

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Edgar H. Miller Jr. entitled "The Knoxville Journal: A Historical Study 1936-1957." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Communications, with a major in Journalism.


Dr. Dorothy Bowles, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:


Dr. Edward Caudill


Dr. George Everett


Dr. Bruce Wheeler

Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor
and Dean of the Graduate School

The Knoxville Journal

**A Historical Study Focusing Mainly
On the Lotspeich Years, 1936-1957**

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science Degree
in Communications
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Edgar H. Miller Jr.
December 1994

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife,
Ghislaine M. Costa Ribeiro Miller,
without whose patience, love and understanding
this project and so many others
during our 36 years together
would not have been possible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My first professor when I returned to college full time after a hiatus of thirty-one years was Dr. Dorothy Bowles. In that first course on media law and in several others over the past three years, I came to have the highest regard for her as a teacher who always goes the extra mile for her students, a dedicated professional in the field of journalism, and a person of the highest character. I am particularly grateful that Dr. Bowles agreed to continue as chair of my committee despite the personal hardship of doing so in a semester when she was on leave from the University.

I am also grateful to the other members of my committee, Dr. Ed Caudill, whose course on History and Historiography of Communications inspired me to attempt a work of this type; Dr. George Everett, whose counsel and advice have been of enormous value; and Dr. Bruce Wheeler, whose enthusiasm for this project gave me an important impetus at a critical moment early on. I also appreciate the assistance of Dr. Herbert Howard who guided me through the proposal process and helped me on the radio chapter.

And of course none of this would never have happened save for Dr. James Crook, head of the School of Journalism, who encouraged me to return to school after so many years and helped make my re-entry as smooth and painless as possible.

The list of people whose cooperation and assistance helped make this work possible is enormous and I could never adequately thank them all. I am especially grateful to all those who agreed to be interviewed and who patiently answered my unending questions and probing. They are cited in the text and their names are listed in the bibliography.

Others whose help was invaluable include: Frank Trexler, managing editor of the *Daily Times* of Maryville, Tennessee, who allowed me free access to the old *Journal* files now in the possession of the *Daily Times*; Vince Vawter, managing editor of the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, who allowed me access to the *News-Sentinel* morgue; Charles Mason, the former publisher of the *Journal*; Arthur Seymour Jr. of the law firm Frantz, McConnell and Seymour, and his patient paralegal Lori Gibson; Joe Capillo, managing editor of the *Southbridge Evening News* in Massachusetts; Susan Bartucci, membership director of the Audit Bureau of Circulation; Steve Cotham, head of the McClung Historical Collection of the Lawson McGhee Library; Al Roberts, former *Journal* photographer, whose personal files provided many of the pictures in Appendix B; Fred and Linda Fields, son and daughter-in-law of the late Pat Fields.

Dealing with a bureaucracy of a great university always brings headaches. However, one shining spot in bureaucratic process of getting a thesis approved at the University of Tennessee is Ann Lacava whose professional competence and cheerful demeanor make her a joy to work with.

It is inevitable that I will have forgotten some names, but to all who helped me in this project I am extremely grateful.

ABSTRACT

This study, relying largely on personal, in-depth interviews with people who worked there, examines the history of the *Knoxville Journal* from its founding in 1885 to its death in 1991, with special emphasis on the years from 1936, when the morning newspaper was bought by businessman Roy N. Lotspeich, to 1957, when Lotspeich's widow, then serving as publisher, entered into a joint operating agreement with the afternoon *Knoxville News-Sentinel*. The *Journal* had been Knoxville's leading newspaper for many years. It fell on hard times during the Great Depression and lost its lead in advertising lineage. In 1936, it still held a small lead in circulation, but although the *Journal* grew under Lotspeich's ownership, it was quickly outpaced by its afternoon competitor.

This study attempted to look at some of the reasons this home-owned newspaper, in what was generally considered the more advantageous morning field, was unable to regain its lead in advertising and lost its dominant position in circulation.

While a lack of documentary financial evidence precluded any firm conclusion, court records and anecdotal evidence suggest that the *Journal's* principal problem throughout the period was a chronic lack of operating capital.

The study also looks at the personalities involved with the *Journal*, and to a lesser degree the *News-Sentinel*, during these years.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background

In 1936, Roy N. Lotspeich, a textile mill owner with no experience in the newspaper business, bought the *Knoxville Journal*, a morning newspaper that had been founded in 1885 and which claimed to be the direct descendant of the fabled Parson William Brownlow's *Knoxville Whig*, started in 1839. The *Journal* had fallen on hard times during the Great Depression and was in the hands of a New Orleans bank that had held about \$450,000 in notes on the paper, the amount for which it was sold.

At the time, the *Journal* had more circulation than the only other daily newspaper in Knoxville, the Scripps-Howard-owned *News-Sentinel*, but it had lost its lead in advertising lineage during the early days of its financial difficulties. Over the next two decades, even though the *Journal* grew along with the region's population, it was far outdistanced by its chain-owned competitor. And, while it had some profitable years, the newspaper had perennial cash flow problems and was in a constant struggle to stay afloat. When Lotspeich died in 1951, the paper's fortunes sagged even more. A bitter legal dispute among the heirs further exacerbated the situation until October 1957 when, in terse announcements on their respective Sunday front pages, the two competing newspapers announced they were combining everything but their editorial operations — production, printing, advertising, circulation and business. The *News-Sentinel* would be the dominant partner and the *Journal* would cease publishing on

Sunday. The joint operating agreement was a shock to the staff and the community.

A year after he bought the paper, Lotspeich brought in Guy L. Smith Jr. as editor. From that moment, it was Smith's personality, not Lotspeich's, that dominated the *Journal*. Smith, using the newspaper as his base and his tool, became the state's most powerful Republican leader. He was respected, even loved, by his friends and political allies, feared and hated by his enemies and political foes. He was almost universally loved by those who worked under him on the *Journal*. A diehard conservative who cheered the likes of Joseph McCarthy during the Communist witch hunts in the early days of the Cold War, Smith spearheaded many progressive causes, the most notable of which was his successful crusade through the newspaper and later the federal courts to force the state legislature to reapportion itself through the U.S. Supreme Court's famous "one man, one vote" decision.

This thesis looks at the history of the *Journal* from its founding in 1885 to its death in 1991, but it primarily is a study of those turbulent years from 1936, when Roy N. Lotspeich stepped from relative obscurity to buy the *Journal*, until 1957, when his heirs made a pact that created a newspaper monopoly in Knoxville in all but the editorial departments.

Statement of Purpose

The thesis examines some of the possible reasons behind the *Journal's* relative decline as Knoxville's leading newspaper. Above all, it looks at the personalities of those involved in running the *Journal* in those years: Roy Lotspeich, the Greene

County shoe salesman whose wife's money brought him to power and prominence in Knoxville's business and social community; Guy Smith, the patrician politician-editor whose vitriolic editorials made him a worthy successor of the feisty Parson Brownlow; associate editor Steve Humphrey, a Kansas-born newspaperman who kept the *Journal's* newsroom running through the troubled times; and the men and women — many of them outstanding newspaper people but all of them “characters” — who populated the *Journal's* zany newsroom.

Questions

The primary question this thesis set out to answer was why the *Journal*, a morning paper under local ownership and seemingly competent business and editorial management, lost its position as the leading newspaper of East Tennessee. Since “why” questions are difficult to answer in historical research, the author sought instead to identify some of the factors leading to the *Journal's* loss of dominance in Knoxville and East Tennessee during the Lotspeich years.

At the outset of this study, the author was convinced that the *Journal's* management, particularly editor Smith, had failed to perceive the changing demographics of the region, remaining a virulently Republican newspaper in an area that was no longer as solidly Republican as it had been. However, even though hoped for financial records were not found, it seems obvious from court records and the anecdotal evidence collected that the *Journal's* problems over the years came primarily from a lack of sufficient operating capital that would have permitted it to launch and

pursue vigorous circulation and advertising campaigns, and expand its news hole and news coverage.

Literature Review

Nothing, as far as could be determined, has been written exclusively about the *Knoxville Journal*. Two seminal works on newspapering in Knoxville proved most helpful in understanding the history and background of the *Journal* in particular and the press in Knoxville in general.

The first of these is Steve Humphrey's account of the life and times of Parson William Gannaway Brownlow and his *Knoxville Whig*, the newspaper from which the *Journal* dated its existence. That book, "That D----d Brownlow,"¹ deals thoroughly with Brownlow and the *Whig*. It introduces Captain William Rule, founder of the *Journal*. Humphrey, long-time associate editor of the *Journal* and one of East Tennessee's finest newspapermen (he disdained the label "journalist"), had planned a subsequent work that would chronicle the history of the *Journal*. However, failing health prevented him from carrying out that task.

The other work on Knoxville newspapers is the 1933 master's thesis by Clara Estelle Masterson, "A History of Knoxville Journalism." Masterson methodically traced Knoxville's newspapers from the *Knoxville Gazette*, started in Rogersville 1791, the year before Knoxville became a city, through 1933 when the daily field had narrowed to the *Journal* in the morning and the *News-Sentinel* in the afternoon.

¹Appalachian Consortium Press, Boone, N.C., 1978.

According to her thesis, Knoxville had fifty-six newspapers (including general circulation weeklies) in the 141-year period.

The history of a newspaper is inextricably woven into the fabric of the community it serves. To write the history of the *Journal* it was necessary to understand something of the history of the city and the area. Perhaps the most important history of the city up to 1900 is the *Standard History of Knoxville, Tennessee*,² by Captain William Rule, founder of the *Journal* in 1885 and its editor until his death in 1928. This work, which is not in general circulation, provided the foundation for much of the work done by both Humphrey and Masterson.

Another helpful book in understanding Knoxville is Betsey Beeler Creekmore's *Knoxville*.³ Mrs. Creekmore gives a very readable if somewhat romanticized history of Knoxville from its earliest times. She includes a great deal of interesting material on the families that founded the city and those that played important roles in its subsequent development. It is must reading for anyone interested in the history of the area. However, she makes no claim that her book is bona fide history, "except in the sense that history is no more and no less than the story of people and what happened to them." And she admits that she is marking "the sunny hours" of the city's past, leaving its shortcomings and problems for others.

And of course, no reading of the history of Knoxville would be complete

²Lewis Publishing Co., Chicago, 1900.

³University of Tennessee Press, 1958.

without *The French Broad-Holston Country: A History of Knox County, Tennessee*,⁴ and *Heart of the Valley, A History of Knoxville, Tennessee*.⁵

June Adamson's chapter on "The Communications Media" in *Heart of the Valley* provides a good synopsis of Knoxville media from the earliest times to the date of the publication. And the other chapters in both books offered a wealth of background information.

More specific to the needs of the study was *Knoxville, Tennessee, Continuity and Change in an Appalachian City*, by Michael J. McDonald and William Bruce Wheeler.⁶ This is a much more critically serious history of Knoxville, starting in the post Civil War period when Knoxville began to grow into an industrial city.

A glimpse at how the *Journal* saw itself in the period was found in the "1941-42 Voluntary Classified Business Directory" published by the *Journal*. It offers a brief history of the area, brief articles on the University of Tennessee and TVA, and a longer piece on the *Journal* itself. The article describes in layman's terms the operation of the newsroom and the production process of putting out the newspaper.

William J. MacArthur Jr.'s *Knoxville: Crossroads of the New South*, billed as "a pictorial and entertaining commentary on the growth and development of Knoxville, Tennessee," is one of the few works that offered direct comment on the role of Knoxville's two major 20th century newspapers in the history of the city.

⁴Rothrock, Mary U., editor, East Tennessee Historical Society, Knoxville, 1946.

⁵Lucile Deaderick, editor, The East Tennessee Historical Society, 1976.

⁶University of Tennessee Press, 1983.

John Dean Minton's *The New Deal in Tennessee 1932-1938*⁷ helps explain the changing demographics, the growth of the labor movement and the shift of attitude from fierce independence to acceptance of governmental responsibility for the welfare of its citizens.

*These are Our Voices, The Story of Oak Ridge 1942-1970*⁸ also provides some insight into the changes that were occurring in and around Knoxville in the period in question, as does North Callahan's *TVA: Bridge Over Troubled Waters*.⁹

Two books that provide some political perspective are Shirley Chapman's *Democrats Challenge Traditional Republicanism in Upper East Tennessee*¹⁰ and William R. Majors' *Change and Continuity, Tennessee Politics Since the Civil War*.¹¹

It was hoped a dissertation, "Effects of Positive Versus Negative News on Newspaper Advertising Response," by Martha Rogers¹² might also shed some light on the effects of a newspaper's political stance on advertising. Unfortunately, it did not, and no other studies along this line were found.

A number of unrelated theses and dissertations, while having no direct bearing on the *Knoxville Journal*, were helpful in providing ideas about how other researchers

⁷Garland Publishing, New York, 1979.

⁸Overholt, James, editor, Children's Museum of Oak Ridge, 1987.

⁹A.S. Barnes, 1980.

¹⁰Research Advisory Council, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, 1977.

¹¹Mercer University Press, Macon, Ga., 1986.

¹²University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1983.

have gone about such projects. While newspaper history is not the most popular topic of graduate research in journalism schools, an abundance of material exists. Some of the theses and dissertations consulted included:

"An Historical Analysis of the Morristown (Tennessee) *Citizen Tribune*: 1966-1970," by Sheridan Clinton Barker.¹³ This is a thorough look at history of the *Citizen Tribune*, a paper started in Morristown to compete with the long-established *Daily Gazette-Mail*. The author had good sources, including access to the C-T's business records.

"The Ochs Family In Knoxville, Tennessee," by Susan Gilbert Barnes.¹⁴

"13-30 Corporation: A Case Study in Innovative Magazine Publishing," by Edward Earl Cook.¹⁵

"Knoxville's Rosies: The Impact of World War II on Women Production Workers of Knoxville, Tennessee," Patricia Earle Brake Howard.¹⁶

"A History of The Hattiesburg American," By Patt Foster Roberson.¹⁷

"Eugene Cervi and Cervi's Rocky Mountain Journal, A Study of Post-World War II Colorado," by Margaret Passoth Picher.¹⁸

¹³University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1973.

¹⁴University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1980.

¹⁵University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1983.

¹⁶University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1988.

¹⁷University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, 1985.

¹⁸University of Denver, 1986.

"A Crusading Newspaper: The Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette Under William E. Chilton III," by Fran McEwen.¹⁹

"Politics, Polemics and Murder: A History of the San Augustine Red-Lander 1838-1847," by Gary Borders.²⁰

One article that has been particularly helpful in this research is Tim A. Pilgrim's "Newspapers as Natural Monopolies, Some Historical Considerations" in a 1992 edition of *Journalism History*. The *Journal* would appear to fit squarely within the natural monopoly theory.

Methodology

The methodology of this research consisted mainly in conducting in-depth, open-ended interviews with a variety of people who had some professional, political or familial connection with the two Knoxville newspapers and the people who ran them during the period under study. Whenever possible, the recollections of those interviewed were supported by articles from the newspapers and other documents that were available.

Demographic and voting information as well as advertising and circulation figures for the two newspapers during the period were examined. Circulation figures were obtained from Audit Bureau of Circulations reports. Advertising figures came from reports published in *Editor & Publisher* magazine.

¹⁹Ohio University, Athens, 1989.

²⁰University of Texas, Austin, 1987.

An informal comparison was conducted of the news and editorial positions of the *Journal* and the *News-Sentinel*. This primarily consisted of an examination of the *Journal's* feud with Mayor George Dempster and the colorful editorial battle between the two papers during the 1955 municipal election. The newspapers themselves were the primary source.

Published herein for the first time is the original 1957 joint operating agreement between the two Knoxville newspapers. A major source of information on the business operations of the *Journal* was the transcript of the 1955-57 Chancery Court case, *Carter vs. Lotspeich*, in which the Lotspeich heirs battled for control of the *Journal*. Finally, the author was provided a few unpublished personal documents by the sons of Guy Smith and Steve Humphrey for inclusion in this study.

Much of the information on George Dempster and his feud with Guy Smith came from boxes of scrapbooks of newspaper clippings held in basement files at the McClung Historical Collection of the Lawson McGhee Library. The material from Captain William Rule's history of Knoxville came from the non-circulating copy of the book in the Hoskins Special Collections Library of the University of Tennessee. Other newspaper files, clippings and pictures were found in the *Journal's* old morgue, as newspaper archives were once called. The *Journal* morgue is now in the hands of the *Daily Times* of Maryville. Material also was obtained in the morgue of the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*.

CHAPTER TWO

Captain William Rule: Grand old man of Knoxville newspapering

The Early Days

When Captain William Rule and Ohio businessman Samuel Marfield founded the *Knoxville Journal* in 1885, they ignored much of the conventional newspaper wisdom of the time.

While other publications were disavowing party affiliation and declaring themselves independent, the *Journal* was avowedly partisan. At a time when the nation was turning from the “bloody shirt” of the post-Civil War period, with the first Democratic president elected since the war’s end about to take office, the *Journal* was staunchly Republican.

While evening papers were booming in other cities, the *Journal* entered the morning field against formidable competition. While other papers were turning to the brand of sensationalism that later would be called “yellow journalism,” the owners of the *Journal* opted to publish a serious newspaper.

The founders lacked the coveted Associated Press franchise to provide national and international news by telegraph.

The *Journal*’s first issue came out February 16, 1885, just days before Democrat Grover Cleveland was inaugurated as America’s twenty-second president.

Knoxville, like the rest of the United States, was still recovering from the late war. Its population was growing and would reach nearly 33,000 by the end of the

century. Much of the growth came from an influx of rural whites and blacks seeking employment.²¹

The 1880s also witnessed Knoxville's greatest manufacturing boom to that time.

Between 1880 and 1887 alone, ninety-seven new factories were built. In addition to iron mills and machine shops that processed iron into a multitude of finished products, cloth mills and furniture factories sprang up and prospered. And once the cloth mills came to Knoxville, it was only natural that a thriving apparel industry would follow.²²

Six banks were founded between 1870 and 1890. The search for firewood during the war and in the post-war years had virtually denuded the area of trees, and homes and businesses had turned to coal, which was being found and mined in great abundance in East Tennessee. The lush hardwood forests that covered the nearby hills fueled a boom in logging and made Knoxville a lumber trading center.

Captain Rule

William Rule, who would be associated intimately with the *Journal* until his death in 1928, was a Knox County native, born in a log cabin in Stock Creek Valley seven miles from Knoxville on May 10, 1839. He was the oldest son of Frederick and Sarah Elizabeth Brakebill Rule. Rule's grandfather moved from Virginia to the Stock Creek area after the War of 1812.²³

²¹McDonald, Michael J., and Bruce Wheeler, *Knoxville, Tennessee: Continuity and Change in an Appalachian City*, University of Tennessee Press, 1983, 23-24.

²²Ibid. 21-22.

²³The *Knoxville Journal*, July 27, 1928, p.8.

He was educated in public schools. He was nineteen when he married Lucy Ann Maxey on October 28, 1858, and he and his wife moved to Knoxville where William and a cousin, James Rule, opened a store on State Street directly behind Staub's Theater (later the Lyric). Today, a high-rise bank building, Plaza Tower, occupies the entire block. In November 1860, at age twenty-one, Rule went to work for the *Knoxville Whig*, published by "Parson" William G. Brownlow.

"I just drifted to the newspaper profession," he was quoted in the *Journal* years later as saying. "But once I got in, I didn't have any more time for drifting. I did everything there was to do in getting out the first paper I worked for, from writing the news to wrapping the printed copies, addressing them and taking them to the post office to mail."²⁴

After the start of the Civil War, Confederate troops occupied Knoxville. Brownlow, an outspoken defender of the Union, was forced to shut down the *Whig* and go into hiding in Sevier County. Rule was chosen for the perilous mission of notifying Brownlow that the Confederates were burning railroad bridges throughout East Tennessee. The city was under martial law and the young newspaperman had no pass to leave town. He managed to get across the Tennessee River where a Union sympathizer had a horse waiting for him. As he rode through Sevier County he encountered along the way mountaineers with squirrel rifles. They had heard the Rebels were after Brownlow, who had the sympathy and support of the people in the county. When Rule identified himself and his mission, he was allowed to pass. He

²⁴Ibid.

found Brownlow hiding in the home of a friend in Wears Valley.

Rule joined the Union Army in September 1862 as a private in Company A, Sixth Tennessee Infantry. He served mainly in Middle Tennessee and participated in General Sherman's famous "march to the sea." He was mustered out as a captain on April 27, 1865.²⁵

Rule founds the Chronicle

After the war, he returned to Knoxville and worked as a correspondent for Nashville, Memphis and Cincinnati newspapers, earning \$20 a week before rejoining Brownlow as city editor of the *Whig*, which by now had become a daily.²⁶ He remained there until the paper was sold. In 1870, Rule and H.G. Tarwater established the *Knoxville Chronicle*. Rule, writing in his "Standard History of Knoxville, Tennessee," describes the founding of the *Chronicle*:

The *Knoxville Whig* having changed its politics under its changed management, there was no Republican paper in Knoxville and as an overwhelming majority of the voters of Knox County and East Tennessee were Republicans, William Rule and Henry C. Tarwater determined in the year 1870 to establish a Republican weekly newspaper in the city. An order was made for the necessary material and a press was bought. The old building on South Gay Street, opposite the Court House, which had been the office of the *Knoxville Whig* when it was suspended in October 1861, was secured as the office of publication. The new venture was called the *Chronicle* and it met with much favor from the beginning.²⁷

²⁵The *Knoxville Journal*, July 27, 1928, biographical sketch by J.A. Dunn.

²⁶Masterson, Clara Estelle, "A History of Knoxville Journalism," Master's thesis, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, 1933, 184.

²⁷Rule, William, *Standard History of Knoxville, Tennessee*, Lewis Publishing Co., Chicago, 1900, quoted by Clara Estelle Masterson, op.cit.

The *Chronicle* came out as a weekly on April 6, 1870, and became a daily a few weeks later. A.J. Ricks bought out Tarwater's interest in the *Chronicle*. In the meantime, the Democratic owners had closed the *Whig* in 1871. Brownlow, on completion of his term in the U.S. Senate, returned to Knoxville, and revived the *Whig* in 1875. Later that year, Ricks sold his interest in the *Chronicle* to Brownlow. Later Rule bought a half interest in the *Whig* and the papers were combined and published under the name, the *Knoxville Whig and Chronicle*, using the *Whig's* motto, "Cry Aloud and Spare Not." Parson Brownlow was the editor of the consolidated paper until his death in April 1877. The paper was sold in November 1882 to a "stock company."

Printer's devil Adolph Ochs

One of Rule's employees at the *Chronicle* was Adolph Ochs, a printer's devil who later purchased the *Chattanooga Times* and later still the *New York Times* to become one of the nation's foremost newspaper publishers.

In a letter of recommendation, Rule noted that Ochs was "honest, zealous, reliable and trustworthy." He added, "He is endowed with an intellect capable of reaching the highest point in mental achievement."

In the interim between the sale of the *Chronicle* and founding of the *Journal*, Rule was associated with Ogden Brothers book-sellers and stationers on Gay Street.

Birth of the Journal

Here is Rule's account of the founding of the *Journal*:

In December 1884, William Rule and Samuel Marfield, then a citizen of Circleville, Ohio, determined to publish a daily and weekly paper to be called *The Knoxville Journal*. Being denied the Associated Press news service, arrangements were made with W.P. Phillips, then with the United Press,²⁸ and Mr. Somerville, manager of the press department of the Western Union Telegraph Company, by which a news service was obtained. The service was to be edited and sent out from the Washington office of the United Press... . The first issue appeared on the twenty-sixth day of February 1885. A little later, on the fourth day of March 1885, when Grover Cleveland was inaugurated for the first time as president, its proprietors convinced the public that the *Journal* was going to be a newspaper. Mr. Marfield took charge of the business and Mr. Rule of the editorial department of the paper.²⁹

Rule, in a "Salutatory to the Public" in the first issue of the paper, pledged to give patrons "the very best newspaper that can be made for the money they are able to spend in its publication."

He said it would furnish "the latest news in a concise, readable form and with strict accuracy," adding, "We are convinced that the newspaper reader of the period is more concerned in knowing what is going on in the world than in reading the opinions of the editor, especially on subjects worn threadbare by oft-repeated discussions. Hence, while we shall not hesitate to express in plain terms our own convictions on topics of public interest, we shall prefer to give our readers facts and events, leaving

²⁸This was not the United Press that was established as United Press Associations in 1907 and later became United Press International after the merger with International News Service in 1958. Walter Polk Phillips, one of the incorporators of this early United Press, was a former Associated Press employee. The agency competed vigorously against the older AP for several years but in 1897 it went into bankruptcy and finally closed on April 8.

²⁹Rule, op. cit., 334-335.

them free to reason out their own conclusions in their own way.”

The *Journal*, he said, “will be a Republican newspaper in the broadest and highest sense, not a promoter of or leader of faction, but an advocate and defender of principles.” After praising the record of the Republican Party, he said: “But while our support of the Republican Party shall be pronounced and fearless, we shall never wear the yoke of servile partisanship, nor will we be guilty of a craven neutrality.”

In a phrase that would later be echoed by Adolph Ochs who said after taking over the *New York Times* he would publish a newspaper “in language that is parliamentary in good society,”³⁰ Rule pledged that his newspaper “may be taken into the family circle and read around the fireside without blush, explanation or apology.”

Rule’s style of newspapering caught on. Just over a year later, on April 25, 1886, the *Journal* bragged in print:

With this issue the *Journal* casts off the old garb of its youth and appears in the full dress maturity as an eight-page paper. The demands which the enterprising business houses of Knoxville have made upon our columns for some time have been so great that the amount of space left for regular reading matter has been so much curtailed that our change of form and enlargement have become a necessity. In fact, for some days past we have been compelled to withhold advertising for the reason that we had no place left where we could insert it. Our enlargement is not an advertising dodge by which we could sound our own praises and make great boasting, but a plain business necessity — to us a very gratifying one for it is the best evidence of the prosperity of the *Journal* which could be adduced.

The article claimed the *Journal* had the most advertising and largest circulation of “any paper ever published in this city.” The article also bragged on the *Journal*’s

³⁰Ochs, Adolph S., “Business Announcement,” the *New York Times*, August 19, 1896, editorial page.

news coverage, saying that "seldom indeed has anything of interest happened in or near Knoxville, a full account of which cannot be found in the *Journal* of the following morning." And it emphasized that the *Journal* "does not deal in idle sensation, but seeks always to gain actual news. In fact, it intends to be reliable always." The latter comment was a jab at the sensationalist trends becoming more and more the vogue in the American press.

Sensational journalism, always present to some degree in the American press, was coming into its own in New York and other major cities in the late 1800s, led by Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*. It reached its peak in the "Yellow Journalism" that characterized many of the nation's newspapers by the end of the century.

'Gilded Age' journalism

Some writers have called the era into which the *Journal* was born "the Gilded Age" in America.

Gilded Age journalism was born in Gilded Age America, an America where population increased dramatically. In these few decades the United States became industrially mature, producing many factories, trusts and large middle and working classes. America moved toward the cities, developing an urban culture and serious urban problems. All of these significant trends exerted a deep influence on the press. ...

Reaching out to many segments of the public, even to illiterate immigrants, the new, imaginative, publishers introduced new and lively types of news, written in a brighter, faster-moving style. They presented colorful human-interest features, hard-hitting editorials. Pictures were used lavishly. Format changed radically from pre-Civil War appearance. Two, three and even eight-column banner headlines spread the news across the front page.³¹

³¹Kobre, Sidney, *The Yellow Press and Gilded Age Journalism*, Florida State University, 1964, 1.

The development of the telegraphic system in the United States had revolutionized the delivery of news from remote locations. The post-war boom also brought with it significant advances in the production of newspapers.

As part of the industrial revolution of the late 19th century, achievements in printing included the typesetting machine, faster presses, stereotyping, color printing, dry mats, electrotyping, and photoengraving. Ottmar Mergenthaler's Linotype machine first cast a line of type for newspaper use in 1886 in the New York Tribune plant. The timesaving performance of the Linotype helped the large evening dailies, which were under pressure to cover more news close to deadline time.³²

The *Journal's* birth gave Knoxville three morning newspapers, the *Tribune* and the *Chronicle* being the other two, and engendered fierce competition for news, circulation and advertising. The *Daily Chronicle* might have been expected to have an edge because, as it bragged in all-caps type above the nameplate on Page 1, it was "the only Knoxville paper taking the full Associated Press dispatches."

The Associated Press, formed by six New York publishers in 1848 as a news-gathering cooperative, had spread across the country and held a virtual monopoly in distribution of telegraphic news to its member newspapers. It reportedly had agreements with Western Union for preferred treatment and rates for its members and its franchise arrangements with members prevented competing newspapers from getting the AP service. A newspaper without AP service was at a distinct disadvantage in providing a full telegraphic report, and newspapers were bought and sold for their AP franchise.

³²Emery, Edwin, and Michael Emery, *The Press And America*, Prentice-Hall Inc., 4th edition, 1978, 234.

However, the AP advantage did not help the *Chronicle* in its battle with the upstart *Journal* under Captain Rule. By 1886, the *Daily Chronicle* was in serious financial trouble. A general creditors' bill was filed against the ailing paper and on June 4 the *Chronicle* announced to its readers that a receiver had been appointed by the court to run the paper. The editorial on Page 4 of the paper said the receiver, John C. Houk, was "a gentleman thoroughly and especially acceptable to the present management of the paper."

Merger of the Journal and Chronicle

While John C. Houk was acceptable to the *Chronicle* as a receiver, the newspaper held no such good feelings about the man who forced it into receivership in the first place. In an editorial under the headlines, "The *Chronicle*, The Situation After Yesterday's Engagement. No Dead and Only a Few Legal Cripples Left on the Battlefield," the *Chronicle* vented its spleen against being "forced into unnecessary and reckless bankruptcy proceedings by the clamorous demands of General R.N. Hood for a small claim in which he was amply secured to the extent of five times over the actual amount of his claim against the company as such."

The *Chronicle* also admitted that at that moment "there was not enough paper in the house to get out another issue." Despite their financial woes, the editorial said, "The owners of the *Chronicle* are not a lot of children, incapable of managing their own business. They were well acquainted with its condition and had it become at any time hopelessly insolvent, as Hood states in his bill, both to save themselves from

entire ruin and to protect their creditors they would have gone into voluntary liquidation. But such is not now and never has been the case. The past year has been a hard one with all, and newspapers — always the first to feel the stringency of hard times — have suffered everywhere, and in Knoxville there has been no exception to the rule. Still, for sometime past the *Chronicle* company's business has been improving and its prospects have become more favorable than at any time in two years."

The editorial pledged that the paper would continue to be run by those who "cannot be bribed, wheedled or crushed by a lot of scoundrelly conspirators whose evil deeds of the past and whose vicious plans of future plunder are menaced by a fearless free press."

The writer of the unsigned editorial then named some of the "scoundrelly conspirators":

Jim-crow lawyers like Bob Hood and Henry Cooper, bottled poke-juice financiers like Sanford, "strictly business enterprises" like the *Knoxville Journal* crowd, swallow-tailed "God-and-morality Republicans" like Thornburg and Rule and Cooper who wrote those nice letters to Senator Logan; reptiles like Gaines the commercial agent — all of this crowd are collectively and severally defied to do their utmost and their meanest, and still we shall live.³³

Its defiant tone notwithstanding, the *Chronicle* was put on the block and sold at public auction to one of its creditors who, after running it a short time, sold it "with its good will and franchises" to Rule and Marfield, proprietors of the *Knoxville Journal*. The *Chronicle* thus ceased to exist. The *Journal*, in acquiring the *Chronicle*,

³³The *Chronicle*, June 5, 1886, p.4.

obtained the AP franchise, which it now shared with its morning competition, the *Tribune*.

The *Journal* announced the acquisition on its editorial page in its edition of Sunday, September 5, 1886:

At 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon a trade was consummated under which the *Knoxville Chronicle* newspaper and job office passes into the hands of the proprietors of the *Journal*. ... Under the terms of the contract, all subscribers to the *Daily Chronicle* who have paid for that paper will hereafter receive the *Daily Journal*, during the time for which they subscribed. The weekly list will be transferred to the *National Review* at Nashville.

