Ibid., p. 47.

⁴Ibid.

in their native language were published even after the turn of the century. The Volksblatt, intensely involved in the Civil War turmoil, and the Zeitung, longest-lived of the dozen publications, were most noteworthy.⁵

The Advocate, with a tradition of Democratic entrenchment, did not hasten to the abolition banners. Nevertheless, the impact of immigrant thinkers such as Gustavus P. Koerner could not long be ignored. Koerner, a distinguished Bellevillean, was a product of the Universities of Jena, Munich, and Heidelberg who emigrated after the 1833 Frankfort revolts and rose to such positions as Lieutenant Governor of Illinois (1852-6) and Civil War Minister to Spain.⁶

It was Koerner who remarked later, "The Advocate had never paid expenses [yet] it had commanded some of the ablest editorial ability Illinois had known up to the breaking out of the civil war."⁷

In 1849 a "hopeless case of California fever" induced E. H. Fleming to cast his lot with the gold rushers. William S. Fleming, now sole publisher, bluntly told his readers he felt skin to Atlas shouldering the world.⁸ By July 11 his mastery was evident enough to announce his new brainchild, The Daily Belleville Advocate. Far

⁵Scott, Newspapers, p. 22.

⁶Centennial Edition, p. 54.

⁷Belleville Daily Advocate, March 22, 1901, p. 1.

⁸Belleville Advocate, March 15, 1849.

from today's concept of "daily," the new Advocate appeared on August 2 with columns dutifully labeled "Monday," "Tuesday," and so on through the week. It was, literally speaking, still a weekly Thursday sheet. Even the success of the daily columns was brief since the project was abandoned September 20.⁹

While the Flemings remain notable for their family dedication to the Belleville Advocate, it was Jehu Baker who brought youthful vigor to the editorial columns. Joining the staff as co-editor on November 15, 1849, Baker's personal motto, "Truth and Honor in Politics, As Well As In Private Life," was soon adopted by the newspaper.¹⁰ A recent recipient of bar membership, Baker was grooming for the rigors of political life. After the Civil War, he embarked upon a career as thrice-elected member of Congress and two-term Minister to Venezuela. Linguistically talented, Baker spoke French, Spanish, Italian, German, and once undertook the translation of Montesquieu's Grandeur and Decadence of the Romans.¹¹

A tragic page in Belleville history was written in 1849. The floating palaces which plied the Mississippi

⁹It is believed in some circles that a small daily, the first in the state, did appear at this time, the above-mentioned edition being merely a weekly compilation. No editions have yet been discovered to substantiate this theory.

¹⁰Belleville Advocate, November 29, 1849.

¹¹Centennial Edition, p. 12.

from St. Louis to New Orleans carried "the produce of the most fertile portion of the globe,"¹² but that year they also carried cholera.

Across the River, frantic St. Louis fought the spectre. Temporary arrest of the plague was costly for it was due to the dockside explosion of the steamboat White Cloud. While flames devoured the polluted air, they also consumed twenty-three steamboats, four hundred buildings, and \$2,750,000 worth of property.¹³

Belleville had little time to solace her neighbors. The disease had spread through adulterated wells and the June heat. Three hundred deaths had been tallied by the end of July; streets were covered with lime; soft coal fires were arranged at intervals throughout the town. Unknown to the inhabitants, the plague probably combined the horrors of cholera, dysentery, and typhoid.¹⁴

With such a step backward, Belleville naturally yearned for a better future. The face-lifting which ensued included a new city charter in 1850 and the election of Theodore J. Krafft as first mayor of Belleville.¹⁵ Incorporation papers were modeled on the capital city,

¹²Edward W. West, Historical Sketch of the County of Saint Clair From Early Times to the Present (Belleville: Advocate Steam Printing House, 1876), p. 21.

¹³John M. Peck, Annals of the West (2d ed.; St. Louis: James R. Albach, 1850), p. 808.

¹⁴Centennial Edition, p. 106.

¹⁵Hinchcliffe, Belleville, p. 24.

Springfield, and provided for a council of eight aldermen to assist the mayor. The resultant boom contributed greatly to town morale. Industry and manufacturing were heartily encouraged, two railroads serviced the city, and the county was operating on an impressive half million dollar budget.¹⁶

In search of greater conquests Jehu Baker bid his farewells to newspapering in a letter published in the Advocate edition of April 25, 1850. Dr. Caspar Theill of Ohio, offering his temporary services to the abandoned Editor Fleming, was welcomed to the vacant associate editor's chair in the following week. By June 20 this interim association was terminated in favor of a more permanent arrangement. John W. Merritt, father of General Wesley Merritt and later staff member of the Springfield Register, cast his lot with William Fleming.

The new collaborators managed to overhaul the printing office. Subscription rates dropped to an annual cost of one dollar and the issues beginning February 13, 1851, sported new type and four additional columns. Despite its boast of "largest in Southern Illinois," the Advocate was sometimes pressed for space and resorted to supplements, sheets often utilized to print the overflowing amount of legal notices. About this time E. H. Fleming became aware

¹⁶Hinchcliffe, Belleville, p. 24. See also Belleville Advocate, March 2, 1854.

of the frustrations in the life of a California gold-seeker and found his way back to the family seat in Belleville.

Still relegated to life above the local stores, the Advocate moved to S. B. Chandler's Main Street establishment on October 22, 1851, and subsequently appeared on the street on Wednesday mornings.

On that same day word was published of the formation of still another of the partnerships which marked early Advocate history. William S. Fleming relinquished the Advocate to the illustrious duo of E. H. Fleming and Judge Nathaniel Niles.

Now remembered as the founder of the Republican Party in Southern Illinois, Judge Niles was bound to leave his mark on Advocate policy during his six year off-and-on kinship with the paper. A native New Yorker, Niles was intensely abolitionist and at one time had personally freed a captured runaway slave. The Judge's popularity, currently due to his reputation as an ex-county judge, was later augmented by his service as Brigadier General in the 113th Illinois Infantry in the War between the States.¹⁷

During their management, the editors absorbed a smaller paper, the Illinois Independent,¹⁸ and adopted

¹⁷Centennial Edition, p. 12.

¹⁸Scott, Newspapers, p. 20.

the sub-masthead "Official City Paper."¹⁹ The Advocate now seemed secure and prosperous. Dynamic Editors Fleming and Niles spent the summer of 1853 planning the introduction of the Daily Advocate. Unfortunately, former Governor John Reynolds initiated the Belleville Daily Eagle at the same time. Belleville could not sustain two dailies and the three hundred subscribers required to justify publication of the Daily Advocate could not be mustered.²⁰

Judge Niles on July 19, 1854, announced his intentions of pursuing other interests and sold his newspaper rights to James S. Coulter. Prospects were indeed bright. New type and press equipment were purchased and the old was placed on sale through advertisements in the Advocate. Appointment as official city printers was another feather in the journalists' caps in May, 1855.

Although it was Coulter who had offered earlier to sell his interests to a journalisticly-inclined party, E. H. Fleming, the mechanical genius of the office, actively severed ties with Coulter on November 14, 1855. Fleming chose to engage solely in his long-standing interest, job printing. J. S. Coulter assumed the role of editor and proprietor. On November 28, 1855, the masthead Advocate was supplanted by the more precise designation

¹⁹Belleville Advocate, October 22, 1851 (to May 5, 1852).

²⁰Belleville Advocate, July 27, 1853; August 24, 1853; August 31, 1853.

Weekly Belleville Advocate.

The eagerness of both the editors to withdraw from their profession suggests the turmoil that had once more cropped up beneath the placid regularity of weekly editions. As might be expected, the difficulties were financial. On June 4, 1856, Judge Niles, both predecessor and successor, returned to grasp the publisher's reins. When nonpayment of mortgages and other monetary harrassments threatened the Weekly Advocate existence, Judge Niles recognized the consequences of losing a respected journal in that portion of the state.²¹ With his own funds and an even greater donation of personal energy, he sought to save the paper's faltering life. Edward Schiller, joining the staff on July 1, 1856, remained Niles' assistant for the succeeding five months.²²

Much of the Weekly Advocate's fame derives from the fact that it served as an exponent of the Free Soil doctrines in the critical pre-Civil War years. Following its old idol Martin Van Buren into the new party ranks, the Weekly Advocate espoused the Free Soil platform which, not strictly abolitionist, sought to limit the extension of slavery in newly-acquired territories. Judge Niles, a life-long Free Soiler, was a timely addition to the staff.

²¹Weekly Belleville Advocate, May 25, 1859.

²²Weekly Belleville Advocate, July 16, 1856, and December 3, 1856.

The blazing issue everywhere was slavery.

"Slavery is ruinous to the whites -- retards improvement -- roots out industrious population -- banishes the yeomanry of the country."²³ Editorials were forthright and accusing. If Richmondites called Negroes "friends," what moved them to sell 12,000 "friends" a year? "Facts are stubborn things. One fact is worth a dozen assertions."²⁴

Lashing out at the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and the current furor of the Dred Scott case, the Weekly Advocate centered its attack on Stephen A. Douglas. "People will turn to the history of the time and draw a moral in favor of honesty and against the trade of the mountebank. Mr. Douglas' career will be regarded as a lesson for the American or something to be shunned both for its inherent baseness and the conspicuous fate which it brought upon that once famous trickster."²⁵

A GOP torch light rally brought to the rostrum two state heroes, Belleville's native son Lyman Trumbull and Abraham Lincoln. Trumbull, fresh from five years on the Illinois Supreme Court bench, was en route to establishing an impressive record of eighteen years in the United States Senate. In 1864 as chairman of the judiciary

²³Weekly Belleville Advocate, December 3, 1856.

²⁴Weekly Belleville Advocate, July 28, 1858.

²⁵Weekly Belleville Advocate, September 8, 1858.

committee, he introduced the resolution which became the basis for the Thirteenth Amendment.²⁶ Word for word, his rally speech was recorded in the next issue of the Weekly Advocate.

While an appearance in the city some years before had left Bellevilleans with something less than a fondness for the future Emancipator, they were now willing to recognize Lincoln as an accomplished orator. The "death watch" which critically ensconced itself in the front seats at political rallies was completely won.²⁷ Lincoln's speech was acclaimed as "masterly, conversational, earnest" and the "rights of man were eloquently vindicated."²⁸

Under the tutelage of Judge Niles, the Weekly Advocate, once so unwaveringly Democratic, followed its conscience into the Free Soil camp and emerged thoroughly Republican. Abraham Lincoln was at last reaping the benefits of his early support of the Advocate. Surely this backing came at a crucial moment in his career.

