

William P. Koscher, "The Evolution, Tone, and Milieu of New England's Greatest Newspaper: The Springfield Republican, 1824-1920" *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* Volume 5, No 1 (Spring 1976).

Published by: Institute for Massachusetts Studies and Westfield State University

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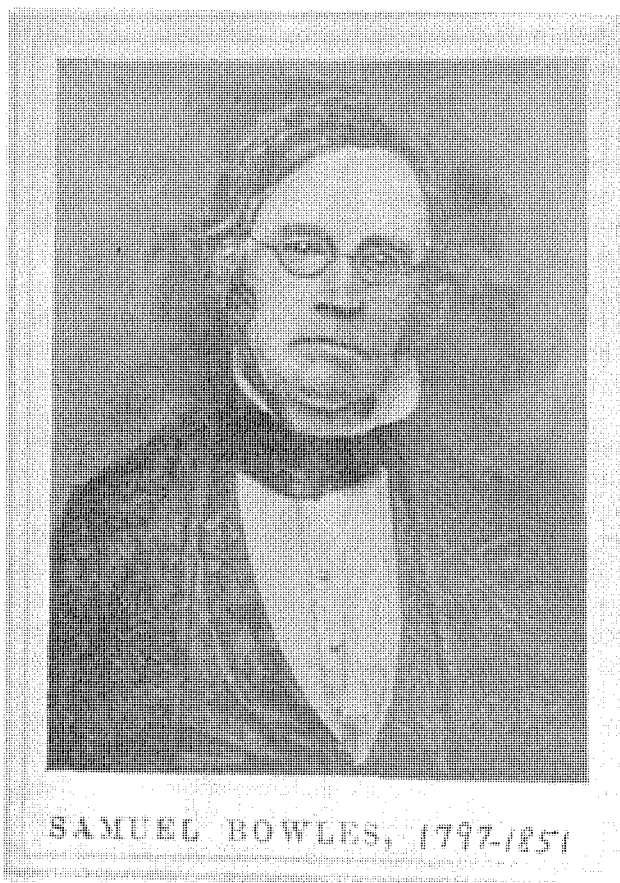
The Evolution, Tone, and Milieu of New England's Greatest Newspaper: The Springfield Republican, 1824-1920

William P. Koscher

The influence and quality of the Springfield *Republican* in the years leading up to and just following 1900 is generally acknowledged by historians and students of journalism. The paper did not emerge suddenly at the turn of the century and quickly attain its high position of influence. It had been a stable, sound, high quality "country" journal for three quarters of a century and had gradually earned its place in American journalism. Three generations of Samuel Bowles's had owned and edited the *Republican*, and each had left his mark on the paper as it developed. Family ownership can be a decided advantage in the newspaper industry in that it lends an appearance of permanence and dependability which is important to advertisers and readers.¹

The evolution of the paper paralleled that of American journalism generally. It was established originally as a party organ by the first editor, Samuel Bowles. The initial issue appeared in the midst of the hotly contested presidential campaign of 1824. At the time, all of the local papers were Federalist, and the Democratic-Republicans wanted their views represented in the area. Bowles was then one of the proprietors of the Hartford *Times*, but he agreed to move up the Connecticut River Valley and establish a journal with these sympathies on a trial basis.²

Sam Bowles was of Puritan lineage that could be traced five generations back to 1640 and to John Bowles, a church elder at Roxbury, Massachusetts. The young printer had learned his trade from apprenticeship which had begun in 1814. In the beginning, at Springfield, "he was proprietor, publisher, editor and devil, he set his own type and ran his own press." The first issue contained no local news, since the editor assumed "everyone knew it anyway." Rather, it was made up of articles taken from the most recent available Boston and New York papers. Foreign news was similarly selected from the foreign press, and, due to the nature of overseas communication, it was usually several weeks old. News from Washington normally took about eight days, longer in bad weather. For the first two decades of its existence, the *Republican* appeared on a weekly basis. The bulk of the advertising was for patent medicines, and politics accounted for the greatest proportion of the reading.³



"All illustrations in this article are from the collections of the Springfield City Library"

Despite the avowed bias of the paper and Bowles's personal preference for William H. Crawford of Georgia, no candidate was endorsed in the confusing presidential election of 1824. It was to be the only such occasion in the history of the paper. Four years later, the *Republican* became a strong advocate of John Quincy Adams. A Jackson victory, it was feared, would lead to a military dictatorship and would result in a subordination of the government of laws to one of personalities. This opposition to Jackson continued through his two administrations as Bowles and his paper became strongly Whig. Jackson's application of the spoils system and his fight against the bank drew heavy editorial attack and his use of the veto was characterized as "monarchist." Only in his stand against the South Carolina nullifiers did the president receive consistent support from the *Republican*. The editor had lived in Hartford at the time of the Hartford Convention, and as a result, opposed any threat to the unity of the young nation.⁴