The *Journal* is now in a position to give its patrons the best newspaper ever published in East Tennessee, and that is what it proposes to do. ...

The consolidation of the *Chronicle* with the *Journal* will not affect its political policy. As in the past, the *Journal* will continue to uphold the principles and policies of the Republican Party. It will do this boldly, but at the same time respectfully. While doing this, it will reserve the right to criticize men and measures whatever be their origin or to whatever party they may belong.

The merger left the *Journal*, in Captain Rule's words, as "the only daily Republican paper published in the eleven states that seceded and joined the Southern Confederacy."³⁴

The Sentinel joins the fray

With the *Journal* and the *Tribune* battling head-to-head in the morning field, John T. Hearne, a newspaperman from Kentucky, started the *Knoxville Sentinel* as a Democratic afternoon daily in December 1886. Hearne, according to Captain Rule's

³⁴Rule, op.cit. 335.

history, brought the first web press to Knoxville with which to start his afternoon contender.³⁵

In the mid 1890s, the Sentinel Company bought the *Knoxville Tribune* and published both the morning and afternoon papers from the same office. Typesetting for both papers also was done in the *Sentinel*'s composing room. On June 6, 1894, the *Sentinel* publishers announced in the paper's columns that they had placed a Mergenthaler Linotype machine in the office and that the public would be allowed to examine the machine as soon as printers became proficient in their use. It was the first Linotype used in Knoxville.³⁶

The *Sentinel* continued to thrive in the afternoon field and eventually merged in 1928 with the *News*, founded by the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain as an afternoon paper in 1921, to become the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, today the only daily newspaper publishing in Knoxville.

The Journal and Tribune

The *Tribune* was founded on March 18, 1876, as a weekly. Politically it was Democratic. The following year it changed hands and became a daily. The newspaper changed hands four times over the years until it was bought in mid-1895 by J.B. Pound and R.H. Hart, owners of the *Sentinel*. The papers were across the street from

³⁵Rule, op.cit., 337.

³⁶Masterson, op.cit., 156.

each other in the 700 block of Gay Street. Both were printed in the *Sentinel* office.³⁷

The *Tribune* claimed direct ancestry to the *Register*, an early Knoxville paper established on July 16, 1816, by F.S. Heiskell and Hugh Brown.³⁸ That ancestry is dubious, however, because it is based solely on the connection of one of its founders, John H. Fleming, as editor for a brief time of the *Register*.

Knoxville businessman E.J. Sanford bought the *Journal* at public sale June 30, 1898. The same day, Rule asserts in his history, Sanford bought the *Tribune* from J.B. Pound and consolidated the two papers as the *Journal and Tribune*. A.F. Sanford, who was publisher of the combined paper, indicates in a reflection published in the *Journal* on April 26, 1936, that his father was associated with the *Journal* before that. He wrote:

The old *Journal*, a Republican paper under the editorship of Captain William Rule, and the old *Tribune*, a Democratic paper, were consolidated July 1, 1896. My father, the late E.J. Sanford, and some associates had been struggling along *for several years* [emphasis added] trying to keep the old *Journal* going ...

Alfred Sanford noted that J.B. Pound was having similar difficulties keeping the *Tribune* afloat, despite the economies of publishing it jointly with the *Sentinel*. "The real trouble was that there was not room for two morning papers to live profitably in a town the size Knoxville was in those days," he concluded.³⁹

According to Sanford, his father paid \$20,000 for the name, good will,

³⁷Masterson, op.cit., 120, 156.

³⁸The *Tribune*, August 16, 1896, quoted by Masterson, op.cit., 122.

³⁹The *Knoxville Journal*, April 26, 1936, p.6E.

subscription list etc. of the old *Tribune*.

The two papers had held the AP franchise jointly in the morning field. The news cooperative gave the combined paper an exclusive franchise.

The paper was published under the name, the *Journal and Tribune*, until 1925 when the word "Tribune" was dropped and the name of the city added to make it the *Knoxville Journal*.

The Sanford Era

The Sanfords opened a new era at the *Journal*. Young Sanford, whose father had made his fortune in the wholesale drug business, admitted that he knew nothing about the newspaper business when he was named publisher:

I don't know how my father had the nerve to pick me out as being able to handle this job at that time as I did not know the first thing about the newspaper business.

Up until then my business experience had consisted of a course of floor-sweeping, window-washing and later promotion to shipping clerk in the old wholesale drug house of Sanford, Chamberlain and Albers, and later I was switched over by my father to the management of the Knoxville Brick Co., in which he and several other Knoxville men were interested, which job I held for two or three years.⁴⁰

Sanford said, "Perhaps I was like the boy who was thrown into the pond and told that he had to swim whether he knew how or not if he wanted to get out. And with the help of Sam Slover, who stayed with the organization for sometime after the consolidation, we did manage to swim out."

But profitability did not come quickly, despite the expectations of the elder

⁴⁰Ibid.

Sanford for the consolidation. Again in the words of Alfred Sanford in the 1936

Journal article:

My father had rather expected when the papers were consolidated that it would start out immediately making some money on account of the increased business and reduction of overhead etc., but after weeding out all of the duplicate subscriptions of the *Journal* and *Tribune*, we found ourselves with only about 6,000 circulation, and naturally we added a few extra expenses, so for a year or two we either ran a little in the red or managed to make a very little money. After the third or fourth year, as I recall it, we were showing some profit; enough, I am glad to say, to make my father feel before his death in 1902 that his investment had not been a bad one.

In 1902, the *Journal* moved from 703-705 Gay Street to a new building at 614 Gay Street, the building later occupied by the S&W Cafeteria, and installed a new press, doubling its press capacity to 16 pages. It used that press until 1925, when it again doubled its capacity to thirty-two pages.

Captain Rule continued as editor under the Sanfords. Although the title "managing editor" was not used in those days, the man whose job corresponded to that position was a former baseball umpire named George Denny, described later by a veteran proofreader as "that prince of good fellows." As an umpire for the Knoxville Reds, Sanford recalled, Denny "was most efficient and always cool and collected, and when a man was 'out' under George's decision, he always stayed out: and I do not recall ever seeing anybody trying to argue with him about any of his decisions." As an editor:

He was an impartial newspaperman, believed in printing only the uncolored news, and nobody could bluff him or influence him as to the publication or omission of legitimate news items. Later on, when I learned more about managing editors, that title was given to him which he held

until the time of his death.⁴¹

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Knoxville had shed many of its characteristics as a brawling frontier town, but it was still a long way from becoming a cosmopolitan city. A story told by Sanford illustrates life in the city at that time. He began by describing *Journal* employee John Black. "Nature had been unkind to John when it distributed physical beauty, as it gave him a small body and no beauty, and he was in the habit of stuttering ..."

There is one incident in connection with him that stands out in my mind particularly. The Spanish-American war was on in 1898, and we got out a special soldiers' benefit edition. As the press of the old *Journal* would print only eight pages at a time, this edition had to be printed in sections and these sections "stuffed" together by hand. We rented a vacant store across the street and had a big crew at work there one night putting this edition together. A crowd of hoodlums gathered around the front door and began to make offensive remarks to the workers, which exasperated us all.

Finally one big fellow came inside. He seemed to look rather belligerent and I very foolishly started toward him with the impulsive thought that I would try and kick him out of the place. The fellow seemed to back out very readily before my advance, which made me think that I had scared him out until I turned around and found John Black behind me, flourishing a knife with a blade about nine inches long — which is the real reason the fellow beat his hasty retreat. John then stuttered out to me: "I was ready to cut his heart out, Mr. Sanford."

The *Journal's* Republican politics helped its circulation growth in those years, according to Sanford who wrote that thanks to First District Republican Representative Walter D. Brownlow "East Tennessee was one of the first localities to be covered thoroughly with rural free delivery, which when the paper started was only in an experimental stage; but Brownlow got them to do most of their early experimenting in

⁴¹Ibid.

East Tennessee, so we got off at an early start with the farmers having their daily early morning mail." Indeed, the *Journal's* mailed editions remained an important part of its circulation until the 1980s when it switched from the morning to the afternoon field.

Sanford continued to run the paper until 1928 when declining health led him to sell it to Colonel Luke Lea, a Nashville publisher and powerful Democratic politician, and Rogers Caldwell. The paper changed hands on March 31, 1928. Part of the deal was that Rule would be retained as editor. Apparently Rule had no qualms about the change in the paper's political affiliation at this point in his career. Even during the days when the *Journal* was an avowedly Republican paper, Captain Rule is said to have stayed above the fray in local party squabbles.

As everyone knows, he (Captain Rule) was a staunch Republican all of his life, and the paper was the same, but we took no part in local Republican factional controversies. The news editors and reporters had strict and positive instructions to play no favorites of any kind in reporting political events. When a row broke out among the Republicans we let them fight it out among themselves and in the case of such a campaign we were generally charged by both sides with giving the other fellow more publicity in the news columns. When this happened we knew that we were about right in our news policy, but nevertheless had to have both of the factions sore at us on this account.⁴²

Sanford summed up his 30 years at the *Journal* this way:

... if the *Journal* under Captain Rule's and my operation achieved any measure of success, it was in my opinion due to the fact that we always tried to print a good, clean newspaper without sensationalism; never trying to use the news or headlines or editorials policies for any purpose than to give the public the best paper we could.⁴³

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

A national newspaper chain discovers Knoxville

Edward Wyllis Scripps, one of the great names of American journalism, was one of the first publishers to see the true business potential of newspapers. Scripps believed that papers could be started cheaply and operated at a profit. Scripps, who at one point owned majority control of 34 newspapers in 15 states, claimed none of his papers had cost more than \$30,000 to establish. In 1911 he declared that all two bright young men needed in order to found a successful paper was the use of a basement, enough means to get a second-hand press and four linotype machines, and the crusading spirit.⁴⁴

By 1914, Scripps had trimmed his chain — Scripps-McRae Newspapers — down to 23 papers. That same year he and his partner quarreled and Milton McRae withdrew from the concern. Scripps suffered a paralytic stroke in 1917 and turned the business over to his sons, James G. and Robert P. Scripps, president of the board and editor-in-chief respectively. James and his father had a falling out three years later and the son was replaced by Roy W. Howard, president and general manager since 1912 of the Scripps-founded United Press news agency. E.W. Scripps retired completely in 1922, turning the chain over to Robert, who a little later gave Howard equal power with himself on both the business and editorial sides. The chain became known as Scripps-Howard, the name it still carries.

In 1921, Robert P. Scripps, working under his father's dictum that a third of

⁴⁴Mott, Frank Luther, *A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 260 years: 1690 to 1950*, revised edition, MacMillan, 1959, 548-549, quoting Collier's magazine, July 29, 1911, 23.

the profits should go to enlargement of the chain, began founding and buying new papers, adding 18 to the group in the 1920s, including the *Knoxville News*.⁴⁵

The *News* was founded as an afternoon paper on November 21, 1921, with Edward J. Meeman as editor, Hillary M. Johnson as business manager and Loye W. Miller as managing editor. From the start, the well-financed Scripps-Howard paper provided serious competition for its afternoon rival, the *Knoxville Sentinel*. On November 21, 1926, the two papers merged into the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, today the only daily newspaper in Knoxville. Meeman continued as editor; Myron G. Chambers became business manager and Loye Miller remained as managing editor.

'30' for Captain Rule

The grand old man of Knoxville journalism, Captain William Rule, died at age eighty-nine at 9:35 a.m. Thursday, July 26, 1928, not four months after the paper passed to Luke Lea and his associates.

Death came after an operation for acute appendicitis at Fort Sanders Hospital the previous day. As the *Knoxville Journal* reported, "... early Thursday morning he revived sufficiently to recognize his daughter, Miss Lillian Rule. Shortly afterward his indomitable spirit gave up the fight and Captain Rule's life flickered away."

The *Journal* obituary continued:

For months the weight of his advancing years had been resting heavily on Captain Rule and his associates had noted that their chief was growing feebler. But as his strength ebbed away, Captain Rule's interest

⁴⁵Mott, op.cit., 551, 640-642.

in the world he had watched so long remained unflagging to the end.

Almost Captain Rule realized the wish he expressed four years ago on the occasion of the presentation by the *Journal* staff of the portrait of Captain Rule which hangs today in the lobby of the business office. On that day, Captain Rule, addressing his co-workers said:

"When my time comes, I hope death finds me at my desk and busy."

Death did lay its hand upon him at his desk. Captain Rule was seized by illness in his office Monday afternoon. The captain was taking his annual vacation, but nevertheless he couldn't resist the temptation to steal down to the *Journal* office and read his favorite exchanges in the old easy chair he had filled so many years.

Knoxville virtually shut down to mourn Captain Rule, a former mayor. He was buried in Old Gray Cemetery near the graves of four children who preceded him in death, James F. Rule and Cora, Alida and Stella Rule. *New York Times* publisher Adolph Ochs sent a floral tribute and his brother Milton Ochs attended the funeral. Perhaps the most appropriate tribute came from the *Journal* itself: flowers arranged in the shape of a newspaper page. As the *Journal* described it in its editions of Saturday, July 28, 1928: "Against a background of white lilies, orange marigolds formed the figures '30,' signifying the end of a newspaperman's career."

Rule's final column, "As I See It," published a week before his death, touted the qualities of GOP presidential candidate Herbert Hoover. Hoover was elected that fall and took office in March 1929. The 1920s had been a time of great prosperity for America but the bubble burst when the stock market crashed on "Black Thursday," October 24, 1929. Within a few hours that day, the precipitate downward plunge of stocks swept away hundreds of millions of dollars in paper profits. It was the beginning of the Great Depression.

The 1920s had been boom years for the American newspaper industry. Total

newspaper advertising hit a record high of \$860 million in 1929 and in 1930 aggregate newspaper circulation was at a record 40 million. But prices and wages had gone up to record highs in the '20s as well and as businesses failed in the Great Depression, advertising lineage plunged. However, with radio still in its infancy and television more than two decades away, the newspaper was still the principal news source for the American people and in the Depression they needed it more than ever. Thus, throughout the period, newspaper circulation remained high.⁴⁶

The new owners of the *Journal* were hard hit by the Depression and in December 1930 Luke Lea⁴⁷ and his associates went bankrupt and the *Journal* was placed in the hands of receivers. It was operated by R.H. Clagett and Olin Berry, who later formed the Knoxville Publishing Co. and bought the paper outright in June 1932. But the paper still was not out of the financial woods. Clagett and Berry had gone deeply in debt to purchase the *Journal*. The *Journal*, according to court records, was not making a profit and was having trouble paying bills. The biggest creditor was the Canal Bank and Trust Co. of New Orleans, which held first mortgage bonds of about \$400,000 against the *Journal*. The *Journal* once again fell into receivership. R.H. Clagett continued to operate it, however, through 1936.

⁴⁶Mott, op.cit., 674-675.

⁴⁷Lea's troubles were just beginning: He lost the *Nashville Tennessean* as well as the *Journal* and he and his son, Luke Lea Jr., were implicated in a scheme to defraud the Central Bank and Trust Company of North Carolina. They were convicted and jailed in May 1934. The father served about two years and the son was paroled within a few months. Both were pardoned in 1937.

A question of succession

For years, the *Journal and Tribune* carried the following affirmation on its masthead: THE JOURNAL AND TRIBUNE Successors to BROWNLOW'S KNOXVILLE WHIG Established 1839. Although the claim subsequently was dropped from the masthead, the notion that the *Journal* was the direct descendant of the *Whig* persisted until the newspaper's death as a daily on Dec. 31, 1991. In a "Souvenir Edition"⁴⁸ published in October 1890, the *Journal* listed on its masthead,

The <i>Daily Journal</i>	Established 1885
The <i>Chronicle</i>	Established 1870
The <i>Whig</i>	Established 1839

Steve Humphrey, in his book, *That D----d Brownlow*, describes himself as "former associate editor of the *Knoxville Journal*, descendant of the *Whig*." The newspaper in the dateline on its front page counted its existence as starting in 1839. In the final edition as a daily (a weekly *Journal* was published for a few months after the daily ceased to exist), reporter Anna Garber wrote a brief history of the *Journal* that called Brownlow's *Whig* "the forerunner of the *Knoxville Journal*." However, she made no attempt to justify that claim. Neither, as far as this writer can ascertain, did Captain Rule present any direct justification for the claim.

The claim is one that still irritates Harry Moskos, the present-day editor of the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, as much as it likely did his predecessors. Moskos asked Knoxville historian Stephen V. Ash to research the alleged link of the *Knoxville*

⁴⁸An original copy is on file at the Hoskins Special Collections Library at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Journal to Brownlow's *Whig*.

Ash, using Captain Rule's history, Masterson's unpublished thesis, "Knoxville Newspapers, 1791-1935," and "Men of Affairs in Knoxville," by Joe L. Baker and Stuart Towe (1917), concluded that there was no link. He concedes, however, that the *Journal*'s ancestry clearly includes the *Chronicle*, which Rule founded in 1870 because Knoxville had no Republican paper. The *Whig* had been sold and turned into a Democratic organ. The original *Whig* died in 1871 but Brownlow, on leaving the U.S. Senate in 1875, started a new *Whig*. As Humphrey recorded the event:

The ashes of the *Whig* stirred with short life early in 1875. Senator Brownlow, his legislative record unimpressive except that he remained alive, completed his term. Andrew Johnson succeeded him, but lived only a few months. The parson had found the *Chronicle* "too mild in its tone and altogether too conciliatory, considering the party with which you have to deal, and how violent and hostile toward the loyal people that party is."

Rule bought a half interest in the new *Whig* and it was combined with the weekly edition of the *Chronicle* as the *Whig* and *Chronicle*. Parson Brownlow then joined the paper as principal editor. Rule was the equivalent of managing editor.⁴⁹

Humphrey noted:

The *Whig* and *Chronicle* and the *Chronicle* bore little resemblance to the old *Whig*. The weekly was an eight-page tabloid, the daily four pages with large body type. The news content was greater, especially in local, state and national affairs. Much of it was received by wire. Rule, as mentioned, had specialized in getting local news. Editorializing still appeared in some news items, but was gradually being confined to the editorial page. Brownlow's writings were more philosophical and more abundant with historical background.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Humphrey, Steve, *That D---d Brownlow*, Appalachian Consortium Press, Boone, North Carolina, 1978, 384-385.

⁵⁰*Ibid.* 385-386.

Parson Brownlow's health began to fail and on the night of April 28, 1877, he became ill. He died at 2:05 a.m. Sunday, April 30.

Ash concluded in his undated paper titled, "*Knoxville Journal* 'Family Tree'":

Thus, the only link between the *Chronicle* and the *Whig* seems to be personal, not institutional — e.g., the presence of Brownlow on both papers. Perhaps Brownlow, as evidenced by his renaming of the *Chronicle*'s weekly edition, believed he had "revived" the old *Whig* in spirit. But clearly, in an institutional sense, any connection to the old *Whig* was impossible, given Brownlow's dissociation from that paper in 1869 and its demise two years later.

It is of course through the *Chronicle* that the modern *Journal* traces its roots back to the old *Whig*. But this connection seems valid only if one accepts the mere presence of Brownlow as a connecting link between the *Whig* and the *Chronicle*. Rule himself had worked for the *Whig* 1860-61 and 1866-69, but he did not assert any link based on that fact. His clear, although unstated, assumption is that Brownlow's presence established that link.

Ash's reasoning seems valid except for one point he appears to have overlooked: Parson Brownlow did revive the *Whig* and ran it briefly before Rule bought a half interest and merged it with the *Chronicle*. The *Whig* had closed once before because of the Confederate occupation of Knoxville and was revived by the parson. Nonetheless, any link between the *Journal* and the *Whig* is tenuous at best and existed mainly in the mind of Captain Rule and others at the *Journal*. The *Journal* certainly was the *spiritual* successor to the *Whig*, both because of Brownlow's presence on the *Whig and Chronicle*, indisputably the *Journal*'s forerunner, Rule's own tenure at the *Whig* as a young man, and because of the mind-set of the man who directed the paper from 1938 until his death in 1968, Guy Lincoln Smith Jr., a man whom Parson Brownlow would have undoubtedly applauded as a worthy successor to his own *Whig*.

CHAPTER THREE

A New Lease on Life: A Mill Owner Buys The Journal

East Tennessee in 1936

In the summer of 1936, a new era had begun in the Tennessee Valley.

The Tennessee Valley Authority, created by Congress three years earlier, already was producing power from its first hydroelectric project, Norris Dam on the Clinch River. Soon, the longtime dream of making the Tennessee River navigable all the way to its origin at the confluence of the French Broad and Holston rivers just east of Knoxville would be a reality. Cheap electrical power was expected to be a magnet for industrialization throughout the valley. The ancillary benefits from recreation and tourism on the newly created lakes were already becoming apparent.

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, a half-million-acre forest preserve in eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina, was open and already was attracting tourists from throughout the East.

The Valley had not been spared the ravages of the Great Depression, but President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" had been particularly favorable to Tennessee in general and, thanks to TVA, the Tennessee Valley in particular.⁵¹

⁵¹Minton, John Dean, *The New Deal in Tennessee, 1932-1938*, Garland Publishing, New York, 1979, 203.

The Tennessee Valley Authority

The long battle to develop the Tennessee Valley basin was led in Congress by Nebraska Senator George W. Norris and culminated with the signing of the TVA Act on May 18, 1933. The act created TVA "for the purpose of maintaining and operating the properties now owned by the United States in the vicinity of Muscle Shoals, Alabama, in the interest of the national defense and for agricultural and industrial development, and to improve navigation in the Tennessee River and Mississippi River Basins. ..."⁵²

The act gave TVA the power to acquire land by eminent domain, and the authority to build dams for flood control and to establish a navigable channel on the Tennessee River.

TVA literally turned on the lights in much of East Tennessee. It provided relatively cheap power both for residential and industrial use. The dam construction, which included building a new city, Norris, Tennessee, provided employment for thousands of local manual laborers and brought hundreds of engineers and technicians to Knoxville from through the United States. It also pumped much needed money into the impoverished region. A side benefit was the tourist attraction the dams and newly formed lakes provided. As Minton says:

TVA brought new residents to the area and it also brought visitors. By the end of 1939, more than four million people had visited TVA dams, seventy-five percent of the visitors to Norris Dam were from outside of Tennessee. In 1938 the U.S. Travel Bureau estimated that Tennessee received \$81 million from recreation travelers. The Knoxville Tourist

⁵²U.S. Statutes at Large, XLVIII, Part I, 58.

Bureau estimated that its city received \$3 million from such travelers in 1939.⁵³

The newcomers were not always welcomed with open arms. William J. MacArthur Jr. says, "There was, of course, a deep and abiding resentment in many quarters against the outsiders who came with TVA and against all they seemed to stand for." But he adds, "On the other hand, the infusion of new people benefited the city's cultural and intellectual life, as TVA people contributed their efforts to diverse local organizations such as the Civil Liberties Union, the East Tennessee Historical Society, and the Knoxville Symphony."⁵⁴

Bettie Ramsey, a Knoxville native, recalled that before TVA came to East Tennessee, "you could walk down Gay Street (Knoxville's principal downtown business and shopping street in those years) and you just knew everybody. Gradually we began to see strangers. Then it picked up momentum."⁵⁵

Other New Deal programs

TVA was not the only New Deal program to benefit Tennessee. Knox County was the beneficiary of the first work project initiated in Tennessee under the Emergency Relief and Construction Act, a highway construction and maintenance program that began October 29, 1932. Workers were paid partly in cash, the remainder

⁵³Minton, op.cit., 205.

⁵⁴MacArthur, Arthur J., Jr., *Knoxville's History: An Interpretation*, East Tennessee Historical Society, Knoxville, 1978, 62.

⁵⁵Ramsey, Bettie, interview with author, Knoxville, June 14, 1994.

in food.⁵⁶

The other alphabet soup agencies created under the New Deal turned up in East Tennessee, including the Civilian Conservation Corps about which the *Knoxville Journal* editorialized:

The entire project is one which appeals tremendously to the imagination as well as to common sense.

Its work is well worth doing. It stirs the enthusiasm of its workers. It accomplishes the relief of families in need and the rehabilitation of jobless and discouraged men. It benefits the country.⁵⁷

The CCC works in East Tennessee included building fire observation towers, state-owned telephone lines, and state parks. Of particular benefit to the eroded hillsides in much of mountainous East Tennessee were the thousands of gully dams CCC workers built. They also planted 8 million trees and raised 20 million one-year seedlings.

The Works Progress Administration of 1935 spent millions in Tennessee on highways, roads, streets, schools, landing fields and airports, including Knoxville's McGhee-Tyson Airport, a \$726,000 facility which was dedicated on October 15, 1937.

TVA and the other New Deal programs changed the Tennessee Valley in other less demonstrable ways as well. They brought in organized labor and, as a result of Roosevelt's program of relief and public works, "most Tennesseans accepted a new philosophy of governmental responsibility for the welfare of its citizens. The Tennessee farmer found controlled production, rental payments and regimentation

⁵⁶MacArthur, op.cit., 55-56.

⁵⁷Ibid. 58.

more beneficial than uncontrolled production, flooded markets and lower prices.”⁵⁸

Despite the New Deal programs, the Depression was leaving indelible scars on Knoxville. Knoxville's banks failed, as they did in other cities. Construction nearly stopped and factories closed. In 1936, more than 7,000 workers were unemployed. The overall standard of living declined and housing, which had deteriorated before the Depression, became even worse. The city, forced to the brink of financial ruin by heavy bonded indebtedness, was obliged to pay its employees in scrip and had to re-fund its public debt to 1978. With Knoxvilleans defaulting on their city taxes in droves, the City Council begged for mercy from its creditors and issued more bonds.⁵⁹

Scars of the Depression

As McDonald and Wheeler observed:

In Knoxville the scars of deprivation were slow to heal. The optimistic booster spirit of an earlier epoch was mortally wounded, leaving a legacy of rigid conservatism and defensiveness as shrill as it was unconvincing. True these attitudes had always been present in the city, at least since the Civil War. But the Great Depression acted to deepen these intellectual gullies and make it difficult for anything to hold out against the onrushing tide. In Knoxville the legacy included a suspicion of change and innovation; a desperate clinging to the eternal verities of family, church, prohibition, and making ends meet; deep lines of demarcation between economic, social and racial groups; a fanatical defense of the city itself against the criticisms of “outsiders,” whether they represented TVA, the university, or some other group. The dreams of the New South advocates of so long ago had all come true. But for some, these dreams of industrialization and urbanization had turned to nightmares.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Ibid. 274-275.

⁵⁹McDonald and Wheeler, *op.cit.*, 62-63.

⁶⁰Ibid. 66.

The Tennessee Blue Book and Official Directory for 1936 had a rosier view of Knoxville, which it called "The industrial capital of the East Tennessee Valley":

Knoxville, located in the heart of the rich East Tennessee Valley, stands as an important commercial and industrial center of a prosperous section. With natural resources found nearby in great variety, Knoxville is enjoying a steady growth. There are approximately 350 manufacturing plants in this city. Textile mills represent the largest part of this manufacturing group. Knoxville is the largest heavy-weight cotton-knit underwear manufacturing center in the world.

Metalworking plants at Knoxville have an annual output of more than \$10 million. Their products included rolled iron and steel, temperature regulating devices, coal mine equipment, quarry and mill machinery, stoves, and general foundry products.

Knoxville has a group of woodworking plants that have an actual output of approximately \$6 million.

Several milling companies turn out flour, meal, and feed that is distributed over a wide territory. A large fertilizer manufacturing plant is located here.

Marble is another of Knoxville's leading products. The Knoxville territory is the third largest marble-producing area in the world, turning out the famous Tennessee marble that is used in fine structures the world over.

Knoxville is the center of a territory that is blessed with natural resources. In no other section of the United States of equal size, is there to be found such a wide variety of minerals in commercial quantities as is found within 100 miles of Knoxville. There is coal, marble, zinc, copper, iron, barytes, silica, kaolin, limestone, ochre and clays. The center of the state's zinc mining operations is at Mascot, twelve miles from Knoxville.

Large copper mines are located at Copperhill, within seventy-five miles of Knoxville. The largest sulfuric acid plant in the world is operated in connection with the mines. The plant of the Aluminum Company of America at Alcoa, fifteen miles from Knoxville, is one of the largest of its kind in the country.

More than forty-five million tons of bituminous coal is mined annually within seventy-five miles of Knoxville. Millions of tons of iron ore, lie within a short distance of Knoxville.

The University of Tennessee is located at Knoxville.⁶¹

⁶¹The Tennessee Blue Book and Official Directory, 1936, 33-34.

Population growth slows

The Depression had slowed the city's growth. Knoxville's population in 1936 was about 108,000 people, up from 105,802 in 1930. Knox County's population in 1930 was 155,902 and would reach 178,468 by 1940.

While, as the Blue Book noted, Knoxville sits in the middle of a variety of commercially exploitable minerals, in 1936 coal was definitely king. The coal fields in the mountainous counties to the north — Morgan, Scott, Anderson, Campbell, Claiborne and Union — were a major source of soft coal for the nation and Knoxville was the commercial hub of the coal-mining activity. While cleaner-burning oil and gas were making inroads in other parts of the country, coal was the fuel of choice for homes and industry throughout East Tennessee. Knoxville was a rail hub and coal-burning locomotives spewed out their oily black smoke over the city. The coal smoke polluted the air and left a dirty pall of soot over everything.

MacArthur described the Knoxville of the 1930s this way:

With its large white majority and its Republican inclinations, Knoxville was by 1930 an unusual southern city. The railroad and machine shops, the textile, marble, and lumber mills gave the town the look of an industrial center. Black smoke from coal-burning furnaces filled the city air and the oily black soot was inescapable. Knoxville took on the grimy look which for many years was one of its most remarkable physical characteristics.⁶²

Jim Golden, who came from Washington in 1938 to be the *Journal's* advertising manager, remembers Knoxville as a very dirty city, and not just from air pollution. "I went to the theater one night and people were chewing tobacco and

⁶²MacArthur, op.cit., 59.

spitting on the floor," he recalled.⁶³

The governor of Tennessee in 1936 was Hill McAllister, a Democrat. Representing the Second Congressional District was Republican J. Will Taylor. Samuel O. Houston was county judge and J. Wesley Brewer was sheriff.

The *Knoxville Journal* had clung desperately to life during the early Depression years. Advertising in both Knoxville papers had plunged precipitously but the *Journal*, which throughout the 1920s had led in ad lineage, had suffered even more than the *News-Sentinel*. In 1936, the *Journal*'s lineage was 4,735,788 lines daily and 1,557,058 on Sunday, compared to 5,943,626 in the *News-Sentinel* daily and 2,103,593 on Sunday.⁶⁴ In 1929, according to Editor & Publisher figures, both papers published well over 6 million lines in their daily papers and nearly 3 million on Sunday. In 1936, the *Journal* still held a slight lead in circulation, however, with 49,199 daily and 52,190 Sunday, compared to 45,625 daily and 48,941 Sunday for the *News-Sentinel*.⁶⁵

A mill owner buys the Journal

This was the situation in Knoxville and at the *Journal* when Roy N. Lotspeich, a successful Knoxville textile mill owner, came forward with an offer to buy the ailing newspaper.

Lotspeich, who had no newspaper background and who is not known to have

⁶³Jim Golden, interview by author, Knoxville, Tennessee, June 13, 1994.

⁶⁴Editor & Publisher magazine, February 27, 1937, iv.

⁶⁵Audit Bureau of Circulation.

expressed any particular interest in the field, was an unlikely candidate to come to the newspaper's rescue. Although he bought the paper outright, times were hard and cash was short. Appalachian Mills, the firm he founded in 1910, had suffered along with the rest of Knoxville's textile industry during the Depression. Lotspeich was a conservative Republican, but he had never taken any active role in politics either locally or nationally. Why, then, this sudden interest in investing nearly a half million dollars in a shaky newspaper?