Despite the looming war scare, the Weekly Advocate entered the ranks of "established" community

²⁶Dumas Malone, ed. Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XIX (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), pp. 19-20.

²⁷Meredith Nicholson, The Valley of Democracy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), p. 195.

²⁸Centennial Edition, p. 47.

newspapers. Nathaniel Niles could now open a private law practice with full confidence in the continuance of the Republican organ he had helped to create. With a parting salute to E. H. Fleming as the only previous "real" Advocate builder, he sold the Weekly Advocate to Collins Van Cleve and T. C. Weeden.²⁹ The old hazard of frequent editorial turnover was fast becoming past history.

²⁹Weekly Belleville Advocate, May 6, 1857.

CHAPTER V

A REPUBLICAN NEWSPAPER AND THE CIVIL WAR

During the initial year of their proprietorship, Van Cleve and Weeden absorbed the St. Clair True Democrat and George A. Harvey's Tribune.¹ Earlier that year the Sun, a project engineered by E. H. Fleming and W. S. Fleming but doomed to a life span of only thirty-five issues,² was also merged with the Weekly Advocate.

Certainly one of the most fateful days in the paper's history was September 8, 1858. At the corner of High and First South (now Washington) Streets, a three story brick building became the Weekly Advocate headquarters -- altogether in keeping with its new role of stability.³ The proud tradition of the paper as a family sheet was reiterated with the simple declaration, "A Family Paper -- Devoted to Politics, Literature, Science, Education, Agri-

¹Weekly Belleville Advocate, May 6, 1857, and July 10, 1857.

²Weekly Belleville Advocate, February 19, 1857.

³Weekly Belleville Advocate, September 8, 1858.

culture, Humor, and General Intelligence."⁴

Urging those who had promised contributions to make good their words, the editors indicated that such support would aid them in producing this "honest journal" for "the progress of education, the enlightenment of the people, and the circumscription of Slavery -- that dark plague spot of our land."⁵

The energy and enthusiasm of the new owners seemed boundless. Considering themselves in unusually fine fettle, they revealed a scheme for the much-desired "daily." Proposed at a rate of ten cents per week, the publishers hoped to produce the sheet each morning with special focus on local events. With the installation of telegraph services, news could be received four to twelve hours earlier than it was presently arriving through other media. "Call at our office and put down your names...Who's in?" stated the rallying cry.⁶ Like others who have been "men out of their times," the Weekly Advocate owners had misjudged the readiness of the public and the daily was still a number of years in the future.

An earmark of mid-nineteenth century journalism was the injection of personality. Diametrically opposed

⁴Weekly Belleville Advocate, September 8, 1858.

⁵Weekly Belleville Advocate, May 25, 1859.

⁶Weekly Belleville Advocate, January 26, 1859.

to today's reverence for the five objective W's which relegates any hint of opinion to the editorial page, this old-time informality did lend untold color to a newspaper's pages. About this time a healthy rivalry sprouted between the Weekly Advocate and the young Belleville Democrat. With tongue-in-cheek, the Weekly Advocate editors chatted about a recent perusal of an issue of the Democrat. The rival editor Reverend William F. Boyakin was obviously committed to "make the Black Republicans 'tremble in their trousers'!"⁷ He had also been critical in his columns of the lack of good tobacco in the area. The Weekly Advocate critics could not resist combining these two Boyakin "pet peeves," and we can imagine the hearty chuckle in the offices over the resulting mischievous paraphrase.

Now whosoever of you hath a supply of the weed, and seeing your editor have need, putteth him off with less than a plug, how dwelleth the love of the party in you?⁸

If there was a sting in this cult of personality, there was also a generous measure of pleasant commentary. Concerning a visit by E. J. Montague, soon to be intimately connected with the Weekly Advocate, the editor wrote:

⁷Weekly Belleville Advocate, March 9, 1858.

⁸Ibid.

Mr. Montague, editor of the Chester Herald dropped in to our sanctum yesterday (Tuesday), looking in good health and spirits. We are glad to hear that the Chesterites are beginning to appreciate the benefits accruing from a well edited and neatly printed sheet as is the Herald. Success to him. By the way, how comes it that all the editors down in Egypt (we claim to be in Egypt) are all such good-looking men?⁹

By virtue of her position as the largest city in Southern Illinois, population 12,000, Belleville became the self-appointed "Queen of Egypt." She did not welcome the Civil War's intrusion on her prosperity. Her stores were handling a \$400,000 annual business and she prided herself on inexhaustible agricultural wealth.¹⁰ An elaborate new court house, a public school system, and underground pipelines for gas service told the story of her growth. Neat roads of cedar blocks or red bricks were being laid. Each railroad car which carried a load of the 6,521,417 bushel coal output tallied greater wealth for the citizens.¹¹ All too soon the men who frolicked in Belleville's beer gardens would be enlisting for the war. Early morning bargaining sessions at the carts and stalls of Market Square would be victimized by soaring prices and scarcity of products.

Collins Van Cleve, who at one time had offered

⁹Weekly Belleville Advocate, February 16, 1859.

¹⁰Centennial Edition, p. 20.

¹¹Hinchcliffe, Belleville, p. 62.

to sell his interest "to some competent, sober, industrious Republican or, if desired, we will dispose of the entire concern on reasonable terms,"¹² found a qualified buyer in E. J. Montague, late of the Chester Herald and future editor of the St. Louis Dispatch.¹³ The transaction was effective February 1, 1860. Montague's previous experience made the transfer smooth and by the end of the year a "neutral" paper the Mascoutah News Letter complimented his paper as a "spicy journal" and the accepted Republican organ of Southern Illinois.¹⁴ The News Letter, incidentally, was absorbed by the Weekly Advocate on January 11, 1861.

Van Cleve returned that year to re-purchase his "Independent Republican Journal, Devoted to Agriculture, Local and General News, and Miscellany," which now assumed the masthead Belleville Advocate and soon simply The Advocate. He resumed duties February 8, 1861, with the aid of an assistant editor, Alexander G. Dawes.¹⁵ Within a few months, however, Dawes was called to Cairo to drill his own company. In October news reached The Advocate that Dawes, captain of Company "F" - 9th Illinois Regiment,

¹²Weekly Belleville Advocate, June 8, 1859.

¹³Belleville Daily Advocate, April 13, 1907, p. 1.

¹⁴Weekly Belleville Advocate, December 15, 1859.

¹⁵The Advocate, May 17, 1861.

was publishing a camp paper, the Union Picket Guard, at the offices of the Paducah Herald.¹⁶

Meanwhile, his position with The Advocate was assumed by Francis M. Hawes.¹⁷ The paper proudly closed ranks with other renowned and loyal papers -- Bowles' Springfield Republican, Harding's Philadelphia Inquirer, Medill's Chicago Tribune, and Weed's Albany Evening Journal.¹⁸

Most ominous of their opponents was the Copperhead press. Magnifying Confederate success, denouncing the war, the draft, the generals, and the President, it created confusion and consternation. The Volksblatt spoke for most of Belleville. "The only secret organization of which there is anything to be feared, is that of the Copperheads who, under the cry of VIVE LA UNION, are stabbing in the back the only earnest supporters of the government."¹⁹

True, the bull market in news, uncensored on-the-spot reports, and endless information via the "grapevine telegraph" made the Civil War a publisher's hey-day. But in many respects the debits outweighed the credits.

¹⁶The Advocate, October 18, 1861.

¹⁷The Advocate, May 17, 1861.

¹⁸Mott, American Journalism, p. 337.

¹⁹The Advocate, February 27, 1863.

Paper and labor were available at prohibitive prices. Special taxes and censorship of the mails made publishers wary. When its Hoe press was seized by creditors, The Advocate resorted to a hand press leased from the former editor, Alexander Dawes.²⁰

On October 18, 1861, The Advocate moved to the former quarters of a drug store at Illinois and First South (now Washington) Streets. Whether the move was motivated by economic reasons or for proximity to the Post Office is not specified. Its rates were reduced to one dollar and the paper underwent a corresponding reduction in size.²¹

As the war dragged to its almost surprise ending, publication became a costly enterprise. On March 6, 1863, Gustavus F. Kimball, long-time Advocate printer, bought the Van Cleve interests. F. M. Hawes continued as editor in the partnership. In seven months this was dissolved in favor of sole ownership by Kimball who remitted \$800 to Hawes and \$200 to John E. Thomas, a financial backer during those critical war years.²² The new editor had acquired experience in his native New Hampshire and founded a paper in the city of Canaan. Rated 4-F in the Civil War draft because of faulty eyesight, he poured his ener-

²⁰Belleville Daily Advocate, March 22, 1901, p. 1.

²¹The Advocate, January 10, 1862.

²²The Advocate, December 4, 1863. See also Belleville Daily Advocate, March 22, 1901, p. 1.

gies into The Advocate.²³

The encouraging trend of the war was briefly shadowed for The Advocate when a group of soldiers swarmed the offices on May 27, 1864. The group, characterized by the editors as "sober, deliberate, determined," was in search of the Volksblatt, which happened to be printed some ten yards from The Advocate door.²⁴ They had been maligned, the soldiers reported, by the German paper which took advantage of their absence and inability to defend themselves. In an effort to quell the seeds of riot, the editors whisked out their own copy of their neighbor's paper and sought to prove the "offensive" article had been misrepresented to the boys in blue.²⁵

While the victories and setbacks of the States' struggle occupied most of their columns, The Advocate printers did not lose sight of their immediate duties to the community. When the Chicago Journal inadvertently or not characterized Belleville as a "beautiful little village," the editors were bound to vindicate the city reputation. Fourteen miles of brick and stone pavement, one hundred street lights, four public schools, twenty-two teachers, nine hundred pupils, eight "thundering great

²³Belleville Daily Advocate, April 29, 1917, p. 1.

²⁴The Advocate, May 27, 1864.