By the mid-eighteen-forties, the railroad had made Springfield a crossroads in the communications network that extended northward from New York City and westward from Boston. It was about this time that the editor's son, the second Samuel Bowles, began working on his father's paper. The younger Bowles had been born in Springfield in 1826, and had attended local school, but had not gone on to college because his father disapproved. It is this second of the three Samuel Bowles's that had the most to do with the building of the Springfield *Republican*. He is generally referred to as the "great editor" of the paper. Although suffering from repeated health problems, he imparted a drive and creativity to the paper which carried it for decades after his death.⁵ He once equated newspaper work with "taking whiskey" since "once one gets the habit he feels that he must have the excitement it produces."⁶

His first and probably greatest innovation was made in 1844 when he was but eighteen and working under his father. At the time there were no daily newspapers in the state outside of Boston. Young Bowles convinced his more cautious father to allow him to try a daily edition. It first appeared on March 27, 1844 as an evening paper, and the initial subscription price was six dollars per year. The experiment was declared a success when circulation had risen to twelve hundred. After that first year, the daily was shifted from evening to morning. The old weekly remained but soon assumed a secondary role, consisting of selected, condensed contents of the daily.⁷ The elder Bowles remained at the head of the paper he had founded until his death in 1851. The son then assumed full control which he held until he bequeathed it in turn to his son upon his death in 1878. The basic character of the paper, though expanding and becoming more sophisticated, remained the same. Political support of Whig candidates continued despite the continued failure of the party to nominate Daniel Webster, the paper's perennial favorite, for the presidency. In 1844 the elder Bowles attended the Whig convention in Baltimore and established a practice which was extended to both parties after the paper

became politically independent. Whenever possible, a representative of the paper attended national political conventions.⁸

The *Republican* first gained national attention during the slavery controversy and the Civil War. The first Bowles expressed early concern over the slavery problem when in 1825 he joined and became secretary of the Springfield branch of the American Colonization Society. As the issue developed, the editor found himself torn by the moral and legal aspects of the question. On the one hand, he opposed slavery extension into the territories and seemed to sympathize with the aims of the abolitionists, yet he censured the tactics of the Garrison group. While defending the right of the abolitionists to petition Congress, he hesitated to print inflammatory anti-slave letters in his newspaper. He opposed those who would flaunt the nation's laws and thus threaten the Union. The most useful course of action, he argued, was to reason with the slave holders.⁹

The difficulty in maintaining a moderate position on such an emotional issue became increasingly apparent as the dilemma dragged into the eighteen-fifties. Absolute insistence on the rule of law finally gave way in the face of the Fugitive Slave Law. The Constitution did not require Americans "to be slave catchers" nor to withhold their "Godspeed to the fugitive." Still the fear of disunion overrode the moral indignation held for slavery. Although viewed as "a deep and bitter evil, an anomaly in our Republic giving the lie to every line of our profession as a people and a nation," slavery was a fact and had to be met with wisdom and caution and not with "the cowardice of a fanaticism which would pull down the whole fabric because it has one gross imperfection in its frame."¹⁰ The radicals could not be allowed to destroy a system otherwise based on justice and reason.

The *Republican's* Whig allegiance was not unnaturally transferred to the new Republican party and its first presidential nominee, John C. Fremont. Four years later the paper favored Massachusetts Congressman Nathaniel P. Banks for the nomination and characterized Lincoln as little more than a "politically available mediocrity" when he defeated Banks and went on to win the election.¹¹

During the war itself, political questions took precedence over military matters in the editorials. Unlike some other Northern papers, the *Republican* did not press for emancipation but recognized the political problems involved; the preservation of the Union remained the most important goal.¹² The

president himself rose rapidly in the paper's esteem as the war progressed. He came to be regarded by 1864 as

the representative of the simple truthfulness and honest and all enduring patriotism of the American people. He stands out from all men of his section and of his time — and not alone by reason of his office — as the representative of the republicanism of the republic, the champion of the democratic principle, the friend of the Union and the Constitution, and foe of all class privilege and class domination.¹³