"My interest in the purchase of the *Knoxville Journal*," he was quoted as saying, "is primarily that of a citizen who wishes to perform a constructive service for his community. Naturally, I regard it as a good and sound investment, but first I wish to see this great old newspaper that has held the confidence of the people for almost a century, developed into an even greater medium for the advancement of all things good for Knoxville and East Tennessee and the South."⁶⁶

Court documents⁶⁷ show that the money for the purchase, as indeed the money that enabled him to establish Appalachian Mills earlier in the decade, came from his wife, Ethel Moore Lotspeich. At least one family member felt it was her desire to gain entree and status in Knoxville society, more than the altruistic reasons cited by her husband, that led the couple to invest in the newspaper.⁶⁸ While that can only remain speculation, there is some basis for this opinion.

⁶⁶The *Knoxville Journal*, May 14, 1936, pp. 1 and 4.

⁶⁷*Carter vs. Lotspeich*, Chancery Court of Knox County, case Number 37437. This case is discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

⁶⁸Bettie Ramsey, interview with author, June 14, 1994.

Lotspeich bought the paper from the Canal Bank & Trust Co. of New Orleans for \$450,000. The bank, which had been the paper's major creditor, had acquired controlling interest in the paper after it had gone into receivership earlier in the decade.

'Tennessee Valley's Greatest Newspaper'

In the announcement of the purchase, Lotspeich said he would retain R.H. Clagett as editor and general manager.

He also said:

For some time I have felt that the *Journal* could be a better medium of general welfare for our city and state if it were owned entirely by local people. Many of my friends have expressed the same opinion. So it was for that reason that I began negotiations to that end and it is a great pleasure for me that these negotiations have been satisfactorily concluded.

It is my plan and purpose immediately to make improvements in the mechanical equipment of the paper that will make it second to none in the South in that respect. Also, the editorial content of the paper, excellent as it has been, will be improved, so that there may be a continued steady growth in circulation. These matters will be left to the judgment of Mr. Clagett whose management of the paper already has brought an enormous increase in circulation during the last five years.

As a businessman and newspaper reader I have observed that the newspapers that have thrived most are those that have served best the interests of the people who inhabit the territory in which they are located. No other institution or business is so distinctly affected by the prosperity or lack of prosperity in its community. It is our aim to work for those objectives that we believe will bring prosperity to the greatest number. We want to see all of East Tennessee more densely populated and ornamented with more industries to give employment to more people. We want to see agriculture in East Tennessee developed to the highest degree of profitable productiveness. We want to see all the people blessed with more of the good things in life to which they are entitled as inhabitants of these wonderful mountains and valleys.

With an earnest desire for the good will and cooperation of all the people who the *Journal* will serve, I pledge to Knoxville and East

Tennessee a continuation of those fine policies and traditions that have won for the *Knoxville Journal* the reputation as "Tennessee Valley's Greatest Newspaper."⁶⁹

The deal was completed with the signing over of a majority of the *Journal* stock to Lotspeich on August 7, 1936. At that time, Lotspeich announced that other investors in the enterprise were Ira A. Watson, owner of Watson's, a department store chain based in Knoxville; R.H. Clagett, editor and general manager of the newspaper since 1928; and Robert R. Spilman, vice president and secretary of Appalachian Mills and a director of Home Federal Savings & Loan association. The newspaper's front-page story on the purchase said "a few other purchasers of stock in the company four years ago retain their interests." They were not named nor was it revealed how much stock any of the minority stockholders actually held. At a meeting of the stockholders following completion of the transfer, Lotspeich was named president and treasurer; Clagett, executive vice president; Watson, vice president; Spilman, secretary. The story said that no change in the paper's operating personnel was contemplated. It listed the following heads of departments: J.C. McKinney, advertising director; W.S. Burnett, circulation manager; Robert B. McNitt, managing editor; H.N. Quigg, chief accountant; John J. Mitchell, composing room foreman; D. Beeler, stereotype foreman; J.O. Booher, press foreman; Hal D. Carter, mail foreman. The article also noted that Lotspeich had been "virtually in charge of the paper" since the deal was announced in May.⁷⁰

⁶⁹The *Knoxville Journal*, May 14, 1936, pp. 1 and 4.

⁷⁰Ibid. August 8, 1936, pp. 1-2.

The unsigned article also took the opportunity to reassert the claim that the *Journal* was descended directly from the *Whig*, saying, "... the present newspaper is a direct descendant from that little sheet first published by the redoubtable Parson William G. Brownlow." The article went further and claimed direct succession from "the influential *Knoxville Register*, which was organized in 1816 by Major Frederick S. Heiskell and Hugh Brown and which continued publication under the same name until 1863. The name was revived about 1870 by Rolf S. Saunders, who had formerly been connected with the *Register* and who named his paper the *Knoxville Whig and Register*. Its title page set out that the *Register* was established August 3, 1816, and the *Knoxville Whig* May 16, 1839. The *Journal* chose the latter date, however, as its own beginning.

In the same edition announcing the completion of the purchase deal, a Page One editorial proclaimed, "The *Knoxville Journal* today becomes a home-owned newspaper that will uphold the traditions and the aspirations of the people of East Tennessee."

The editorial, noting the *Journal's* long history in the community, said the papers "new owners are conscious of the tremendous responsibility entailed by that heritage of service and we pledge every facility of manpower and the graphic arts to honorably live up to that responsibility and to continue to hold the confidence that the people of Knoxville and East Tennessee have placed in this newspaper generation after generation."

The editorial noted that the *Journal*, "with but a brief period of digression," had

been Republican in politics since the party was founded. It said, "We sincerely believe that in national affairs the Republican Party stands today more firmly than ever as a bulwark of protection for the people."

"In state and local politics the *Journal* has been Republican also, but has recognized the practical fact that many issues peculiar to our state or our country or our city do not come within the scope of a national party's principles," the editorial continued. "For that reason the *Journal* has been non-partisan or independent in its support of state, county and city candidates for public office, supporting those deemed most capable of rendering the best service to the people. In that respect the *Journal* will continue to be independent. In the publication of news about politics we shall continue to keep our columns free from bias or unfairness, treating all candidates and all parties with equal consideration so that our readers may derive full information upon which to arrive at their own conclusions. We shall never be dogmatic, but shall endeavor to win adherents to every cause espoused by us through sound and logical presentation of facts and arguments."

More than likely, the editorial writer — in all probability R.H. Clagett himself — meant every word of that statement. But Clagett would be replaced in just over a year by a man who would have quite a different philosophy on how the paper should be run.

Then, as now, taxation was seen as "foremost among public issues." The *Journal* vowed to be in the forefront of the battle against increased taxes.

The editorialist then turned to the promise of the future.

We have in Knoxville and East Tennessee a city and a region possessed of boundless possibilities for industrial and agricultural development, once the handicap of high taxes is surmounted or removed. This region above all others in the New South is blessed with raw materials, manpower, fuel and hydroelectric power, transportation and communication facilities, livable climate and social order that combined under systems of government that do not take everything from the producer, great or small, can bring through the processes of modern knowledge an era of abundance and prosperity such as no other people ever enjoyed on earth. It is to the attainment of that goal that the *Journal* is dedicated and to the enjoyment of which the *Journal* invites all who desire to join us in this endeavor.

The editorial, noting that "East Tennesseans ... are individualists, rugged or otherwise," pledged to oppose the "theories of socialism and communism that are being injected into American thought from the mental cess pools of Europe."

But the editorialist apparently saw nothing "socialistic" in the fledgling Tennessee Valley Authority, whose activities, he wrote, "have attracted the attention of the world."

Fulfillment of the Authority's program of industrial and agricultural development will stimulate the growth of population and wealth throughout this region until it becomes an area teeming with prosperous and happy people enabled by knowledge and science to utilize and conserve all of the resources of the Valley. In the furtherance of that program the *Journal* will be enlisted.

The editorial also heralded the potential of the recently formed Great Smoky Mountains National Park for attracting millions of visitors annually. And it proclaimed that river navigation "eventually will bring to Knoxville a reduction in freight rates that will interest manufacturers and distributors" and that "(t)he great airport now being constructed near Knoxville will put East Tennessee on a main line of the world's airways." It also predicted that improvement of the highway system.

"The University of Tennessee will enlarge its range of influence and benefits for all the people," the editorial said.

The editorial concluded:

The *Knoxville Journal* as a home-owned newspaper begins today a new chapter in its history which we confidently expect to be the most useful, the most brilliant, the most satisfying of the many chapters that have been written. We ask in this undertaking the confidence, the good will and the co-operation of our readers wherever they may be.

Bob McNitt's year as managing editor

One new staff member hired not long after Lotspeich announced his intention to buy the paper was managing editor Robert B. McNitt, a twenty-five-year-old Yale graduate from Southbridge, Massachusetts, where his father owned the *Southbridge Evening News*. After graduating from Yale where he was business manager of the *Yale Literary Review*, McNitt had worked on his father's small paper and then for the McNaught Syndicate, which his father also owned. His travels representing McNaught brought him to Knoxville where he met R.H. Clagett, the *Journal's* editor and general manager. Clagett offered him the managing editor's post. After consulting with his fiancée, Mary Dyer of Southbridge, McNitt accepted the offer. The couple were married on June 30, 1936, and following a honeymoon in Bermuda, young McNitt took over the *Journal* newsroom.⁷¹

McNitt remained at the paper just 14 months, but in that short time he made an

⁷¹McNitt, V.V., *Bob's Thirty Years*, privately published, New York: 1945. This book is not in general circulation. However, Joe Capillo, the managing editor of the *Southbridge Evening News*, was kind enough to furnish the author with photocopies of the pertinent pages.

indelible mark on it, redesigning it away from the nineteenth century "tombstone" makeup to a more modern format. The *Journal* in a Page 1 story September 30, 1937, announcing his departure said:

Under management of Mr. McNitt the editorial staff was completely reorganized. The personnel was increased and several departments strengthened. The type face was changed and a number of daily features of national prominence instituted in the pages of the newspaper. He enlarged the photographic department and introduced many metropolitan newspaper practices to Knoxville for the first time. The circulation of the *Journal* during Mr. McNitt's tenure increased several thousand daily and Sunday.⁷²

He left Knoxville to go to Greenwich, Connecticut, to become editor of the Southbridge paper and later went to the McNaught Syndicate, also owned by his father, V.V. McNitt. In December 1941, two weeks after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, McNitt was tragically killed in a train accident at the Greenwich station. He was thirty years old.

V.V. McNitt wrote and privately published a book about his son, "Bob's 30 Years: The Life Story of Robert B. McNitt By His Father." In it, he gives an account of Bob's short stay in Knoxville. Since nobody is living who was at the *Journal* during its first year under Lotspeich and no other account of that time is known to exist, McNitt's book, which includes an essay, "As I Knew Bob," written by former *Journal* staffer O.K. Barnes, provides an unusual glimpse of The *Journal* from August 1936 until September 1937. His father wrote:

McNitt tackled his job with zeal and enthusiasm, arriving at the office before noon and returning home only after midnight, taking time

⁷²The *Knoxville Journal*, September 30, 1937, p.1.

out only for dinner. One of his first tasks was to strengthen the editorial staff, which he did, with Clagett's cooperation, by hiring seasoned veterans such as O.K. Barnes who would be his "star reporter" and eventually a columnist writing under the title, "Here Today." Barnes joined the *Journal* shortly after the paper he had been working on, the *Louisville Herald-Post*, folded.

A shot for a shot

Improvements in photo techniques and engraving technology had made the use of pictures more popular in the daily press and McNitt and Clagett moved swiftly to build a strong photo department. A new engraving plant was installed and a photographer, Howard Jones, was hired. One of Jones' early pictures remains to this day a classic newspicture. It showed Ed McNew, a Knoxville bail bondsman and political leader, aiming his pistol directly at the camera. McNew hired up-and-coming defense attorney Ray Jenkins to represent him in the subsequent trial. Here is Jenkins' account of what happened that day:

Ed McNew, a professional bondsman and wealthy political leader who controlled Knoxville's so-called floating wards on election days, was indicted by the Knox County Grand Jury for driving while intoxicated, a misdemeanor. There was nothing out of the ordinary about that.

It was at the time of the Lindbergh baby kidnapping. The child's fate was unknown. So when a foundling baby resembling the Lindberghs' son was discovered at Crossville, Tennessee, seventy-five miles from Knoxville, McNew's interest was excited and he drove there to make inquiry. When it developed that this was some other baby, McNew sought to adopt it, and that got into the news.

One morning McNew, a sick and crippled man, was leaving his office and was confronted by a newspaper photographer named Howard Jones. At the very instant that his picture was snapped the bondsman fired a pistol at Jones. The photo of the year was taken. It appeared in *Time* magazine, showing Ed with an angry look on his face and a blazing pistol

in his hand, smoke coming from the barrel.⁷³

The photographer got the picture but was not hit by the bullet. McNew was indicted for an attempt to commit murder in the first degree, but Jenkins, who went on to become one of East Tennessee's most famous trial lawyers and gain national fame during the televised Army-McCarthy hearings in the 1950s, and his brother and co-counsel, Erby Jenkins, won acquittal for McNew, the photographic evidence notwithstanding.

Barnes' view of the Journal

The situation at the *Journal* was, in Barnes' words, "not the happiest." He added, "There was a lack of equipment, lack of staff, lack of funds for news department operations."

Barnes found another problem in Knoxville. Some natives didn't like newcomers taking hard-to-get jobs. "We like you, all right," one woman acquaintance told him. "But you might as well understand right now that we Knoxville people don't like to have you outsiders coming here and taking jobs. We can get along without you and — I mean this in a business way of course — we resent you."⁷⁴

Barnes continues: "Bob had that sort of spirit to contend with, and in greater

⁷³Jenkins, Ray, *The Terror of Tellico Plains*, East Tennessee Historical Society, Knoxville, 1978, 52. It should be noted that Jenkins took some artistic license in his description of the picture, which was published on the facing page in his book. McNew's face is obscured by his hands and the pistol, which he is aiming at the photographer. Thus it is impossible to tell if he had "an angry look on his face."

⁷⁴Barnes, O.K., "As I Knew Bob," in *Bob's Thirty Years*, privately published by V.V. McNitt, New York: 1945, 35.

degree than I." Nonetheless, he wrote, "His manner of facing those handicaps and his determined battle to make things go were enough to inspire the most cloddish staff member."

Barnes recounts another episode in the newsroom that tested McNitt's mettle:

In the days of my *Journal* experience, Bob fired a staff member who seemed to be held much in awe by his associates for a certain violence of nature. He was told he must not appear again in the *Journal* newsroom.

A few hours later I heard the undesirable was in a downtown dive drinking heavily and swearing he would revisit the newsroom that evening and execute certain pummelings and maulings upon Bob. This I personally greeted with but passing interest. I did not yet know Bob very well and the prospect of a ruckus was mildly exhilarating.

At supper hour the belligerent one appeared, evidently drunk and surly. Bob was out. Quite impersonally I relished the situation, feeling a little sorry for the m.e. who was smaller in build. I was curious about what he would do.

When Bob came in he immediately saw the malcontent at the rear of the room. Bob's jaw seemed to set and his face became slightly flushed. He unhurriedly placed his hat in his office, and walked directly back to the fire-eater.

"Get out!" he said without raising his voice. The fellow looked fierce for a second, then uncertain for a second, and then walked out never to return. As I recall, that little episode marked the beginning of my affection for Bob and my respect.

He had known of the threat, of the temper of the staff, and the possibilities of the situation. I doubt if he gave an instant's thought to the matter of "face" with the staff in the event of a beating. He was angry and imperative.⁷⁵

McNitt on the battlefield

Another episode cited by Barnes to show the courage of his boss and friend occurred when the managing editor joined him and a photographer in covering a strike

⁷⁵Ibid., 36-37.

at the Aluminum Company of America plant at nearby Alcoa.

There was danger in the air that morning as we walked up the roadway beside the aluminum plant — a road lined with angry workmen. The *Journal* people, considered by the workmen to be “pro-company,” were objects of muttered threats and murmured epithets. I believe Bob was oblivious to them. Our photographer followed us, as did two Associated Press men and the combination reporter-photographer of our opposition paper.

The fires were about to flare up, it was plain, and yet we were somewhat surprised when a flurry of rifle and pistol shots sounded. You must know what I mean: expected yet unbelievable.

My military training (Barnes was a former Army captain) and the necessity to remain and get the story prompted my action: I flopped on my face. Our AP friends followed my example. Our rival newspaperman showed a flash of heels and disappeared in the distance. Company guards on one hand (including a large number hired especially for the trouble, I believe) and enraged workmen on the other were letting go both barrels. Woe unto the innocent bystander!

And there, some ten or fifteen yards ahead of me, casual as a spectator at a cricket match, stood Bob. He had practically hypnotized our photographer, I believe, for the kid was kneeling in front of Bob, taking pictures for all he was worth. I yelled repeatedly at Bob to take cover. He turned his head back once and grinned, and waved a hand as if to say: “I’ll talk to you in a minute. I’m busy now.”⁷⁶

According to Barnes’ front page story in the *Journal* the next day, two people were killed and 23 people were wounded in the shootout. Troops were called in to put down the melee. Photographer David Ingerman’s pictures included an eight-column panoramic view of the scene that the *Journal* ran across the top of the page over the nameplate.

McNitt also stood up for journalistic integrity against those on the business side who saw a different role for the newspaper, Barnes says, citing an effort by an unnamed “business office man in an important position” who ordered him to put his

⁷⁶Ibid., 37-38.

byline on a statement "containing allegations and criticism directed against the TVA and municipal ownership of power facilities." He refused and McNitt backed him up. The business office man, Barnes writes, went to the publisher, Roy Lotspeich, but Lotspeich on this occasion backed his managing editor and the article did not run.

McNitt left the *Journal* on September 29, 1937, shortly after Guy L. Smith Jr. was hired as editor, replacing Clagett.

According to the elder McNitt, "He ranked Bob, and when he began going over Bob's head to instruct reporters and give them special assignments, the managing editor felt aggrieved. he tried to get an understanding with his publisher but the latter, who was not a newspaperman, could see no reason for establishing a system of office courtesy. Rather than allow a trying situation, already hopeless, to become impossible, Bob resigned voluntarily."

Despite the difficulties that eventually led him to leave, McNitt left the *Journal* a far better newspaper than the one he found. The generous use of photographs and the modern makeup were hallmarks that remained with the paper long after his departure.

Financial ills continue

Roy N. Lotspeich had put up the bulk of the \$450,000 required to buy the *Journal* but it appears he had little operating cash left to put into the paper.

Advertising lineage had gained slightly in 1937 under Lotspeich's management, from 4.7 million lines daily and 1.6 million lines Sunday in 1936 to 5.3 million daily

and 1.7 million Sunday. The *News-Sentinel* gained as well, rising to 6 million daily and 2.2 million in 1937, from 5.9 million daily and 2.1 million Sunday in 1936. While the *Journal* continued to trail the *News-Sentinel* by nearly half a million lines on Sunday, it had narrowed the daily gap by nearly 400,000 lines, from a *News-Sentinel* advantage of 1.2 million lines in 1936 to 800,000 in 1937.⁷⁷

By 1940, Sunday lineage in the *Journal* had increased somewhat, to 1.8 million, but daily lineage had dropped, to 4.7 million. The *News-Sentinel* in 1940 posted 6.2 million lines daily and 2 million Sunday.⁷⁸

Average circulation of the *Journal* in 1936 was 49,199 daily and 52,190 Sunday, compared to 45,625 daily and 48,941 Sunday for the *News-Sentinel*. The *Journal* circulation gained slightly in 1937, to 50,308 daily and 54,271 Sunday, while the *News-Sentinel* declined, to 44,918 daily and 48,232 Sunday. However, by 1940, the *News-Sentinel* had moved well ahead of the *Journal* with a circulation of 56,961 daily and 60,068 Sunday, compared to 42,762 daily and 36,787 Sunday for the *Journal*. The *News-Sentinel* would never again relinquish its circulation and advertising lead.⁷⁹ Table 1 on the following page shows the daily and Sunday circulation figures for both newspapers during the period 1936-57 as furnished by the Audit Bureau of Circulations, the organization that monitors and verifies newspaper circulations in the United States.

⁷⁷Editor & Publisher Yearbook, New York, February 27, 1935, p.iv., and February 26, 1938, p.ii.

⁷⁸Editor & Publisher, March 1, 1941, p.iv.

⁷⁹Audit Bureau of Circulations reports for years cited.

Table 1
Daily and Sunday Circulation
Knoxville Journal-Knoxville News-Sentinel
1936-1957

Date	Journal daily	Journal Sunday	N-S daily	N-S Sunday
1936	49,199	52,190	45,625	48,941
1937	50,308	54,271	44,918	48,232
1938	49,032	58,138	49,590	61,263
1939	49,910	58,138	51,422	67,423
1940	42,762	36,787	56,961	60,068
1941	46,010	40,383	57,812	61,881
1942	54,720	48,983	69,998	72,258
1943	56,609	48,346	72,503	74,657
1944	78,405	66,967	94,515	93,790
1945	83,650	70,543	99,735	98,335
1946	90,936	85,807	101,202	105,166
1947	84,801	88,380	99,013	104,394
1948	85,013	85,817	102,558	108,706
1949	84,063	91,460	103,013	109,626
1950	82,763	92,326	104,481	111,759
1951	79,620	78,764	102,802	106,484
1952	81,672	80,532	102,261	105,825
1953	80,248	82,360	105,043	108,402
1954	83,015	88,408	104,861	108,852
1955	83,126	89,533	107,260	111,627
1956	79,447	89,639	99,661	105,109
1957	79,041	90,986	101,185	106,049

Source: Audit Bureau of Circulations

Throughout this period, Golden recalls, the *Journal* experienced severe cash flow problems. At times the situation was so bad that employees had to wait to get paid until the district circulation managers came in with their weekly bags of money. The business office personnel would count out payroll in nickels and dimes, he said.⁸⁰ At other times, the paper used scrip. Even when it paid in checks years later, employees often would race to the bank to cash their paychecks, fearful they would bounce.

Garrett Loftis, who hauled newspapers to upper East Tennessee during the mid-1930s, remembers how he and the other circulation men would bring their sacks of money straight into the business office and dump them out so the staff could be paid.⁸¹ Circulation men barely made enough to pay for their gas and car expenses, Loftis said, so he arranged with Kerns Bakery to haul a trailer load of bread to Newport along with his papers. The trailer was filled with "huge boxes of bread and with that was always 40, 50, 75 pounds of bar yeast for the bootleggers. It was no secret." He said the load was delivered to a Newport retailer and "what he did with it was his business.

⁸⁰Jim Golden, interview by author, Knoxville, Tennessee, June 13, 1994. Golden joined the newspaper in August 1938 and, as far as the author can determine, is, at 93, the only *Journal* executive of the 1930s still living. He had been an advertising salesman on the *Washington Post*, but after the *Post* was purchased by Eugene Meyer in 1933 he didn't like the new management style and moved over to the *Washington Times-Herald*. He later heard of an opening in Knoxville as advertising manager of the *Journal*. After a meeting with Lotspeich and *Journal* business manager Henry Page, Golden accepted the job and moved to Knoxville in August 1938. He remained at the paper until the joint operating agreement with the *News-Sentinel* in 1957. He joined radio station WKGN for a time then became advertising director of JFG Coffee in Knoxville, a post from which he retired in December 1993 at age 92.

⁸¹Garrett Loftis, interview with author, October 4, 1994.

That's when they were really making liquor up in Cosby." He added, "Back then we were doing anything we could to make a dollar." However, Loftis said that although he had lucrative offers to haul the finished product — moonshine — back to Knoxville on his return, he always refused them.⁸²

As the *News-Sentinel* began to widen its circulation lead, the *Journal* management would try anything, Golden said. "They gave papers away. They had cigarette deals. It was embarrassing as hell to be the second paper."

Golden said that Ira Watson, the retail merchant who held a minority interest in the *Journal*, "stepped in and helped Mr. Lotspeich out" on several occasions when cash was short. Roy Lotspeich had discovered that operating a newspaper, particularly against a major chain-owned competitor such as the Knoxville *News-Sentinel*, was not an easy undertaking. Lotspeich had stepped from the relative obscurity and security of running a textile mill into the rough-and-tumble world of Knoxville newspapers and politics.

⁸²Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

Roy Lotspeich: From Shoe Salesman to Publisher

A traveling man from Greene County

Roy Nicholas Lotspeich was born on August 3, 1882, in the Nolichucky Valley of Greene County, one of the richest farming regions in East Tennessee. His father, W.A. Lotspeich, operated a small foundry that made iron kettles, skillets and other implements. One of young Roy's first jobs was on the road selling the things his father made. He would take it on a wagon with a team and peddle it in hardware stores and country stores throughout the area. This instilled in the young man a love of selling that remained with him throughout his life. After attending Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee, he worked in several stores before getting a job selling shoes on the road.⁸³

The young salesman made his base in Knoxville and it was there that he met the woman he would marry, Ethel Moore, daughter of a wealthy stove manufacturer. At the time, Lotspeich was 26 years old and "a man of limited financial means" but one who had "unlimited initiative, energy, ambition and ability."⁸⁴

Ethel Moore was born in Lynchburg, Va., on October 29, 1886, the daughter of William Carrick Moore and Gertrude Jeffords Moore. The family lived in California

⁸³The *Knoxville Journal*, September 9, 1951, p.1.

⁸⁴*Carter vs. Lotspeich*, Chancery Court of Knox County, No. 37437, Answer of Defendants, Ethel Moore Lotspeich and Ethel Lotspeich Smith, filed August 17, 1955.

and Nebraska before settling in St. Louis when Ethel was eleven. She graduated from Mary Institute in St. Louis in 1906. In 1908 the Moore family moved to Knoxville and built a house on South Seventeenth Street. There is no record of how the couple met, but their wedding on June 1, 1909, was a major social event in Knoxville. Miss Pattie Boyd, whose career as society editor spanned more than 50 years starting with the *Tribune* and continuing at the *Journal and Tribune* and eventually the *Journal*, described it as "one of the most elaborate and beautiful weddings ever witnessed in Knoxville." The interior of St. John's Episcopal Church was decorated with "brilliant electric lights," palms, ferns, potted plants and cut flowers, she wrote. "The bride wore an exquisite gown of white Duchess satin trimmed in Duchess and point lace hand embroidered in pearls. Her tulle veil was caught in the coiffure with a pearl and diamond ornament and on the cordage she wore a jeweled crescent, the gift of the groom."⁸⁵

After a short reception at the Moore home, the newlyweds hurried to the train station to catch the 12:35 a.m. train to New York where on June 3 they boarded the Cunard Line's *Slavonia* for a cruise to the Mediterranean.

Shipwrecked

The *Slavonia*, a steamship built in 1903, was considered "one of the crack passenger carriers running out of this port (New York) to the Mediterranean." It was making its first voyage after having been refitted and equipped with a wireless

⁸⁵The *Journal and Tribune*, June 2, 1909, p.7.

telegraph. On June 10, about 2:30 a.m. in heavy weather and rough seas, the passengers were awakened by a great crash — the *Slavonia* had hit a coral reef just off Flores Island in the Azores in the North Atlantic. The Lotspeichs and the other passengers rushed to the deck. Captain A.J. Dunning and his crew calmed the passengers, and the ship's band played popular songs of the day. Later, breakfast was served as usual and after daybreak, the passengers — 110 in cabin class and 300 steerage -- were put into lifeboats and ferried to safety on shore. No one was injured. The *Slavonia*'s radio operator had fired off SOS signals on the wireless as soon as the ship hit the reef. In a short time, the North German Lloyd Line's *Prinzess Irene* arrived on the scene and the cabin passengers were taken on board. The steerage passengers, mostly Italians bound for Naples, boarded another ship, the Hamburg-American Line *Batavia*. The *Slavonia* filled with water and sank about 24 hours later, the first Cunard passenger liner lost at sea.

The Lotspeichs and most of the other passengers continued their Mediterranean cruise aboard the *Prinzess Irene* despite the frightening experience.⁸⁶ Back home, the shipwreck made front page news in the *Journal and Tribune*, under the all-caps headline, "KNOXVILLE PEOPLE ON FOUNDERED LINER," with a deck reading: "Honeymoon of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Lotspeich is Made Memorable By the Foundering of the Cunard Liner Slavonia Off Flores Island in the Azores Group — Vessel is a Complete Wreck but the Timely Aid Rendered by Other Liners Enables Everyone of

⁸⁶The *New York Times*, June 12, 13 and 15, 1909.

the 410 Passengers To Be Taken Off In Safety.”⁸⁷

The couple returned to Knoxville where a year later Lotspeich founded, with his wife’s money, Appalachian Mills, a textile firm he operated until after he bought the *Journal* in 1936. At its peak, Appalachian Mills employed about 2,000 people.⁸⁸ During his years as head of Appalachian Mills, Lotspeich also began acquiring real estate holdings and at his death held considerable property both in downtown Knoxville and in what was then undeveloped farm areas west of the city.

After their return to Knoxville, Mr. and Mrs. Lotspeich moved into a house on what was then Temple Street in an area that has since been taken over by the University of Tennessee campus. Ethel Lotspeich became close friends with a woman who lived two houses down the street. When the woman was stricken with cancer, she asked Ethel to look after her daughter. And, as she was being wheeled into surgery for the final time, she asked her friend to adopt her baby if she did not survive. The woman died, and Ethel and Roy Lotspeich adopted the baby and raised the child as their own. They had no other children.⁸⁹

Purchase of the Journal

The *Journal*’s announcement of its impending purchase in its May 14, 1936, issue and the story of the conclusion of the deal three months later on August 8 gave

⁸⁷*Journal and Tribune*, June 12, 1909, p.1.

⁸⁸*Ibid.* September 9, 1951, p.1.

⁸⁹Bettie Carter Ramsey, interview with author, June 14, 1994.

little information about the new owner and publisher. It mentioned his founding of and connection to Appalachian Mills, his real estate holdings and unspecified "other business interests in Knoxville and East Tennessee."

Many things probably led the Lotspeichs to take the considerable risk of investing \$450,000 to buy an ailing newspaper during the Great Depression.

One reason undoubtedly was his belief that it was a good business investment, as he said in his statement when the purchase was announced. A second reason clearly was political. Lotspeich was a strong Republican and had been quietly influential in behind-the-scenes Knoxville for several years.

Bettie Ramsey, his niece, recalled the passion of his political beliefs.

He and Aunt Ethel would come to see my grandmother, his mother, a staunch Democrat, every Sunday night. Uncle Roy was a staunch Republican. I was a child then, nine years old or younger. They would talk but he never sat down. He would have his hands crossed behind his back and would pace the floor and they argued over politics — the whole time — neither one convincing the other.⁹⁰

His passion for politics and "solving the world's problems" remained with him until his death. As Mrs. Ramsey recalled:

On the night he died — I remember that Sunday night so well — when I got over to the home, Bleak House on the (Kingston) Pike, Bill Lee, the minister at St. John's then, said, "I was holding your Uncle Roy in my arms when he died and, you know, he was still trying to fight the world. He said, "I think he and Guy Smith felt that they could solve the problems of the world."

But the most compelling motivation for buying the *Journal* may have come from Mrs. Lotspeich. It was, after all, her money, inherited from her father's stove

⁹⁰Ibid.

manufacturing business, that financed the purchase, just as it was her money that had enabled her husband to found the textile mill years earlier.⁹¹

Bleak House

Immediately after they acquired the *Journal*, the Lotspeichs bought a mansion at 3150 Kingston Pike, the historic Bleak House where General James Longstreet made his headquarters during the Confederate occupation of Knoxville in the Civil War. The residence soon became famous for parties and social events hosted by the couple. Even though both were strict teetotalers throughout their lives, liquor was always served at the parties, Mrs. Ramsey said. As the *Journal* reported in her obituary, Mrs. Lotspeich was noted as "a warm and gracious hostess. The hospitality of Bleak House was not only famous in this city but throughout the country."⁹²

Among those entertained at Bleak House were former President Herbert Hoover, U.S. Senator Robert A. Taft, Mrs. Manuel Quezon, wife of the president of the Philippines, Helen Keller, and virtually every other prominent person who visited Knoxville during those years.⁹³

Mrs. Lotspeich also devoted herself to a myriad of social, charitable and civic activities over the years. She, along with her husband, was a vital force in the annual Wild Flower Festival, an event sponsored by the *Journal* and a forerunner to the

⁹¹*Carter vs. Lotspeich*, loc.cit.

