

Populist Journalism

Scraps of History Regarding Populist Newspapers.

A few weeks ago The Independent sent out nearly a thousand marked copies containing an article on "Populist Journalism," and requesting information not only regarding populist papers now in existence, but also the history of those that have suspended or changed political policy. Last week we inquired especially into the situation in Alabama.

Responses are coming in now to the first article. Many of the letters will be of interest to Old Guard populist editors who "have come all the way over the trail" and are still preaching and teaching the three fundamentals of populism—"money, land, and transportation."

LEBANON JOURNAL.

Editor Independent: I was most agreeably surprised today to receive a marked copy of your paper containing the article entitled, "Populist Journalism." Besides, it does one good to yet occasionally get hold of a genuine populist paper.

I have heard much of the Lincoln Independent in the last ten years, but somehow never got it on my exchange list.

Have lived in Smith county, Kansas, twenty-five years, seventeen of them in the newspaper business. Left the republican party (sold a republican paper) in 1889, and founded the Lebanon (Kas.) Journal in December of that year, in opposition to republican practices, and republican theories. In 1890 the people's party swept them from power in this county, and we held it solidly until the election last fall.

As it looks to me, our downfall commenced with our first attempt at fusion and the toboggan stood with the deception of the spider's web to the fly, from that moment, to hurry our early demise as a party of national or state force.

In 1891, the Lebanon (Kas.) Journal passed into the hands of a joint stock company while I went to Smith Center and founded the Smith County Journal, selling it to its present proprietors in December of that year; and, returning to Lebanon, took charge of the Lebanon Journal, and conducted it as a populist paper until the first of May of this year.

Immediately after the sweeping victory of the republicans last fall, the Smith County Journal turned democratic. As a business proposition a newspaper in a town the size of this one is seldom, if ever, a paying investment from a financial standpoint, and so when our party was gradually "fused" out of existence, I agreed with the republican paper here to combine the two and sell to a new man, who established the Times, which is now run as a republican paper.

In the early struggles of the people's party it was the wail of the republican press that it (the people's party) was a democratic move to get republicans into the democratic fold. This sentiment we had to combat in this locality for years. Then came the national convention at St. Louis in 1896 (in which I was a delegate) and the prophecy of the republicans looked dangerous—had a tendency to weaken the faith of our voters.

Must we admit the republican prophecy was correct, or lay the blame to the short-sightedness of our party leaders?

I preferred selling my paper to affiliating with either of the old parties and when a favorable opportunity offers will again engage in the newspaper business as near where I left off as I know how.

Wishing you success and hoping that you are backed by a territory sufficiently large to hold the people's banner aloft until the people again get their feet on the ground with a good solid organization in defense of the rights of man—and women, too, for that matter—I remain,

J. A. WRIGHT.

Lebanon, Kas.

(If Mr. Wright will reflect for a moment that the republican party, since

the civil war, has been the accredited representative of the big capitalists—those engaged in manufacturing, banking, mining, railroading, etc.—and that logically the democratic party had no ground to stand on except to represent the little fellows—the farmers, merchants, home owners, etc.—he will understand why the grange, farmers' alliance, greenback, and populist movements grew up. It was because the leaders of the democratic party were for the most part big capitalists, or their employes, and there was no political party to represent the economic interests of the little fellows. Every time the democratic party, either pretendedly or in earnest, presented a platform that appeared to hold out some hope that the little fellows would receive some considerations at the hands of the government, it was inevitable that the existing third party should go to pieces; and it mattered not whether there was "fusion" or not—the third party members would generally vote the democratic ticket.

There was no short-sightedness of populist leaders. Bryan's nomination on the Chicago platform sounded the death-knell of the then people's party organization. There was no necessity for two parties representing the same class of people. And it made no difference whether the St. Louis convention indorsed Bryan or nominated a different candidate, the vast majority of populists would have supported Bryan any way—because his election offered some hope of relief for the little fellows who were being robbed right and left by the railroads, the trusts and the bankers.

But temporary destruction of a political organization does not destroy the men who composed it. There are more populists now than ever before. With indications that the democratic party will return to its former tactics of being a republican echo, there is necessity for a rebuilding of the people's party organization. This was the object of the Denver conference, and its work is growing every day.—Associate Editor.)

RICE COUNTY EAGLE.

Editor Independent: The Rice County Eagle (Lyons, Kas.) was started in 1884 as a reform paper, under the name of the Lyons Prohibitionist; this was changed in 1890 to Rice County Eagle, as at present.

Except for a few months in its inception, D. P. Hodgdon has been owner and editor. The editor was an Abe Lincoln republican, a prohibitionist (as he was an abolitionist), is now a populist and expects to champion populism (though more extensive in scope than formerly) as long as he lives, and fight goldbugism, imperialism and anarchism, which are fast ruining the nation.

D. P. HODGDON.

Lyons, Kas.

RUSSELL REFORMER.

Editor Independent: I note in The Independent of October 8 that you are collecting a history of reform papers. I wish you success. The Russell Reformer, at this place, began January 1, 1897, and is flourishing—a straight populist paper in principle.