Following the war, the *Republican* was equivocal on the proper method of reconstruction. While it supported a suffrage amendment, the paper urged an educational test for voters. The Republican party's reliance on Negro votes for supremacy in the South also disturbed the paper, and although President Johnson's impeachment was supported, the paper defended the seven Republicans who voted against conviction. In the midst of the turmoil, Bowles gradually became disillusioned with the Republican party and, in particular, with his newspaper's role as an organ of the party. Grant quickly lost favor on account of his appointments as reform of the civil service and of the spoils system became the prime issue of the paper. In 1872 the *Republican* expressed the thought that the country "ought to do better than re-elect Grant." With this decision to oppose Grant and the party regulars, the Springfield *Republican* declared its political independence. At first the paper sought the nomination of Charles Francis Adams, but eventually it came to support Horace Greeley. The fear was registered, however, that if he were elected, his administration would be "a political hurley-burley."¹⁴

The disputed election of 1876 brought the era to a close.¹⁵ There existed a friendly split in the staff as the editor supported Rutherford B. Hayes while his son, the third Samuel Bowles, and the young managing editor, Solomon Griffin, backed Samuel Tilden. All agreed, however, that Tilden had been fairly elected but also accepted the decision of the electoral commission to the contrary.

Two years later the great editor was dead. The eulogies were impressive. Alexander McClure of the Philadelphia *Times* felt it was sufficient to say that Bowles had founded "the nation's first independent newspaper in the broadest sense of the term."¹⁶ Henry Watterson, editor of the Louisville *Courier-Journal* and one of Bowles's closest friends, commented that

to say of a man that he edited the model provincial newspaper in the most newspaper reading country on the globe; that he gave his provincial newspaper national influence and importance, and that he was a statesman rather than a politician is to say all that can be claimed for a journalist. Yet, it no more than rightly belongs to Sam Bowles.... He was a true leader of opinions.¹⁷

In a little more than three decades he had taken a modest, four page weekly newspaper and had built it into what Horace Greeley called "the best and ablest country journal ever published on this continent."¹⁸ A national circulation had been established, and local circulation had doubled during the war years alone.¹⁹



SAMUEL BOWLES, 1826-1878

The *Republican* would continue, however, long after the death of the man who was responsible for its stature. It would continue to grow and remain in the forefront of the newspaper industry. Proprietorship of the paper passed to the third Samuel Bowles, who had begun to work for his father in 1873.²⁰ He was to be a different sort of editor and personality than his father, having, as another editor said,

few of his father's gifts or peculiarities—his angles, so to say—his canny wisdom, his acute and agile understanding, his talent for apt expression. He was neither a politician nor a writer, but he had a tenacity and a genius for hard, continuous work; he was bred to the business, educated in its traditions.... Under his constant conscientious, painstaking administration the *Republican* not merely held its own but gained in popularity and influence.²¹

Born in 1851, this last of the three Samuel Bowles's had attended Yale for two years and had spent a year traveling and studying in Germany. Although he worked for a time in the editorial and news departments, the growth of the business and his own aptitude had prompted his father to put him in charge of the business management of the paper. He was to head the paper for thirty-seven years until his death in 1915, but, unlike his father, did little actual writing. Most of his written contributions were letters in which he shared the pleasures of his travels with his readers. It was in the handling of the details of the business and in the setting of the general direction that he presided rather than commanded as his father had done. All were responsible to him, and he could be a stern taskmaster. He read the proofs of the editorial page daily, but it seems he was more concerned with eliminating errors than in dictating editorial policy.²²

In one important respect, at least, the character of the *Republican* changed after 1878. Until that time it has been "Sam Bowles' paper" in much the same way that the Louisville *Courier-Journal* had been "Henry Watterson's paper" and the Emporia *Gazette* would become "William Allen White's paper." Journals published outside of the large cities rarely had a national identity of their own. Their strength usually depended on the character of their editor. The Springfield *Republican* of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would prove the exception. Even under the second Bowles, editorials were written by many on the staff. Occasionally, in this earlier period, editorials were signed but with pen names. In the period covered in this study editorials always appeared anonymously. One rural New Hampshire paper noted that "a good many readers of the *Republican* would like to know something about the men whose writings they read day after day, year after year."²³ The number written from the outside was "negligible."