⁹²The *Knoxville Journal*, December 10, 1962, p.1.

⁹³*Ibid.*

current Dogwood Festival. She was a vigorous campaigner for and defender of women's rights and was quoted as telling the Knoxville Women's Club in 1954 that women can achieve anything they set their minds to do."⁹⁴

Like her husband, she was a staunch Republican, tracing her party affiliation "to the day when President William McKinley pinned his picture button on me" when she was a child.⁹⁵

She was active in garden clubs, in the Tennessee Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, and in the development and continuation of several private philanthropic organizations, particularly the Knoxville Association for the Blind, and the Home for Friendless Babies until it was closed.⁹⁶

After her husband's death, she sold Bleak House, which she herself owned, to the United Daughters of the Confederacy, which still occupies it.

The Lotspeichs were Episcopalians. They belonged to Cherokee Country Club and spent their winters in Palm Beach, Florida, where they were members of the Everglades Club.

Mrs. Ramsey remembers her Aunt Ethel as "an ambitious person in every way." She said Mrs. Lotspeich was sometimes called tough and "I think when it came to the business world, she would hold her ground; she could be hard," but otherwise was very much the lady. Her Uncle Roy, she said, "was ambitious too, but I don't

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid.

think he cared to put on the dog.”

Mrs. Ramsey said she felt the social prestige of owning the newspaper was important to Ethel Lotspeich. “I remember when they bought Bleak House, how startled my mother was. ... She wondered if he was getting in over his head. I think social prestige was very important to her. I think she was pushing ... and also used money she had. He did get started because of her money. Otherwise he wouldn’t have.” Her mother was Ella Mae Lotspeich Carter, Roy Lotspeich’s sister.

Mrs. Ramsey remembers her uncle as a warm, caring family man. He paid for her to study music at Fitts Junior College in New York (1938-40). “It was anything but easy for him then to do that,” she said. “He made it possible for me to go to the opera every Friday night. These are heartwarming things. I was never to say anything or let Aunt Ethel know. “Lotspeich also provided well for his nieces and nephews in his will, setting up a trust that included them and made Mrs. Ramsey’s brother, John P. Carter, co-executor with Mrs. Lotspeich. Later, the family would split over the running of the *Journal* and separate trusts would be established for Mrs. Lotspeich and her adopted daughter, and the nieces and nephews.

Partners in everything

In her answer to that suit, Mrs. Lotspeich provided a glimpse of how she viewed her business relationship with her husband.

[F]rom the beginning until that marriage was ended by Lotspeich’s death, they were partners, not only in their marriage venture but also in various business ventures. ... with money supplied from the inheritance of defendant, Ethel Moore Lotspeich, together with her assistance, advice and

counsel, the said Lotspeich became an outstanding businessman in East Tennessee, and accumulated what is considered in this area to be a large fortune before his death. However, like other businessmen with varied interests, Lotspeich occasionally had financial reverses; and during the period following one of these reverses, defendants, with their own money, supplied the funds with which Lotspeich saved the investment made by him only a few years before in the *Journal*; otherwise, said investment would have been lost long before Lotspeich's death.⁹⁷

Lotspeich was well-known for playing the stock market. Several people interviewed for this study suggested that he often skirted the law in his financial dealings. However, he was never charged with any crime nor could any concrete evidence be found to support such allegations.

Mrs. Ramsey recalled one incident at Appalachian Mills before Lotspeich bought the *Journal*. Her brother, John Carter, who was an executive at the mill, confronted his uncle about a practice during the Depression years that he felt was not legal. As she recalled, the practice involved billing and collecting for goods before they were actually shipped to the customers. "They would be a shipment or so behind and yet they would have already received the money for it. It wasn't taking funds from one thing and using them for yourself, but it was still operating on money from orders that had not been filled," she said. Bob Spilman, vice president and secretary of Appalachian, defended the practice and a violent argument ensued. "There was actually a fistfight," she said. "Uncle Roy had to separate them. One threw an ink bottle at the other."

Former *Journal* employees who knew Lotspeich recall that he pretty much left

⁹⁷*Carter vs. Lotspeich*, loc. cit.

the running of the paper to the department heads. Jim Golden, the advertising manager during those years, said that Guy Smith was the real power behind the paper, although Lotspeich "always got his two words in."

Ben Byrd, who started at the *Journal* as sports writer in 1947 and eventually became sports editor, recalled that Lotspeich "never interfered at all in the newsroom."

"In the old building, his office was downstairs. And the editorial office, Guy Smith's office, was upstairs. It was a very rare day that he came up to Guy Smith's office. I don't know how much he influenced Guy Smith about what to do but he sure never messed with the news staff at all," Byrd said. "Guy Smith wasn't the kind of man to brook much interference."⁹⁸

The first time Byrd met Lotspeich, he ordered the publisher out of the sports department. Byrd was alone in the department that afternoon and very busy. At the time, the *Journal* was "big for fish pictures," he said.

"Anybody who caught a fish that measured over six inches, we'd run a picture in the paper," he said. "So a guy came up there bringing a big string of fish to get his picture taken. He had run into Mr. Lotspeich downstairs and Lotspeich told him to come up to the sports department and we'd take care of it."

All the photographers were out on assignment and nobody was around to take the picture, Byrd said. "So I told him we couldn't do anything until a photographer got back. I wasn't sure when that would be. He left and I guess he must have run into Mr. Lotspeich downstairs again and he (Lotspeich) asked him if he'd had his picture

⁹⁸Ben Byrd, interview with author, August 19, 1994.

taken and he said no. Mr. Lotspeich came up wanting to know why the picture hadn't been made of the fish. I didn't know who he was. I said, 'We can't take pictures without a damn photographer here to do it. Why don't you get on out of here and go on back downstairs.' I thought he was an advertising salesman. He was real nice about it. He said, 'Oh, well, I didn't understand.' He went back down. I got to know him pretty well later and I think he was probably a shy sort of man. He didn't like to butt in, even though he owned the place."

Five cents a mile and a chauffeur, too

Journal photographers probably had more contact with Lotspeich than most of the news staff because they would be assigned to take pictures for the advertising department and at social events at Bleak House. Photographer Hugh Lunsford remembers the publisher as "a nice guy who put on a gruff exterior." Lunsford especially remembers Lotspeich's concern for money. At the time, photographers had to use their own cars and got paid, as Lunsford recalls, about four or five cents a mile. They had to pay for their own parking, buy their own gas and do their own repairs. They had asked for an increase to seven cents a mile. "Lotspeich called us down to his office," Lunsford said. "He had his chart like Ross Perot. He showed us how he could operate his limousine and pay his chauffeur for five cents a mile." But the publisher finally came around and increased the mileage payment.⁹⁹

Lunsford also recalled that Lotspeich almost always had a good word for the

⁹⁹Hugh Lunsford, interview with author, September 14, 1994.

photographers when he would see them. "He would compliment us. ... He'd say, 'That was a good picture.' But you didn't know which one he was talking about."

Lunsford remembers Mrs. Lotspeich as "a sweet lady" who was very concerned about the staff and their problems, down to the quality of coffee in the newsroom. He said she knew everybody on the staff by name and knew about their families.

"I really liked her," Lunsford said. He said that when he would go to the mansion to take pictures she would always offer him food or a glass of wine.

Frank Jordan, who also joined the staff right after World War II, recalls covering an automobile wreck right in front of Bleak House late one night. To get the story in by deadline, he decided to telephone from the Lotspeich house. The publisher was still up and answered the door when Jordan knocked. "He recognized me and I asked him if I could borrow the telephone to call the story in," Jordan said. "It was the only time I was in that house and I was impressed with how many couches he had. He had this huge room, the living room, and I bet he had 10 or 12 couches in there. He took me in his office and I used his telephone and called the story in to the paper and he stood there and just chatted with me. Told me how much he appreciated me. As a person he was a friendly type person to me, at least. I don't know of anybody who didn't like him."¹⁰⁰

In addition to his civic, charitable and business activities, Lotspeich was known as an accomplished horseman. And, he was well-known around downtown Knoxville because of his daily walks through the business district, a practice he started when he

¹⁰⁰Frank Jordan, interview with author, August 23, 1994.

was still at Appalachian Mills. Indeed, it was on one of these daily walks in July 1951 that he suffered a fainting spell that was the first indication of a heart condition that would result in his death on September 8 of that year at the age of 69.

During Lotspeich's lifetime, the *Journal* continued to suffer from lack of adequate operating capital and lost its position of dominance in the Knoxville newspaper market. No dividends were ever paid to stockholders. Even before his death, according to court records, the *Journal* operated at a loss most years. But even in the good years, the profit margins were small and did not make up for the losses in other years. According to court records, the *Journal* earned a profit of \$18,900 in 1951, the year Lotspeich died. But over the next three years it lost more than \$200,000.

Tension increased among the heirs, particularly those directly involved in management of the newspaper. Mrs. Lotspeich received an offer of \$1 million for the money-losing paper, but turned it down. This led nephew John P. Carter, then a vice president of the *Journal*, to file a lawsuit in Chancery Court in 1955 attempting to force her to sell the paper. The dispute was settled two years later, just weeks before a joint operating agreement was reached between the two rival Knoxville newspapers.

Roy Lotspeich, after rescuing the *Journal* from insolvency in 1936, stepped aside after he hired Guy L. Smith as editor, and was content to remain in the background and let Smith run the paper. Consequently, it was Smith's name that became synonymous with the *Journal* and Smith who gave the paper its character until his death in 1968.

CHAPTER FIVE

Guy Lincoln Smith: Crusading Editor, Politician

Personal Journalism in Knoxville

When Guy Lincoln Smith died on Thursday, November 22, 1968, an era of crusading politician-editors in Knoxville ended. The *Knoxville Journal*, one of the few American newspapers still practicing a form of personal political journalism that had been common in the nineteenth century, would join the bland world of corporate newspapers that try to be everything to everybody in the community, studiously avoiding controversy and vigorous editorial positions.

Guy Smith was rarely if ever neutral on any issue or toward any person in public life. Nobody who knew Guy Smith was neutral about him. He evoked strong emotions from all with whom he came in contact. He emanated an aura of authority and power that often intimidated and cowed even men of great power and importance. Politicians, great and small, paraded daily to his office at the *Journal* to pay homage, receive guidance or ask his blessing on their endeavors. While he was unrelenting and merciless with his political foes, those he supported could do no wrong — until they crossed him. He was a champion of the needy, of a free press, of two-party democracy. His most famous crusade was his successful battle through the paper and the courts for equitable reapportionment of legislative seats based only on population. That battle ended in the U.S. Supreme Court's famous "one man, one vote" ruling. His

greatest political victory was the election of Howard Baker to the United States Senate and the opening up of Tennessee as a true two-party state.

Guy Smith was

stern. He was blunt. He demanded production. He demanded results. He demanded loyalty. Usually he got them. When he didn't get them, inside or outside the *Journal*, he expressed himself vigorously by word or by action.¹⁰¹

The editorial staff of his newspaper stood in awe of him, but almost to a person they respected him and many virtually worshipped him. To this day, veteran staffers speak of him with reverence and affection. Smith took care of his editorial employees, providing a financial helping hand to staffers temporarily down on their luck, giving drunks repeated chances to get their lives back in order, rehiring former staffers who had fallen on hard times elsewhere and needed a job, making sure that family members were taken care of when reporters were away on assignment, and winking at the ever-present newsroom high jinks.

In politics, Smith was loyal to his principles, not to people. His causes might change but the underlying principle did not. He was the quintessential behind-the-scenes politician, the master of the smoke-filled room. He is widely quoted as having told a prominent businessman who said he didn't want to run for mayor because he knew nothing about running a city, "You run for mayor; I'll run the city."¹⁰²

He combined the roles of politician and editor with class and finesse, never

¹⁰¹The *Knoxville Journal*, November 23, 1968, editorial page.

¹⁰²The *Knoxville Journal*, "Our First 150 Years," 15th of a series, published as pull-out section June 30, 1989, p.1-2. This material is from the personal collection of Hugh Lunsford, former *Journal* photographer.

seeing any conflict between the two. He used the newspaper, both in its editorial and news columns, to further his political ends, but he was ever the newspaperman, allowing his staff free rein to pursue non-political stories without interference, and an unbending defender of freedom of the press and speech. Given the *Journal's* constant financial woes, he would agree to run stories to please advertisers. But he refused to quash unfavorable stories of legitimate news value involving advertisers.¹⁰³

Johnson City native

Guy Lincoln Smith Jr. was born in Johnson City, Tennessee, on September 30, 1898, the son of Guy Lincoln and Mary Johnston Smith. He grew up in Johnson City and attended the University of Tennessee in Knoxville for a year, then transferred to Princeton University where he was graduated in 1919 with a bachelor of arts degree. At UT, Smith became friends with young Estes Kefauver, a friendship that remained warm throughout their lives even though they were on opposite sides politically. On June 21, 1921, Smith married Thelma McNabb.

He joined the *Knoxville Journal and Tribune* in 1920 as a reporter and later as an editorial writer. He returned to Johnson City in 1921 where he founded the *Johnson City Chronicle*, a paper that quickly grew from a weekly to a daily. Smith also was

¹⁰³Several former editorial employees related incidents in which Smith refused to knuckle under to advertisers' demands to quash stories. The author recalls many occasions when Smith would bring something that amounted to free advertising to the city desk and quip, "Here's a whoring job for you." Ron McMahan, in the "Our First 150 Years" series (15th, June 30, 1989) recounts an episode in which a prominent citizen tried to get a routine drunk driving report quashed. Smith ordered that the story be expanded and placed on Page One. Otherwise, it would have been a two-paragraph item buried deep in the paper.

involved in starting the *Bristol Bulletin* and the *Johnson City Staff News*, both weeklies, in 1925. In the Depression, Smith's newspapers in the Tri-Cities area fell victim to the roll back of advertising and in 1935 the papers went into receivership. Smith refused to declare personal bankruptcy and eventually paid back in full almost \$20,000 in obligations.¹⁰⁴

As a *Journal* reporter in 1920, Smith was assigned to cover the successful campaign of Republican Alfred Taylor for governor. He traveled throughout the state with Taylor, who had been a close friend of his late father, Guy L. Smith Sr. Two years later, when it was rumored that Tennessee Senator John K. Shields would be appointed to fill a vacancy on the United States Supreme Court, Governor Taylor told a reporter he would appoint young Guy Smith to fill the Senate vacancy. The *Journal and Tribune* reporter had boarded the governor's Pullman car when it stopped at the Knoxville station en route to Nashville and asked him who would be appointed to the Senate vacancy if it occurred. The governor replied:

By reason of the fact that no vacancy yet exists, that is rather a premature question. However, I have given the matter much study and in case a vacancy should occur I have in mind the appointment of Guy L. Smith, publisher of the *Johnson City Chronicle*.

He is a live wire and a true friend of mine. He is a graduate of Princeton University; is clean, honest, capable, and furthermore is an experienced, successful newspaper man, and you know that more and more newspaper men are being recognized as being well fitted for public positions of importance.

Mr. Smith is not only well equipped for this high place, but he has been my faithful supporter, both in and out of power. Further, he is the son of my old boyhood friend and political ally, the late Guy L. Smith. I feel

¹⁰⁴Smith, Guy L., letter to the editor of the Knoxville News-Sentinel, published November 10, 1955.

that this appointment would not only be approved by the state at large but, more important still, would insure (sic) the office being creditably filled.¹⁰⁵

As it turned out, Shields was not appointed to the Supreme Court bench. In any case, Governor Taylor apparently had forgotten that his young publisher friend was at the time barely twenty-four years old, six years shy of the constitutional age of thirty for U.S. senators.

Smith at the Journal

Smith returned to the *Journal* as Lotspeich's hand-picked editor in September 1937, just before his thirty-ninth birthday, and would remain in the post until his death in 1968. The paper carried no announcement of his coming and it was only on October 24, 1937, that his name began appearing on the masthead along with those of Lotspeich, Charles H. Smith Jr., Lotspeich's son-in-law who was vice president and assistant to the publisher, and Henry C. Page. Charles Smith and Guy Smith were not related.

As noted in Chapter Two, Robert McNitt, the managing editor brought in from Massachusetts the year before, departed shortly after Smith took over. McNitt's father cited Smith's actions in "going over Bob's head to instruct reporters and give them special assignments" and Lotspeich's refusal to interfere as one of the reasons for McNitt's rather sudden departure. The elder McNitt also describes in his book a story that his son obviously took some pride in pursuing:

¹⁰⁵*Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, November 12, 1922.

Some may remember the furor raised over the marriage of a child bride in some Dogpatch in the Tennessee mountains about fifty miles from Knoxville. The item came to Bob's attention in a casual paragraph in a bunch of country correspondence. Bob immediately dispatched his photographer to the hill country, and good pictures resulted, which the Associated Press was glad to pick up for its news picture service. In consequence of the attention given this case, official brakes were applied to the ardors of middle-aged men who wanted to marry mountain girls not yet in their teens.¹⁰⁶

McNitt's zeal in spreading this particular story likely did not please Guy Smith. Indeed, it obviously rankled him for several years. In an editorial in December 1948 blasting CBS radio for setting up a program in which two mountain families purported to reconcile a feud between them, Smith wrote:

First it was the Scopes monkey trial; then it was the child bride business; and now it's "feudin'"! There has never been a state that has made as much progress from a standpoint of economic development, during a period in which it was getting as much adverse publicity as has been the case with Tennessee.

Anybody who knows anything about mountain feuding knows that, if indeed any feud existed in Hamilton County, the radio stunt won't cure it. If there is none, in the true sense of the word, then the "reconciliation" business was pure hokum. Either way, Tennessee has Columbia Broadcasting System to thank for more bad publicity. Several hundred people throughout the nation were doubtless added to the number who all along have conceived of Tennessee as a jungle in which the natives go barefoot and make their clothes out of animal skins — or at least did so until TVA rescued them from their poverty and ignorance.

It is obvious that any young editor from Massachusetts who would propagate the image of Tennessee as a place where mountain men were routinely taking pre-teen brides would not have pleased the author of that editorial. Smith continued throughout

¹⁰⁶McNitt, op.cit., 17.

his long tenure as editor to deal directly with reporters, particularly the reporter covering politics, when it suited him to do so. Mostly however, he left the running of the news side to his associate editor.

'You can't do that!'

An incident just days after Smith took over gave the community a chance to see the new editor's stuff. A *Journal* reporter, Sam Adkins, had been insisting that City Judge R.A. "Rufe" Mynatt make court records available to the press. The judge had consistently refused, saying, "No paper man is going to get anything in my office." According to contemporary news accounts, Mynatt "approached the reporter from the rear and struck him so severely on the right side of his head the reporter's glasses were broken." The *Journal* swore out a peace warrant against the judge and filed suit in Chancery Court asking that the public records be made available to the public and the press. The *Journal* editorialized:

Perhaps the judge might be reminded that his docket or that of any other judge is not included in the list of his personal possessions, and any citizen, no matter how humble, has an unquestionable legal right to look it over at any time when the process will not interfere with the actual operation of the court.

We believe that Judge Mynatt acted yesterday in haste, perhaps his breakfast wasn't what it should have been, or maybe something else had happened to upset his usually pleasant dispositions.

Don't tell us we can't look at your docket, anyway, Judge!

You can't do that!¹⁰⁷

It didn't take Judge Mynatt long to change his mind. He hired Ray Jenkins to

¹⁰⁷The *Knoxville Journal*, September 21, 1937, editorial page.

represent him and Jenkins quickly issued a statement saying that the court docket would be opened to the press. The *Journal* withdrew its Chancery proceeding and Mynatt apologized for the "incident that occurred at the Safety Building a few days ago, in which he and Mr. Adkins were involved. He (Mynatt) has been through a long and trying ordeal in connection with the present investigation of City Council, all of which he feels was uncalled for, and which has worked an undue hardship upon him and his family, and was not unnaturally at high tension at the time of this incident. Had a little more diplomacy been exercised at the time, the incident would not have happened." The statement apologized as well to "the Hon. Roy Lotspeich," who "is a high type gentleman." Neither the statement nor the *Journal* story said who would pay for Adkins' smashed glasses.¹⁰⁸

Smith wasted no time in wading into the local political fray and quickly established that the afternoon newspaper was the enemy. His first major issue was opposition to city-owned electrical power systems, a position that predated his arrival at the *Journal*, but one he seized upon with relish when he took over. In an editorial, he labeled the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, without naming the paper, "the community's official public power propagandist." At the same time, the *Journal* editorially threw its weight behind a Knoxville businessman named George R. Dempster for the position of mayor-manager, even though he was a Democrat and, like the other four candidates, supported public power.¹⁰⁹ It would be the only time Smith and the *Journal* would

¹⁰⁸The *Knoxville Journal*, September 24, 1937, p.1.

¹⁰⁹The *Knoxville Journal*, October 23, 1937, editorial page.

support Dempster in anything. The two men later became bitter enemies and battled each other ferociously throughout their long careers in Knoxville politics.¹¹⁰

The *Journal* saw construction of a city-owned distribution system as a way of squandering millions of dollars. It said:

The fact of this whole matter is that the *Journal* — while it realizes the importance of a proper solution of Knoxville power question — knows that this city lived and moved and had its being almost one hundred and fifty years without going into the power business. We submit to the intelligent consideration of the voters that there are other — and at present even more vital considerations in this present Mayor's race than the power question — issues upon which this campaign should be decided. ...

We have no hesitance in making it plain so far as the public, Mr. Dempster, and the afternoon power propagandist are all concerned, that the *Journal* expects to continue to oppose with all its resources the follow of Knoxville's investment of from six to ten millions in a public ownership adventure.

Smith also took a swipe at the *News-Sentinel's* outside ownership.

The *Journal* is a Knoxville institution, a natural born hillbilly almost 98 years old. The afternoon public power propagandist, on the other hand, under the direction of ten holding companies with headquarters in New York, doubtless has connections which make it a much more suitable medium for the fiats of Mr. Lilienthal¹¹¹ than the *Journal* would be.

The *Journal* lost that battle, of course. Less than a year later, on September 2, 1938, Knoxville became the first major city of the Tennessee Valley to oust its investor-owned power company in favor of a municipal-owned company, the Knoxville Utilities Board, which still supplies the city's power and lights.

This was but the first of almost daily battles on the *Journal's* editorial page. No

¹¹⁰The feud between Smith and Dempster is examined in more detail later in this chapter.

¹¹¹David E. Lilienthal was a member of the first three-man TVA board and in 1938 became its chairman.

issue was too big or too small for Smith to tackle. He proffered advice and opinion on foreign affairs and national issues as well as on the most trivial local matters. In politics, the *Journal's* news columns closely echoed the editorial stance on the paper, giving prominence to stories and pictures that advanced that policy and relegating other items to the back pages or the waste basket.

Smith was a totally committed party man, but he also was a pragmatist. While East Tennessee remained solidly Republican, the other two grand divisions were just as solidly Democratic, virtually assuring election of Democrats to all statewide offices. In order to make sure East Tennessee got its share from the Democratic-controlled General Assembly, GOP legislators often would cooperate with the sitting governor to approve legislation. But on one battle, Smith would not compromise and virtually from the beginning of his tenure at the *Journal* made it a holy crusade. The Tennessee General Assembly had not reapportioned itself since 1901, despite a state Constitution mandate that it redraw the legislative boundaries every ten years on the basis of population. This meant that the state's cities, which had grown tremendously since the turn of the century, were grossly under-represented in the Legislature, which was controlled by the rural counties. Realizing that editorial outrage alone was not going to move the recalcitrant Legislature, Smith in 1959 promoted and joined a class action lawsuit demanding that the state be reapportioned to take into account its population growth from 2 million people in 1901 to nearly 3.3 million in 1950. The case, *Baker vs. Carr*, was dismissed by a three-judge federal panel in 1959 on the grounds that federal courts lacked jurisdiction in such state matters. It was appealed to the U.S.

Supreme Court. In 1962, the high court, in what became known as its “one man, one vote” ruling,¹¹² reversed the lower court ruling and held that federal courts do have jurisdiction and that “a justiciable cause of action” had been stated by the plaintiffs. The case was remanded to the U.S. District Court with instructions to develop equitable reapportionment. The eventual reapportionment of the state as a result of the ruling doubled the representation of East and West Tennessee in the state Legislature and had repercussions across the nation. Smith is believed to have coined the term “one man, one vote” in one of his early editorials on the subject.

Another continuing battle Smith waged and eventually won on the *Journal*'s editorial pages was for expansion of the city through annexation. The *Journal* supported candidates for city government who backed annexation and Smith dispatched reporters across the state and the South to report on the experiences of other cities' experiences with annexation.

Smith vigorously backed many progressive civic improvement projects over the years, including downtown revitalization, creation of industrial parks, consolidation of city and county government, expansion and improvement of the Knoxville Zoo, construction of the Civic Coliseum.

The zoo benefitted tremendously from a tongue-in-cheek campaign Smith started to “Save Ole Diamond.” Ole Diamond was an African bull elephant — said to be the largest of his type in captivity. The zoo planned to get rid of him because it had inadequate facilities for him and no mate to keep him calmed down. The SOD

¹¹²*Baker vs. Carr*, 364 U.S. 186 (1962).

campaign raised thousands of dollars and was publicized daily on the *Journal's* front page. At one point a *News-Sentinel* columnist in an "election sidelight" published an item asking, "Has the city's big elephant, Diamond, become a pawn in Thursday's county election?" The columnist then passed along the rumor that the SOD fund "may be used to help the Republican cause in the campaign and noted that "the funds are being handled by the *Knoxville Journal* and are not available to the *News-Sentinel*." Smith demanded and got an apology from the afternoon newspaper, then published on Page One of the *Journal* the original item under the heading "— The Libel, Reprinted from the *News-Sentinel* July 31, 1966," and alongside it, "— The Apology, Reprinted from the *News-Sentinel* August 1, 1966." In the humiliating apology, the *News-Sentinel* acknowledged that all the money collected in the Ole Diamond fund was held in a trust fund and "could not possibly be used for any other purpose than keeping the elephant in expanded quarters at the city Zoo. The *News-Sentinel* apologizes to the *Journal* and assures the public the political rumor was entirely unfounded."¹¹³ The fund eventually raised \$22,000 and, perhaps just as importantly, sparked renewed interest in the Knoxville Zoo. It was the catalyst for a massive zoo improvement program costing about \$3 million.¹¹⁴

Smith in 1940 created the Journal Milk Fund, an annual campaign during the Christmas season to raise money to pay for milk and vitamins for children — and in

¹¹³The *Knoxville Journal*, August 2, 1966, p.1.

¹¹⁴"Accomplishments of Guy L. Smith," attached to nomination form for Tennessee Newspaper Hall of Fame, dated August 29, 1974, p.6. This document is on file in the office of the director of the School of Journalism, College of Communications, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

later years, the elderly — throughout the year. The campaign raised \$1,240 in 1940, the year it was started, and by 1968 when Smith died, the annual total was more than \$31,000.¹¹⁵

He also started a “Brick Fund” through the newspaper’s columns that raised almost \$300,000 to build a new facility for the East Tennessee Children’s Hospital in Knoxville. The hospital’s overall fund drive, supported by the *Journal*, raised nearly \$3 million during a two-year campaign.¹¹⁶

For years, Smith, a teetotaler, and the *Journal* battled to keep Knoxville dry. In the 1950s, it was one of the largest dry cities in the United States. Although legally dry, whiskey flowed through Knoxville virtually unchecked through a multi-million dollar bootlegging industry, with all the attendant payoffs and governmental corruption. About 1955, the *Journal* began to soften its opposition to legal liquor and in 1960, with a friendly mayor and city government in office, the *Journal* launched a vigorous campaign for legalization that was accompanied by a countywide crackdown led by state police troopers in March 1961 of all illegal liquor outlets, including country clubs and other social clubs that had served liquor by the drink with impunity for years. In the next referendum on the issue, the voters approved legal control of liquor.

In the battle against legal liquor, the *Journal* found itself in an unholy alliance with bootleggers and fundamentalist preachers. The bootleggers put up the money and

¹¹⁵Ibid. p.2.

¹¹⁶Ibid. p.6.

the preachers and the *Journal* provided the soapbox. The *News-Sentinel*, on the other hand, consistently battled for legal control. Loye Miller relished the battle and when a referendum battle was heating up he would sometimes stay home from church on Sunday morning to listen to the radio preachers rail against him as “that evil Loye Miller up at the *News-Sentinel*.”¹¹⁷

During one of the referendums, a preacher led a crowd of drys in a march to the *News-Sentinel* building on Church Street. The preacher had a bullhorn and yelled out that he wanted the editor of the *News-Sentinel* to stick his head out the window so you can see what an evil snake in the grass he really is. Two men from the composing room were in the newsroom and grabbed Gunby Rule, the only editor on duty that afternoon, and shoved his head out the window. Rule, a grandson the fabled Captain William Rule, founder of the *Journal*, later swore that when the preacher saw him he looked up and winked.¹¹⁸

In the end, legal control became one of the rare local issues on which the two Knoxville newspaper agreed. As Mike Miller, Loye Miller’s son, recalls, “There was so much competition that if one paper said one thing the other one automatically went the other way. They just distrusted each other so much.” Miller, who himself worked at the *News-Sentinel* before becoming a Washington correspondent for Scripps-Howard News Services, remembers the competition as “more like a holy war. It was not a friendly rivalry.” The rivalry extended even to the society pages. If a picture of a

¹¹⁷Mike Miller, interview with author, September 16, 1994.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*

bride ran in one paper, the other would refuse to run it.

Miller said that even though his father never said anything bad against Guy Smith at home, "I sort of got the impression over the years ... that Guy Smith must be this awful, evil man. Later on in life when I first met him ... at the 1964 Republican Convention in San Francisco, he was nice to me. He went out of his way to be nice to me and I thought this is not such a bad guy after all."

Miller said his father felt Smith wanted to run the town, to own the politicians and have them do his bidding.

In the *News-Sentinel* morgue's file on Guy Smith is a clipping of a *Journal* editorial pasted on a sheet of paper. The last paragraph of the editorial was marked and a note in the margin read, "Proof that GLS, assuming he wrote this, can write and with deep human feeling." It was signed LWM, 4/14/53. The editorial cited a number of tragic stories that had appeared on the front page of the *Journal* the day before that showed "a panorama of human woe and heartbreak." The marked paragraph read:

The heart does not beat, unless it were a renegade from birth, that is not touched by these sudden and violent manifestations of how uncertain is the course and conduct of mankind. It would be easy to let ourselves be overwhelmed by gloom and depression at this moment when spring offers her greatest charms, as we contemplate this unhappy chain of events. Certainly all those directly concerned must know that they have the deepest sympathy of those who have read the accounts. And in these hours when grief bites deeply into the soul they can remember that however wrong the human race can go, whatever startling terrors and trepidations it must face, that always there is sympathy. Without it the human race is lost. With it can rise above any disaster.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹The *Knoxville Journal*, April 11, 1953, editorial page.

While the *Journal* supported its share of noble and worthy civic causes, it was more often on the opposing side of many civic undertakings, including in 1951 buying voting machines for Knox County. The paper editorialized:

We repeat — the only way to hold honest elections is to have honest men to conduct them. No machine and no system will do the work, even though every safeguard has been placed around them. And Republican voters in contemplating the expenditure of \$300,000 of the taxpayers' money, might well keep in mind that the election machinery is all in Democratic hands.¹²⁰

Voting machines undoubtedly would have been worth the money had Republicans been in control of the county Election Commission.

The *Journal* also vigorously opposed efforts in the early 1950s to split the University of Tennessee by creating a campus in Memphis.