²⁵Ibid.

breweries," four papers beside the "large, old, cheap, / handsome and interesting" Advocate ran their litany. "Beautiful little village, eh? Take it back, Mr. Journal, take it back!"²⁶

Fury of a more constructive nature followed a visit to the city schools. "Build now!" the editors urged when they saw the underground caverns and "hovel not fit for stable or pig-sty" which were sufficing for school rooms. To ask an "educated, refined lady" to teach there was an outrageous insult -- not to mention the endless harm done to youthful bodies forced to sit six hours on backless benches!²⁷ Such crusades were signs of the times and a tribute to men who did not forget far-reaching goals in a total pre-occupation with the immediacy of war.

Three Advocate issues of April, 1865, are gold mines of Americana. They preserve not only the vital events of that historic month, but also reflect the American personality.

April 7, 1865. "The rebel citadel has fallen. Richmond is ours!" A virtual end to the war was reflected in frantic outbursts of joy.

April 14, 1865. "Today is the fourth anniversary of the fall of Fort Sumter" -- and the surrender of the

²⁶The Advocate, January 16, 1862.

²⁷The Advocate, December 11, 1863.

sword of General Robert E. Lee wrote a final page in the book. Jubilee mellowed into sober reflection on the event-filled years between those incidents. Lee was not at all the ogre they would have pictured him.

April 21, 1865. Huge black margins marched through the paper's columns. The Land of Lincoln was doubly stricken by the loss of its greatest son. Accounts were entered of the rapid inauguration of Vice President Andrew Johnson, of the murderous John Wilkes Booth, and of the impressive life of the late President. Poetic attempts to pay tribute appeared as "The Deep Toned Bell," and "Dirge for a Soldier."

The formal close of conflict rated an Advocate Extra, rushed to print by the editors at four o'clock on the afternoon of November 7, 1866. Massive headlines were in keeping with the national spirit.

LET THE COCK CROW
LET THE CANNON ROAR
LET THE WILD EAGLE SCREAM

CHAPTER VI

INCORPORATION OF THE BELLEVILLE ADVOCATE PRINTING COMPANY

The phenomenon of the post-Civil War elán left its Midas touch on the Belleville Weekly Advocate. On the site of its former quarters at High and First South Streets, a three story brick building had lately been erected. From the day of the paper's return to that busy corner just two blocks from Market Square until its demise almost a century later, the Advocate shingle was as familiar a sight as the corner street sign.

The printing plant, "surpassed by none in the state,"¹ was pictured in the issue of June 15, 1866, although photographs did not regularly appear in the newspaper until several decades later. Wiser now in the realm of publishing and financing, Editor Kimball reminded his readers that "a good local newspaper is mutually advantageous to both reader and publisher."²

¹The Advocate, May 12, 1866.

²The Advocate, June 15, 1866.

Always engaged in the by-products of the newspaper industry, the Advocate probably won widest recognition for its excellence in job printing. In the late '60s, the job department undertook printing assignments for such far-flung locations as Cairo, Springfield, Chicago, Peoria, St. Louis, and Pennsylvania.³

The introduction of a new power press, pictured in the May 3, 1867, edition, brought a veritable revolution to the Advocate pages. The paper expanded from four to six pages and the tight eight column layout was discarded for a tasteful, eye-appealing six column plan.⁴ Less obvious transitions included the appearance of local news on page one. Strange as it might seem to the uninitiated, the most welcome innovation was the introduction of generous white spaces. Instead of consecutive articles in which headlines were barely distinguishable from texts, blank spacing, as we have it today, posed a less oppressive sight to the reader and permitted him to readily discern separate articles. Within the articles themselves, the reader found more faithful adherence to facts and less of the old editorial intrusion.

Belleville population had reached 12,000 when the Advocate found it possible to print a semi-weekly

³The Advocate, November 23, 1866.

⁴The Advocate, May 3, 1867.

paper. Beginning August 16, 1867, the sheet appeared each Tuesday and Friday. No doubt this dictated a need for experienced assistance since Editor Kimball employed J. A. Blake of the East St. Louis Tribune as co-editor on October 1.

Early in 1868 F. M. Taylor, who could be called a magnate in the Illinois newspaper field, purchased an interest in the Advocate. The Kimball-Taylor partnership, in view of its extensive holdings, formed the Union Newspaper Company of which the aforementioned were editors and publishers.⁵ In addition to printing the People newspaper on their presses, Kimball and Taylor were the proprietors of the Litchfield Union Monitor, Nashville Journal, Sparta Plain Dealer, Collinsville Argus, and Mount Vernon The News.⁶

The Belleville historian John Hinchcliffe drew an impressive portrait of the Advocate status in 1870. The Advocate Printing House, he marveled, used \$600 worth of paper a week. This was attributable to the fact that it not only printed its own semi-weekly, but also the patented insides or jackets of eighty-five country papers, plus extensive job work which included the printing of books

⁵The Advocate, January 10, 1868.

⁶Scott, Newspapers, p. 21.

for St. Louis publishers.⁷

These tasks were accomplished on two large cylinder presses valued at \$3350 each, and two job power presses, with the added facility of a Sanborn Power Paper Cutter. The establishment, purchased by Kimball during the war for \$1000 was now worth an estimated \$20,000.⁸

Belleville was indeed thriving. Its industries included a nail mill, brass factory, and chair factory. The St. Clair Machine Shop produced reapers and mowers; the Gundlach Foundry, grain drills and hay racks; the Belleville Oil Works, obviously, oil products. Also numbered among the city products were sash doors, bricks, and cough syrup.⁹

Perusal of city church directories attested to the predominant nationality: St. Paul's German Reformed, German Methodist Episcopal, and German Lutheran. St. Peter's Cathedral was a Roman Catholic episcopal seat. The small Negro populace was ministered to by the African Methodist Church.¹⁰

The Reconstruction administration of Ulysses S. Grant had degenerated into a nest of scandals and alienations. Reaction was inevitable and took shape as a Liberal Republican movement spearheaded by reformers and old

⁷Hinchcliffe, Belleville, p. 24.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., pp. 64-72.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 58.

line politicians as well. Because this heterogeneous group found voice in opposing Grant rather than constructively supporting a man who embodied its ideals, the foundation was basically weak. The subsequent splinter convention which met in 1872 in Cincinnati nominated the impulsive, fad-following, vindictive New York newspaper editor Horace Greeley. When the Democratic Party, tired of its exclusion from national policy-making, interpreted the swing to Greeley as their chance to regain power, they hurried to secure his nomination to their own ticket. Ironically enough, Greeley was notorious for his crusading career of anti-Democratic editorials! The "great revolt at Cincinnati" not only split the Republican Party into factions backing either Greeley or Grant, but also split Belleville's winning team of Kimball and Taylor.

In May, 1872, the Missouri Democrat baited Editor Kimball as a man "on the fence" between Grant and Greeley.¹¹ Curiously, the next editions of the Advocate performed a feat of defining position sheerly by insinuation and allusion. In the first place, Kimball's name was conspicuously absent from the "Proprietors" box on page one. There was the added hint in the statement that "the Advocate has never had one word of personal abuse

¹¹The Missouri Democrat was of Republican persuasion while the Missouri Republican upheld the tenets of the Democratic Party.

for Grant."¹² Greeley's letter of nomination acceptance was published although it was later referred to in the Advocate pages as a "rhetorical feat of re-hashing his platform."¹³

It is not surprising, then, to read in the June 7 issue that the partners had severed relations for reasons of political difference. Taylor purchased the Kimball shares for a spectacular figure of \$5000,¹⁴ and henceforth operated as sole proprietor of the Western Printing Company headquartered at the Advocate offices. Kimball, meanwhile, decided to spend the summer in Denver and was sufficiently stimulated by the climate to resume his profession there. Founder of the Rocky Mountain Leader, Kimball determined that this newspaper would not engage in politics, but seek to develop the resources of the territory and cater to local interests.¹⁵ [This enterprise ended when Kimball returned to Belleville six years later to organize the Belleville Times.]

Editor Taylor was left to carry on single-handedly his campaign support of the regular Republicans. "It took Carl Schurz seven weeks to make up his mind whether Greeley was a sage or an ass after the condurangos named

¹²The Advocate, May 24, 1872.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Scott, Newspapers, p. 21.

¹⁵The Advocate, September 6, 1872. See also The Advocate, December 6, 1872.

him at Cincinnati for President," he goaded.¹⁶

For the second time in its history, the Advocate was threatened by fire. "The Advocate office made an attempt at a fire last Friday, but it accumulated such a big crowd and an engine, and they made so much fuss about it, that it went out and we don't really think it will try it any more."¹⁷

Excitement in generous measure was provided by the 1877 strike of the East St. Louis, Illinois, railroad workers. Joining East St. Louis law enforcement officers, the Belleville Guard won the distinction of capturing the strikers' train, the key incident in ending the strike. A St. Louis paper could not resist a humor-tinged description of the Prussian helmeted troops which marched to the music of Faust, settled the railroad dispute, and stomped back to "their little quiet home across the Rhine."¹⁸ Publisher Taylor himself was the captain of a sheriff's posse.

With his diverse interests, Taylor found it profitable to introduce the position of "local editor" to his staff. First occupant of that desk was J. A. Wall who came from the Perry County Signal and was, the editor

¹⁶The Advocate, August 2, 1872.

¹⁷The Advocate, June 7, 1872.

¹⁸The Advocate, August 3, 1877.

assured his readers, a "pungent paragraphist, spicy localist, and good and witty itemizer."¹⁹

The era of the 1880s was a powerful one in the annals of newspapering. It was ennobled by the Samuel Bowles theory that the press was "the voice rather than the creator of public opinion."²⁰ Nevertheless, St. Louis' Joseph Pulitzer was introducing the crusade techniques in New York and avowing that "the editorial page is the chief reason for the existence of the newspaper."²¹

The National Editorial Association, later to count the Belleville Advocate among its members, was formed in New Orleans in 1885.²² A member of the Kansas City Times named Eugene Field was coining ditties like this one about the competing Kansas City Star.

Twinkle, twinkle little Star,
Bright and gossipy you are;
We can daily hear you speak
For a paltry dime a week.²³

The Advocate began the new decade with a change of ownership. On June 11, 1880, F. M. Taylor retired from his long association with publishing. The new owner, John E. Thomas, was no stranger to the Advocate for he

¹⁹The Advocate, May 16, 1879.

²⁰Mott, American Journalism, p. 406.

²¹Ibid., pp. 406 and 438.