The regular staff included a man responsible for each area for which he developed an expertise.²⁴ The pay was small, the work hard, and individual recognition slight, but it was a marvelous opportunity to learn the craft in an excellent school and have whatever one wrote read by a large number of people. Each man reserved the right to his own opinions, a fact which often resulted in apparent inconsistency. In fact, it was usually but a matter of two writers expressing slightly differing views on overlapping topics.²⁵

The one man most responsible for the editorial content and philosophy of the *Republican* in this later period (1895-1920) was Solomon Bulkeley Griffin. He was born in Williamstown, Massachusetts and was a Williams College graduate. He came to Springfield as a young man fresh from college in 1872 and started work on the editorial staff for the modest salary of twenty-five dollars per month. Six years later he was managing editor, a post he would hold for forty-one years until his retirement in 1919.²⁶ His primary duty in this position was the immediate supervision of the editorial staff and the direction of the political and intellectual course of the paper.²⁷ For most of the period he seems

to have been the major contributor to the editorial page. His acquaintance "with public men and other journalists... was wider than that of anyone who has served the *Republican* with the single exception of the second Samuel Bowles."²⁸ His reputation, however, did not extend beyond the industry. A friendly rival noted of Griffin upon his retirement that readers of the paper, though they may not know his name, will miss his very individual style of thought and expression that had done so much to give the *Republican* its peculiar flavor.

Henry Watterson was known everywhere for what he wrote, but "Sol" Griffin has written under the traditions of anonymous newspaper work and the paper has been individualized rather than the man who individualized it.²⁹

Among those in the industry and public life who knew Griffin, he was recognized as a "dangerous antagonist and powerful friend."³⁰ His personal expertise lay in the area of politics. It was he who attended the national conventions of both parties. In his memoirs he admits that his early "predilections had been with the Republican party," but, like the paper itself, his views were to be influenced far more by issues than either party or personalities.³¹

After Griffin, the leading editorial writer was Waldo L. Cook. Indeed, Cook may have contributed more editorials than Griffin toward the end of the period and was to follow Griffin as managing editor in 1919.³² There were naturally others on the staff and some key correspondents in Boston, New York, and Washington, and occasionally an editorial was solicited from the outside, but discussion of these men would seem unnecessary in light of the dearth of evidence as to what each man was responsible for.

In format the *Republican* was traditional and slow to respond to the pressures for change. From its beginning, for example, the first page had been an advertising cover. When it finally changed to a more modern front page in 1910, it was one of the last American papers to do so. An editorial on the day of the change explained that it was difficult "from the standpoint of sentiment to abandon the ancient practice," but the change was made desirable by changing conditions.³³ Headlines, however, were kept to a minimum for, as Griffin recalled, "the use of big black type leaves a paper with lessened resource when really great news is precipitated. It is forced to make itself a poster."³⁴ Short spelling was employed at times but never to the extent that some others such as Theodore Roosevelt used it. Capital letters were spared and it came to be said among the printers that "only Jesus Christ and Samuel Bowles were capitalized in the *Republican*."³⁵ It was also known in the business as typographically the cleanest paper available, a reputation which evoked considerable pride.³⁶

The original four pages grew to eight, then twelve, and finally to sixteen pages, and photographs began to appear around the turn of the century. A member of the Associated Press, the *Republican* used the service only when the

news item in question could not be reported by one of the paper's own correspondents. Other innovations of news reporting were added cautiously. Very primitive public opinion polls were occasionally noted, for example.³⁷

Its advertising policy often cost the *Republican* some money, but the result was a tasteful newspaper. Illustrations, trademarks, or anything else "except what could be set in the paper's own carefully selected types" were excluded. Patent medicine advertisements, the greatest single source of revenue, but also one of the more noxious, were carefully screened. The acceptable list was narrowed gradually until it was decided in August 1915 not to accept any further contracts for "internal medicines of any sort." Similarly, promotions for alcoholic beverages were excluded in 1914, a voluntary forfeiture of thousands of dollars of annual revenue from local breweries alone.³⁸

The limits of news as a basis of steady circulation inspired the development of features in all the newspapers of the day.³⁹ Any journal, however traditional, had to respond to pressures from readers and advertisers; it had to compete with other newspapers and with magazines as entertainment as well as a source of news and wisdom. Most innovations of this sort appeared first in the Sunday *Republican* which had been introduced in 1878 as the first Sunday paper in the state outside of Boston. Its front page, for example, had featured news as opposed to advertisements from the start. Soon after the turn of the century, the Sunday edition had become a full-scale modern newspaper. It contained several features and usually three sections, each containing as many pages as an entire daily newspaper. One such Sunday edition included, in addition to news, editorials, and advertisements, the following features: Plays and Players, Music and Musicians, Young Folks Page, Books and Authors, Interests of Women, Recreation, Local Intelligence, Sports, Social News, and Automotive News.⁴⁰ Soon thereafter, a lithogravure which would develop into a photogravure appeared. On the day in which the latter was introduced, an editorial explained that the innovation was in response to the growing favor that the former had found with readers and advertisers, and that the section would meet "a clearly defined need" as Springfield became more metropolitan. On rare occasions the Sunday *Republican* was almost entirely devoted to a special topic which was particularly pressing, such as an election, the women's suffrage movement, or the assassination of an Austrian Archduke. Another device used to stir interest was the hiring of a national figure to cover a coming event. Baseball players such as Tris Speaker and Grover Cleveland Alexander were commissioned, for example, to report on the 1915 World Series. Aside from a sports and magazine page running daily, the special features remained exclusively in the Sunday edition.