The *Journal* was ever vigilant in the post-war era to creeping socialism, in TVA and elsewhere in the fabric of American life. When President Harry S Truman called for government action for better housing, better medical care and better schools, the *Journal* contended that "the whole history of this country completely refutes" the viewpoint that government should bring about these things. Presaging today's debate on health care, the *Journal* argued that in health care more than 60 million Americans were covered by private hospitalization policies and that 34 million were covered by medical expense policies. "This is a great record for the nation's insurance policies and it is a tremendous argument against the kind of fiddle-faddle being turned out by the President and his left-wing advisors on the subject of government-paid medical

¹²⁰The *Knoxville Journal*, January 24, 1951, editorial page.

care such as the British recently installed in the course of nationalizing that country.”¹²¹

A couple of years later, the *Journal* was warning that while the American people would never vote in socialism, “many thoughtful citizens are beginning to suspect the nation may be Socialized before many of us wake up to what is happening to us.” The editorial, warning that Truman’s new budget would increase the federal tax bite from a fourth of the average citizen’s income to one half, added, “The current war scare is working perfectly into the plans of the New and Fair Dealers who have exerted every effort, since 1932, to get this country on the same road which has been taken by the British and practically all the nations of Western Europe.”¹²²

While the *Journal* could always be counted upon to oppose any increase in taxation, it had just a few days earlier acknowledged that more tax revenue would be needed for “pay-as-you-go financing of the national war effort” and came out in support of a national sales tax. “Selecting a nice, round figure for use as an example, a ten per cent national sales tax would yield on that kind of national income \$20 billion of the new money required, or more than the increase of next year’s budget over this year’s federal spending,” the paper editorialized.¹²³

Guy Smith provided a laundry list of his positions during the Korean War in a January 1, 1951, editorial that characterized his positions on international and national

¹²¹The *Knoxville Journal*, September 9, 1949, editorial page.

¹²²The *Knoxville Journal*, January 16, 1951, editorial page.

¹²³The *Knoxville Journal*, January 10, 1951, editorial page.

issues throughout the Cold War. Summarized, these positions included: Get out of the United Nations; bring American troops home from Korea "where they never should have been sent in the first place"; avoid future Korea and "further wild goose chases in which American boys are sent into a foreign war backed only by resolutions of approval from other nations; make the Western Hemisphere the nation's primary military responsibility, leaving primary responsibility for Europe to the Europeans; quit providing money and manpower for arming Europe; utilize the manpower of Japan and Germany to resist Russian aggression; resist the efforts on the domestic scene of all "pressure groups, whether business, industry or labor to carve out for themselves cushions against the sacrifices which all of us are going to have to make to support a defense effort"; "stop in their tracks the reformers and bleeding hearts" trying to take advantage of the war situation to socialize America; lengthen the legal work week to forty-four or forty-six hours to stimulate production without price and wage restrictions; put maximum pressure on the administration and Congress to hold non-war expenditures to a minimum to keep taxes down; end the Marshall Plan "handouts" to Socialist governments; "clean out the State Department, getting rid of (Secretary of State) Dean Acheson and all his men of like mind, and then ceaselessly search out and prosecute the Reds, pinks, and plain crackpots who still hold responsible posts in our government."

As to the latter point, the *Journal* was a tireless ally of Joe McCarthy and the *Chicago Tribune* during this period in blasting alleged Communists and fellow travelers on the national, state and local scene. A favorite local target was the

Highlander Folk Center whose director, Miles Horton, the *Journal* saw as a sinister Communist relentlessly plotting the overthrow of the American democratic system.

The *Journal* was outraged and indignant when Truman fired General Douglas MacArthur as commander of U.S. forces in Korea a few weeks later. It said:

For the first time in history an American commander has been relieved by reason of pressure from foreign governments, and from governments which had almost no fighting troops in the field.

Truman's action may be regarded as the final public admission that the sovereignty of this great nation, whose freedom has been a vaunted possession for almost two centuries, has been bartered away for the false promises of peace in the United Nations charter.¹²⁴

Not surprisingly, the *Journal* saw the removal of Truman and the Democrats from the White House and Congress as the only solution to America's problems.

Guy Smith snubs Ike

Smith, in the meantime, had scored a major political upset in 1950 with the election of a trusted friend and political ally, Howard H. Baker of Scott County, to Congress. Baker, with the strong support of Smith and the *Journal*, ousted long-time Congressman John Jennings. The battle, in the Republican Primary, was one of the fiercest ever seen in a district that has sent Republicans to Congress since the party was founded. Smith had been elected state GOP chairman in 1948, a post he would hold for ten years, and the Second District victory consolidated even further his position as the party's maximum leader and set the stage for the biggest battle of all,

¹²⁴The *Knoxville Journal*, April 12, 1951, editorial page.

the 1952 GOP presidential race. Under Smith's leadership, the state GOP was squarely behind Ohio Senator Robert Taft for the Republican nomination. It is widely believed among former *Journal* employees that Smith had been given assurances of a Cabinet post in a Taft administration. Confident of victory, Smith went to Chicago as a member of the Tennessee delegation headed by Representative Baker.

In Chicago, however, a steamroller for General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander in Europe in World War II, quashed Taft's hopes — and Smith's — in short order. Eisenhower was nominated on the first ballot. Eisenhower was the last man Smith and the Tennessee delegation wanted. A report by *Journal* reporter Ted York from the convention three days before the first ballot said that if a deadlock developed between Taft and Eisenhower, the Tennessee delegation was prepared to switch to General MacArthur "who is looming larger and larger as a compromise candidate."¹²⁵

The Tennessee delegation stuck with Taft until it was absolutely clear that the Ohio senator was defeated. When that happened, delegation chairman Howard Baker arose and switched the Tennessee votes to Eisenhower. The move brought a great outburst from the hall because it was well known that a member of the Tennessee delegation, First District U.S. Representative B. Carroll Reece, was Taft's southern campaign manager. Baker told a reporter afterward that the GOP organization in Tennessee would support Eisenhower "100 percent."¹²⁶

¹²⁵The *Knoxville Journal*, July 9, 1952, p.1.

¹²⁶The *Knoxville Journal*, Associated Press dispatch from Chicago, July 12, 1952, p.1.

Smith's unwavering support of Taft caused a furor that brought into question his ability to continue to lead the party in the state in the wake of Eisenhower's nomination. The flap, fanned into a major incident by *News-Sentinel* associate editor Edward B. Smith's convention reporting, revolved around Smith's failure to join the Tennessee delegation in calling on Eisenhower at his headquarters at the Blackstone Hotel on the eve of the balloting. The afternoon newspaper published a picture of the encounter, pointing out in the caption that all the delegates were there except Guy Smith. Later, the *News-Sentinel* obtained a picture from the *Chicago Tribune* that showed Smith "stalking out of the Eisenhower headquarters" at the Blackstone on the morning of July 10.

The episode infuriated Guy Smith who, on returning to Knoxville, fired off a letter to the three Scripps-Howard newspapers in the state that had used Edward Smith's columns, giving his version of what transpired at the Blackstone. The *News-Sentinel* published Guy Smith's letter in full alongside the *Chicago Tribune* picture of him walking out of the headquarters past reporters, including Edward Smith, and Edward Smith's own account of what had happened. Edward Smith gave this report:

We all lined up in the corridor leading to the Eisenhower suite as the meeting hour arrived. Then suddenly Mr. Smith, who had been up near the suite entrance, came back down through the crowded corridor. He was heard to say something about "ringers" wanting to be in on the meeting, and that he wouldn't be a party to such a meeting. He was obviously referring to Mr. (Allan) Strawbridge, who ran against Carroll Reece in 1948 for the U.S. Senate nomination; Mr. (Ralph) Duggan, who managed the Dewey campaign that year in Tennessee; and Mr. (John A.) Prichett, well-known anti-Reece Republican.

We reporters couldn't tell what had taken place up in the Eisenhower suite; we were not sure whether the delegation had yet gone into the suite. But in a few moments were allowed to file into the

headquarters where Eisenhower stood smiling between Baker and others in the delegation.

Later, Congressman Baker held a little press conference and he was asked if Mr. Smith had ever gone into the Ike headquarters and shaken hands with the General. Baker smiled wanly and said, "You'll have to ask Mr. Smith about that."¹²⁷

Edward Smith's column also said, "When the Eisenhower bandwagon began to roll, Mr. Smith disappeared from his seat in the convention hall. He was not there when Chairman Baker cast the delegation's vote for Ike."

Guy Smith denied that he deliberately snubbed Ike. In his version, Guy Smith wrote that the delegation called U.S. Representative Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania and asked that it be allowed to meet with Eisenhower with no one else in the room. Scott agreed, Smith said, and the delegation left immediately for the Blackstone.

There we were ushered into an anteroom where Rep. Baker was told by some man by the name of Pheiffer that the arrangement made by Rep. Scott was contrary to the headquarters rule, and that the Tennesseans present in the headquarters at the time would have to go in with the delegation.

It seemed to me that this was highly discourteous to the delegation in view of Rep. Scott's agreement, and consequently I left the anteroom where we were waiting to be received by the General.

When it was learned that I had left, and that other members of the delegation were ready to do so, Pheiffer then changed his tune and the delegation was permitted to call on the General without others being in attendance, as originally agreed.

By this time I had already gone out of the Blackstone and returned to my hotel, not knowing of the change of plan which my departure brought about and which enabled the delegation to hold its private conference with Gen. Eisenhower as originally agreed.¹²⁸

Smith said, "I have become weary of the repeated prejudicial effort of your

¹²⁷The Knoxville News-Sentinel, September 10, 1952, p.11.

¹²⁸Ibid.

group of papers to keep this half-truth alive with the unflattering implications carried along with it," and offered to buy advertising space to run his letter if the papers refused to print it as editorial matter. He signed it as chairman of the Republication State Executive Committee.

The Journal likes Ike

Whether the snub was intentional or not, Smith's diehard attitude toward Taft was creating problems back home at the *Journal* where associate editor Steve Humphrey had been left in charge of the newsroom. Not long after the bulletins flashed across the wires that Eisenhower had been nominated, Ethel Lotspeich, who had taken over as publisher when her husband died the year before, marched into the newsroom along with John P. Carter, her husband's nephew and the vice president of the *Journal*. Dave Garrison was city editor at the time and he recalls the moment vividly:

They came up to the newsroom on the freight elevator. Mrs. Lotspeich walked over to Steve Humphrey and had a very animated conversation. Humphrey, I could see his face getting redder and redder and he was slapping his fist down on the desk and he was saying, "No, no, no!" I heard her say to Steve, "You can do it, or you can go home." Steve said, "I'll go home." He went over and got his hat and rammed it down and he left in the middle of the edition.¹²⁹

The publisher and Carter went back downstairs and Garrison took over the job of getting the paper out in Humphrey's absence. A few minutes later, Mrs. Lotspeich and Carter returned to the newsroom and called Garrison aside.

¹²⁹Dave Garrison, interview with author, July 9, 1994.

She said, "I've just had a conversation with Mr. Humphrey." I said, "I heard part of it." She said, "I told him roughly what I'm going to tell you. You will write an editorial to run on Page One endorsing the nomination of Dwight Eisenhower for president of the United States and if you tell me no, you can get up and go home." I said, "Mrs. Lotspeich, you don't appreciate the position you put me in. ... I'm not in a position to go home. I've got a job to do and I'm trying to do it well."

She said, "Well, people seem to forget that in a crisis of this kind, I call the shots when Guy's away."

I said, "Well, I've never written an editorial since I've been here. I've written everything else, but I don't have any idea of what to say in an endorsement of Mr. Eisenhower. In the first place, I know that as soon as he gets back, Guy'll fire me if I do it."

She said, "No, Guy will not fire anybody." So I told her that against my better judgment I would write the editorial. That was the only one I wrote, I think, that appeared in publication. It ran on Page One, an editorial endorsing Eisenhower. I waited for Guy to come back. He walked in his office. He had a very dour look on his face. I guess he had the weight of all the Republicans in Tennessee on him. I watched him go in. I was sitting at city desk, running through the early assignments. Humphrey still had not come back.

I said to him, "I know what you and I have to talk about. We might as well get started." He said, "Don't think anything about that. You did what I would have done if I had been here. I understand it. Incidentally, it was a pretty good editorial."

But his world had just fallen apart. One minute he was talking to the man who going to be the next president of the United States and he was going to have a part in it. His stock was going up. All at once the whole thing was torpedoed. But we got through that situation. His friendship or his rapport with Mrs. Lotspeich went down hill from that point.

Readers would never have known from the *Journal's* front page that morning that the paper had not supported Eisenhower from the beginning. A two-line streamer in 72-point type proclaimed: "Eisenhower, Nixon Lead Great Republican Crusade For Freedom In America, World." A four-column portrait of Eisenhower just below the streamer was captioned, "The Next President." Under that was a two-column picture of Senator Richard M. Nixon who was Eisenhower's running mate, and Garrison's

editorial. The editorial read:

The *Journal* today wholeheartedly and without reservation endorses the candidacy of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Republican nominee, and calls upon all good Americans to do the same, with an eye toward victory in November.

The Republican Party has made its choice. It has selected Dwight Eisenhower to be the next President of the United States — a goal that may be obtained only if every shoulder is put to the wheel.

Senator Taft, as gracious in defeat as he was brave in battle, was the first to pledge his support to General Eisenhower following his nomination. The *Journal* urges its readers and good Americans everywhere to join this concerted drive by the Grand Old Party to rid our nation's capital of the pestilence that has been visited upon it for the past 20 years.

General Eisenhower will find us "in ranks" when the shooting starts.¹³⁰

The military terminology came naturally to Garrison who had returned to the *Journal* in 1946 following his combat service in Europe in World War II and his discharge as a major in the U.S. Army.

Smith made his peace with the Eisenhower organization and put all his force behind Ike's successful campaign in Tennessee. His enemies inside the party were not content to drop the matter. In March 1953, State Representative Beverly C. Wood fired off an air mail, special delivery letter to the Republican National Committee in Washington charging that Guy Smith was trying to build up a dictatorship and establish one-man control of the party in Tennessee. Assistant Chairman William T. Pheiffer, the man Smith had clashed with over the appointment with Eisenhower ("some man named Pheiffer"), replied in a letter dated March 18, 1953,

We doubt that anyone in a responsible Party position would sanction an assertion that any one person in Tennessee, or in any other State, has sole

¹³⁰The *Knoxville Journal*, July 12, 1952, p.1.

patronage power. I speak advisedly, on the basis of investigation and my extensive handling on the National level of Tennessee political matters, in saying that no person from your State has ever asked or even suggested that anyone be vested with such absolute authority. Certainly, such a construction of the patronage situation had not come to our attention prior to the time that you telephoned me. It, therefore, follows that there has been no grant of one man patronage power in Tennessee or elsewhere.¹³¹

Pheiffer went on to say, "We look on Tennessee as a real star in the galaxy of States which rallied to the Republican banner in 1952." Smith issued his own statement to the *Nashville Banner* in which he said Pheiffer's letter "completely debunks the myth which Mr. Wood and other critics of the Tennessee Republican organization have tried to build up, namely, that I or any of the party elected officials have undertaken to build up a dictatorship in the Party, or to establish one man control of patronage in Tennessee." Smith continued:

In the list of those most hysterical in their opposition to the existing state organization I count off the names of one after another who, while he may have supported Gen. Eisenhower last November, supported Kefauver whole-heartedly four years ago and last year Albert Gore. These are the half-baked Republicans who presume to take charge of the Republican Party in Tennessee and to advise the Republican National Committee as to its course. As long as I am chairman of the Republican Party in Tennessee it will not be the pocket-piece of either Democratic faction. The Democrats know that and, I suspect, respect me more than they do these groveling loud-speakers who are willing to make any sacrifice of party interest to gain personal political power.

I am a man of peace.¹³²

Smith would remain in the GOP state post until 1958.

¹³¹William T. Pheiffer letter to Hon. Beverly C. Wood, House of Representatives, State of Tennessee, Nashville, Tennessee, March 18, 1953. Copy of this letter was found in Guy L. Smith's file in the morgue of the Knoxville News-Sentinel.

¹³²Guy L. Smith, undated statement for the *Nashville Banner*, found in his file at the Knoxville News-Sentinel morgue along with the Pheiffer letter dated March 18, 1953.

The Smith-Dempster feud

Smith, as can be seen from his writing, relished rough and tumble politics. He did not mince his words or pull his punches. Allies could fall into disfavor overnight and be back in grace by the next election. But there was one feud that was bitter and deeply personal. This was Guy Smith's on-going battle with Knoxville industrialist-politician George R. Dempster.

Dempster was a native Knoxvillian whose father came from Scotland and whose mother was Irish. They came to Knoxville in the 1870s. In 1907 at the age of 19 Dempster and his brothers went to work on construction of the Panama Canal. He worked as a steamshovel operator and even invented a method for a steam shovel to empty itself. He told the shovel manufacturer about his idea but they said they weren't interested. A few years later, the company came out with a similar device. Dempster would tell the story and add, "That's how I learned about patents."

On their return to Knoxville, the brothers formed Dempster Brothers, a firm whose "Dempster Dumpster" became the standard garbage removal receptacle in cities throughout the world. Dempster, a Democrat, also got involved in state and local politics, serving a term as state commissioner of finance and taxation in 1932. He later served three terms as city manager and in 1951 he was elected mayor of Knoxville, serving from January 1, 1952, until January 1, 1956. He also served as chairman of the board of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and president of Citizens for TVA. He grew up as a Presbyterian but became a member of St. James Episcopal Church to be with his wife. He was fond of saying that she grew up as a Republican

but became a Democrat to be with her husband. Dempster neither smoked nor drank, but he was well-known for his salty language. He is quoted as having said of his archenemy in the Knoxville political arena, longtime Councilman Cas Walker, "If I ordered a whole truck load of SOBs and they sent just Cas, I'd pay for the whole shipment." But Walker, perhaps the most colorful character in modern Knoxville politics, said at Dempster's funeral in September 1964, "He was a man. You knew where you stood with George Dempster." Of a particularly pompous individual in Knoxville politics, Dempster once said, "He's the only man I know who can strut sitting down." Dempster was a "quiet philanthropist," preferring to make his charitable donations and actions in private rather than making them public. A reporter once asked him on his birthday if he thought they were "coming too fast." Dempster snapped back, "No, when they stop coming I'll be dead."¹³³

In politics, he was a liberal and a Democrat, which made him a natural enemy of Guy L. Smith. However, the bitterness between them surpassed the enmity either man harbored for others just as committed to their causes and their parties. If Dempster was for something, Smith and the *Journal* automatically were against it.

"Those two men really disliked each other," former *Journal* sports editor Ben Byrd recalled. "It wasn't a matter of political philosophy. They really despised each other. They had hated each other for 20 years."

Nobody seems to know precisely what caused such bitterness and hatred between these two men. They started off as friends. When Smith came to Knoxville in

¹³³Telephone conversation with Ann Dempster Smallman, August 30, 1994.

1937, Dempster, then city manager, was writing a column in the *Journal*. The *Journal* strongly supported Dempster in an early, unsuccessful, run for mayor even though Dempster supported and the *Journal* opposed municipal ownership of the electrical power distribution network. Shortly after that, however, Dempster and Smith had a falling out. Most former *Journal* employees assume it was merely the fact that Smith had earned the title of "Mr. Republican," while Dempster often was labeled "Mr. Democrat," putting the two men at permanent loggerheads. However, the bitterness of the feud suggests that it went deeper than that. Dempster family members recall that the fuss started over a loan Dempster made to Guy Smith when he was broke in the 1930s. Smith acknowledged that Dempster had given him a small loan, but he said, "The reasons for my opposition to Dempster had nothing to do with the \$200 or \$300 loan he made; he has simply taken a true set of facts and distorted them to suit his diseased imagination." He did not say, however, what it was that caused their feud. Ironically, in their latter years, when the feud was at its most bitter point, the two men were virtually neighbors on Cherokee Boulevard in Sequoyah Hills along the Tennessee River.

The obscurity of the editorial page

The issue of the loan spilled into the public arena in 1955 when the *News-Sentinel* published comments by Dempster implying that Smith had failed to pay his Depression debts to him and others. Smith replied in a letter which the afternoon newspaper published on Page One of its November 10, 1955 issue:

Editor,
The Knoxville News-Sentinel
Knoxville, Tennessee

I am aware, as I suspect the public is, of your competitive interest in the publication of any attack on me which tends to tarnish my reputation or besmirch my character. You have demonstrated this repeatedly in the past and I, therefore, would not even suggest that you give the same prominence to my brief rebuttal of the charges made by Dempster that you gave his attack on me. I thought perhaps I might seek the obscurity of your editorial page.

For a lifelong character-assassin such as Dempster, the process of taking a set of facts out of context, then disgorging them by a false motivation has been reduced to a science. In this letter, I would like to deal with two items in his mad-dog assaults on me over the past decade and a half.

Item One: How I turned on him when he asked for payment of a note 18 years ago — I believe the amount was \$200 or \$300. Dempster tells the truth when he charges that I was "broke" when I came to Knoxville in 1937. I had, along with a good many others, lost everything I had in the dark days of the '30s. It is true that he lent me a few hundred dollars, but even Dempster will not claim he has not been paid. (Nor was he paid two cents on the dollar, as he settled his own debts with the old Holston-Union National Bank. This institution, it will be remembered, went under as the result of scandalous financial manipulation on the part of Dempster's political godfathers, including J. Basil Ramsey, whose firm recently prepared the financial plan for Knoxville's still unused sewage disposal plant.)

At the time these small loans were made, almost 20 years ago, Dempster was delighted, or appeared to be, to give this small help. You don't borrow money from your enemies! You would think, to hear the gentleman talk, that he had lent me a million dollars and had lost it all when, as a matter of fact, all that really emerges from the Dempster charges is the fact that a small man has undertaken to use an act, performed more than a decade and a half ago under the guise of friendship to besmirch my reputation. His behavior is the measure of a man whose whole life is a record of betrayal.

In the past 18 years since I have been in Knoxville I have sent back to Johnson City, where I lost my property in 1937, almost \$20,000 on obligations which I was advised by friends to meet through the bankruptcy court, but I declined to take this easy way out. If this is a bad record, then let Dempster make the most of it. The reasons for my opposition to Dempster had nothing to do with the \$200 or \$300 loan he made; he has simply taken a true set of facts and distorted them to suit his diseased imagination.

The second item to which I would call attention was his visit to West High School last year. He was invited there to make a speech before a class in civics. He devoted his whole time to making an assault upon me.

It happened that my young son was not in the class, though his classmates were. If the boy had been there it would not have deterred this vicious character-assassin, however. He has never hesitated to stage his personal assaults on me, no matter how embarrassing this may have been to the organization or audience before which he spoke.

There is a lesson in my experience with this man for the public. I have had the courage to oppose his vaulting ambitions for dictatorial control of this city. Any one of you who read this might well have been the target of his abuse if you had taken the same public position.

This man Dempster deserves to be relegated to the political ash heap and buried so deeply that one of his own Dumpsters can't dig him out. This is a matter of public sanitation.

Very truly yours, Guy L. Smith.

Ben Byrd, recalling Smith's line about seeking the "obscurity of your editorial page," said, "No question who won that round."¹³⁴

Dempster held his own in the battle with Smith, not only with the verbal barrages before various groups alluded to by Smith in his letter, but also by more direct action. He is even alleged to have engineered a raid in which Roy N. Lotspeich, the *Journal* publisher, was caught with a load of whiskey in his car. Around Christmas 1948 when Knoxville was still "dry," Lotspeich, also a teetotaler, had his Packard automobile pulled over by two constables. The officers searched the car and found a quantity of whiskey in the trunk. A grand jury refused to indict Lotspeich on charges of illegal possession of whiskey. Lotspeich said the whiskey was to be used as Christmas gifts for *Journal* advertisers. While neither newspaper apparently ran stories of the arrest, Dempster had no hesitation in blasting Lotspeich a few weeks later when

¹³⁴Ben Byrd, interview with author, August 19, 1994.

Dempster took over editorial direction of a labor publication known as the *East Tennessee Labor News*. In an issue in early April 1949, Dempster provided full details of the raid on Lotspeich's car. In a Page One "news" story on Dempster's debut with the publication, the *Journal* said:

The lead editorial of this week's issue was devoted to a tirade of vilification of the publisher and editor of the *Knoxville Journal*. The article was advertised on page one of the six-page issue in an eight-column line of type half an inch high, and was written in typical Dempster style.

The topic of the piece was a review of the raid on the *Journal* publisher. The liquor confiscated was intended for gifts for the paper's customers.

This editorial connection represents an extension of Dempster's activities in the publishing field. Within the past few years he has confined himself to publication at every election of a libelous attack on Roy N. Lotspeich and Guy L. Smith which was made part of the minutes of the House when Charlie Thompson was a member of the Knox delegation in 1945. The article was written by Dempster and placed on the House *Journal* by Thompson and is therefore "privileged" legally since no damage suit can be brought for republication of the record of a court or legislature.

It is supposed that Dempster has sought this new outlet for his spleen since it has become increasingly difficult in the past few weeks for his stooges to arrange speaking dates for him before local clubs and organizations. No matter what subject is assigned to him, he delivers a tirade against his political opponents. He is never hampered by facts in these oratorical excursions.¹³⁵

The matter came up again in the *Journal* a few weeks later in a report on implying some questionable acts by two constables, Clyde Carter and Charles E. Alexander. The article said in a paragraph far down in the jump:

Constables Carter and Alexander are the same officers who staged at the behest of George Dempster a blackmail raid upon the automobile of Roy N. Lotspeich, publisher of the *Knoxville Journal*, last Christmas.¹³⁶

¹³⁵The *Knoxville Journal*, April 10, 1949, p.1 and 2.

¹³⁶The *Knoxville Journal*, July 29, 1949, p. 2.

In another incident, Dempster ordered Smith's Cadillac attached for non-payment of \$94.01 in back personalty taxes. Smith immediately paid the back tax under protest. The warrant was served on Mrs. Smith at their residence at 2216 Cherokee Boulevard, just a few doors down from the Dempster residence at 2061 Cherokee in the posh section of Sequoyah Hills overlooking the Tennessee River/Fort Loudoun Lake. Smith used the *Journal* news story about the incident to lambast his enemy once again:

Dempster's order to an embarrassed police force to levy on and drive off my automobile to enforce collection of a personalty tax charge of something less than \$100 is typical of this man's use throughout his political life of the machinery of government to hit at his opposition.

In this incident is an illustration of why I have always opposed every attempt Dempster has made to destroy the Tax Arbitration Board. If he ever got this board out of the way, so that he could give full rein to his vindictive nature, no real estate owner could afford to oppose him politically.¹³⁷

Often during Dempster's term as mayor, the *Journal* would write stories about what was happening at City Hall without mentioning Dempster by name, referring to him simply as "the mayor." This also was true in some editorials. Likewise, whenever photographers were shooting an event at which the mayor was present they were instructed to put him on the end so that he could be lopped off before the picture was printed. *Journal* photographer Hugh Lunsford remembered one incident:

I was down at the YMCA to cover a meeting one time and I lined up four or five people for a picture before the meeting. There was lots of noise from people talking. I was backed off a ways and I was talking loud telling them how I wanted them. I said, "Mayor, I want you over there." Just as I started to speak to him the room just went quiet. Everybody in

¹³⁷The *Knoxville Journal*, September 28, 1954, p.16.

the room could hear me. And he said, "*Journal's* cutting me off again."¹³⁸

During Dempster's term as mayor, a *Journal* photographer shot a picture of an illegally parked police car and promptly ran it on Page One to embarrass the police department. Dempster, in retaliation, ordered the police to tow in the cars of any *Journal* staffers found illegally parked at expired meters. Several reporters had their cars towed. One old car towed belonged to *Journal* columnist Vic Weals who wrote about it in a "Home Folks" column entitled, "Ode (Owed) To The City of Knoxville."

On Monday you towed in my automobile
From a parking place, Church Avenue near State;
And I write this verse to tell you that you're welcome
For these many reasons I will now relate.

As transportation that car is not dependable,
No bumper jack, a clutch that's apt to slip;
Battery's bad, motor knocks, tires worn out,
The starter's shot, the crankcase apt to drip

The bank and I fought a long, long struggle
To see who'd own it — I or they;
I thought I won, but now you have it,
So take warning, be prepared to pay.

Drive careful and you'll get 10 miles to gallon;
Use it and be welcome, I shed no tears;
I'll ride the bus and walk the other mile —
Save dollars, first time in many years.

Dempster had good reason to launch tirades at the *Journal* and his nemesis Guy Smith. In a Page One "news" story when Dempster was running for City Council, the *Journal* said Dempster was ineligible "to hold this public position, or any other public position, because the record shows he is morally unfit for such a trust, is politically

¹³⁸Hugh Lunsford, interview with author, September 8, 1994.

repugnant to the people of Knoxville and of Tennessee and is utterly irresponsible except to his own peculiar interests.”

One of Dempster’s most widely publicized acts as mayor was his “shoot to kill” order to police during labor violence in a strike by the Communications Workers of America union against the telephone company. The strikers had threatened to blow up the telephone company building. They didn’t and the officers did not have to carry out the order. Nonetheless, he made headlines all over the country. The *Washington Star*, for example, headlined it, “Knoxville Mayor Gives Police Order ‘Shoot to Kill’ in Labor Violence.”¹³⁹ Smith wasted no time in blasting Dempster. “Shooting to kill,” he wrote in a July 24, 1955, editorial, “should be the last order, not the first, issued by any responsible head of government in any kind of civil disturbance.” The order had the unusual result of putting Dempster, who was generally a strong union supporter, against the CWA and putting Guy Smith, a staunch right-to-work advocate, on the side of the union.

Even when Dempster did something Guy Smith agreed with, Smith couldn’t resist taking a sarcastic swipe at him. For example, Mayor Dempster finally agreed to hire a traffic engineer to try to put some order in Knoxville’s chaotic traffic situation at the time. The *Journal* had been promoting such a move for a long time. “As we said,” the *Journal* editorial said, “this shows how amenable he (Dempster) is to reason, when he can’t dodge responsibility for a situation, when an election is coming and

¹³⁹Dempster kept extensive scrapbooks filled with his press clippings from his days in public office. During the period he was mayor, he had saved such minutiae as announcements that City Hall would be closed on holidays. The scrapbooks were donated by his daughter, Ann Dempster Smallman, to the McClung Historical Collection of Lawson McGhee Library.

he's scared stiff."¹⁴⁰

The 1955 race for mayor

The election that fall brought the Smith-Dempster feud to a mud-slinging climax. Dempster, who had won the job in 1951, was seeking re-election against Guy Smith's hand-picked candidate, Jack Dance, in the November 3, 1955, election. The *Knoxville News-Sentinel* came out strongly for Dempster. Both papers pulled out all the stops, in news columns as well as on the editorial pages, as the campaign progressed toward the voting day. In a typical editorial of the campaign, Smith wrote:

Knoxville, for almost a quarter of a century, has borne the reputation of having turbulent and unstable municipal government. ... We think it is important for the younger voters to learn, and the older ones be reminded, that Mayor Dempster is perhaps the only living Knoxvilleian with an obsession on the subject of controlling this city's government. It is the ruling passion of his life. He would rather be mayor of Knoxville than to hold any office within the gift of the people at any level of government.

Furthermore, it is an obsession which has had possession of him for most of his adult life. He has been willing to knock down, run over, coerce, intimidate and brow-beat any individual who had the temerity to stand in the way of his ruling passion. ... It is this frenzy for being ruler — perhaps dictator would be more accurate — of Knoxville which is the direct cause of the turbulence and instability which have characterized this city's government for a quarter of a century. ...

Knoxville voters have an opportunity to give this obsession of the mayor's a death blow in the coming election and at the same time to give City Hall, for good, a peaceful and orderly kind of government which it has not known for many a year. Mayor Dempster is 68 years of age. Surely with his defeat next month, he will be willing to leave Knoxville government alone, devoting his considerable talents to his own affairs. Nothing else we can think of would provide Knoxville with a more powerful tonic for growth and development.

¹⁴⁰The *Knoxville Journal*, July 30, 1955, p.4.