When you get your history prepared, don't fail to send a copy to the state historical society at Topeka, of which I am a life member. I am a populist of the vintage of 1890—when I voted first time.

J. C. RUPPENTHAL.

Russell, Kas.

THE LIBERATOR.

Editor Independent: The Liberator was established in Norton, Kas., in March, 1892, by D. W. Hull, who came from Fort Dodge, Ia. In 1898 he leased the paper for six months to Perry Coler; and in 1901 it was leased for nine months to Harry Davis. In June, 1902, I bought the paper from Mr. Hull.

The Norton Liberator, published at Norton, Norton county, Kas., is a six-column quarto, 600 circulation; issue of Friday, October 9, 1903, was Vol. XII., No. 39; six pages of ready print; \$1 a year; owner and editor, W. A. Hunt. Politically, the paper preaches simon-pure populism. W. A. HUNT, Norton, Kas.

TOPEKA INDEPENDENT.

Editor Independent: The Topeka Independent, of which I was the editor and one of the publishers, suspended publication six years ago. The Advocate was the last populist paper published in this county. It had many ups and down and last year "went out of politics" altogether.

There are scores of thousands of populists left in Kansas—but no populist party. It jumped down the dem-

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ocratic throat last year. It still wriggles some in the democratic stomach, and may be cast out some day—but it will never again be that "thing of beauty" which the poet says is "a joy forever." ALBERT GRIFFIN. Topeka, Kas.

THE BETTER WAY.

Editor Independent: The Better Way was established August 6, 1896, since when it has advocated populism every week to the present time. It supported Mr. Bryan in 1896 and 1900 and has stood with the people's party, first, last and all the time.

The paper was founded by Dr. D. M. Dunn & Son and by them published until July, 1897, when it was leased by Richards & Fleming. They published it until November, 1899, when Dr. Dunn again took charge and continued to February 22, 1900, at which time the present owners took charge of it.

The Better Way is a six-column quarto with ready print inside; published every Thursday at Minneapolis, Kas.; subscription price, \$1, and the publishers take pride in saying that in the three years and eight months that they have owned it, they have doubled its circulation, until now at Vol. 8, No. 10, we have a bona fide list of 1,440. The present owners and publishers are F. C. JOHNSON & SON. Minneapolis, Kas.

ARKANSAS.

The Nonconformist directory of reform papers, published in 1891, credited Arkansas with the following:

- Alliance Voice, Batesville.
- Faulkner Wheel, Conway.
- Morning Star, Eureka Springs.
- Expositor, Eureka Springs.
- Advocate, Heber.
- Our Country, Jonesboro.
- Workman's Chronicle, Little Rock.
- Rural & Workman, Little Rock.
- Arkansas Economist, Searcy.
- Cottage Home, Texarkana.

An inspection of Ayer's American Newspaper Annual for 1901 fails to show one of these in existence. The only populist paper credited in this directory is—

Morgan's Buzz-Saw, Hardy.

The Independent would be glad to hear from any of its Arkansas readers, giving corrections or additions to this list or information regarding the ten populist papers of 1891 which are now non-existent.

The Carlisle Indian football team came near cleaning Harvard out by a slick maneuver that astonished alike the rooters, fans and general public. One of the Indians caught the ball from a kick-off, shoved it under his jersey and ran the whole length of the field to a touchdown. The authorities decided that there was nothing in the rules which forbade such a maneuver and the score stood at that point 11 to 0 against Harvard.

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- A57—150 acres, Lancaster Co., \$8,000.
- A58—480 acres, Knox Co., \$6,720.
- A61—320 acres, Red Willow Co., \$3,200.
- A56—134 acres, Lancaster Co., \$8,040.
- A55—160 acres, Nance Co., \$6,400.
- A56—1,440 acres, Valley Co., \$12,500.
- A42—640 acres, Knox Co., \$19,200.
- A46—360 acres, Red Willow Co., \$2,500.
- A48—160 acres, Red Willow Co., \$2,000.
- A37—480 acres, Harlan Co., \$7,000.
- A38—320 acres, Harlan Co., \$6,400.
- A30—320 acres, Nuckolls Co., \$12,000.
- A31—160 acres, Franklin Co., \$2,480.
- A33—320 acres, Franklin Co., \$16,000.
- A34—640 acres, Franklin Co., \$7,000.
- A24—640 acres, Buffalo Co., \$10,880.
- A25—160 acres, Red Willow Co., \$1,600.
- A29—320 acres, Harlan Co., \$4,800.
- A26—160 acres, Harlan Co., \$4,800.
- A11—320 acres, Harlan Co., \$7,000.
- A 8—143 acres, Fillmore Co., \$7,000.
- A 7—320 acres, Fillmore Co., \$14,000.
- 1066—320 acres, Red Willow, \$3,700.
- 1065—514 acres, Red Willow, \$5,654.
- 735—500 acres, Douglas Co., \$35,000.
- 734—1280 acres, Lancaster, \$38,400.
- 718—320 acres, Lancaster, \$16,000.
- 633—200 acres, Lancaster, \$13,000.

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