²²Ibid., p. 469.

²³Ibid.

was financial backer and franchise holder for Kimball during the Civil War period.²⁴ Thomas was subsequently known as the publisher and the editorial tasks were once more assumed by G. F. Kimball. His year old Belleville Times was consolidated with the Advocate.²⁵

The collaborators decided to move all Advocate operations to the smaller of the two buildings occupied by the company.²⁶ This concentration of equipment at No. 21 East First Street (19 East Washington Street today) was doubtlessly due to the smaller volume of business demanded of the offices after the disintegration of the Taylor enterprises.

An outstanding offer was made to the citizens in that 1880 election year. To stimulate interest in the campaign, the Advocate was offered for five months for only twenty-five cents.²⁷

The reinstatement of Kimball did not prove to be permanent, for he offered his resignation October 8, 1880, just four months after his return to the editor's desk.²⁸

An Extra published on Saturday, July 2, 1881,

²⁴ Belleville Daily Advocate, March 22, 1901, p. 1.

²⁵ The Advocate, June 11, 1880.

²⁶ The Advocate, August 6, 1880.

²⁷ The Advocate, June 11, 1880.

²⁸ The Advocate, October 15, 1880.

informed townsmen of the attempt on the life of President James A. Garfield. Unfortunately, in the understandable excitement and rush to press, information was based on rumor and private telegrams. No one really knew whether the President was dead or wounded or who had perpetrated the act.

Another special edition appeared in 1884. The eight page extravaganza highlighted the current "Belleville boom." This boom in a city of 16,000 was mirrored in the addition of electric street lights, three steam fire engines, and a police force completely uniformed.²⁹

John E. Thomas recognized the growth of his business on June 26, 1885, by the sale of half interest to James A. Willoughby. Willoughby assumed the position of business manager. By 1894 the Advocate had stabilized and grown in prestige to such an extent that incorporation papers were drawn up. Capital stock in the Belleville Advocate Printing Company was subscribed at \$100 per share.³⁰

First secretarial minutes of the infant corporation reveal that John E. Thomas held forty shares at a subscription rate of \$4000. James A. Willoughby and

²⁹Centennial Edition, p. 22.

³⁰Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Shareholders and Board of Directors, Belleville Advocate Printing Company, Belleville, Illinois, p. 1.

John B. Matlack each held sixty shares at a combined figure of \$12,000. In the following election of corporation officers, the lot of chairman fell to Matlack, Willoughby was elected secretary.³¹

A special stockholders meeting was called the next year to accept the resignation of Matlack on December 15. His interests were purchased by J. F. Wassel, but soon assimilated by the two senior members, Thomas and Willoughby.³²

Perusal of an Advocate issue of January 3, 1896, is a glimpse into life before the turn of the century.

Local excitement revolved around the fire at the mill and the suicide of a school principal. A railroad accident and the activities of the Women's Relief Corps won minor headlines. It was, nevertheless, still an era of feature articles. One appearing in that issue dealt with the revolutionary idea of sweeping with a hose, a process in which a blast of air would take the place of the broom and the carpet sweeper. Other articles informed readers that French violins were best, Blenheim spaniels were undoubtedly the most lovable of pets, and when lightning struck, it was the "upstroke" that was fatal.

³¹Corporation Minutes, p. 1.

³²Ibid., p. 6.

Advertisements for nerve berries, soap, stoves, carpets, and bank services took precedence. Within the span of the eight pages were such columns as the gossipy "Purely Personal," "Mortuary Record," "Church Notes," "Buggets of News," and "Wedding Bells," which happened to slip past a proofreader and appear that day as "Weeding Bells."

War with Spain loomed on the horizon and the Advocate reported that, "It is now evident that the government is getting ready to deal with Spain vigorously."³³ Naval authorities, it added, were already studying hypothetical campaigns. Meanwhile, the incomparable William Randolph Hearst was scolding his correspondent who did not agree that war was imminent. Hearst telegraphed: "Please Remain. You Furnish the Pictures And I'll Furnish the War."³⁴ The resultant spectacular successes of the American forces in the short conflict provided perfect copy for headline hunting newspapers and patriotic readers.

³³The Advocate, September 17, 1897.

³⁴Mott, American Journalism, p. 529.

CHAPTER VII

A MILESTONE - THE BELLEVILLE DAILY ADVOCATE

Abortive attempts in the past to establish the Advocate as a Belleville daily were no deterrent to the vigorous new corporation. Conditions in the last weeks of 1898 were at last ripe for the debut of a "first-class, up-to-date, wide-awake and progressive daily paper."¹ For ten cents a week, the reader purchased a four page sheet, strictly Republican, and dedicated to publication of news "without fear or favor."² The paper was issued each day except Sunday, but, primarily for the benefit of surrounding smaller towns, the Advocate also continued to publish its weekly. A digest of the entire week's events, the weekly better served the purposes of farming communities which lacked the time or propitious mail service to enjoy a daily newspaper. Serving area readers since 1840, the grand old weekly did not meet its demise until 1910.

p. 1. ¹Belleville Daily Advocate, December 5, 1898,

²Ibid.

In reaching a landmark such as the establishment of a successful daily, the Daily Advocate editors took the opportunity of nudging their competitor, still a weekly. "The greater portion of the real live news in yesterday's News-Democrat will be found in the Daily Advocate of the day before. We are glad to help out a neighbor occasionally, but we hope the N-D won't impose on good nature."³

An official motto: "To At All Times And Under All Circumstances Stand Up For Belleville," and purpose: "To Vanquish the Foes of Belleville and To Do All the Good We Can,"⁴ were taken most seriously by the paper's staff. The first target was Belleville's City Council. It was the vogue, said the exposé article, for the Council members to plunder the treasury by that species of skull-duggery known as ignoring the formality of calling for bids. Such use of public office to feather one's own nest was coupled with the additional affront of officially voting to audit their own accounts. These illegalities were matters for the grand jury and the editors concluded, "The Daily Advocate gives fair warning...the City Council must live up to the spirit and the letter of the law."⁵

p. 1. ³Belleville Daily Advocate, December 7, 1898,

p. 1. ⁴Belleville Daily Advocate, December 5, 1898,

⁵Belleville Daily Advocate, May 12, 1899, p. 3.

Happily, the human failings of the few were offset by the progress of others. The famed Western Brewery Company, for example, took a giant step into the future with the announcement of a new member in its family of brews -- a dark beer, Wurzburger, in bottles!⁶

The birth of a Belleville daily was the precursor of the birth of a new century. With it came the natural anticipation of an era of progress.

The newspaper profession on the national scene and in Belleville enjoyed an era of short and snappy sentences, cartoons which simplified the gist of the news, and a myriad of "colyums."⁷ Fudging, a device for rapid insertion of late news, was perfected, and President William H. Taft inaugurated the practice of the weekly press conference.⁸

The Daily Advocate in 1901 invested heavily in new equipment. A Mergenthaler type-setting machine was purchased for \$3000 along with two sets of matrixes and two timers for \$83.⁹ At the annual corporation meeting December 9, 1901, records showed President James A. Willoughby and his wife Lizzie owned eighty shares of stock

⁶Belleville Daily Advocate, December 30, 1899, p. 2.

⁷Mott, American Journalism, p. 581.

⁸Ibid., pp. 602 and 608.

⁹Corporation Minutes, p. 12.

and a similar number was held by Secretary-Treasurer John Thomas and his wife Anna K.¹⁰

Turn-of-the-century Bellevilleans readily patronized the school picnics, county fairs, strawberry festivals, and street fairs that animated summer life, but none could match that climactic festivity -- Belleville Day at the St. Louis World Fair in 1904.¹¹ In Belleville the Richland Creek was spanned by an impressive concrete bridge, the St. Clair Bridge, built under the supervision of James Baermann Strauss, also known for his direction of the Golden Gate Bridge construction.¹²

A popular entertainment spot was the city's Anheuser-Busch opera house built in 1858 and purchased by the Beer Baron August A. Busch in 1896. Across its stage passed everything from Shakespeare troops to slapstick acts. In the adjacent pavilion, patrons of the theatre-restaurant could enjoy dancing or the lively music of a German band concert. The beer garden was a refuge where habitués might animatedly discuss anything from politics to romance.

The Daily Advocate of November 15, 1901, reveals the dramatic but tragic end of the opera house. How the

¹⁰Corporation Minutes, p. 13.

¹¹Centennial Edition, p. 38.

¹²Ibid., p. 112.

1:15 A. M. fire began remained a mystery. Some conjectured that a defective furnace, a smouldering cigar butt, or even the explosives used by the current show -- "The Indian, or Across the Trail" -- triggered the blaze. In any case, the brick and wood structure was gutted, probably hastened by a twenty minute delay in water pressure for the fire fighters. Actually, even a \$30,000 loss was replaceable, but as a signpost of Midwestern Americana, the beer garden-opera house was irreplaceable.

A sense of history has always been nourished by Bellevilleans, not necessarily because they have been educated to it, but because they are reared in its aura. The Honorable J. Nick Ferrin was Belleville's native son who merited membership in the first executive committee of the Illinois State Historical Society. On the occasion of its first anniversary, that illustrious body was planning the inauguration of local societies and reviewing historical materials available throughout the state.¹³

With justifiable pride in the state's famed historian Professor Clarence A. Alvord, a sizeable Belleville delegation crossed the Mississippi River to hear the Professor address the Missouri Historical Society meeting in St. Louis. Author of Illinois in the Eighteenth Century, Eighteenth Century French Records in the Archives

¹³Belleville Daily Advocate, January 8, 1900,
p. 1.

of Illinois, and Old Kaskaskia Records, Alverd's topic for the evening was "The Illinois French During the American Revolution."¹⁴

Like many other cities, Belleville's greatest hazards were fire and water. In 1908 both struck with unusual vengeance. The Richland Creek made a periodic spring leap of its banks. The electric power company at its creek-side location was, and still is, the first and hardest hit. Low-lying fairgrounds were also submerged with the regrettable loss of a new and as yet unused \$2500 League Park. Tracks of the Illinois Central Railroad washed away, a Louisville and Nashville train derailed, and livestock and fowl by the hundreds drowned. Two persons were known dead and the Feuss-Fischer dry goods store lost \$10,000 worth of stock in the debacle.