One feature slowly faded from the pages of the *Republican* for the same reasons that the above were introduced. This was the so-called "huckleberry route" or the daily report from each of the various villages and towns in the Connecticut Valley which were served by the paper. The growth and increasing

sophistication of the area made these daily discussions somewhat superfluous, if still charming, reading in the new, more metropolitan setting.

Having discussed the paper's background and format, it seems appropriate to consider briefly the state and regional setting. It is true that the *Republican* is being considered here primarily in its role as a national institution. Local news was normally relegated to a separate section, and fewer than ten percent of its editorials dealt with state and local topics combined.⁴¹ On the other hand, the local surroundings provided a vantage point and contributed in many ways to the flavor of the paper. It would be foolish to deny that the paper's positions may, in part, have been shaded by the ethnic make-up, the peculiar economic and social interest, or other characteristics of the community. Indeed, part of the argument for choosing the *Republican* for such a study rests on its being produced far from the frenzy of the big city and in an environment which was more familiar to most Americans.

The small colonial village founded by William Pynchon as a trading outpost had been chartered as a city in 1852, but by 1890, Springfield still totalled only 44,179 residents. The two neighboring industrial towns of Holyoke and Chicopee had populations of 36,637 and 14,050 respectively, and Hampden County as a whole totalled 135,713.⁴² At the close of the period, Springfield had nearly tripled in size, while Holyoke, Chicopee, and the county had roughly doubled. According to the 1920 census, the "Springfield area," the city and its suburbs, included 332,762 inhabitants.⁴³

Nearly one-fourth of the 1920 figure for Springfield were foreign born and about sixty percent were either immigrants or children of immigrants.⁴⁴ There was also a very small Negro minority of about two percent.⁴⁵ Of the nearly 77,000 immigrants and their children, nearly 20,000 were of Irish descent, and over 10,000 were of other northern European background. Nearly 8,000 were of Italian origin, and another 10,000 or so were Russians or Poles. There were also about 15,000 Canadians, mostly French. The flow of immigration into the area was fairly even from 1890 up to the World War when it dropped dramatically.⁴⁶

The region had undergone a basic change economically as well as ethnically. No longer did the inhabitants depend upon the fertile Connecticut Valley for prosperity. Industry had gradually come to dominate the region. The city had long been known as the home of a United States Armory and its Springfield rifle, the Smith and Wesson revolver and the Merriam-Webster publishing companies. But by the 1920s, literally dozens of firms had emerged. Over two-thirds of those employed in the city were involved in the related areas of manufacturing, transportation, and trade. The region was saved from the evils of dependence upon a single industry. There were at one point twenty-one different firms in the city, each with a capitalization of over one million dollars. The products ranged from firearms, motor vehicles, chemicals, and machinery to paper, textiles, toys and games, matches, processed meats, and confections.

The city was also the home of Massachusetts Mutual Life and Springfield Fire and Marine insurance companies. Holyoke and Chicopee concerns produced paper, textiles, athletic goods, and automobile tires, and the small adjoining town of Ludlow boasted of the world's largest jute mill.⁴⁷