As the campaign picked up steam in the final days, the two daily newspapers got into a Page One editorial cartoon battle. The News-Sentinel pressed into service Bill Dyer, whose outstanding Dyergram had entertained and amused Tennessee football fans for years. The *Journal* borrowed artist J. Clark Whaley from its advertising department and pressed him into the unaccustomed role of political cartoonist. Dyer came up with a series on "Mr. Meddler and Mr. Peddler," with caricatures of Guy Smith and Councilman Cas Walker, who ran a chain of popular supermarkets in East Tennessee. Whaley's cartoons were characterized by a drawing of the Scripps-Howard lighthouse and motto, "Give Light and the People Will Find Their Own Way," to which he added, "which way?" One Whaley cartoon showed a caricature of Dempster with his arm around a shapely woman labeled "The Knoxville News-Sentinel." She sports a sparkling bracelet with a tag, "special tax assessment cut of \$83,000," referring to an event in the 1930s when Dempster was city manager. The *Journal* also ran on Page One every day in the final weeks of the campaign an item labeled, "A Voice From The Past," in which it quoted *News-Sentinel* editorials by Loye Miller from the 1940s when the newspaper had opposed Dempster, using some of the same arguments against him the *Journal* was using in the 1955 campaign. At the end of these brief excerpts, was the line, "Who is the *News-Sentinel* trying to kid?" In the end, Dance outpolled Dempster by nearly 4,000 votes in the primary election. Dempster later stepped aside, avoiding a runoff. The *Journal*, in its issue of November 4, 1955, with the election results, ran a Page One cartoon parodying Dyer's cartoons. It showed caricatures of Walker and Smith carrying a wreath to lay at a cracked

monument labeled "The News-Sentinel." Atop the monument was a pot labeled, "\$83,000 Tax Assessment Cut." A little figure in the left-hand corner labeled "Knoxville voter" is saying, "Give Light and the people will find their own way — which way?" A little lighthouse is walking away saying, "Aw shuddup!"

The *Journal* was hardly a gracious winner. On November 5, it ran another cartoon showing a scowling Dempster holding a smiling mask in one hand and dipping a brush into a bucket labeled "smear." That cartoon ran above a story quoting Cas Walker as saying, "Gambling, whisky and prostitution have always flourished under Mayor George Dempster."

The 'firing' of Guy Smith

Apparently the Smith-Dempster feud was an embarrassment to Mrs. Lotspeich, who had already clashed with Smith over his diehard support of Taft at the 1952 GOP convention. According to Dave Garrison, who was acting managing editor at the time, she actually tried to fire Smith at one point. Garrison owned a golf driving range on the Alcoa Highway and he was working there one day before going to the *Journal* when Mrs. Lotspeich and John Carter drove up in her Packard. Here is Garrison's version of the story:

She said, "I came out to invite you to my house. I want you to come out and have tea at the Bleak House tomorrow."

I had seen the Bleak House from the outside. I knew they didn't serve tea like I served tea at my house. I didn't know which way to run.

She said, "I'm going to appoint a new editor to the *Journal*. Mr. Smith has chosen to take a course of action that's contrary to everything that we and our friends believe in. We can't get it settled."

I said, "Mrs. Lotspeich, I don't want any job that Guy Smith wants,

(but) I'm honored that you'd come to me."

She said, "We looked over the staff and you're the only one here that we think that we can depend on."

I was a major out of the army and I'd had some rough spots but I couldn't envision dealing with those people who walked through the newsroom and into Guy's office, making demands for this and that, which he always found a way to meet. ... But I did go over to the Bleak House and was served hot tea, which was a new thing in my social life. And I sat and heard the same thing over. She said, "We're through with Mr. Smith." I was editor for a day. Guy came back in the next day, looking sort of like the cat that ate the canary. He had a grin on his face and he said, "Well, you'll have to move over, old boy, I've got my job back."

I said, "By God I'm glad you've got it because I don't want it."¹⁴¹

Garrison's account could not be confirmed through any other source. The other people who were party to the arrangement, Mrs. Lotspeich, Carter and Guy Smith, are dead. Garrison said no announcement was made to the staff so no one else knew what had happened.

Not everybody at the *News-Sentinel* hated Guy Smith. He had a staunch admirer in Roger Daley, longtime *News-Sentinel* business manager, a position in those years that was co-equal to editor. "Guy was one hundred percent editorial, but he was the best ad man they had," Daley recalled. He said he ran into Smith on the street once after the *Journal* had run a large ad for a patent medicine that promised to cure cancer and anything else. Smith asked why the ad didn't run in the *News-Sentinel*. Daley told him that the paper didn't run any medical advertising that used the word "cure." Smith said he had another ad from the same company, but planned to refuse to run it. They became good friends after that and Smith frequently would check out would-be advertisers with him. *News-Sentinel* editor Loye Miller never

¹⁴¹Dave Garrison, interview with author, July 9, 1994.

knew of their friendship, he said.

"I always had a great affection for Guy," Daley said. "He was just an old rascal."

For many years, Smith and a group of cronies played poker at the City Club in downtown Knoxville. The friends would meet at 8 p.m. each Wednesday and play until 11 p.m., Jim Golden, the *Journal's* longtime ad manager, recalled. He said the last hand always was a showdown hand for five dollars.

Smith's other extracurricular passion was fishing. Whenever time permitted he would don his wading boots, pack his fishing gear and head for a mountain stream.

A lonely man

Hugh Branson, who for many years worked as administrative assistant to U.S. Senator Howard Baker, became a close friend and political ally of Guy Smith before they engineered Baker's successful 1966 Senate race. He remembers him, particularly in the last years of his life, as something of a lonely man.

"He was a man who could move mountains, and if you were his friend he would move mountains for you," Branson said. "But he was lonely. I think he was also bored. Most of what he did didn't really challenge him. He was kind of an aristocrat who lost his money in the Depression. He had been through these political wars and probably had lost a lot of friends because he never held back regardless of the consequences. As a result he probably didn't have a lot of people to talk to."¹⁴²

¹⁴²Hugh Branson, interview with author, September 20, 1994.

Branson, who was a television personality in Knoxville before going into politics, recalled that shortly after he got to know Smith, the editor asked him to put together a TV ad campaign for a slate of Republicans running for county offices. This was before TV had been discovered by most politicians. Branson said the candidate for sheriff at the head of the ticket seemed to be a particularly weak candidate. I asked (Smith) what his qualifications were," Branson said. "He replied, 'Oh hell, he doesn't have any qualifications.'"

"I said, 'How do we elect him?' He said, 'Don't worry about that; he's not going to get elected any way.'"

Branson got Knoxville lawyer Erby Jenkins to act as spokesman for the candidates. He put together a series of TV ads and held rallies at which the candidates would appear but Jenkins would do all the talking. To everybody's surprise and amazement, including Smith's and Branson's, the sheriff and virtually the whole Republican ticket was elected.

"The most important thing and most significant thing that made Guy different is that he was smarter," Branson said. "He thoroughly knew all of details of what he was doing. There was nothing you could tell him that he didn't understand and didn't have some previous knowledge of. At that time politics was a matter of identifying your voters and getting them out to the polls. He knew exactly the people he was dealing with, he knew how to motivate them and how to get them to the polls."¹⁴³ Some politicians have argued that Smith, who for years until Howard Baker was

¹⁴³Ibid.

elected, held up the advent of true two-party rule in Tennessee. Branson disagrees vigorously with that idea. "He cut deals for whatever he could do for East Tennessee, but he would have dropped the Democrats in a flash. When Republicans went to Legislature, they got something out of it. Today they have no impact. They have virtually half of the legislature and control nothing. I guarantee you when Guy was there, the governor had to put up with him and he had to give something, or he made it miserable for him."

Branson said he felt the main problem in getting Republicans elected to statewide office was the lack of a credible candidate for many years. Even when Howard Baker Jr. came along, nobody really believed he could be elected and despite his good showing in his unsuccessful race in 1964 against Ross Bass, even Guy Smith tried to talk him out of running in 1966. Smith and others, including Baker's stepmother, Irene Baker, who had taken over her husband's congressional seat when he died, urged young Howard to run for Second District seat. Branson said he alone urged Baker to make another Senate try. Smith agreed to support Baker's campaign but clearly had little hope he would win. Early in 1966, Smith changed his mind and called Branson to his office. "By God, you were right. You are going to win. I didn't believe it but you've convinced me now," Branson quoted him as saying. Baker went on to win handily against Frank Clement, the former governor.

Dave Garrison, who in addition to being off-and-on an employee and a political ally became a close personal friend of Guy Smith, agreed with Branson's assessment that he was lonely in the last years of his life.

"He became a cynic," Garrison said. "He might have always been a cynic. He called me in one day and said, 'I've about reached the end of my rope. I've outlived all my friends.' I said, 'You can't say you've lost all your friends. I'm your friend.' ... I think he did die with the feeling he was dying without friends."¹⁴⁴

The boss

The former *Journal* staffers interviewed for this work were unanimous in their unqualified praise for a man several still call "the boss." For Ben Byrd he was "probably the greatest editorial writer in the country. He could just come right down on top of you or he could play around with you and then give you the knife. I enjoyed reading his editorials. I think the saving grace of any writer is a sense of humor, wit. He had that."

For Frank Jordan, he was "a newspaperman's editor." Hugh Lunsford said: "If I were writing one of those 'most unforgettable characters I ever met' pieces, he would be the one."

Loved by his staff and his political allies, hated and feared by his enemies, Guy Smith left an indelible mark not just on the *Knoxville Journal*, but indeed on Knoxville journalism and Knoxville and Tennessee politics. In victory and defeat, he stood tall, firm in his convictions and principles, fearing no man and giving no quarter in his political battles.

The *Knoxville Journal* survived Guy Smith by twenty-three years, but part of

¹⁴⁴Dave Garrison, interview with author, July 9, 1994.

its soul was buried with him. The era of the crusading newspaperman-politician, begun with Parson Brownlow and carried on by Captain Rule, ended when Guy Smith breathed his last.

CHAPTER SIX

A Venture into FM Broadcasting

WKPB-FM

On Wednesday, October 15, 1947, the *Journal's* owners ventured into a new medium — FM radio. Station WKPB-FM began broadcasting daily from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. at 93.3 megacycles at a power of 3,000 watts. Range of the station was estimated at 40 to 70 miles, depending on receiving equipment. "The range will be the same both day and night and at no time will there be interference from other stations. This is one of the striking advantages of the new FM system," the *Journal* reported in a Page One story announcing the new station October 12, 1947.

FM broadcasting was relatively new in 1947. It was invented in the 1930s by Edwin Armstrong as a way of overcoming interference problems associated with AM service. AM, or amplitude modulation, broadcasting uses audio-frequency pulses to vary the strength of carrier waves, which keep the same frequency. AM broadcast stations are limited to a side band of five kilocycles (kilohertz) on each side of the central frequency. The total width is called a radio channel. The AM channels do not permit the transmission of all the higher overtones of music. In FM, or frequency modulation, broadcasting, circuits are arranged to make the varying strength in the audio pulse change the frequency of the carrier wave. As loudness of the sound source increases, so does the frequency of the carrier wave. FM also uses the less crowded

high frequency, giving stations the necessary channel width.¹⁴⁵ In AM, atmospheric static, electrical motors and other devices can produce static. Since the amplitude of the carrier remains constant, FM is not affected by such things. Despite its technical superiority, FM was not an immediate success, thanks largely to the owners of the large AM stations and the Federal Communications Commission. The FCC in 1941 allocated spectrum for commercial FM service but four years later moved it to another part of the frequency band, rendering obsolete all existing FM receivers. Indeed, FCC regulations for years favored AM over FM, until 1974 when the number of independent FM stations and FM receivers had grown substantially and had become a force in the marketplace.¹⁴⁶

In 1947, relatively few Knoxvilleians had FM sets, but the *Journal* noted that “practically all the receivers built in the last year” contained FM. For older sets and those still being built without FM, the newspaper offered a converter at \$29.95.¹⁴⁷ The *Journal* article on the new station continued:

Every piece of equipment used in building WKPB is of the latest design and is matched to produce the best tone quality possible with a broadcast station. A full tone range of 50 to 5,000 cycles will be transmitted. This is about three times that possible with the present AM system of broadcasting. In addition, all static and noise is eliminated by the FM system.

One other FM station, WROL-FM, is already on the air in

¹⁴⁵Excerpted from Compton’s Interactive Encyclopedia Copyright © 1993, 1994 Compton’s NewMedia, Inc.

¹⁴⁶Corn-Revere, Robert, “Economics and Media Regulation,” in *Media Economics: Theory and Practice*, ed. Alison Alexander, James Owers, Rod Carveth, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, New Jersey, 1993, 75-76.

¹⁴⁷The *Knoxville Journal*, October 12, 1947, p.1, p.4.

Knoxville, broadcasting on a frequency of 97.3 megacycles or Channel 247. Three other applications for FM stations in Knoxville are pending before the FCC, from WNOX, WIBK and WBIR. Conditional license grants have already been given to WNOX and WBIR.

The management of WKPB will be pleased to hear from listeners as to the quality and strength of the signal at various locations and will also welcome comments and suggestions on the program material.

Studios and offices are located on the second floor of The Journal Building and the antenna is atop the tower on the Hotel Farragut.

WNOX, the CBS affiliate owned by *News-Sentinel* owner Scripps-Howard, and WROL, the privately owned NBC affiliate, were easily the most popular stations in the Knoxville market at the time. WNOX carried two immensely popular country music shows, the "Midday Merry-Go-Round," broadcast every weekday following the noon news until 1:45 p.m., and the "Tennessee Barn Dance" on Saturday nights. The shows, hosted by radio personality-politician Lowell Blanchard, were the springboard for many of the great country and western stars who later found national exposure on WSM's "Grand Ole Opry" in Nashville.

The two stations between them also carried the popular radio soap operas of the day, "Ma Perkins," "Backstage Wife," "Portia Faces Life," "Just Plain Bill," and "Guiding Light." WKPB, anticipating programming of most modern-day FM stations, was virtually all music. The main disc jockey was Ben Farthing, who also worked on the *Journal* copy desk. Farthing used his personal record collection at the beginning.¹⁴⁸ The station's initial programming, listed in the "Journal Radio Clock" each day in the paper, included "Dance Parade" from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., "Mountain Music," 3-4 p.m., "Sacred Hour," 4-4:30 p.m., "Musical Varieties," 4:30-5:30 p.m., "Just Relax," 5:30-6

¹⁴⁸Vic Weals, interview with author, August 18, 1994.

p.m., "Song Favorites," 6-6:30 p.m., "Dinner Music," 6:30-7:30 p.m., "Features," 7:30-8 p.m., and "Symphony Hall," 8-9 p.m. The station carried no news broadcasts at the beginning despite its association with the newspaper. By the time it went out of business, the station was on the air from 10 a.m. until 10:15 p.m., and had begun carrying news broadcasts every hour and a 15-minute news summary before sign-off.

WKPB's swan song

The station remained on the air until April 15, 1949. No formal announcement was made in paper of the impending closing of the station. However, in the "Journal Radio Clock" that appeared daily with program listings of Knoxville's five AM and two FM stations, a line was added in the WKPB column, "Friday, April 15th: Our Last Day On Air." The *Journal* had been running a small question and answer column about WKPB-FM for some time and in that column on April 11 the newspaper confirmed that the station would go off the air and explained what had happened:

Radio stations in this country can be supported only through advertising. In order to attract advertisers a radio station must reach a mass audience. While the audience of WKPB was growing every day, the rate of growth was slow enough so that a long period of time would elapse before the audience would compare with those of long established AM stations. In the meantime, the cost of operating the station was too high to continue the same type of programming.¹⁴⁹

The column added that the *Knoxville Journal* had borne the cost for the station during its 17-month existence. A question on April 13 asked what would happen to WKPB's equipment. The answer was it would be sold "either in part or as a package

¹⁴⁹The *Knoxville Journal*, April 11, 1949, p.14.

to any other interested broadcaster." Its phonograph record collection would be auctioned off and the space would be rented, the column said. And the "personnel will be available for other jobs."¹⁵⁰ In fact, the equipment eventually was given to the University of Tennessee which that fall started its own non-commercial FM radio station, WUOT, and still operates at 91.9 megacycles.

Harold Price, the author of the column, defended FM radio to the end. In another column, on April 12, he wrote, "FM is still the finest method known of bringing aural entertainment to your home. The many letters now being received at WKPB will attest to that. Technically, FM will always be superior to AM." He listed the reasons FM was having such a struggle catching on:

It is inferior as an advertising medium due to many things, chief among them are: definite and organized opposition to FM by companies with large interests in AM broadcasting, indifference to technical improvements by the general public, poor FM receivers turned out by manufacturers closely aligned with AM broadcasting, network policy with respect to duplication of FM programs (duplicate all or carry nothing at all from the network) and probably most important of all, the fact that FM has been pioneered and promoted by engineers and investors. Those men are guided by a desire to produce things for a fuller and richer life but lack the ballyhoo and emotional appeal necessary to sell such things to the masses of people.¹⁵¹

An offer for WROL

While WKPB was still on the air, Roy Lotspeich made a bid to buy WROL-AM. The publisher offered nearly \$400,000 for the station. The 5,000-watt station was owned at the time by Stuart Adcock. It was founded in 1927 as WNBJ, a 50-watt

¹⁵⁰The *Journal*, April 13, p.8.

¹⁵¹Ibid. April 12, p.9.

station, but the letters were changed to WROL in 1930. It became affiliated with NBC in 1937. Adcock was quoted as saying he was negotiating to sell WROL-FM as well, if not to Lotspeich to somebody else. The sale was subject to the approval of the FCC.¹⁵²

However, the *Journal's* arch-enemy, George Dempster, threw a monkey wrench in Lotspeich's efforts to buy the station by making a similar offer to Adcock for the station.¹⁵³ Dempster's move led Lotspeich to withdraw his offer, provided his \$40,000 earnest deposit were returned. Adcock agreed. However, Dempster was unable to raise the money to buy the station and Adcock eventually withdrew the station from the market. The *Journal* reported that Dempster had been in touch with a "nationally known broker of newspaper and radio properties but had been turned down."¹⁵⁴

Guy Smith and radio/TV

It is not known what role, if any, Guy Smith played in the WKPB venture. Some time later, probably in the mid-1950s, he went on record against granting radio or television licenses to any newspaper. His reason: "Because maximum freedom of information can only grow out of maximum freedom of speech."¹⁵⁵ Unlike a lot of

¹⁵²The *Knoxville Journal*, November 9, 1948, p.1.

¹⁵³The *Knoxville Journal*, January 25, 1949, p.1.

¹⁵⁴The *Knoxville Journal*, April 28, 1949, p.1.

¹⁵⁵Smith, Guy L., "Whose Freedom of Speech?" an undated carbon copy of an article from Smith's personal papers, supplied by Reuben Smith, his son. The article is not dated nor is there any indication where or whether it was published.

newspapermen of the time who saw radio and television, in Smith's words, "as little more than brash kibitzers in the news business," Smith understood the power and potential of both media in the dissemination of news. He saw great danger to freedom of the press in newspaper-radio-TV combinations. He wrote:

I think there is a misconception in the minds of many of us about that treasured right, guaranteed by the Constitution, and known as "freedom of the press." Those of us in the newspaper business have a tendency to believe it was put in the sacred document by the Founding Fathers just for our particular benefit.¹⁵⁶

Smith blasted the growing practice of monopoly ownership of newspapers in many cities, citing specifically Memphis and Louisville, and took a slap at joint operating agreements, or as he called them at that time "combinations," not realizing that in a short time his own paper would become a part of a "combination" with its hated afternoon rival. He added:

Then when the Federal Communications Commission, through exercise of its licensing power, bottles up either radio or television, or both, in the hands of a member of one of these combinations, it requires no imagination to see that to a great extent the public will get through all three mediums (sic) the news dished up as the publishers, and/or radio and television operators think they should have it, and it will all lean to one viewpoint. Radio and television news reports and editorial commentaries are subject to the same kind of editing, selection, and rejection that takes place in the editorial departments of newspapers every workday of the week. An identical process is easily possible in governing the speeches and appearances of favored political candidates on radio and television, just as the editor or publisher may manipulate "objective" news, either in the writing or the "play," for his candidate or against the opposition. All this is not to charge the newspaper publishers of the country with an iniquitous design to stifle free speech or to throttle the right of the public to know, but simply to aver that they are human beings who happen to operate newspapers.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

The article concluded:

God knows the truth is difficult enough to arrive at when one gets all the versions of the same set of facts, but at least the public has a better chance to achieve this objective if the versions of all the different media are not tailored to fit the news judgment of an identical set of editorial brains.¹⁵⁷

Lindsey Nelson

Perhaps the *Journal's* most significant contribution to the world of radio broadcasting had nothing to do with its efforts to enter the business. The *Journal* inadvertently launched the professional broadcasting career of Knoxville's most famous sports announcer, Lindsey Nelson.

Returning to Knoxville after service in World War II, Nelson landed a job as a city-side reporter on the *Journal* making \$35 a week. Here is how Nelson tells the story in his autobiography, *Hello, Everybody, I'm Lindsey Nelson*:

I worked the police beat, hospitals, the courts, and general assignment. I did almost anything until the day they sent me to Newport, Tennessee, to cover the award of a Congressional Medal of Honor to a returning soldier. I was completely compatible with those circumstances and with those people. Before long, I got the feeling that I might get a Congressional Medal of Honor myself. And I got so carried away that I completely overlooked the necessity of getting back to the *Journal* with my story. And instead of getting the Congressional Medal, I got fired.¹⁵⁸

Back at the paper, Nelson's failure to return created havoc and consternation. The photographer who accompanied him on the assignment, Greeley Smith, also had failed to return. The paper was putting out six editions a night, timed to catch various

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

¹⁵⁸Nelson, Lindsey, *Hello, Everybody, I'm Lindsey Nelson*, Beech Tree Books, William Morrow, New York: 1985, 124.

train and bus schedules to the hinterlands. The early first edition deadline came and went with no story or pictures. Associate editor Steve Humphrey started asking about the duo, but nobody had heard from them. Humphrey sat down and wrote a story based on what he knew would be happening at the event, describing the politicians who would be present and filling in with background on the man's war record.¹⁵⁹

"He made it sound pretty good," then city editor Dave Garrison recalled. "He had enough of the kid's heroics to gloss it over." Finally, about 11 p.m., as the city edition deadline drew near, photographer Greeley came "crawling up the stairs from the alley with his camera bag over his shoulder."¹⁶⁰ He was too drunk to develop his film, Garrison said, but copy editor-columnist Vic Weals knew his way around the darkroom and got the pictures out. Greeley was able to help identify the people in the pictures and provide more fresh details to help Humphrey flesh out the story. It was three days later when Nelson finally showed up to pick up his check, Garrison said. "I figure that we launched one of the greatest sports announcers in history when we fired Lindsey Nelson," Garrison said.¹⁶¹

Nelson eventually landed a job announcing high school football and a nightly sports show on a new Knoxville radio station, WKGN. In 1948, the Aluminum Company of America, sponsor of the University of Tennessee football broadcasts, switched its broadcast of the games from WNOX to WKGN and Nelson was tapped as

¹⁵⁹Vic Weals and Dave Garrison, interviews with author, August 18, 1994, and July 9, 1994, respectively.

¹⁶⁰Dave Garrison, interview with author, July 9, 1994.

¹⁶¹Dave Garrison, interview with author, July 9, 1994.

the play-by-play announcer. His expertise and skill and as announcer led to a network offer from Liberty Broadcasting System and then to NBC. Over the next three decades he became one of America's top sports announcers, ranking with such legendary figures as Bill Stern and Red Barber.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Antics In The Newsroom

Playing 'far away'

The *Journal* newsroom in the 1950s was a place populated by characters. Many were excellent newsmen. Some were gaining experience they would use later on at major newspapers and wire services across the country and around the world. Others would remain with the paper throughout their careers. The *Journal* also had its share of has-beens and hacks who never would be. Many of the editorial staffers were heavy drinkers. A few had one-way tickets to skid row and wound up as derelicts when even the *Journal's* tolerant bosses could not ignore their drinking.

The newsroom was a rambunctious place where for many years virtually the entire staff would leave their desks and typewriters to congregate around the Coca-Cola machine for a boisterous game of "far away." In those years, Coca-Cola was dispensed in its classic six-ounce green bottle. On the bottom of each glass returnable bottle was the name of the manufacturing plant that had originally produced the Coke. Over time, bottles from many distant places would come to be mixed in with the local output. While most of the bottles would be from Knoxville or nearby towns in East Tennessee, occasionally one would turn up from as far away as California or another distant point. In the game, each player would put a quarter in the pot and take a turn buying a Coke from the vending machine. The pot would be won by the person who had the name of the most distant city on the bottom. Urgent calls to Highway Patrol

headquarters would settle disputes over distance.¹⁶²

The newsroom was a place of high jinks and antics, fist fights and practical jokes. One reporter routinely carried a pistol in a shoulder holster. He would sit down at his desk and hang the pistol on the chair. Nobody said anything until one day he got up and the weight of the pistol tipped the chair over. The weapon fired, leaving a hole in the ceiling but otherwise doing no harm. Management barred pistols in the newsroom after that.¹⁶³

Steve Humphrey, newspaperman

For most of the period covered by this study, the newsroom was the domain of associate editor Steve Humphrey, whose fringe of white hair around his otherwise bald pate gave him a look of distinction. His dignity and old world air made him a somewhat incongruous element in the newsroom. He never joined in the frivolity of things like "far away," but he called the others down only if the uproar went beyond tolerable bounds even for the *Journal*. Humphrey was a newspaperman through and through. He became Guy Smith's alter ego, running the newsroom while Smith played politics.

Humphrey was born in Scandia, Kansas, September 14, 1900. His father was a farmer who had settled on an 80-acre farm nearly three miles west of Scandia in 1884. Humphrey was fond of telling a story about the hardships his parents faced in those

¹⁶²From the author's personal recollection and participation in many games of "far away."

¹⁶³Vic Weals, interview with author, August 18, 1994.

years. Their neighbor was a Swedish immigrant who later became known to the family as "Aunt Gusty" Peterson.

Mother walked down the road one-eighth of a mile in search of milk for my oldest brother Clyde, then about eighteen months old. At the Peterson home she met Aunt Gusty. They had been born in lands separated by the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea and now they met on a bare and windswept Kansas farm, utter strangers in a raw new country. Mother had Clyde in her arms and her money, a nickel, perhaps even a dime, tied up in a corner of her handkerchief. She explained who she was and why she had come to Aunt Gusty's door. Aunt Gusty was abrupt. It was her normal manner. "We've got no milk to sell," she said and it may have sounded like a blunt rejection of Mother's appeal. I have always felt that Mother's heart sank but it bounced back up with pleasure as Aunt Gusty finished her sentence with a touching, "but we got some milk for the baby" Aunt Gusty had rejected Mother's appeal to buy milk but it was a rejection to permit her to purchase what the Swedish wife would give out of compassion for the baby.¹⁶⁴

In his youth, Humphrey worked on the farm harvesting wheat, milking cows and performing other farm chores. He also carried newspapers. He worked his way through Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, waiting tables. After graduation, he worked for newspapers in Topeka, Lincoln, Nebraska, and Little Rock, Arkansas. Humphrey liked to tell the story of being fired from the *Arkansas Gazette*: "They said my work wasn't any good, and I didn't have any proof to the contrary." From Little Rock, he took a train to Memphis and a copy editor's job on the *Memphis Press-Scimitar*. In 1928, he was transferred to the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, a sister Scripps-Howard paper. In his eight years on the afternoon paper, he covered the courthouse and city hall beats, then became telegraph editor and finally assistant city editor.

¹⁶⁴Steve Humphrey, letter to "Clara and Joe," dated June 5, 1980. Furnished to the author by Steve Humphrey Jr.

He left the *News-Sentinel* to publish a weekly commentary paper for a short time before joining the *Journal* in 1936 when it was bought by Roy Lotspeich. He mainly covered politics on the *Journal* and for years, even after he became associate editor, covered the sessions of the state Legislature in Nashville. In 1938, he was named city editor and in 1947 became associate editor. Humphrey took a leave of absence to teach journalism at the University of Tennessee during the 1946-47 school year. When Humphrey died in 1990, the *Journal* described him in an editorial as an "irascible, loyal, incisive, witty newsman" who "was to former *Journal* editor Guy Lincoln Smith the paper's designated hitter long before baseball's American League employed the term." After his retirement from the *Journal* in 1967, Humphrey devoted much of his time to writing a book, *That D....d Brownlow*. That work was to have been followed by a second volume covering the history of the *Journal* from its founding through its later years. However, failing health kept him from writing the second volume. Of retirement years, the *Journal* commented:

His work in retirement as a history buff and writer was as distinguished as his career in journalism, and he pursued it with the same twinkling eye and sharp pencil he had used to exhort young reporters, mark up their sophomoric copy or damn crook politicians or Democrats. Humphrey was fiercely political and unabashedly Republican at a time when those feelings fit in the *Journal's* type galleys to a T.¹⁶⁵

Sports editor Ben Byrd first knew Humphrey as a journalism teacher in 1946 when Byrd was a student at the University of Tennessee after serving in the U.S. Navy in World War II. Humphrey was impressed with Byrd's talent and steered him

¹⁶⁵The *Knoxville Journal*, December 21, 1990, p.12A.

to a full-time sports writing job at the *Journal* in 1947. Humphrey left academia himself a few weeks later and assumed the post of associate editor, which he held until he retired in 1967.

Over those 20 years he was in charge of the day-to-day operations of the newspaper, leaving his great friend, editor Guy L. Smith, free to write his powerful editorials and devote much of his energies to the game of politics, which he played with passion and expertise.

They were a perfect team. Smith had the air of the aristocrat about him and projected a forbidding presence to his staffers, until we learned how soft his heart was. It was left to Humphrey to come down hard on members of the flock who strayed, a task he handled with cool and clinical ease. Both men were blessed with delightful senses of humor, and I cannot recall a tough session with them when everyone didn't leave the boss's office smiling.

I have said before this that Steve Humphrey was the best newspaperman I have ever known. And I stress the word *Newspaperman*. Above all else he hated to be referred to as a *journalist*, a word he regarded as fluffy and affectatious. His was the job of producing that daily miracle, a newspaper, and no one could do it better.¹⁶⁶

Humphrey vs. Neyland

Humphrey had little patience with anybody who he felt was trying to interfere with the news that he wanted to print. Ben Byrd recalled an episode in which Humphrey clashed with the General Robert Neyland, the fabled UT football coach and athletic director. Neyland, breaking one of his self-imposed rules, had spoken before a civic club before the season started.

"In the question and answer part, a question came up about the schedule which called for the Vols to play Georgia Tech at a time when he didn't want to play them,"

¹⁶⁶Byrd, Ben, "Steve Humphrey: A Newspaper Giant Passes from the Scene," Byrd's Eye View Column, *The Knoxville Journal*, December 25, 1990, p.7C.

Byrd recalled. "He got to talking about Bobby Dodd and about Bill Alexander, who was at that time the athletic director at Georgia Tech, and he got mad and he called them both SOB's."¹⁶⁷

While the *Journal* had nobody covering the meeting, advertising manager Jim Golden was in the audience and reported to Guy Smith and Humphrey what Neyland had said. Byrd gave this account of what happened next:

The news side fixed up a Page One streamer story, "Neyland calls Dodd, Alexander SOB's." Somehow Neyland learned about it. I have no idea who told him. He came up there. ... Guy Smith found out that he was coming and left. That left Steve Humphrey as the senior officer present. Neyland came into the sports department first ... and wanted to know who he would have to talk to about that. We told him it was news side story and so he would have to talk to Steve Humphrey. Humphrey kept him waiting a long time. Humphrey could be mean as hell. I don't think he particularly liked Neyland, anyway. Neyland went over there and talked to him a long time and didn't get any satisfaction out of him. Neyland didn't deny saying it. He just said, "Goddamit, I knew better than to go down there (to the civic club) and talk anyway." And Neyland came back over by sports and said, "I can't get nothing done with that man there." He left and sometime before the first edition came out the Lotspeichs called Steve Humphrey and told him to kill the story. I don't know whether Neyland went directly to the Lotspeichs or went through a friend who was a big advertiser.