"Belleville is Inundated by Worst Flood in History."¹⁵ That there was even an edition of the Daily Advocate in which to print that headline is remarkable. Restoration of electric power was not completed for four days and during the interim, staff members maneuvered hand presses or helped generate power from traction engines to produce the punctual paper.

p. 1. ¹⁴Belleville Daily Advocate, April 5, 1907,

¹⁵Belleville Daily Advocate, May 5, 1908, p. 1.

Later that year, the Sunday stillness was pierced by the fire wagon bells. J. F. Imbs, president of the Crown Milling Company, and vice president of the Jordan Shoe Factory, lost \$150,000 in the razing of his adjoining establishments.¹⁶ Four streams of water were useless against flames fed by combustibles in the elevator and the ciled floors of the shoe factory. Service by the Bell and Kinloch telephone companies and the electric company was disrupted in the eastern segment of the city. Hundreds of curious spectators gathered on Monday afternoon to watch the demolition of the building hulks.

Other events in the first decade of the twentieth century were the closing of the toll houses on the Rock Road from Belleville to St. Louis,¹⁷ and the opening of the Lyric Theatre, new home of the nickelodeon, movies, vaudeville, and road shows.¹⁸ The first fatal auto crash in the city's history was registered on June 5, 1911.¹⁹ Incidentally, when Alfred Tennyson Dickens, son of Charles Dickens, chose to re-trace the steps of his father, the second Dickens-Belleville encounter proved a far more cordial event.²⁰

¹⁶Belleville Daily Advocate, August 24, 1908, p. 1.

¹⁷Belleville Daily Advocate, October 11, 1907,
p. 1.

¹⁸Centennial Edition, p. 65.

¹⁹Belleville Daily Advocate, June 5, 1911, p. 1.

²⁰Belleville Daily Advocate, November 23, 1911,
p. 1.

A Daily Advocate stock shift was experienced in 1909. The two principals, Willoughby and Thomas, held 79 shares apiece and one share each was gained by Fred E. Evans, an editor, and Edward Julius, a pressman. In the elections, Willoughby retained the presidency, Julius became vice president, and Evans, secretary.²¹ In the same year, stockholders agreed to confer with W. H. Carr concerning plans for contests to increase circulation.²²

Several alterations affected the Daily Advocate in 1910. The daily was increased to eight pages and added to the roster of United Press news service members.²³ The weekly became a semi-weekly and the staff continued publishing the equivalent of two papers. A notation in the corporation minutes indicated that Fred E. Evans was to be manager-in-charge during any absence of Willoughby. Salaries for corporation officials, incidentally, were less than spectacular figures -- Willoughby receiving \$20 a week and Thomas \$15.²⁴

Under a contract with Western Type Foundry Company, the corporation acquired a second-hand #2 Huber Press capable of 1600 to 1800 impressions per hour at an agreement of \$100 to accompany the order, \$400 to be paid

²¹Corporation Minutes, p. 21.

²²Ibid., p. 22.

²³Ibid., p. 23.

²⁴Ibid., p. 30.

on installation, and the \$1000 balance payable in installments with five per cent annual interest.²⁵

Proprietors Thomas and Willoughby had accomplished tasks of heroic proportions in Belleville newspapering when they celebrated their silver anniversary of partnership. The impetus of youthful energy, however, appeared within the ranks. After ten years with the Advocate, the last four in the capacity of editor, Fred E. Evans purchased a majority of eighty shares of corporation stock on October 23, 1913.²⁶ Edward Julius, pressroom foreman for fourteen years, acquired twenty and three-fourths shares. The remaining fifty-nine and one-fourth shares were financed by Attorney Preston K. Johnson, future mayor of Belleville. Elections held during that special October meeting designated Evans president and manager; Johnson, secretary-treasurer.²⁷

A promissory note and \$4500 chattel mortgage were held by the Belleville Savings Bank.²⁸ Salaries for the officers were set at \$22 for the president and two dollars for the secretary.²⁹ With this initiation into Daily Advocate proprietorship, the Evans interests

²⁵Corporation Minutes, p. 26.

²⁶Ibid., p. 31.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., p. 33.

²⁹Ibid.

remained a dominant influence for almost thirty-five years.

CHAPTER VIII

A QUARTER CENTURY OF HISTORY IN THE DAILY ADVOCATE PAGES

World War I was a press agents' war, a bottomless source of human interest features for newspapers which, in the beginning, simply mirrored tales of an obscure conflict in far-away places to a nation of American spectators. In 1914 Bellevilleans were paying more attention to the City Centennial. Speeches and concerts filled the week of September 13-19. The closing event and climax of the festivities was a Pageant jam-packed with the elements of Belleville history -- French, Indians, "Long Knives," founding father Blair, the Latinische bauer, and the Civil War.¹ Concurrently with this gala ran the annual county fair with booths exhibiting everything from prize bulls to needlework. Even busy Market Square was barricaded to traffic for the picturesque float parade.²

A blinding swirl of gaiety, however, cannot long blot out the presence of world war. Headlines like,

¹Belleville Daily Advocate, September 19, 1914,
p. 1.

²Ibid.

"First Tale of Horror of Armenian Massacre," and the overwhelming idea of 950,000 reportedly slain were icy blasts of reality.³ With the war daily costing Great Britain \$20,000,000, her plea for \$2,000,000,000 credit was directed at a well-fed and complacent United States.⁴ Although money and materials were supplied with impersonal readiness, the first incidents on the high seas which jeopardized even a single American life drew every patriotic citizen intimately into the conflict.

Underscored by a 373 to 50 vote in Congress, President Woodrow Wilson signed a declaration of war which officially brought the fifteenth nation into the war.⁵ Certainly the population of Belleville supported this measure. The Library Board refused to raise its flag until war had been declared. Of the 20,000,000 prospective U. S. military draftees, many found their way to Belleville for training at Scott Air Force Base, erected on the city's outskirts.

The Daily Advocate, of course, lent its support to the war effort. Through its "Smokes for our Sammies" campaign, the paper proposed to raise a fund to be forwarded to the trenches for the purchase of tobacco. With

p. 1. ³Belleville Daily Advocate, November 29, 1915,

p. 1. ⁴Belleville Daily Advocate, November 10, 1915,

⁵Belleville Daily Advocate, April 6, 1917, p. 1.

\$167.03 the contributors were able to insure the purchase of 40,480 cigarettes; 1,585 cans; 135 plugs.⁶

Editorially, the Daily Advocate wholeheartedly approved the enforcement of a stricter alien act. In the local shoe factory, wives of enlisted men were given priority in jobs and the fair sex was even pressed into action to learn the "tackle key and sounder" (telegraph).⁷

Full page Belleville Savings Bank ads urged readers to buy liberty bonds. Anheuser-Busch notified the populace that its soft drink Bevo was a great favorite in the canteens of "the boys in khaki."

Loyalty sometimes took a fanatic twist. Such was the case when Belleville's mayor immediately stopped the printing of Council minutes in German and went so far as to accuse the German papers of disloyalty. Yet Belleville boys marched bravely off with their more Anglocized comrades and often found their letters home printed in the Daily Advocate pages. Some recounted the advance crossing of the Rhine,⁸ others the official surrender of the German navy.⁹ But surely the Daily Advocate staff gloried most in a letter from J. A. Loos, Jr. Private

⁶Belleville Daily Advocate, December 7, 1917, p. 1.

⁷Belleville Daily Advocate, September 26, 1917,
p. 1.

⁸Belleville Daily Advocate, November 28, 1918,
p. 3.

⁹Belleville Daily Advocate, December 11, 1918,
p. 1.

Loos, it seems, happened upon pages three and four of an old Daily Advocate during his tour of duty in the French countryside. The Yanks, he assured the home folks, were "bagging Huns by the wholesale."¹⁰

Local ladies, however, continued to take "Hoover lessons" in the conservation of food,¹¹ and all bemoaned the stockyards fire which killed 500 horses destined for sale to the Allies.¹²

Political cartoons even half a century ago were powerful reflections of public sentiment. Irrepressible American determination was characterized in such drawings as a huge wave labeled "Germany" dashing itself against a Gibraltar-solid cliff marked "Allies," or the powerful Allied boot striding masterfully across the continent to Berlin. American nature was not totally power crazed. Despite the rather sadistic outline "German Bier Garden," one cartoonist captured the tragedy of war in his picture of a desolate graveyard peopled by the skeleton Disease, the haggard old lady Hunger, and the skin-and-bones dog Defeat.

As a member of the National Editorial Association, the Daily Advocate was fortunate to receive the NEA

¹⁰ Belleville Daily Advocate, November 12, 1918,
p. 5.

¹¹ Belleville Daily Advocate, September 26, 1917,
p. 1.

¹² Ibid.

scoop picture of the signing of the treaty at Versailles. Relayed by plane, train, and dirigible, the prints arrived in the United States two and one-half days before the fastest trans-Atlantic ship.¹³

Meanwhile, the Daily Advocate family expanded. The annual meeting of 1916 indicated the following division of stock: President Fred E. Evans - 80 shares, Vice President Edward Julius - 20.75, Secretary Preston K. Johnson - 27.65, and Treasurer Woodford W. Evans - 31.60.¹⁴ Acting on a motion by W. W. Evans and possibly due to the effect of war on the price of paper, the Board decided to discontinue the semi-weekly edition and also agreed on a motion to borrow \$500.¹⁵

On April 10, 1916, the Daily Advocate welcomed Walter D. Schmitt, qualified for staff membership by fifteen years with the News-Democrat. At a special meeting during the next week, the Board of Directors increased its capital stock from \$16,000 to \$18,000.¹⁶ Stock distribution remained the same with W. D. Schmitt acquiring the twenty shares of the stock increment.¹⁷

¹³Belleville Daily Advocate, July 9, 1919, p. 1.

¹⁴Corporation Minutes, p. 37.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 40.