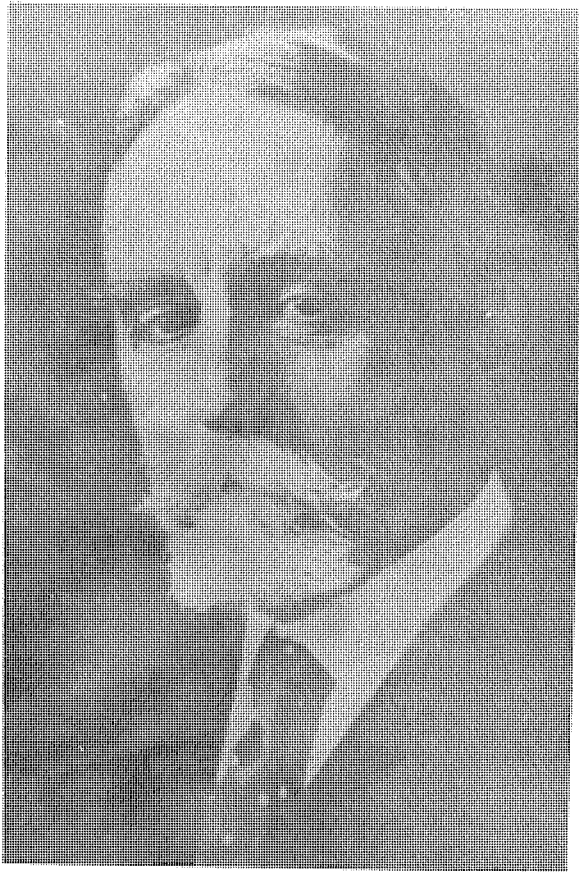
There was social differentiation, but the situation was far from static. New manufacturing families had risen at the upper levels to challenge older commercial families. The city also had its poorer quarters and nationality groupings, but, due to the fairly consistent prosperity and ethnic variety, neither poverty nor immigrant ghettos were pronounced.⁴⁸ There seemed a genuine desire to assimilate the new arrivals. School attendance was high and illiteracy below four percent. Most of Springfield's residents fell somewhere between the highest and the lowest levels of society, and although it would probably be misleading to characterize it as a middle-class community, it was developing in that direction. Springfield's nickname, "The City of Homes," gave the not inaccurate impression of what remained in 1920 basically a residential community. The city had changed markedly over the period: "the annual charity ball was a thing of the past." It was not yet, however, a metropolis. Richard Hooker explains that "the contacts of life in such a city (differed) in degree rather than in kind from the days when it was slowly emerging from the town and everybody knew everybody else."⁴⁹ The changes in the make-up and outlook of the paper itself over the period doubtless reflect its changing setting. Somewhat greater attention was paid to the peculiar problems and customs of the newer ethnic groups and to the affairs of their native lands, particularly in time of international crisis. Similarly, the growth of local industry may have led to more emphasis on the difficulties of industrialization generally. The *Republican's* basic outlook, however, does not seem to have been greatly affected by local changes in and of themselves.

The character and tone of the Springfield *Republican* can be inferred, to a degree, from what has been said thus far: it will hopefully become very clear after its content has been analyzed. However, a few comments on the paper's basic philosophy and its view of the role, rights and responsibilities of the press may be helpful in framing what will follow.

Responsibility, scrupulous accuracy and sophistication were the hallmarks of the Springfield *Republican*. Its news reporting and editorials were never sensational or hysterical even in times of great excitement or crisis. A New England contemporary summed it up well,

Our of all this ruck of printers, ink, crude pictures and screaming headlines, detached incoherent "specials" and maudlin guesses, it is a mighty relief to see, looming above it all, the sane calm and self-controlled Springfield *Republican*, a shining example and exception of a newspaper's ability to keep a clear head and maintain a proper sense of proportion.⁵⁰

In an address to the Pulitzer School of Journalism in October, 1913, Editor Bowles expressed what he believed the role of a newspaper to be. "The primary duty," he said, "continues to be to chronicle accurately and truthfully the events of consequence and to promote earnestly and persistently the public good."⁵¹ The public good might be promoted in a number of ways. Properly handled, the newspaper could be an educator as well as a wholesome force. It would reduce prejudice by instructing the public in the true nature of the immigrant, and, at the same time, it would aid in the new American's assimilation.⁵² One journal went so far as to claim that, given enough newspapers like the *Republican*, "we could almost get by without colleges."⁵³



"SAMUEL BOWLES, 1851-1915"

A consistent defender of the rights of a free press, the paper was also a stern critic of its own industry and always careful to observe what it believed to be the responsibilities that accompanied the rights. In the hysteria of the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, the following appeared:

There is much to deplore in the conduct of much of the press, particularly, in relation to the war and the issues leading to it. The course of what are called yellow journals in their shrieking, lying, inflaming efforts to shout the government into war, would almost have justified the government in closing their offices. Typographically, much of the metropolitan press is an offense to the eyes of the people. Its sins against taste, discretion, and judgement are grievous. All sense of fitness and proportion are defied, and even cultured Boston has to put up with billboard headlines and hysterical poster printing which would be expected in a community of savages during a season of eclipses and earthquakes.⁵⁴

Even some reform-minded journalism or "muckraking" was seen as possibly dangerous in that "unwarranted conclusions" might be drawn by those without historical perspective. Yet, if the perspective could be kept true, "nothing but good" could result from "these probings into the private aspects of public life."⁵⁵

The paper was often involved in libel suits defending its right to say what it believed to be the truth. In one instance, the paper lost a suit to a professional baseball player who claimed he had been libeled by a report in the sports page that he had spiked an opposing second baseman. The award amounted to sixty-two dollars.⁵⁶