At practice the next day, Neyland came over and we were talking about the incident. He said, "Steve Humphrey is the meanest white man I ever met." He sort of respected him, though.¹⁶⁸

Humphrey's ire was raised several times by Mrs. Lotspeich after she became publisher. In addition to the time he quit rather than write an editorial endorsing Eisenhower without Guy Smith's approval, he stormed out of the building on at least two other occasions. Once he smashed his fist down so hard on Mrs. Lotspeich's desk

¹⁶⁷Ben Byrd, interview with author, August 19, 1994.

¹⁶⁸Ben Byrd, interview with author, August 19, 1994.

it smashed the glass top. Humphrey stormed out of the building. He was out several days. As his son, Steve Humphrey Jr., recalls, "Daddy didn't even tell mother. He dressed up and went to town each day and attended movies." Guy Smith was out of town at the time and when he returned he finally located Humphrey and asked him to come to the office. After a long conversation, they came to the door of the office together and Humphrey let out one of his famous cackles. Then he walked over and sat down at his desk and went back to work. As one staffer recalled the incident, Mrs. Lotspeich glowered at him but said nothing. Several people interviewed for this work recalled the incident, but nobody knew what the argument was about in the first place.

The 'colonel'

Despite their closeness, Humphrey never addressed Smith by his first name, giving him instead the title "colonel." Steve Jr. said his father had called him "Mr. Smith" until the editor suggested that he should call him "Guy." "Daddy couldn't do that and started calling him 'colonel' instead," Humphrey said.¹⁶⁹

Humphrey loved a good story or a good picture and he knew what to do with it. Photographer Hugh Lunsford and reporter Bill Anderson were sent out to cover a story in Sevier County in which a man had just been beaten to death by his broomstick-wielding father. Lunsford got pictures of the father behind bars at the jail but the best picture was a poignant one he shot of the victim's grandmother and little daughter. It was Saturday night and AP's Bill Rawlins had already transmitted the

¹⁶⁹Steve Humphrey Jr., telephone interview with author, September 17, 1994.

picture on AP Wirephoto, having run to the *News-Sentinel* to intercept it before it came out on their photo machine. The news editor on duty opted, however, to play the picture of the father on Page One, relegating the grandmother and granddaughter to a two-column slot inside. Lunsford was furious. On Monday morning when Humphrey came to work, he raved about Lunsford's picture and ran it again, this time across three columns on the front page. The picture went on to win several awards.¹⁷⁰

Humphrey was willing to turn a blind eye to many things that went on in the newsroom but he wasn't willing to let then city editor Dave Garrison get away with sleeping on the job. Dave, to supplement his meager income at the *Journal*, was moonlighting by running a golf driving range on the Alcoa Highway. As a result, he wasn't getting much sleep and often found himself nodding off at the city desk. However, Humphrey's efforts to point out the sleeping editor to Guy Smith were thwarted by political writer Ralph Griffith who, knowing the situation, would wait until Humphrey went in to call Smith to the newsroom to see Garrison sleeping, then ring Garrison's extension to wake him up. "He saved my hide a few times by keeping me awake when the associate editor was out to hang my hide on the fence post," Garrison said.¹⁷¹

Dave Garrison

When *Journal* veterans reminisce about the 1940s and '50s, Garrison's name is

¹⁷⁰Hugh Lunsford, interview with author, September 8, 1994.

¹⁷¹Dave Garrison, interview with author, August 9, 1994.

one that comes up repeatedly. Garrison, a native of McMinn County, got his start on the *Daily Post-Athenian* in Athens, Tennessee, in the 1930s. He had graduated from Tennessee Wesleyan College, a Methodist institution in Athens. He also was a stringer for the Knoxville papers. In 1940, he decided to come to Knoxville with an idea of going to the University of Tennessee to finish his degree. Willard Yarbrough, a friend from Athens, was working on the *Journal* and helped Garrison get hired. "I was something of a 'find' for the *Journal* at that time," Garrison said. "They needed somebody who would work hard and was used to working for nothing. I remember that the times were not too good then. Mr. Lotspeich was converting his newspaper money into stock operations and he wasn't doing too well. ... We frequently had to wait until all the circulation men got in with their coin collections and that's the way we were paid off. We were paid in silver and dollar bills usually. There was time when we were paid partially in scrip from the advertising. A man really had to love the game to stay with it, I guess. I came more as a stop-gap operation. I intended to work until the next school semester and enroll in school somewhere. I was broke, utterly, and facing, as it turned out, the draft."

After a summer on the *Journal*, Garrison went to Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, until he had to enter the Army on December 4, 1941, three days before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. He earned a commission in Officer Candidate School, saw combat in Europe with Patton's Third Army, and rose to the rank of major before he was discharged. Before he left the Army, Steve Humphrey contacted him about returning to the *Journal*, which was in the process of rebuilding

its staff following the war.

He returned to the paper on January 26, 1946, as an "old timer," because he had been there briefly before and knew some of the people.

Garrison held about every editorial job on the paper, reporter, city editor, news editor, copy editor, makeup editor, acting managing editor, and, as noted previously, editor in chief for one day.

Garrison also had a number of outside interests including at various times a golf driving range, a music publishing and recording business, and a motel in Florida. A master golfer, he also was involved with Jack Comer in building Deane Hill Country Club in West Knoxville.

Garrison was in Florida running his motel and working on a master's degree at Stetson University in Deland when Jack Dance became mayor in 1955. He got a call from Guy Smith telling him to fly back to Knoxville, that Dance wanted to make him safety director. Garrison came and took the job. He also ran for mayor on one occasion but was defeated.

"The great thing about the *Journal* to me was not the people I knew at any one time, but the people I brushed into or who I worked with there over the years. I relate the *Journal* to Tom Anderson, Ed Harris, Sherlock Hope, Steve Humphrey. And I had the privilege of working with them from the time that I ran the city desk and made the assignments through the time I was promoted to the copy desk and worked with the makeup and found myself getting closer and closer to Guy Smith who treated me like

a brother, like a son.”¹⁷²

Sherlock Hope

Sherlock Hope, another name that always comes up when *Journal* veterans get together, fitted perfectly the Hollywood image of a reporter at the time: a hard-boiled, tough-talking, heavy-drinking, chain-smoking master wordsmith. “Sherlock was the prototype of that cynical, tough newspaper reporter who’d just go after the story. He didn’t worry about anybody’s sensitivities,” said Ben Byrd. “The boss put him on politics there for a year or two and had him writing all those hatchet jobs on the Democrats. Sherlock, who kept his teeth clenched when he talked, said, ‘Long as they pay me, I don’t give a damn. I could write this same stuff about Republicans.’”¹⁷³

Hope, whose claim to fame was his coverage of Al Capone while working on a Chicago paper, was noted for his speed and accuracy on the typewriter. His stories would come across city desk virtually error-free, well-written and complete. On a newspaper that drew a large part of its staff from among undergraduate journalism students at the University of Tennessee, Hope’s prose was a ray of sunshine. Hope also worked most jobs on the paper, from city editor down. He occasionally would leave to join another paper, but he always came back to the *Journal* and always Guy Smith had a job for him. On one occasion when Hope had just rejoined the staff, a relatively new assistant was on city desk when Hope turned in a story that was to be

¹⁷²Ibid.

¹⁷³Ben Byrd, interview with author, August 19, 1994.

the Page One lead item. It was beautifully done and the assistant city editor penned his byline across the copy before sending it to the copy desk. When the first edition came up a couple of hours later, Hope appeared at the city desk, now back in the hands of city editor Dick Evans, demanding to know who had put his byline on the story and insisting that it be stricken before the next edition rolled off the presses. He was truly angry, a cigarette clinched between his teeth and fire coming from his eyes. When he calmed down he explained that he didn't want his creditors to know he was back in town and gainfully employed.¹⁷⁴ Hope died in the late 1950s. He was covering the Court House at the time and came in the office a little early, saying he wasn't feeling well and planned to go home. First, however, he wrote his stories of that day and turned them in. He sat down at his desk again and put his head on his typewriter. Fellow staffers, realizing he was more ill than he had indicated, called an ambulance. He was dead a few hours later.

Tom Anderson

Most former *Journal* staffers would agree that the best sports columnist ever produced in Knoxville was Tom Anderson, another man about whom a legend has built up. Anderson had been sports editor but in later years he relinquished that position to Ed Harris and wrote his column from his home, making only infrequent visits to the newsroom and those very late at night when all the bosses had gone home. According to *Journal* lore, Anderson and Harris were sharing a bottle of

¹⁷⁴The greenhorn assistant was the author.

whiskey in the postage stamp-sized sports department one night when a society matron came into the newsroom with a story she wanted to get into the paper. The society department was closed so she took the information to Dave Garrison at the city desk, just a few paces away from the sports department.

“You could hear what Tom had to say about it,” Garrison recalled. “He said, ‘Look at that old bitch. She just got off her party and now she wants something written in the paper.’ It just went on and on. It was unreasonable and it was ungentlemanly. Nobody could put up with it. Something had to be done. So That’s when Steve (Humphrey) fired Tom Anderson. Actually, I don’t know that he fired him. He said, ‘You’re not to come back in this building ever again. You can do your work at home, write your column and we’ll pay you for it.’”¹⁷⁵

Anderson’s wife, another family member or a taxi driver would bring the column up before deadline every day.

Ben Byrd, who himself was something of a legend at the *Journal* and a great writer in his own right, feels Tom Anderson was unique. “I have never known anybody exactly like him,” Byrd said. “Absolute genius as a writer, as a wordsmith. You hear about people who can just sit down and fire it out like a machine gun, but he’s the only one I’ve ever seen who could do it. He could write a column in 15 or 20 minutes.

“He was a funny man. Tom could have done a lot with his talent. He was one of the best natural writers in the business anywhere. But he had no ambition to move

¹⁷⁵Dave Garrison, interview with author, August 9, 1994.

on or to exploit that talent by writing books or magazine articles. He had absolutely none of that. He was kind of introverted sort of guy until he got to drinking. He would become a little aggressive. Legend has it that Tom wrote all those great columns when he was drunk. But he didn't. He was like anybody else and couldn't write a lick when he was drunk."¹⁷⁶

Byrd said that when he was still relatively new at the *Journal*, the sports staff came back to the office after a UT football game. Anderson went into the deserted society department so he wouldn't be interrupted while he wrote his story. "He came in there (the sports department) about two hours later," Byrd said. "He said, 'Come back here, John, I want you to look at this.' He'd call everybody John or Hock. 'I've got something wrong here. ... I got a stray 'e' in here somewhere.' All he had written was his byline and he had misspelled Anderson. He had written, 'Andersen.' He knew there was something wrong with it but he couldn't quite pin it down. We got the story written. I don't remember just how."¹⁷⁷

For his legendary drinking sprees, Anderson didn't get in that shape very often, Byrd said. "I probably did eight or ten pieces for him all the time we worked together."

Women at the Journal

Another longtime fixture of the *Journal* newsroom was Virginia Ragsdale, the

¹⁷⁶Ben Byrd, interview with author, August 19, 1994.

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

society editor. Mrs. Ragsdale, herself a member of Knoxville's social set, joined the paper in 1942 "because I was hard up and needed the job."¹⁷⁸ She remained at the helm of the society department until the 1970s when she retired. She continued to write her column, "From Me to You," for several years after.

At the *Journal*, women weren't confined to the society department. Several also held down newsroom jobs usually reserved for men at other papers. Among these were Juanita Glenn who started as a secretary in the 1940s but soon became a reporter and eventually state editor, a post she held until the *Journal* closed. Other women in the newsroom in the 1940s and '50s were Georgia Higman who worked on the copy desk and eventually as features editor, Argyll Hope, Sherlock's wife, and Margaret Underwood, who covered several beats including the court house.

Pat Fields

Easily the most colorful of the women on the *Journal* in the 1940s and '50s was Pat Bolton Fields. Pat Fields was born in Saltville, Va. At age 16, she entered Georgetown College in Kentucky but was expelled a year and a half later because of a college prank. Back in Saltville, she decided to study ballet, but found no teacher. She ordered a course by mail and taught herself, later opening a ballet school. In the 1930s, she went to New York and worked as a secretary until she married and moved to Connecticut. Her marriage ended in divorce and Fields bundled her four children into the long-snouted 1927 Packard that had once carried Charles Lindbergh on his

¹⁷⁸Virginia Ragsdale, telephone interview with author, September 20, 1994.

New York City parade¹⁷⁹ and drove to Tennessee. She settled in Kingsport, where she worked in a bank until she landed a job on the *Kingsport Times-News*. Her features were so good at the Kingsport paper that she got an offer from the *New York Times* to come for an interview. The offer was withdrawn when the *Times* learned "Pat" was a woman.¹⁸⁰ In 1953, she moved to the *Journal*. When asked by editor Guy Smith what she wanted to do for his paper, she said, "Put me anywhere but in the society department."¹⁸¹

Fields' first assignment at the *Journal* was as editor of the "Church Page." As she told *Journal* columnist Jim Dykes: "I got saddled with the Church Page. The guy who had had it before me came back to visit once and looked in my desk drawer for the Bible. Turned out his "bible" was a jar of 'shine. He would start the Church Page and the jar of 'shine at the same time. When the jar was empty, the Church Page was done." According to Dykes, a photograph in the *News-Sentinel* finally got Fields off the religion assignment. "One day, sitting under the hair dryer at Miller's,¹⁸² puffing a cigar, she got into a conversation with a *News-Sentinel* columnist who had a photographer with him. The picture appeared on the *Sentinel's* Page One — Pat with her stogie at a jaunty angle — with the cutline, 'Journal Church Editor.'"

¹⁷⁹Dykes, Jim, "Pat Fields: ace up old Journal's sleeve," the *Knoxville Journal*, from an undated clipping provided by Fred and Linda Fields.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁸¹Fields, Linda Felts, the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, March 11, 1993, C10. Linda Fields, features editor of the *News-Sentinel*, is Pat Fields' daughter-in-law.

¹⁸²Miller's was then the major department store in Knoxville.

At the *Journal*, Fields was determined to show that she was every bit as good as any man on the staff. She was, in a sense, the female counterpart of Sherlock Hope, hard-boiled, hard-drinking, tough-talking. But beyond the façade Fields had the proverbial heart of gold. She would befriend the bewildered young reporters, taking them under her wing like a mother hen until they learned the newsroom ropes. Fields covered everything from police to church news to the federal courts in her years at the *Journal*, but her best writing came when she was doing feature stories on the people of Knoxville and East Tennessee.

During her career at the *Journal*, Fields interviewed most of the celebrities who visited Knoxville, Eleanor Roosevelt, J.C. Penney, Elvis Presley and Liberace among others.¹⁸³ Pat Fields died March 9, 1993, just short of her 84th birthday.

Streetcar tokens for the police beat

With money always short for the news department, *Journal* reporters and photographers frequently were at a disadvantage to their colleagues at the *News-Sentinel*. It was standard practice in the 1940s to give the police reporter just three streetcar tokens for covering the beat. Frank Jordan, who went to work on the *Journal* in 1946 after he graduated from high school, covered the police beat for several years. The police beat in those days, he recalls, consisted of the city and county jails, General Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital. Other emergency institutions were covered by telephone. Jordan said the standard practice was to walk from the *Journal* on Gay

¹⁸³Fields, Linda Felts, the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, March 11, 1993, C10.

Street to the county jail near the Gay Street bridge. From there he would catch a streetcar up Gay Street to Regas Restaurant near Magnolia Avenue and walk over to the city jail on Broadway. General Hospital, off Central on Bernard Street, was several blocks away but still walking distance if the weather wasn't too bad. From General, the reporter would catch another streetcar to St. Mary's and use the last token to get back to the office. Occasionally, the reporters would beat the system by hitching rides with friendly policemen. Another police reporter of the era was "Rex" Rainey. His nickname came from slugging his copy on automobile accidents "REX." Nobody today remembers his real name. Police reporters would telephone in their stories to a rewrite man. One of the best, recalls former *Journal* staffer Hugh Lunsford, was Hugh Hoss, a man who could take the reporters' notes and turn them into flowing prose. Lunsford worked as a police reporter in the late 1940s before becoming a photographer.

Lunsford was one of three outstanding staff photographers at the *Journal* during those years. The other two were Al Roberts and the late Tommy Green, the chief photographer. Working with them practically on a full-time basis was free-lancer Brownie Colquitt, a tough but jovial ex-Marine. Lunsford became particularly famous and won many awards for his skill at capturing intriguing expressions on the faces of children and old people.

Notable 'alumni'

Many other *Journal* staffers used the newspaper as a place to learn the trade

before moving on to bigger and better things. Perhaps the most prominent of the *Journal* "alumni" was Don Whitehead, who worked on the paper in the 1930s and '40s before joining the Associated Press and becoming a war correspondent in North Africa and Europe. Whitehead won two Pulitzer Prizes as an AP correspondent. He later worked for the *New York Herald-Tribune* and wrote a best-selling book on the FBI. In his later years, he returned to Knoxville and wrote a column for the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*. Bill Anderson, a reporter in the late '40s and early '50s, went to the *Chicago Tribune* where he became city editor and later national correspondent based in Washington.

Ron McMahan and Bill Vaughan, now partners in a Knoxville public relations firm that bears their names, both started at the paper as copy boys in the 1950s and became reporters. McMahan later worked for Chattanooga papers and in the late 1960s, became Senator Howard Baker's press secretary. He returned to the *Journal* as editor under Gannett's ownership and later bought it from the chain. Vaughan left the *Journal* to work for U.S. Representative Jimmy Quillen, the longtime Republican congressman from the First District, and later was press secretary for Governor Winfield Dunn.

Alvin Webb, who joined the *Journal* out of high school in the early 1950s, left Knoxville to join UPI and had a distinguished career with that news agency as a science writer covering the early days of space exploration from Cape Canaveral before becoming a foreign correspondent who covered major stories all over the world, including the Vietnam War and the Middle East troubles. Webb now runs the London

Bureau of Market News Service.

As a *Journal* police reporter in 1955, Webb drew the assignment to cover a tent evangelist's first appearance before his flock after having been arrested on drunken driving charges two days before. The arrest of evangelist Asa Alonzo Allen had been front page news in the *Journal*. City editor Dick Evans wanted to see how he would explain away his predicament. Webb was twenty years old, six feet tall and weighed about 130 pounds. He went to the tent revival wearing a white, vee-necked sweater and slacks. Most of the men in the congregation wore bib overalls or blue jeans. As Webb later wrote in a first-person story on the front page, Allen stood up and told the crowd to "look around you and if you see anyone taking notes, then stand up." As Webb reported:

The man in front of me had seen me writing, so he instantly arose from his seat. I thought, "Well, this is it," and I too stood up.

Allen looked at me. "There's one. Ushers, throw him out!" I turned to face the stock usher coming toward me. He grabbed my arm and said, "come on, buster. You're going out."¹⁸⁴

Webb was taken outside the tent and beaten up by a mob of men. He returned to the newsroom shaken, his white sweater smeared with dirt, his hair disheveled. The chance to write a first-person story on Page One far outweighed for Webb the trauma of being slugged and roughed up by the preacher's toughs.

A personal reflection

They say printer's ink gets in your blood. I think in my case it was that

¹⁸⁴The *Knoxville Journal*, October 23, 1955, p.1.

combination of smells — newsprint, ink, paste, cigarette smoke, body odor — and noises — clacking typewriter and Teletypes, the rumble of the press that shook the whole building, the shouts, the profanity — that characterized newsrooms in the 1950s before cold type and computers made them like insurance company offices.

When I first timidly climbed to the second-floor editorial department of the *Journal* on a cold January day in 1955, I felt I had stepped onto the set of a grade B Hollywood movie. It was a grimy place with ink-stained floors and walls; wads of copy paper dotted the floor around the waste baskets, attesting to the poor aim of the reporters. A few people were busy typing. Others hurried about on what seemed to me urgent and mysterious errands.

I had been sent to interview for a copy boy's job by the dean of students at the University of Tennessee. The year before, I had at my father's insistence transferred from Emory & Henry College to the University of Tennessee College of Engineering. After one quarter, Dean Ralph Dunford called me to his office and suggested, not unkindly, that my grades in the engineering courses compared to those in liberal arts suggested I was, as he put it, "a man of letters, not a man of numbers." I agreed, but explained that the only way I could stay in school without my father's financial support would be to get a job. He sent me to see Steve Humphrey at the *Journal*.

The interview with Humphrey went well and he offered me the job at seventy-five cents an hour, the minimum wage at the time. As I rose to leave, however, he said, "Oh, yes, I forgot ask you if you can type." I paused. I needed the job and after seeing the newsroom wanted it badly. "Not very well," I replied. Actually, I had never

tried to type, but I looked at the scarred Royal at his desk and saw that each key had the corresponding letter on it. I had seen people type and I thought that any fool could hit a key with the letter on it. One copy boy chore was to type the "show hours," the names, stars and feature starting times of all the films playing at the 20 or so movie theaters in Knoxville. My first night on the job, I was struggling with the typewriter when city editor Dick Evans came over and asked me if I had sent the show hours to the composing room. "I'm working on them," I replied. Evans was furious. We had already missed two editions and were close to missing a third. He ripped the paper out of my typewriter and told me that he would finish them. And, he said, "If you can't type when you come to work on Tuesday, don't bother to come." This was Friday night. Saturday, after my class at UT, I bought a used Underwood for ten dollars at a store on Cumberland Avenue. The salesman threw in a typing book. I carried the huge machine home to Fountain City on a city bus, locked myself in my room and started learning to type. When I returned on Tuesday, I could type by the touch method and kept my job.

The copy boy's duties were many and varied. He started the day about 1 p.m. clipping and stamping the date on the local stories from the *News-Sentinel* to give to the city editor. Next, he went to the *News-Sentinel* to roll up the AP carbons from the overnight PM newspaper report. A *News-Sentinel* copy boy did the same with the *Journal's* AM copy from AP. Those chores done, he had to make sure all the paste pots were cleaned and filled, that reporters had a good supply of cut up newsprint on which to type their stories, and run errands for various members of the staff who

wanted everything from coffee to peanuts. A late afternoon chore involved taking the yellow AP ticker tape stock market report and pasting the appropriate quotes on a sheet of paper next to the company name. It was meticulous and high-speed work. I later was assigned to work in the darkroom, receiving and developing AP Wirephotos. In my spare time, I would hang around the city desk and get assistant city editor Jim Skelton to let me have routine items to write as news stories. These included notices of civic club meetings, obituaries and the like. I also volunteered for Sunday work because the small Sunday staff meant more opportunity to write.

One Sunday in early summer, what had started off as a slow day suddenly exploded into an avalanche of stories. The staff consisted of Skelton, two reporters and myself. A police reporter, Russ Bebb, was due in about 6. One of the reporters had been dispatched on a leisurely assignment to cover a speech at some ceremony. The other was having a hard time keeping up with the pace. I sat down at the city desk and together, Skelton and I polished off the stories, traffic fatalities, a suspicious death investigation, an accident in the Smokies, and a small plane crash in an outlying county. The next day, Skelton spoke to Humphrey and I was promoted to staff reporter at the handsome salary of forty dollars a week.

City editor Evans, who himself had come up as a copy boy, had little patience with cub reporters trying to learn the trade. My desk, along with other newcomers such as Marvin West, who later became sports editor of the *News-Sentinel*, was in the very back of the room. After turning in a story, Evans would wait until you got back to your desk, then bellow out your name, crooking his finger at you to summon you

back to the city desk. You felt as if all eyes in the newsroom were on you as you went up to be chewed out for calling an avenue a street, leaving a participle dangling or making some other major journalistic infraction. It was humiliating and probably reporters today wouldn't stand for it, but it taught you to be extraordinarily careful in editing your copy and to make sure that you included all the details and got them right.

After a hitch in the Army, I returned to the *Journal* in 1959 and worked there several months before I joined the Associated Press. My AP career took me to Nashville, New York, Baltimore, Latin America and the Caribbean and eventually back to Tennessee where I became managing editor of the *Chattanooga Times*. Later still, I joined UPI in Washington and became that agency's assistant managing editor for news.

A sheriff goes without sleep

While the *Journal* was never a truly sensationalist newspaper, its editors loved juicy police stories and a good murder story was virtually guaranteed the streamer slot. Few stories of the era caught the local imagination as did the murder of Mary Hankins, a 27-year-old Fountain City housewife, on May 31, 1951. The slaying occurred on a Saturday, giving both papers an equal crack at the break and both jumped on it with both feet. The woman was found shot in the head on the floor of her new home. Her husband, Fred Hankins, had left her at home alone about an hour earlier to go to a garage to pick up his car. He returned to find his mortally wounded

wife lying in a pool of blood. Every development in the story made front page headlines in both papers for weeks and even came up periodically in later years. The killer was never found and the case remains unsolved. Fountain City at the time was not yet a part of the city of Knoxville, so the crime was investigated by the Knox County Sheriff's Department. Sheriff C.W. "Buddy" Jones apparently thought the case would be solved quickly and told reporters the next day, "We've got some hot leads." He added, "I'm not going to bed until we crack this case." That unfortunate remark, plus the fact he was a Democrat who had been opposed by the *Journal* when he ran for sheriff, earned him the nickname "Sleepless" Buddy Jones, a moniker that plagued him until he left office after one term.

Six editions and practical jokes

Life in the newsroom of the *Journal* was hectic and high pressure as the staffers raced the clock to put out six editions each night: the one star that went to press at 8 p.m., the two star at 9 p.m., the "little four" at 10:20 p.m., the four star at 11 p.m., the city at 1 a.m., and the final as late as necessary. There was considerable makeover between editions to tailor them to the areas they served. The early editions were timed to hit train and bus schedules to the hinterlands. The final edition was usually pretty much the same as the city edition except for "late" bulletins. Since often there were no real bulletins late at night, telegraph editor Bob Adams would begin collecting potential "bulletins" from the AP wires early in his shift. The weakest story on the page would be moved inside or killed and a column of bulletins in boldface

type would fill the hole.

The pressure didn't stop the practical jokes. One notable incident occurred when Ron McMahan was a reporter covering city hall. In a newsroom not known for neatness, McMahan's desk stood out as "outrageously sloppy." One afternoon before Christmas on a slow day on his beat, associate editor Humphrey ordered McMahan to use his free time to clean up the desk. When he left for dinner about 5 p.m., it was spotless. When McMahan returned to the newsroom, he found his desk covered with trash and debris, papers, rubber cement, cigarette butts and ashes. Infuriated and suspecting members of the copy desk had done the dastardly deed, McMahan got a gallon jug of rubber cement, climbed on the copy desk and poured the gooey substance over the table. One of the copy desk editors dropped a lighted match onto the highly flammable cement and the whole desk exploded in flames. Frank Jordan was working on the copy desk the night McMahan took his revenge:

I started grabbing everything out of the way. He went all around that copy desk pouring out that rubber cement. I was hollering at him to quit and getting mad. (Telegraph editor) Bob Adams comes out of the wire room and he saw what had happened. It made him mad, I guess. He reached in his pocket and got a match and threw that match on it. A blaze of fire went all around the copy desk. I was in the slot and it just went all around me. ... I was working the streamer story. It got lost in all that. Ralph Griffith came out and grabbed a fire extinguisher and started squirting that stuff everywhere. I'm telling you that was a mess. It was bedlam that night. I found the same story, but it was on a different wire service. We managed to get the mess cleaned up and got the paper out.¹⁸⁵

The next day was payday. McMahan went to Smith's office early carrying his baby son. "You wouldn't fire a guy with a little baby like this on Christmas Eve,

¹⁸⁵Frank Jordan, interview with author, August 23, 1994.

would you?" Smith smiled one of his rare smiles and said, "I ought to; take this check and get out of here."¹⁸⁶

Another time, Grady Amman, a copy desk editor, brought in a large red cylinder with a fuse sticking out of it. Amman lit the fuse and threw the firecracker-looking device on the copy desk. The copy editors turned their chairs over scrambling to get away from the expected blast. It never came. The cylinder was empty and Amman had a good laugh. Later that night, Amman filled the cylinder full of powder from shotgun shells and brought it into the newsroom and announced, "I'm going to shoot this firecracker!" As Frank Jordan remembered the incident, "Nobody paid any attention to him. And that thing went off. I went stone deaf. Soot came down out of the ceiling all around that place." They cleaned up the newsroom but then started worrying about Guy Smith's office. A janitor provided a key and their worst fears were realized: black soot covered everything. "We knew we were all going to get fired," Jordan said. "So we started meticulously taking a sheet of paper at a time dumping the soot off of it so we could get it back the way it was. He still found out about it. He just laughed."¹⁸⁷

There were fist fights, drunken reveries, card games and more practical jokes over the years, but the common thread among former *Journal* staffers who were asked to reminisce about their years at the paper was what they all called the "family atmosphere" in the newsroom. Despite the poor pay, the night hours of a morning

¹⁸⁶The *Knoxville Journal*, "Our First 150 Years," Special Supplement, 1989, 15th of a series, p.1.

¹⁸⁷Frank Jordan, interview with author, August 23, 1994.

newspaper, the lack of facilities and money for news coverage and the smaller staff — or perhaps because of these things — there was always a tremendous spirit of camaraderie at the *Journal*. The staffers worked together, partied together, socialized together and helped each other when times were hard.

The News-Sentinel newsroom

The free-wheeling antics of the *Journal* newsroom were a sharp contrast to the more serious, even strained atmosphere of the *News-Sentinel*. Frank Jordan, who left the *Journal* to take a copy desk job at the *News-Sentinel*, said the difference in the two newsrooms was due to management's attitude. "At the *News-Sentinel* management held everybody away from them. You couldn't get close to them. You were a number. At the *Journal*, you were a person. You felt a part of the newspaper at the *Journal*. You felt a real pride in the paper."¹⁸⁸

Running the *News-Sentinel* news operation was managing editor C.W. Orcutt, a humorless taskmaster who brooked no levity among the staff. Orcutt "ruled with an iron hand. He was tough, feared by everybody. But he was a fair person," said Don Ferguson,¹⁸⁹ who started as a copy boy at the *News-Sentinel* in 1951 while a student at UT. Ferguson later worked for UPI but returned to the *News-Sentinel* as city editor. He eventually left the news business and today is deputy clerk of the U.S. District Court in Knoxville and writes a syndicated column, "Grammar Gremlins."

¹⁸⁸Ibid.

¹⁸⁹Don Ferguson, interview with author, September 6, 1994.

Assisting Orcutt was longtime city editor Joe Levitt. Levitt was "tough. Quiet. Nothing to say to anybody," Ferguson said. "At work, he wouldn't even speak to you. He was a hard-nosed newsman, man of few words. Strange, but a good man. Neat, meticulous, very organized."¹⁹⁰ Other former staffers said Levitt would pass them on the street without speaking.

The exception to the humorless air in the *News-Sentinel* newsroom was on Saturday night, Ferguson said, when Sunday editor Gunby Rule was in charge. Rule, a grandson of *Journal* founder William Rule, was a "bright guy, pleasant fellow, down-to-earth. He was one of the characters who influenced me. I was just fascinated by him," said Ferguson. Another humorless man was Ralph Millett who eventually replaced Loye Miller as editor. Miller himself had little contact with newsroom staffers, former employees said. Ferguson described him as "the chief executive officer, chairman of the board, I would say. You could tell Orcutt was the guy who had his hands on that staff. It pivoted right around him. Tough. Good newspaper man. And he knew the community pretty well. Loye Miller knew it really well and that made him a better editor, I think. He was the front man and Orcutt was the inside man."

Despite the seriousness, the *News-Sentinel* in those years was a fun and exciting place to work, Ferguson said.