The company purchased a Webb press which printed and folded papers and introduced the mechanical wonder to readers with a six column picture of the press.¹⁸

At the close of the war, Edward Julius and P. K. Johnson resigned their Daily Advocate offices. The 1919 stockholders session declared a 3.95% dividend on stock and elected new officers.¹⁹ F. E. Evans, now possessor of 115 shares, received the president's salary of \$2,784.63. Retaining his twenty shares, W. D. Schmitt earned \$484.40 as vice president. W. W. Evans, who held forty-five shares, was elected secretary-treasurer at an annual income of \$1,079.90.²⁰

The charitable instincts nurtured by the paper during the Great War blossomed in 1918. That year the editors introduced the Empty Stocking Fund, a pre-Christmas fund raising campaign to purchase food, clothing, and toys for needy families.²¹ Like Topsy, the Empty Stocking Fund grew steadily each year until it demanded a special chairman and committees of men and women to assemble the gift baskets and deliver them. The Fund currently approaches its forty-fourth birthday.

¹⁸Belleville Daily Advocate, September 26, 1917,
p. 3.

¹⁹Corporation Minutes, p. 43.

²⁰Ibid., p. 44.

²¹Belleville Daily Advocate, December 10, 1918,
p. 1.

In 1919 the headlines were shared by the exploitation of two Belleville pastimes -- baseball and beer. The occasions were the World Series and Prohibition. An Extra on October 1 ran a script headline, "Reds Win First," and gave an inning-by-inning account of the game along with pictures of the heroes two columns wide and eight inches deep.

A federal court decision to prohibit 2.75% beer induced a rash of criticism. The ever-popular editorial page cartoons were capsule versions of the news stories. In one, the "drys" riding in a camel-drawn fire engine raced to squelch a small fire appropriately tagged "2 3/4%."²²

To beer-producing and drinking Belleville, this turn of events was the red flag to the enraged bull. Although Belleville bootlegging was minimal compared with its neighbor to the north, Chicago, it was sufficient to annoy Eighteenth Amendment enforcers. Quite by accident a tin shop fire uncovered a supply of mash and a 100 gallon still.²³ During a raid on a private home, an exchange of gunfire caught a policeman and necessitated the summoning of state officials for the investigation of the confiscated goods -- a fifty gallon still and

²²Belleville Daily Advocate, July 15, 1919, p. 5.

²³Belleville Daily Advocate, July 11, 1922, p. 1.

fifteen gallons of finished moonshine.²⁴

Always interested in the course of political events, the Daily Advocate reported news of the Hearst-Boss Murphy lawsuits. The affair was turning up enough dirty Democratic laundry, said the Daily Advocate, to require the Mason-Dixon line to hang it.²⁵

Price of newsprint prior to the war had been \$1.85 per one hundred pounds. By 1919 it had soared to \$12 and, if it wished to print a ten page paper, the Daily Advocate found it necessary to raise its subscription rates to five dollars.²⁶

An imbroglio between the Daily Advocate reporters and the police chief developed in the summer of 1922. Reporters, opined the chief, hindered the process of law and henceforth private phone booths would be utilized at the police station to prevent newsmen from obtaining arrest news and interfering with handling of criminals.²⁷ In addition, the police autos would conceal their tell-tale gongs with galvanized iron boxes and keep newshounds from realizing police car whereabouts.²⁸

²⁴Belleville Daily Advocate, July 11, 1922, p. 1.

²⁵Belleville Daily Advocate, November 8, 1919,
p. 3.

²⁶Belleville Daily Advocate, December 29, 1919,
p. 1.

²⁷Belleville Daily Advocate, July 8, 1922, p. 1.

²⁸Ibid.

Editorializing on the "one-man rule" at police headquarters, the Daily Advocate pointed out that if ever a mayor picked a "Frankenstein who'd destroy him," such was the case in the current administration.²⁹ As a result of this clash, a promise was extracted from the mayor that despotism in the law enforcement quarters would cease.

In the course of the same summer, the traveling Daily Advocate president journeyed to the "Wild and Woolly West" to attend the National Editorial Association convention in Missoula.³⁰ By the time he returned to the newspaper offices, Editor Evans had acquired the name "Wolf Robe" as a result of a visit to the Blackfoot Indian tribe at Lewiston, Montana.³¹

After fifty years at the 19 East Washington Street address, the Daily Advocate prepared to expand. The Twenhoefel Building on adjacent premises was purchased for \$32,000 on December 13, 1923.³² Following alterations to the two story structure, the newspaper offices officially began operating from the building February 26, 1924. The company assumed a new around-the-corner address, 21-25 South High Street.

²⁹ Belleville Daily Advocate, July 8, 1922, p. 1.

³⁰ Belleville Daily Advocate, July 29, 1922, p. 1.

³¹ Belleville Daily Advocate, August 1, 1922,

³² Corporation Minutes, p. 67.

In their new quarters, the owners installed a Hoe Press "built like a battleship" and capable of rolling 30,000 twelve page papers an hour.³³ Another landmark of prestige was revealed at a special corporation meeting June 22, 1926.

Resolved, that F. E. Evans, being president of the Belleville Advocate Printing Company...represent this corporation as a member of The Associated Press, and he is duly authorized to sign the by-laws of said The Associated Press and to do and perform such other acts as may be necessary to qualify him as such member to represent this corporation.³⁴

For many years the Belleville Daily Advocate remained the only A. P. affiliate in St. Clair County.

National prosperity reflected itself in the salaries of the successful administrators. On January 1, 1927, salaries were voted at \$11,500 to the president, \$2,000 to the vice president and \$4,500 to the secretary-treasurer.³⁵ A year later the Evans brothers enriched their holdings upon the resignation of Schmitt. Fred Evans held 120 shares and W. W. Evans accumulated a total of fifty-eight shares and became corporation vice-president. The remaining shares went to Miss Anna L. Stolle, secretary-treasurer of the Advocate Printing Company.³⁶

³³Belleville Daily Advocate, July 23, 1925, p. 3.

³⁴Corporation Minutes, p. 51.

³⁵Ibid., p. 52.

³⁶Ibid., p. 55.

Promotional measures of that decade were primarily in the form of contests. These ranged from baking to beauty contests, spelling bees or painting competitions, and even one for ad writing.³⁷

The Roaring Twenties need little historical review. There are lesser known news-worthy items, however, which enhance the color of that age. Bellevilleans were intrigued, along with the rest of the world, at the prospect of raising the Luisitania from her deepsea bed.³⁸ Perhaps Count Charles Zerardi Landi, the naturalized Englishman, could then answer the moot question: Did the Luisitania carry munitions? When Berlin demanded that a German official be present to observe operations, patriots everywhere hoped he would note the record on the gramophone at the moment of torpedoing -- "Rule Britannia!"

In 1923 progress was made in the field of classified advertising when an alphabetized number code was standardized and adopted.³⁹ Chrysler produced a car capable of speeds from two to seventy-five m.p.h.⁴⁰ and the country mourned with President Calvin Coolidge the loss of his sixteen year old son.⁴¹ The political limelight

³⁷Belleville Daily Advocate, December 2, 1927, p. 1.

³⁸Belleville Daily Advocate, July 21, 1922, p. 7.

³⁹Belleville Daily Advocate, September 10, 1923,
p. 7.

⁴⁰Belleville Daily Advocate, February 22, 1924,
p. 4.

⁴¹Belleville Daily Advocate, July 10, 1924, p. 1.

shone on William Jennings Bryan, termed by the Daily Advocate, "the great fanatic of the [Democratic] party."⁴²

The editors also accurately pinpointed the source of the worst labor disputes as "civil wars" and jurisdictional problems within the ranks.⁴³

Rudolph Valentino publicly bemoaned the fact that flappers demanded "the shiek stuff" which he said had assumed a horrid connotation. Personally he felt he had matured as an actor and hoped to abandon the Latin-lover pictures to attempt a Russian romantic series.⁴⁴

Most attention was riveted on the Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee. Readers devoured such tidbits as Darrow's citation for contempt of court, his public apology, and the emptying of the court house when it threatened to collapse from the crowds. A Daily Advocate article uncovered some fine lines of distinction in the evolution problem. Man's descent from an ape was not true evolution. Evolutionists, it stressed, believed that some unknown kind of ancestor hundreds of thousands of years ago generated different lines of descent, men and monkeys being in different strains. It was, therefore, impossible to call man "Ape's Grandchild."⁴⁵

p. 1.

⁴²Belleville Daily Advocate, February 21, 1924,

⁴³Belleville Daily Advocate, July 20, 1925, p. 1.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Belleville Daily Advocate, July 10, 1925, p. 4.

Throughout the Mississippi Valley from St. Louis to Cairo, Little Rock to Memphis, and Greenville to New Orleans, 3,000,000 acres of land were submerged by spring flood waters.⁴⁶ One hundred and fifty were dead in a five state area and losses were in the vicinity of \$100,000,000. Patrols guarded levees and thousands of refugees sought higher ground. Belleville, of course, was ravaged by the otherwise timid Richland Creek. Railroad cars were derailed and bridges washed out. Boats docked at second story windows to evacuate residents.⁴⁷

During the same month, wary observers were becoming critical of the apparently rampant national affluence. The President was unquestionably going to "permit the public to speculate to its heart's content."⁴⁸ October 29, 1929. "'They'll All Come Back For Another Trimming,' Declares 'Gunboat' Smith, Veteran Runner of Little Gamblers." Beneath that headline the obvious was recounted. Speculation fever scared beyond reason. Attempts by John D. Rockefeller and J. P. Morgan to support the sag were only temporarily successful and the Senate was seeking a bank probe. The proposed charters to limit speculation smacked of "locking the barn door after the horse had been stolen." One interviewed stock buyer quipped that selling Manhattan for \$24 cash would even be a profitable deal!

⁴⁶Belleville Daily Advocate, April 23, 1927, p. 1.

⁴⁷Belleville Daily Advocate, April 1, 1927, p. 1.

⁴⁸Belleville Daily Advocate, April 23, 1927, p. 6.

CHAPTER IX

WOMEN AT THE DAILY ADVOCATE HELM

The depression years forced journalists to concentrate all their efforts merely on remaining solvent -- or at least operating despite mounting deficits. The Daily Advocate officers, for instance, agreed to forestall drawing salaries as corporation officials from 1932 through 1936.¹ With prohibitive costs placed on publishing materials, the newspaper raised its subscription to \$7.50 a year.

Innovations within the industry were almost nonexistent though minor changes were introduced. Headlines shrank from banner spreads to a conservative two or three line decked proportion.² Like other enterprises, journalistic offices were crossing the threshold to an era of specialization. "Experts" directed such areas as political and gossip reporting, in addition to the fields of

¹Corporation Minutes, pp. 62-8.