On occasions when it felt an error had been made, the *Republican* was careful to apologize and do whatever possible to redeem the situation. The most striking instance of this occurred in connection with David I. Walsh's election to the Senate from Massachusetts in 1918. The paper had supported him in the campaign partly because of his pledge to back President Wilson and his peace plan. When Walsh reversed himself in the Senate, the paper printed an editorial apology for misrepresenting Walsh in the campaign.⁵⁷ Similarly, the *Republican* was usually quite fair in its treatment of those whom it did oppose. In 1896 William Jennings Bryan and his ideas were considered by the paper as a threat to the nation. Yet, he could not be denied the credit of being "an earnest, sincere and honest man and a patriot who is working with all his might for what he deems the best interests and true glory of his country."⁵⁸

The *Republican* further, unlike many other newspapers of the day, insisted that the press pay its own way. While opposing any increase, it agreed with the existing tariff protecting the print paper industry. In the same way, postal subsidies were shunned. It was felt that each postal class should be self-sustaining and not a burden on the other classes of mail matter. The cost of mailing a bulky newspaper was, as a result, very high, but it seemed the only fair way.⁵⁹

The overall tone of the paper is best characterized as serious. The affairs of the day were considered too important to be often dealt with lightly. It was once lamented that the people seemed "more interested in the big league championship than in the difference of opinion" of the presidential candidates. Humor did shine through occasionally, particularly in the lampooning of men with political ambition. In the 1904 Democratic convention it was noted wryly that "Hawaii is for Hearst with Guam still to be heard from." Four years later it was reported that while "Uncle Joe" Cannon had lost another Chicago district, Danville, his hometown, was still solid.

In most cases the factor which finally determined what position the *Republican* took on a given issue involved a simple moral judgment: what was the right or wrong of the matter. As often as not, the paper appealed to the reader's conscience. In the election of 1900, for example, fought primarily over the burning issue of imperialism, the paper pleaded,

In a country like this, founded on a democratic ideal, governed on constitutional rules, there can be no issue worth a candle's feeble flame compared with those which involve the nation's sense of right or wrong, and which strike deep into the principles which lie at the base of all democratic institutions. To re-elect Mr. McKinley will mean moral apathy. His triumph also will mark popular approval of all the assaults that have been made upon vital principles, without which the whole world would still be crawling under the blight of monarchical absolutism.⁶¹

This sort of approach sometimes led the paper to take positions which put it "on the other side of the street from that on which the majority were traveling."⁶² It also drew some chiding from the competition. The *New York Sun* referred to the *Republican* as "our moralizing contemporary."⁶³ The *New York Tribune* was a bit more incisive when it noted that "up in Springfield, Massachusetts, where the New England conscience turns out anti-imperialism and rifles, they call their democratic paper the *Republican*. And my what a solemn old sheet it is."⁶⁴ Editor Griffin was himself characterized as the "puritan preux chevalier" of journalism.⁶⁵

The *Republican* does, indeed, seem to have embodied in its candor and purity the spirit of ideals of old New England. The old Yankee-patrician conscience which has so often risen to spearhead the cause of morality in the nation's life found an eloquent voice in the pages of this provincial New England journal. Sometimes taking the form of nineteenth century liberalism, sometimes twentieth century progressivism, this puritan conscience was seldom dogmatically conservative. At the same time, it refrained from taking positions or endorsing causes which might threaten the stability or order of a system it thought to be basically sound and moral. Conversely, the paper was most easily moved to anger or even rage when the fundamental morality of the system itself seemed in jeopardy.