²Mott, American Journalism, p. 674.

economics, sports, fashion, food, and world affairs.³

In the face of economic collapse, many Republican papers sought to support President Herbert Hoover and bring encouraging facts before the public. The Daily Advocate pointed out, for example, that by October, 1932, confidence in banks was evinced by a 6.97% increase in deposits.⁴ Employment was up 3.6% in the past month and use of electrical power had been boosted 6.4%.⁵ These facts, together with a steady rise in commodity prices induced them to prophesy a trend toward prosperity. President Hoover, touring the western United States, told a Des Moines audience that "a great national victory has been achieved" in the war against the economic storm.⁶ But the joyous acclaim that met these optimistic words did not drown the cries of the destitute. In the Illinois state legislature, members were seeking to divert funds from the gasoline tax revenue for a vital program of relief.⁷

Public opinion, mirrored in national election returns, renounced the hero of the World War I Food Administration and turned to Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

³Mott, American Journalism, p. 674.

⁴Belleville Daily Advocate, October 26, 1932, p. 8.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Belleville Daily Advocate, October 5, 1932, p. 1.

⁷Ibid.

On the lighter side of the news, the Notre Dame University football squad was making sports news with something beside winning touchdowns. A sudden preoccupation with names revealed that the 1932 team included a William Shakespeare and an Al Smith.⁸

The Daily Advocate supported a unique project, a fraternity for paper carriers. Newsboys of America were able to apply for membership in Nu Beta Alpha and work toward awards for punctuality, courtesy, sales, and personal appearance.⁹ A certificate of appreciation was presented to the Daily Advocate by the U. S. Junior Chamber of Commerce in 1934. In the presentation speech, the Daily Advocate and other recipient newspapers were saluted as "responsible for the democracy in the United States."¹⁰

Militant Illinois G.O.P. members of Congress battled the passage of the National Recovery Administration acts. Between 1,600 and 1,700 unemployed men, however, welcomed the opportunity to work in Civil Works Administration projects supervised in Belleville by the county highway department.¹¹ The St. Clair County Emergency Relief committee sought to give the 7,000 men on its

⁸ Belleville Daily Advocate, October 6, 1932, p. 9.

⁹ Belleville Daily Advocate, April 25, 1924, p. 6.

¹⁰ Belleville Daily Advocate, January 23, 1934,

p. 1.

¹¹ Belleville Daily Advocate, April 5, 1934, p. 1.

list enough work to equal their relief checks, which averaged \$23.00 a family per month.¹²

Aside from dismal depression articles on the local scene, Belleville's daily announced in 1934 the removal of the police force from political jurisdiction and the introduction of a Civil Service plan. Although it was the first Southern Illinois city to introduce this transition, Belleville had long watched the success of this system in nearby St. Louis, which was rated as having the most efficient and modern force in the nation.¹³

Throughout the country, sheriffs tracked down the local elements of the infamous Shelton gang, currently engaged in a lucrative slot machine operation.¹⁴ Similarly, national attention was focused on the pursuit and capture of the elusive criminal, Dillinger.

For many months Belleville was vulnerable to the chaos of the Knapp-Monarch strike. The manufacturer of electrical appliances was torn by riots which stemmed from strikers' demands for union recognition, wage stabilization, and insurance against discriminatory dismissal of employees. Having operated profitably through the depression, the company was now prostrated by wholesale cancellations of orders. Sympathy walkouts by foundry and fac-

¹²Belleville Daily Advocate, April 9, 1934, p. 1.

¹³Belleville Daily Advocate, June 5, 1934, p. 1.

¹⁴Belleville Daily Advocate, April 5, 1934, p. 1.

tory workers disrupted business on a city-wide scale. Knapp-Monarch threatened to move its entire operation to another city. Compromising with a delegation of the mayor and local merchants who asked that it remain, the company retained a portion of its offices in Belleville and removed some projects to other locales.¹⁵

The death of Fred E. Evans on January 1, 1930, caused no upheaval in Daily Advocate stock distribution since his interests reverted to his wife Ida E. Evans. Management, however, was assumed by Woodford W. Evans. It was under his direction that the Advocate Creed was formulated and remained the guiding policy for the next quarter century.

THE ADVOCATE CREED

Never injure anyone in a news story if you can possibly help it.

There are two sides to every question. Get both sides if possible, and get them right.

Always boost whenever possible. Never knock or try to drag a man down.

Do not play politics in a news story, but get the facts and let the public form their own political opinions. If we want to influence political opinions we will do that in the editorial columns.

Never print gossip that will bring ignominy to any innocent man, woman, child, or organization.

Hold sacred the confidences of officials and others.

If a story is told you on the street, that story is your property. Let no public official stop you from printing the story if the facts warrant a story, and the public is served by its being printed.

Above all, be truthful and clean.

¹⁵Belleville Daily Advocate, May 31, 1934,

It is better to have one story exactly right than a dozen half wrong.

Do not let a dirty word get into type. Do not print a suggestive story and never play up a licentious story, and, if possible without suppressing news, do not print it at all.

Keep the paper clean, so that you would not hesitate to take it in your home and let your children read it.¹⁶

Upon the death of Woodford Evans, June 26, 1936, his shares, too, became the property of his wife, Ida A. Evans. The Daily Advocate became one of the few newspapers in the United States dominated by women. Mrs. F. E. Evans procured the corporation presidency; Mrs. W. W. Evans, the vice presidency. Miss Anna L. Stolle retained the post of secretary-treasurer and became general manager.¹⁷ Editorially, the Daily Advocate promised to carry on in the tradition of the Evans brothers and remain an independent Republican journal in which "worthy men and measures will receive its support, but its columns will remain closed to blind partisanship."¹⁸

Although financial distress was in the not-too-distant past, the Daily Advocate proprietors found it possible to purchase a \$7,200 Mergenthaler Blue Streak linotype on November 3, 1937.¹⁹ In three years a Model 14

¹⁶Belleville Daily Advceate, July 14, 1936, p. 12.

¹⁷Corporation Minutes, p. 69.

¹⁸Belleville Daily Advocate, July 14, 1936, p. 12.

¹⁹Corporation Minutes, p. 72.

linotype was bought from the Stelle Printing Company of Mount Vernon for a purchase price of \$4,338.55.²⁰ The beneficent light of prosperity blessed the petticoat proprietors of the Daily Advocate.

Preoccupation with the crises of depression gradually diminished. Other problems such as juvenile delinquency became the focus of national figures like J. Edgar Hoover. In Belleville interest was stimulated by plans to construct huge permanent buildings on the Scott Air Base site.²¹ By July 2, 1938, the general headquarters of the entire Army Air Corps was relocated at Scott.

International concern, on the other hand, was directed at Madrid. Members of the royal family found refuge in the United States where they heard of progress in a plot to sovietize the Iberian Peninsula.²² The incident generating widest interest was the constitutional battle in England. Everyone speculated on the reverse-sex Horatio Alger tale of the American divorcee and the British King. An "epochal struggle with a conservative church and cabinet" centered on Wallis Warfield Simpson and Edward VIII produced a veritable flood of pictures,

²⁰Corporation Minutes, p. 87.

²¹Belleville Daily Advocate, November 25, 1936,
p. 1.

²²Belleville Daily Advocate, October 31, 1936,
p. 1.

features, and editorials.²³

From Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin came the King's decision, "I have determined to renounce the throne." To the Duke of York, now George VI, devolved the task of ruling 495,000,000 subjects.²⁴

The United States, meanwhile, was caught up in its own periodic election turmoil. The Daily Advocate choice, Governor Alfred Landon, was heard by many Bellevilleans when he campaigned in St. Louis on October 31, 1936. To re-emphasize the need for an administrative change, Bissell Thomas, a Washington, D.C. lawyer of Belleville ancestry, returned to the city for a speech exposing the New Deal.²⁵ These events, augmented by a small Daily Advocate supplement in which Governor Landon's picture was superimposed on the shadow of an Abraham Lincoln portrait, did not succeed in unseating the firmly entrenched Roosevelt.²⁶

p. 1.

²³Belleville Daily Advocate, December 10, 1936,

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Belleville Daily Advocate, October 20, 1936, p. 1.

²⁶Belleville Daily Advocate, October 5, 1936, n.p.

CHAPTER X

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

1939. Few frontier newspapers lived to celebrate the joyous occasion of a Centennial Anniversary. For months prior to the October 25, 1939, centennial edition of the Belleville Daily Advocate, staff members turned research experts and compiled stories for the 128 page issue. A special office was dedicated exclusively to coordinating materials and issuing promotional data. One such promotional stunt involved a Town Crier appropriately garbed and dispatched to deliver centennial announcements to Belleville citizens and merchants.

As the state treasurer Louis E. Lewis aptly remarked, "The small town paper is the incarnation of the town spirit."¹ In 1939 Belleville was a bustling city of 30,000 inhabitants (93½% native born, 6% foreign born, and ½ of 1% Negro.)

Statistically it covered 6.5 square miles, boasted 92.3 miles of streets, and enjoyed a 56.3^o annual mean

¹Centennial Edition, p. 16.

temperature with 37.2 inches of precipitation. Situated from 420 to 630 feet above sea level, the city was protected by twenty-seven policemen and twenty-six firemen. Thirty churches ministered to the populace as did eighteen elementary, one junior high, and three secondary schools, with the added prestige of a college.

From the industrial plants came stoves, beer, cigars, dies, caskets, stencil machines, shoes, flour, and pants. A century and a half after its discovery, bituminous coal was still a dominant factor. Six million tons were gouged from sixty mines and 150 feet beneath the town proper ran a rich vein six and one-half feet thick.²

Momentarily the whole world seemed to revolve around the Daily Advocate festivities. This, however, was far from the truth. In historical cyclic fashion, the world was on the brink of another war. Adolph Hitler vowed to take what he wanted or perish in the attempt. Following the invasion of Warsaw by German planes, two distinguished statesmen addressed their people. From England Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain declared, "We are ready," but from the United States President Roosevelt, in the spirit of Wilson, declared that America could be kept out of war.³ A war of nerves began.

²Centennial Edition, p. 26.

³Belleville Daily Advocate, September 1, 1939,

Even the Daily Advocate felt it necessary to print an edition on Labor Day, ignoring its customary holiday. The day's editorial warned, "history is repeating itself," and quoted journalist Walter Lippmann. "It [the war] will engage totally most of the nations of Europe and in varying degrees every people on every continent. It will last long, very long. It will exact a toll that is altogether incalculable."⁴

Although France and England rose to defend Poland, the crux of the war was the neutral bloc -- Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, the Balkans, and the breadbasket of the world, the United States.⁵

Pearl Harbor evoked a powerful page one editorial in the Daily Advocate of December 8, 1941. "The United States of America has been attacked...unwarranted and without warning...expected yet unbelievable...Nippon biting the hand that fed him...88 years ago we presented Japan to the world...beware of American unity...the full weight of American power will be felt in the Land of the Rising Sun."⁶

Scott Air Base mobilized immediately. Belle-

p. 1. ⁴Belleville Daily Advocate, September 4, 1939,

p. 1. ⁵Belleville Daily Advocate, September 12, 1939,

p. 1. ⁶Belleville Daily Advocate, December 8, 1941,

villeans clamored for news of local boys on the USS Okla-
homa, USS West Virginia, and USS Pennsylvania. Otherwise,
a very serious but unpanicked spirit prevailed in the city.
"We've got to be ready. There's no choice."⁷

When routine reports were required by the F.B.I.
concerning the whereabouts of Japanese-Americans, one such
gentleman was taken into custody in Belleville. His request
to enlist in the military erased suspicion of his loyalty.⁸

On the eastern seaboard air raid alerts were
practiced in New York City and a continent away blackouts
were going into effect to shield the west coast cities.
Naval enlistees were "frozen" in the ranks until the war's
end. Among the extraordinary powers assumed by F.D.R. was
surveillance of German and Italian nationals as possible
"threats." When a German correspondent was reportedly
arrested in the United States, American newsmen were dis-
missed from Berlin.⁹

The Declaration of War on the Axis by the United
States rated a three line banner headline. From that time,
cruisers plied the Mississippi to ferret out any sabotage
movements against the multi-million dollar Union Electric

p. 9. ⁷Belleville Daily Advocate, December 8, 1941,

p. 1. ⁸Belleville Daily Advocate, December 9, 1941,

p. 1. ⁹Belleville Daily Advocate, December 10, 1941,

Company plants on the Mississippi banks at Cahokia and Venice, Illinois.¹⁰ A full page map provided readers with an informative study of the Pacific Theatre.¹¹ An eleven foot, two inch thick seam of coal, probably the county's largest, was earmarked "Coal for the National Defense."¹²

Wartime elections displayed the public's approval of U.S. tactics for final 1944 vote counts swept the Roosevelt - Truman ticket into office with a supporting Democratic Congress.¹³

The impetus of war was reflected in the Daily Advocate Board of Directors meetings. In 1942 the Board reviewed its staff gaps created by employee drafting and enlisting.¹⁴ That year it also heard employee requests for increased wages.¹⁵ Stock dividends rose from twelve dollars in 1943 to fifteen dollars in 1944.¹⁶ The happy news of the January 31, 1946, meeting was announcement that all mortgage notes had been retired.¹⁷

p. 1. ¹⁰Belleville Daily Advocate, December 11, 1941,

¹¹Ibid., p. 14.

p. 1. ¹²Belleville Daily Advocate, December 12, 1941,

p. 1. ¹³Belleville Daily Advocate, November 8, 1944,

¹⁴Corporation Minutes, p. 91.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 93-5.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 99.

Three inch letters marched across page one of the paper when unconditional surrender of the Germans was effected on that fateful Sunday in Rheims. Belleville workers took a holiday, but their elation did not erupt into the usual street demonstrations.¹⁸ With the war's termination in sight, large pictures of General Dwight D. Eisenhower and Field Marshall Montgomery honored those heroes along with informative sketches of military personalities like "Old Blood and Guts" Patton. Again the occasion of delirious joy had its sobering aspects. The day's editorial was entitled, "A Day of Joy -- and Prayer," and was accompanied by a drawing reminiscent of scores of scenes around the globe. Before the grave of their son, the parents of a war casualty begged, "Excuse Us If We Don't Join The Celebration."¹⁹

The Daily Advocate in a patriotic gesture presented sculptured picture memorials to local high sellers in the E bond campaign.²⁰ In the opposite camp, reprisals in treason cases rang out at the war's end, most famous of which was the Vidkin Quisling affair in Norway. The United States had its own rash and charged a Navy officer, State Department officials, and the editors of the period-

¹⁸Belleville Daily Advocate, May 7, 1945, p. 1.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 8.

²⁰Belleville Daily Advocate, June 6, 1945, p. 1.

ical Amerasia.²¹

After the war, a most unusual incident occurred in Advocate history. Interested in liquidating her stock in the Belleville Advocate Printing Company, Mrs. Woodford W. Evans privately negotiated the sale of her fifty-eight shares to Robert L. Kern, publisher of the Belleville News-Democrat, on February 25, 1946.²² When consternation arose among the citizenry, the Daily Advocate printed a clarifying page one editorial assuring its patrons that no equipment or real estate had changed hands, no merger or policy change had been effected. As in any corporation, a minority transfer of capital stock occurred, but "we remain an independent Republican newspaper, and a distinct and separate entity from any other newspaper."²³

As business manager, Cyril A. Arnold issued letters to members of the journalistic trade explaining the stock situation and re-stating the absence of any policy change in Daily Advocate publication.²⁴

Later that year Mrs. Fred E. Evans also chose to sell her 120 shares of stock. Anna L. Stolle acquired 95 to bring her holdings to 97 shares. C. A. Arnold purchased

²¹Belleville Daily Advocate, June 7, 1945, p. 1.

²²Belleville Daily Advocate, February 26, 1946, p. 1.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Letter from Cyril A. Arnold, Business Manager of the Belleville Daily Advocate, Belleville, Illinois, March 7, 1946.

twenty-five shares.²⁵ Despite this large-scale shuffle of stock, the same officers presided throughout 1946 until the next stockholders meeting could choose a new Board.

The Belleville Advocate Printing Company's annual meeting was held in January. At the Shareholders Meeting stockholders assembled to elect a Board of Directors. At the subsequent Board of Directors Meeting, members reviewed the financial statement, set annual salaries, and elected officers among themselves.

Before the cessation of their tenure in 1946, the directors met to revise the by-laws. This December 30, 1946, session increased the number of Board chairs to four and formulated new qualifications for members. Article III, Section 2 now contained a clause which prohibited affiliates of other newspapers from holding positions on the Advocate Board of Directors.²⁶

The January, 1947, Shareholders Meeting convened as usual in the law offices of Johnson and Johnson. Chairman pro tem C. A. Arnold presided in the presence of other stockholders Stelle and Kern, in addition to the regular chairman, Ida F. Evans. After presentation of the financial statement and the new by-laws, the meeting adjourned

²⁵Corporation Minutes (new series), January 31, 1947.

²⁶Corporation Minutes, p. 98.

temporarily.²⁷ Reconvening February 11, stockholders nominated and elected C. A. Arnold, Ida F. Evans, and Anna Stolle as members of the Board of Directors. Although Kern voted for himself, he was declared ineligible according to corporation by-laws. With three of the four chairs filled, a vacancy existed on the Board.²⁸

Officers elected at the meeting of the new Board of Directors were: C. A. Arnold, president; Ida F. Evans, vice president; and Anna L. Stolle, secretary-treasurer. Simultaneously, the Board designated Arnold the registered agent of the corporation.²⁹

Proprietorship proceedings remained unchanged in the succeeding years except for the absence of Kern who was regularly represented at meetings by Attorney Wilbur E. Krebs as proxy. In 1953, however, Kern moved to fill the Board vacancy. At the Shareholders Meeting that year, he placed in nomination the name of Carl Lenz, veteran Daily Advocate printer. Although the Board now expanded, officers retained their previous positions.³⁰

Five years later (1958) the death of Miss Anna L. Stolle necessitated corporation adjustment. From the Stolle estate President Arnold purchased 97 shares of capital

²⁷Corporation Minutes (n.s.), January 31, 1947.

²⁸Ibid., February 11, 1947.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., January 28, 1953.

stock to give him a majority interest of 122 shares. New elections within the Board of Directors awarded the vacant secretary-treasurer post to Mrs. Helen M. Arnold.

For Belleville and its Advocate an era was fast coming to a close. A truly historic journal had printed its colorful career indelibly in the annals of Midwestern journalism. The famous and the dedicated had held positions at the Advocate helm. The paper had weathered financial crises and blossomed in days of prosperity. Her political fortunes had alternately been cast with the Democrats, Free Soilers, and the Republicans. In her pages five major wars had been reported. She had expanded with the march of time from a serviceable folio to an artistically made-up daily and reflected the phenomenal growth of the journalistic profession. Her pages are the living history of a newspaper, a city, a state, a nation.

On November 1, 1958, the city of Belleville was saddened by the merger of the 120 year old Advocate with its neighbor paper, the News-Democrat.

The Belleville Daily Advocate announces with deep regret that this is its last day of publication. Recent years have taken a heavy toll of daily newspapers throughout the United States. So much so, that today probably less than two dozen communities in the whole country have two afternoon daily newspapers and this includes the largest metropolitan cities. Most have only one, including such large cities as St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver, Miami, Milwaukee, Atlanta, Cincinnati, etc.

Constantly mounting costs, foreseeable cost increases, the need of expenditures for improvements to meet the demands of present day conditions and un-encouraging outlook for the revenues to pay these costs have presented a problem to Belleville newspapers.

After fullest consideration of every phase and with the interest of all concerned in mind, we feel that only by combining the two local dailies can a strong vigorous newspaper be maintained for the community. To do otherwise would merely sap the newspapers' strength and delay the inevitable.

In the sincere belief that it is the best thing to do, the Belleville Daily Advocate has been sold to Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Kern and Richard P. Kern, owners of the News-Democrat.

* * *

While we leave the newspaper publishing field with deep regret, we have the satisfaction that the Advocate's long service to Belleville has been honorable.

The combined operation will provide the wherewithal to build for the future and to assure continued virile newspaper coverage for the readers and advertisers of the Belleville trading area.

We extend our sincere appreciation to our many loyal supporters, be they readers, employees or advertisers.

Cyril A. Arnold
 President
 Belleville Advocate Printing
 Company.³¹

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