NOTES

- 1 Harold Innes, *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto, 1951), p. 74.
- 2 Richard Hooker, *The Story of an Independent Newspaper: One Hundred Years of the Springfield Republican, 1824-1924* (New York, 1924), p. 20 and George S. Merriam, *The Life and Times of Samuel Bowles* (New York, 1885), pp. 1-4.
- 3 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 6.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 36-44.
- 6 Solomon Bulkeley Griffin, *People and Politics Observed by a Massachusetts Editor* (Boston, 1923), p. 195.
- 7 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, pp. 34-39 and Merriam, *Bowles*, pp. 20-25.
- 8 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 55.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 27, 62.
- 10 *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
- 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.
- 12 Only when Lee drove into Pennsylvania did the *Republican* react in panic. At that point Lincoln was urged to take command in the field. (Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, pp. 93-94).
- 13 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 98.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104, 112-113, 114-117.
- 15 When the votes were tallied in 1876, Samuel J. Tilden, the Democratic nominee, had a clear majority of the popular vote and came within one of the majority of the electoral vote. Four states, however, were contested, and two sets of returns were reported to Congress. The commission appointed to resolve the dispute found in favor of Hayes. The result was significantly affected by behind-the-scenes negotiations between southern democrats and the republicans, and many remained convinced throughout Hayes' term that Tilden had been defrauded. For a discussion of the election, see C. Vann Woodward, *Reunion and Reaction* (Boston, 1951), pp. 16-19, 150-165.
- 16 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 48.
- 17 Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 147.
- 18 Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 76. See also Willard G. Bleyer, *Main Currents in the History of American Journalism* (Boston, 1927), Chapter X, "Samuel Bowles and the Springfield Republican", p. 252.
- 19 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, pp. 88, 119, 131. The paper also expanded from four to eight pages during the War.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 131.
- 21 The Louisville *Courier-Journal*, quoted in *Republican*, 7 April 1915.
- 22 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, pp. 156-157 and Griffin, *People and Politics*, p. 36.
- At the death of the last Sam Bowles, control of the *Republican* went to his nephew, Richard Hooker, (Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 202).
- 23 Gorham, New Hampshire *Mountaineer*, quoted in *Republican*, 19 June 1910.
- 24 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 53 and Griffin, *People and Politics*, p. 91.
- 25 Griffin, *People and Politics*, p. 160. It has not been possible to identify the different points of view of the several men on the editorial staff, or the exact nature of the give and take in the editorial room.
- 26 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 50 and Griffin, *People and Politics*, p. 2.
- 27 Boston *Transcript*, quoted in *Republican*, 17 March 1919.
- 28 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 179.
- 29 The Hartford *Courant*, quoted in *Republican*, 20 March 1919.
- 30 *The New York Times*, quoted in *After the Busy Years, 1872 - 1919* (Springfield, Massachusetts, 1919), p. 7.
- 31 Griffin, *People and Politics*, p. 159.
- 32 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 202.
- 33 The Springfield *Republican*, 9 November 1910.
- 34 Griffin, *People and Politics*, p. 21.
- 35 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 178 and Griffin, *People and Politics*, p. 20.
- 36 The *Republican* claimed to be the "cleanest newspaper in the United States." Advertisement in the *Newspaper Annual and Directory* (N.W. Ayer and Sons, Philadelphia, 1910), p. 212. This writer researched several years of the paper before noting the first typographical error.
- 37 *Republican*, 5 January 1919, 21 October 1902, and 25 March 1910.
- 38 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, pp. 187, 190, 192. It was about this time that the *Republican* shifted to a prohibition stand.
- 39 Innes, *Communication*, p. 78.
- 40 *Republican*, 15 August 1915.
- 41 This figure is based on data resulting from a frequency analysis of the *Republican's* editorial topics over the period made by this writer.
- 42 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 60 and *Abstract of the Eleventh Census: 1890*, 2nd Edition, Revised and Enlarged (Washington, 1896), pp. 21, 43.
- 43 *Abstract of the Fourteenth Census: 1920* (Washington, 1923), pp. 34, 54, 93. The 1920 totals were, for Springfield, 129,614, for Chicopee, 36,214, for Holyoke, 60,203, for Hampden County, 300,305.
- 44 *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 109. For Chicopee and Holyoke the proportion was closer to one-third.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 108. Nearly all of the area's Negroes resided in Springfield. Only 46 were listed for Chicopee and Holyoke.
- Ibid.*, pp. 378-381 and 324-325.
- 47 *Industries of Massachusetts, Volume I* (Boston, 1928), pp. 83-85, 125-138.
- 48 Griffin, *People and Politics*, pp. 13-14.
- 49 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 232.
- 50 Bristol, Connecticut *Press*, quoted in *Republican*, 29 April 1914.

- 51 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 197. Griffin adds that the newspaper was a "guardian of public welfare." (Griffin, *People and Politics*, p. 116).
- 52 *Republican*, 28 May 1914.
- 53 *Life*, quoted in *Republican*, 15 April 1915.
- 54 *Republican*, 8 June 1898.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 7 July 1913.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 11 April 1914.
- 57 Hooker, *Independent Newspaper*, p. 208.
- 58 *Republican*, 25 September 1896.
- 59 *Ibid.*, 3 October 1906, 15 February 1911.
- 60 *Ibid.*, 17 August 1924, 1 June 1904, 10 April 1908.
- 61 *Ibid.*, 18 October 1900.
- 62 The *Hartford Courant*, quoted in *After the Busy Years*, p. 9.
- 63 The *New York Sun*, quoted in *Republican*, 20 June 1910.
- 64 The *New York Tribune*, quoted in *Republican*, 26 April 1913.
- 65 The *Boston Transcript*, quoted in *Republican*, 17 March 1919.