Even the advertising and business staff found the newsroom leaders difficult men with whom to work. Roger Daley came to Knoxville from New York shortly

¹⁹⁰Ibid.

after World War II to work as a sixty-five dollars a week advertising salesman. He became national ad manager, then advertising manager in mid-1950s. He was named business manager and president in 1966 and remained in that post until he retired in 1986. The *News-Sentinel* editors were steadfastly against running anything in the news columns that smacked of promotion or advertising. As Daley recalled:

The *Journal* would accept any publicity picture, if you were an advertiser. Loye Miller was almost anti-business. I showed him a picture one time of a line two or three people deep all the way around Madison Square Garden waiting to get in to see the new Chevrolet or whatever the car was. "It's not news," he said. I said, "Then you'd better go tell these people it's not news." A guy came into the building one day with about a 30-pound catfish on his back and Loye wouldn't run a picture of it. He thought bowling was a waste of time and we never ran any bowling. The *Journal* would run a big picture of perfect scores. We wouldn't carry anything.¹⁹¹

But Daley said that while Miller was sometimes difficult to work with, he was a good newspaperman and was generally well-liked. But, he added, "You couldn't reason with him. He wouldn't get mad or anything. He would just sit there and he wouldn't respond to you."¹⁹²

Daley had a more cordial relationship with Miller's successor, Ralph Millett, the man he supported for the top newsroom job. "Unlike today, the business manager was allowed to have a voice in the selection of editors," he said. "We were a successful team for 20 years."

C.W. Orcutt also was very good at his job "but explosive, throwing telephones and all that sort of business," Daley said. Joe Levitt also had an explosive temper, he

¹⁹¹Roger Daley, interview with the author, September 1, 1994.

¹⁹²Ibid.

said. But he also was a good editor. "The thing about Joe was you never knew whether he was in a rage or laughing. You didn't know how he was going to take something. But Joe would listen. He would look at you and shake his head no but he was hearing you out and he would call you back and say, what about this. Let me hear that again. Joe was well liked. He didn't show his emotions all the time but from time to time he would. Sometimes he would just go by and kind of drag his hand across somebody's shoulder. That was a hell of a compliment."

In contrast to Orcutt, Levitt and Millett was Warner Ogden, the state editor. Ogden was shy and deferential to the point of mousiness. He wore a green eyeshade and interacted very little with the rest of the staff. But Ogden was a well-educated man and turned out a good state section in the *News-Sentinel*. There is a story that the day President Roosevelt died, Ogden was the first to see the bulletin on the news wires. He tore it off and went into the newsroom where he stood quietly by while Miller and Orcutt were talking around Orcutt's desk. Finally he went up to them almost quivering and said, "I thought you'd like to know the president just died." The two editors burst into action and started the ball rolling for an extra edition announcing the president's death.¹⁹³

Loye Miller

Loye Miller, then in his early twenties, came to Knoxville from Cleveland, Ohio, in 1921 when Scripps-Howard decided to start a newspaper. He had been

¹⁹³Mike Miller, interview with author, September 16, 1994.

working for United Press at the time, but had gotten to know Scripps-Howard's Edward Meeman on the *Evansville Press* in his home town of Evansville, Indiana. Meeman asked him to be managing editor of the startup *Knoxville News*. His son, Mike Miller, said his father and four other men carried the Linotypes for the new paper into the building. In Knoxville he met and married Sara Vance Davis, a secretary for a coal company who had come from Abingdon, Virginia. He was named editor at the outbreak of World War II and held the position until he retired in 1967.¹⁹⁴ Loye Miller died on November 30, 1979.

"At home, as a family man, he was a very gentle, kind person," Mike Miller recalled. "I've run into some people at the paper who thought just the opposite. They were afraid of him because they thought he spoke with a bark. I never saw that side."

Miller knew the community well and was involved in many activities such as Rotary Club, although to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest he would never accept official positions with such organizations. He also was an active layman at First Presbyterian Church in downtown Knoxville. Even though in its battles with the solidly Republican *Journal the News-Sentinel* often found itself supporting Democrats for local offices, Loye Miller was a registered Republican, his son said.

Mike Miller, youngest of Loye Miller's three sons, went to work on the *News-Sentinel* as a reporter in the mid-1950s. He said Orcutt and Levitt, who he described as having the "personality of a snake," created the rather grim atmosphere. "Ralph Millett wasn't any joy boy either." He added that any feeling of humor on the

¹⁹⁴Ibid.

newspaper “had to come from the staff, not from them.” Like Ferguson, he preferred working Saturday nights when Rule was in charge. “You looked forward to Saturday night for a little more congeniality and camaraderie,” he said. On the other hand, he said he didn’t feel Orcutt was “all that horrible. I think he ran a pretty tight ship and in some ways had a healthy influence.”

Despite their harsh personalities, the *News-Sentinel* men were praised as outstanding editors. Other key staff members included Tom Siler, the sports editor who had returned to Knoxville after a distinguished career with the Associated Press and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Siler wrote several books on sports and was a much sought-after free-lance writer for major magazines. Assistant city editors were John Elson, a stickler on English language, and Willard Yarbrough, a native East Tennessean (and former *Journal* reporter) who knew the area extremely well. Society editor was Blanche Davis. Key reporters included Julian Granger, Homer Clonts and Carson Brewer.

The *News-Sentinel* was a newspaper guild newsroom. With the advantage of daytime hours and higher pay for its reporters, it managed to keep a more stable and professional staff. Turnover at the *Journal* was always very high and while it had some highly talented people and some stalwarts who stayed on for the long haul, it was a newsroom in which youngsters were constantly being taught the trade. Their zest and enthusiasm often were not a match for the superior numbers and more experienced staff on the afternoon paper.

CHAPTER EIGHT

‘A Clever and Wicked Scheme’: A Family Feud Leads to a JOA

Lotspeich’s investment

When he bought the *Knoxville Journal* in 1936, Roy N. Lotspeich said he regarded it as a “sound investment.” During his lifetime, however, the newspaper remained on shaky ground and “while it earned money during some years, during many years prior to the death of Lotspeich and while he was operating the *Journal*, it operated at a loss.”¹⁹⁵ Mrs. Lotspeich had put up the money for him to buy the paper and on at least one occasion she put up the money to bail him out of one of his many financial reverses in order to save the paper.¹⁹⁶

Lotspeich said at the time his principal reason for buying the financially ailing paper was “to see this great old newspaper that has held the confidence of the people for almost a century, developed into an even greater medium for the advancement of all things good for Knoxville and East Tennessee and the South.” The year after he bought the paper, he brought Guy Smith in as editor and stepped into the background to let Smith run the editorial-news side of the paper pretty much as he chose. Lotspeich, according to advertising manager Jim Golden, also allowed his other department heads a fairly free rein.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵*Carter vs. Lotspeich*, Chancery Court of Knox County, case Number 37437, Answer of Defendants, Ethel Moore Lotspeich and Ethel Lotspeich Smith, 7.

¹⁹⁶*Ibid.* 3.

¹⁹⁷Jim Golden, interview with author, June 13, 1994.

The paper gained in circulation but had early on lost its dominant position to the chain-owned *Knoxville News-Sentinel*. By Lotspeich's death in 1951, the *News-Sentinel* had fully consolidated its position as the city's leading newspaper. Even before Lotspeich bought the paper, it was lagging well behind the *News-Sentinel* in advertising lineage. But while he remained largely in the background, Lotspeich did take an active role in running the paper, going to his office every day and participating in all of the paper's affairs, from the newsroom to the circulation docks and was a force in keeping the paper solvent and publishing.

When he died in 1951, Ethel Lotspeich took over as publisher. Her son-in-law, Charles H. Smith Jr., and Lotspeich's nephew, John P. Carter, were vice presidents and shared management responsibilities with her. Carter and Mrs. Lotspeich were co-executors of Lotspeich's will and co-trustees of a trust created in his will for his heirs. Court records suggest an on-going conflict between Carter and Smith, with Mrs. Lotspeich siding more and more with her son-in-law.

Lotspeich's will

Lotspeich's will placed most of his estate under the trust that was to be created with his widow and nephew as co-trustees. The estate consisted mainly of his shares in the Knoxville Publishing Co., which after his death was renamed the Roy N. Lotspeich Publishing Co., and his extensive real estate holdings. Lotspeich held about 60 percent of the stock and Mrs. Lotspeich and their daughter held another 38 or 39 percent. The will directed that the income from the estate go entirely to his wife during her

lifetime. At her death, one-third of the estate was to go to his daughter and her children and two-thirds to his nieces and nephews, John P. Carter, Bettie Carter Ramsey, and Alice Carter Todd, children of his sister, Ella Mae Lotspeich, and Thomas A. Lotspeich Jr., son of his brother, Thomas A. Lotspeich.

The paper earned nearly \$19,000 in 1951, the year Lotspeich died, but in the next three years it lost more than \$208,000.

The situation disturbed Carter, who saw the estate dwindling because of the continuing losses at the *Journal*. Thus, when an offer came on September 20, 1954, to buy the shares held by the estate for \$1 million, Carter urged his aunt to accept it. She refused.

On July 8, 1955, Carter filed a lawsuit in Knox County Chancery Court attempting to force the sale of the *Journal* and accusing Mrs. Lotspeich of concocting a "clever and wicked scheme to capture absolute control of the stock ownership" of the Roy N. Lotspeich Publishing Co. Mrs. Lotspeich denied the allegations and in turn accused her nephew of his own "diabolical scheme" to deprive her and her daughter of their rightful inheritance.

A two-year legal battle

The lawsuit touched off a bitter two-year legal battle that split the family asunder. The suit was settled in 1957 in a family compromise that left Carter, his sisters and their cousin with the real estate holdings, and gave Mrs. Lotspeich and her daughter full control of the *Journal* itself. Less than five months after the suit was

settled, the *Knoxville Journal* and the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* entered a joint operating agreement with the Scripps-Howard-owned afternoon newspaper as the dominant partner. As part of the JOA, the *Journal* gave up its Sunday edition and moved into The News-Sentinel building on Church Street. Carter founded a successful real estate firm that he headed until his death on January 4, 1993.

During the years after Lotspeich's death until the suit was filed in 1955, The *Journal's* audited circulation remained fairly steady in the 80,000-85,000 range and advertising linage averaged about 6.5 million lines a year for the daily and 3.6 million lines a year for the Sunday paper.¹⁹⁸ Carter contended in his lawsuit, however, that the profit and loss operating experience of the company since the death of Lotspeich "has been very poor in that substantial losses have resulted from said operations and the prospects of future dividends on said shares of stock are indeed very dim." An amended complaint filed June 28, 1956, spelled out the profits and losses for the period:

Year 1951	profit	\$ 18,900
Year 1952	loss	\$ 43,008
Year 1953	loss	\$ 77,478
Year 1954	loss	\$ 88,000
Year 1955	profit	\$125,000 (estimated)

Assuming the 1955 profit was realized, that would have been a net loss in the period of \$64,586. Despite these losses, however, Carter contended that the shares of stock in the newspaper company "are very valuable, particularly by reason of the controlling interest in said corporation and the desirability of control of said newspaper

¹⁹⁸Editor & Publisher Yearbooks for the years cited.

by other persons, firms and corporations who are experienced in the field of publishing newspapers on a profitable basis.”

A difficult decision

Filing the suit was not an easy decision for John P. Carter. He was vice president of the corporation and depended upon his job for his livelihood. But he also was an executor of the estate and he felt he had a fiduciary responsibility to take action. His daughter, now Mrs. Diana Samples, recalled her father's torment. “It was extremely tense and it went on for such a long time,” Mrs. Samples, who was only eight years old at the time, said. “I remember how my father agonized over whether he should bring the suit.” She said he told her years later that in the end he had decided there was simply no way he could continue to work together with Ethel Moore Lotspeich, his co-executor and his boss as president of the *Journal*. Mrs. Samples remembered her childhood shock and fear when her father came home the day he filed the suit and announced he no longer worked at the *Journal*. She also recalled that she was no longer allowed to play with her cousins and friends, the Smith children, Gertrude and Charles H. III, better known as Little Chubby. “We were not permitted in each other's homes,” she said. She noted, however, that the children of her generation have long since buried the animosity of their parents and grandparents and are today friends.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹Mrs. Samples' comments were made in telephone interviews with the author on two occasions in June 1993.

When he finally filed the lawsuit, Carter did not pull his punches. He accused his aunt of an "unconscionable scheme" to gain full control of the publishing company's stock, thus cutting the other heirs, the nieces and nephews of Roy N. Lotspeich, out of their inheritance. The complaint alleged that in her "clever and wicked scheme," Mrs. Lotspeich proposed to transfer about 3,400 shares of common and preferred stock belonging to the trust estate at a price of \$11.60 per share, "a mere fraction of their value," in settlement of "an alleged debt of Roy N. Lotspeich to said Publishing Company." The next step, the lawsuit contended, would be to have the company transfer the same shares of stock to her personally in settlement of a like amount of the company's alleged indebtedness to her personally. "Thus and thereby does the defendant, Ethel Moore Lotspeich, intend to irreparably injure and damage the Trust Estate. ..." The action would have reduced the value of the assets of the estate by hundreds of thousands of dollars, the complaint said, and enhance the value of her personal holdings "to a like extent in complete disregard of her duties as a fiduciary." The complaint linked Mrs. Lotspeich's daughter, Ethel Lotspeich Smith, with her in the alleged scheme and noted that while the daughter "has little or no knowledge of said scheme and plan of the defendant" she was "dominated and controlled" by her mother.

According to the lawsuit, the publishing company had 20,000 shares of voting common stock of no par value and 5,000 shares of non voting preferred stock with a par value of \$100 per share. Lotspeich's 11,974 shares of common stock and 2,999 shares of preferred stock were held by the estate after his death. Mrs. Lotspeich

individually owned 7,000 shares of common stock and about 1,800 shares of preferred stock, about 37.5 percent of the stock. John P. Carter owned 200 shares of common and 50 shares of preferred and Mr. and Mrs. Smith owned 600 shares of common and 140 shares of preferred. Transferring the shares in the manner Carter suggested would have given Mrs. Lotspeich majority control of the *Journal* in her own right, removing it from the trust estate.

Carter urged the Chancery Court to force Mrs. Lotspeich to sell the trust's share, and control of the *Journal*, for \$1 million or to accept the next best offer and to make up the difference from her own funds. The court's initial action was to enjoin Mrs. Lotspeich from doing anything with the trust's shares except with the consent of and supervision by the Chancery Court.

In their reply, Mrs. Lotspeich and her daughter denied any wrongdoing or any scheme to wrest majority control of the company from the estate and unleashed an attack of their own against Carter, saying his refusal to cooperate had blocked the administration of Lotspeich's estate.

As a matter of fact, Carter has been most abusive to defendant, Ethel Moore Lotspeich, in connection with the estate's affairs and, on occasion, has stated that he will completely deplete the Lotspeich estate by litigation expenses unless his demands are met.²⁰⁰

The answer said further: "Having realized that he should not and will not be permitted to dictate the policies at the *Journal*, Carter has set about upon a diabolical scheme to deprive defendants ... of the greater value of the 37.5 percent interest which

²⁰⁰*Carter vs. Lotspeich*, Answer of Defendants Ethel Moore Lotspeich and Ethel Lotspeich Smith, 4.

defendant ... owns in the voting and non-voting stock of the *Journal*." The reply suggested that if the majority shares were sold at the price Carter suggested it would devalue the stock owned by Mrs. Lotspeich and Mrs. Smith. The women argued that while the *Journal* had lost money both before and after Lotspeich's death the losses after his death "can be attributed to factors that have now been overcome and that it has now begun to earn money and that the prospects for future earnings are almost unlimited," a fact, they argued, that boded well for future dividends on the stock. They further argued that it was not Lotspeich's wish or intention that the *Journal* be sold. The answer concluded:

It was the belief of both the deceased Lotspeich and his wife, Ethel Moore Lotspeich, that what does count in the publishing of a newspaper is integrity combined with the capability for conversion and adaptability in growth. It is the policy of the *Journal* for liberal-minded independence. Their purpose was for the *Journal* to have two sides, that is, that it be operated like any other business, and that it pay in the material sense in order to live, but they too wanted it to be much more than a business, that it be an institution bringing to the people a program for welfare and progress; these approaches to be kept constantly in mind as a guide in matters of policy, which at all times was to be considered its major objective and obligation.

A second offer

Carter, on June 28, 1956, filed an amended bill in which he included in the record a second offer for the *Journal* stock. This offer, presented by Knoxville lawyer Howard F. Jarvis in a letter dated June 7, 1956,²⁰¹ was on behalf of unnamed clients

²⁰¹The Jarvis letter, as well as Carter's subsequent letter to his aunt about the offer, are appended to the record of the lawsuit, *Carter vs. Lotspeich*.

who, the letter said, "are East Tennesseans who want to continue to publish a Republican newspaper in Knoxville. They are not connected to Scripps-Howard." He added that the clients "have a background of operations of newspapers in East Tennessee, the South and Southwest." These clients offered \$2.2 million for all the outstanding stock or \$1.1 million for the estate's controlling sixty percent interest. That, Carter argued, should overcome the claim of Mrs. Lotspeich and her daughter that selling the majority share would devalue their holdings, because now they could get the same amount for those holdings. Jarvis said his clients would also like to negotiate a ten-year renewal on the lease of the *Journal* building, but did not make that a part of the proposal. After that letter was sent to the *Journal*, Carter wrote a letter starting, "Dear Aunt Ethel," urging her to accept the offer. Mrs. Lotspeich rejected the offer out of hand and returned a \$25,000 earnest money check to Jarvis. In his amended bill, Carter said the *Journal* had assets of \$1,114,891 as of December 31, 1952, and \$1,122,760 on December 31, 1955. Carter further said that the women's charge that he was not acting in good faith "is wholly unwarranted and is not founded upon truth and sincerity."²⁰²

As the legal wrangling continued, both sides remained adamant in their positions and it appeared that the lawsuit could drag on for years. Barbara Hemmeter, the former wife of Charles H. Smith III, grandson of the Lotspeichs, recalled that Mrs. Lotspeich told her later that the chancellor had warned all the parties at one point that

²⁰²*Carter vs. Lotspeich*, Chancery Court of Knox County, amended and supplemental bill, filed June 28, 1956, by John P. Carter Jr. and Alice Carter Todd.

“either you settle this thing, or I’ll settle it for you and neither side will be happy.”

Following that ultimatum, the parties reached a compromise that the court heard in April. Chancellor Glenn W. Woodlee of Dayton, Tenn., sitting as a special chancellor in the case, issued his final ruling on Tuesday, May 7, 1957. The ruling was based on an amended bill filed by Carter in which the basic structure of the compromise settlement was presented.

The settlement, in effect, gave Mrs. Lotspeich and her daughter complete control of the shares in the *Journal* held by the Lotspeich estate. It gave Carter, his sisters and their cousin all of the estate’s real estate holdings, much of it valuable commercial property in downtown Knoxville.

Chancellor Woodlee noted in his decision that the separate interests of the parties to the lawsuit “have become so adverse and conflicting as to be irreconcilable.” He added that the “large and valuable estate left by the testator (Lotspeich) to be held in trust by said fiduciaries is in grave danger of being subjected to prolonged, expensive and vexatious litigation, the effect of which would irreparably deplete and diminish the value of said estate.”

Separate trusts

The order created separate trusts, one known as the “Nieces and Nephews Trust” with Carter as trustee, and the other the “Lotspeich Family Trust,” with Mrs. Lotspeich as trustee.

The *Journal*, which had given a subdued version in a Page One story of the

original filing, printed an equally bare bones story on the settlement under the headline, "Mrs. Lotspeich, Family, Granted Sole Ownership Of Journal By Chancellor," in its issue of April 21, 1957, when the settlement was first announced. It made no further mention of the case when the official order was entered on May 7, 1957, in Knoxville. The *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, which had leaped with glee upon the story initially, publishing the text of Carter's lawsuit, carried an equally subdued account of the settlement when it was first announced and a brief story on the final decree, leading with the fact the chancellor had awarded \$98,000 in legal fees to the various attorneys in the case.

Carter's amended bill in the lawsuit did not say who made the new offer to buy the *Journal*, nor was it ever revealed subsequently by either party. However, the suit gave a number of clues that allowed the author to track down the would-be purchaser, a group called Southern Newspapers Inc., which at the time was operating the *Maryville-Alcoa Daily Times*. Tutt Bradford, a partner in Southern Newspapers and publisher of the *Daily Times*, confirmed in a telephone conversation that he had made the initial contact with Charles H. Smith Jr. at a party and had followed up with a series of meetings. He said the sale of the paper to his group seemed assured. At one point, Smith asked him what he planned to do with the paper when he took over. He said he would immediately seek a joint publishing agreement with Scripps-Howard. Shortly thereafter, he said, Smith broke off the talks and a year later, shortly after

settlement of the Carter lawsuit, the JOA with the *News-Sentinel* was announced.²⁰³

A stunning announcement

The Sunday editions of both the *Knoxville Journal* and the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* of September 29, 1957, carried separate announcements of the impending joint operating agreement between the two newspapers. The *Journal's* announcement said:

To Readers of The *Knoxville Journal*:

This is to advise you that, effective October 1, 1957, an arrangement has been worked out between the *Knoxville Journal* and the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* under which the Advertising, Circulation and Mechanical Departments of both will be located at The News-Sentinel plant on Church Avenue.

Sunday editions of the *Knoxville Journal* are suspended with this issue. This newspaper will continue its six issues weekly as usual.

Editorial departments of the two newspapers will be conducted as they have always been — completely independent of each other and preserving for the citizenship of Knoxville and East Tennessee the long-standing advantage of having two metropolitan newspapers of completely different viewpoints under separate ownership and control.

The arrangement described between the Knoxville daily newspapers grew out of economic necessity. ...

The *Journal* announcement was signed by Mrs. Lotspeich, president and publisher, Charles H. Smith Jr., vice president and general manager, and Guy L. Smith, editor.

Neither newspaper gave any details of the agreement. Under present-day rules, newspapers must bare their corporate souls in public before entering such an

²⁰³It is ironic that while Bradford's offer to purchase the *Journal* was turned down, it eventually was bought by a later owner of the Maryville newspaper, the Persis Corporation.

agreement. However, the Knoxville agreement came before passage of the Newspaper Preservation Act of 1970, which allows the U.S. Justice Department to decide whether one or both newspapers in a given market met the criteria of a "failing newspaper" required to start a joint operating arrangement. The terms of the *Journal-News-Sentinel* JOA remained a closely guarded corporate secret until lawyers for the Roy N. Lotspeich Publishing Co. released the text of the agreement for inclusion in this study. Clearly, the decision on how to handle the initial announcement came from the board rooms of the two organizations, not the newsrooms. An announcement of this magnitude involving any other organization would have sent the newspapers scurrying to dig up all relevant details about the event.

The *Journal* staff was told of the agreement just prior to publication of the announcement in the papers. The news was announced by a clearly shaken Guy Smith and stunned the reporters and editors. It all happened very fast. "We made up one night at the *Journal* and the next night at the *News-Sentinel*," Frank Jordan said.²⁰⁴ The staff felt it was a defeat, or as Vic Weals put it, "a loss of prestige, particularly in the Sunday sports section. That meant that we didn't have Saturday's game."²⁰⁵ It also meant the end of the *Journal*'s popular Sunday "Cavalcade" feature section, the showcase for the art of *Journal* photographers and feature writers.

The agreement, whose text is published as an appendix of this study, took effect at noon Saturday, October 1, 1957, and ran for an initial period of thirty years.

²⁰⁴Frank Jordan, interview with author, August 23, 1994.

²⁰⁵Vic Weals, interview with author, August 18, 1994.

Under the agreement, both papers would publish Monday through Saturday in their respective fields, the *Journal* in the morning and the *News-Sentinel* in the afternoon. However, only the *News-Sentinel* would publish a Sunday edition. The *News-Sentinel* would take over all non-editorial functions of the *Journal*. The *News-Sentinel* would print, sell advertising for and distribute both papers. The *Journal* would move into the *News-Sentinel* building when an addition was completed to make room for both newsrooms. The two organizations retained their separate corporate identities. The agreement also allowed the *Journal* to set its own advertising and circulation rates. The agreement also stipulated:

The *News-Sentinel* and the *Journal* each agrees to preserve the present quality, character and reputation of its respective newspaper or newspapers, and to maintain as far as practicable the present editorial makeup and format of its respective newspaper or newspapers in order to preserve their respective identities and characteristics.²⁰⁶

The split on profits was 30 percent to the *Journal* on the first \$1.1 million and 25 percent up to \$2 million and 22.5 percent on everything over \$2 million. The *Journal* was to reimburse the *News-Sentinel* on the same schedule for any losses. Appendix A of the agreement gave the *Journal* 78 columns and the *News-Sentinel* 86 columns Monday through Saturday, with the *News-Sentinel* getting 240 columns for its Sunday edition. The agreement left it to the *News-Sentinel* to change, after consulting with the *Journal*, the number of columns allocated to each paper and also to determine what payment, if any, was to be made if either newspaper exceeded its

²⁰⁶Agreement between the Knoxville News-Sentinel Company and the Roy N. Lotspeich Publishing Company Inc, signed September 21, 1957.

allotment.

'Whose Freedom of Speech?'

Guy Smith was on record as deploring monopoly situations in other cities and he wasn't too keen on joint operating agreements either. He wrote in the article,

"Whose Freedom of Speech?" cited earlier:

The reader is not quite as helpless in a situation in cities where there is simply a physical "combination" of morning and afternoon newspapers. There is some chance, at least, of differing selection of news and of opposing editorial position. Always theoretically, and sometimes actually, "combination" papers are independent in editorial policy, though they frequently adhere, in our particular area, to different factions of the same political party. But for the most obvious human reason of having to live together under one roof, their competition with and opposition to each other are most frequently synthetic.²⁰⁷

As noted above, John P. Carter founded a real estate firm in 1957 following the settlement and ran it with great success until his death in January 1993 at age 80. John P. Carter Co. Realtors remains one of Knoxville's most prestigious real estate firms.

Mrs. Lotspeich continued to run the *Journal* until her death on December 10, 1962. Her son-in-law, Charles H. Smith Jr., succeeded her as publisher, serving until his death in 1972. He was succeeded in turn by his son, Charles H. Smith III, who died in the 1980 crash of his vintage F8F Bearcat airplane in Georgia. Control of the *Journal* then went to Charles Mason, husband of Gertrude Smith, young Smith's sister and granddaughter of Lotspeich. A year later, with the blessing of the remaining heirs,

²⁰⁷Smith, Guy L., op.cit.

the *Journal* was sold to Gannett Newspapers. In 1986, Gannett negotiated a renewal of the joint operating agreement and, as part of the deal, the *Journal* switched from morning to afternoon distribution, a move Carter told his daughter "was the biggest damn fool mistake they've ever made."²⁰⁸ In exchange for relinquishing the more favorable morning cycle, Gannett's minority share of the partnership was increased from 22 1/2 percent to 25 percent, with a corresponding reduction of Scripps-Howard's share from 77 1/2 percent to 75 percent.²⁰⁹ The Knoxville deal was part of a larger tradeoff between the two giant chains involving their JOA in El Paso. While there was no change in publishing cycles in El Paso, Scripps-Howard agreed to transfer to Gannett its 50 percent interest in the Newspaper Printing Corp., which acted as business and production agent for both Scripps' evening *Herald-Post* and Gannett's morning and Sunday *El Paso Times*. Under the El Paso agreement, the *Times* became the agent for the *Herald-Post*. Editor and Publisher magazine also reported that there was a change in the 50-50 profit distribution from the joint operation, but said the figures were not revealed.²¹⁰

Gannett opted out of the new arrangement a few months later, selling the newspaper to editor Ron McMahan and William C. McKinney, whose family owned several papers in Ohio. The McMahan-McKinney partnership was not a happy one²¹¹

²⁰⁸Diana Samples, telephone interview with author, June 1993.

²⁰⁹Editor & Publisher, "Gannett, Scripps restructure Knoxville, El Paso JOAs," February 22, 1986, 38.

²¹⁰*Ibid.*

²¹¹This is according to McMahan in a conversation in July 1993 with the author.

and they soon began looking for buyers. In 1988, Persis Corp., a Honolulu-based newspaper chain, bought the *Journal*. A year later, the company also bought the *Maryville-Alcoa Daily Times* and switched it to the morning field. The *News-Sentinel* argued that this violated the terms of the joint agreement. The dispute set in motion a chain of litigation that led to the dissolving of the JOA. Persis insisted that it planned to continue to publish the *Journal* from its Maryville plant. But in the *Journal*'s December 31, 1991, issue Persis announced it was suspending daily publication.²¹² The corporation continued to publish a weekly edition using the *Journal* name but ceased publication altogether a few months later in 1992.

The compromise settlement worked out by Chancellor Woodlee undoubtedly saved the major portion of the Lotspeich estate's assets, which included the *Knoxville Journal* itself. However, it left unanswered for all times whether Mrs. Lotspeich truly was engaged in a "clever and wicked scheme" to take over the *Journal* or whether Carter's lawsuit was, as she charged, his own "diabolical scheme" to drive down the value of her own individually held stock in the newspaper company.

While pursuing with vigor the secrets of others, newspapers generally have been loath to cover their own business activities and reveal to the public their own corporate secrets. The *Journal* certainly was no exception. Part of the settlement agreement in Carter's Chancery Court suit was that the record would remain sealed. The Chancery Court first opened the file for Steve Humphrey when he was researching a sequel to his book on Parson Brownlow and again to this researcher in

²¹²The *Knoxville Journal*, final edition, December 31, 1991, p.1.

connection with a class project in historiography in 1993. Much of the file still remains closed, however.

A joint agreement with the *News-Sentinel* was not a new idea. It had been broached several times when Lotspeich was still living. Roger Daley said that on one occasion Lotspeich went to New York to sign papers with Scripps-Howard and backed out at the last minute. On another occasion, shortly before his death, Lotspeich and the Scripps-Howard executives agreed to meet in Washington. Just before the meeting, he called and said he wasn't coming, Daley said.²¹³

While there were complaints on both sides over the ensuing years, the JOA was a success at least until the Persis Corporation bought the *Journal*. As Carter's suit had alleged, the *Journal* was a very valuable asset and one which many others would dearly like to own.

²¹³Roger Daley, interview with author, September 1, 1994.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusions

The *Knoxville Journal* was a Republican newspaper in an area that has been predominantly Republican since the party was founded. It was a morning paper at a time when morning papers were in the ascendancy elsewhere in the nation. It was a home-owned paper in competition with a chain-owned paper in a community that was noted for its distrust of "outsiders." It had over the years a zealous, loyal and dedicated staff of able reporters and editors. It pursued local news with vigor and resoluteness. It was the dominant newspaper in both advertising and circulation through the 1920s and continued to lead in circulation until 1938.

The purpose of this study was to attempt to ascertain some of the reasons the *Journal*, given these natural advantages, lost its dominant position as the newspaper of choice in Knoxville and East Tennessee.

Many reasons for the newspaper's loss of dominance suggest themselves as one looks at the history of the *Journal* during the period 1936-1957: poor management; lack of operating capital, resulting in smaller staffs of less well-paid employees in all departments; lack of promotional campaigns to boost circulation and advertising; the chain-owned paper's superior resources; failure by the *Journal's* editor to take into account the changing demographics brought about by the influx of people because of TVA, World War II and Oak Ridge.

One question that suggests itself is whether the *Journal* fell victim to the argument that newspapers are natural monopolies and in a competition the stronger

paper will inevitably wind up dominating a given market. This idea, expounded to explain the shrinking number of dailies and competitive newspaper markets in America, is that “dailies can’t help destroying their competition — the strongest paper comes to dominate a newspaper market until competing dailies are killed off.”²¹⁴

One “advantage” actually may have been a disadvantage in the Knoxville area. That is the idea that a morning paper had an inherent advantage over an afternoon competitor. Few people living know the situation of the two newspapers in those years better than Roger Daley, who joined the *News-Sentinel* in 1946 and rose from advertising salesman to business manager. Daley points out that East Tennessee, indeed the entire southern Appalachian region, was an early-rising area. People had to drive to work to get to the plants in Oak Ridge, Alcoa and other outlying areas. Many worked the second and third shifts, particularly during and immediately after World War II when production was booming. The population was predominantly rural and farmers tend to get up and get on the job early. Television was slow in catching on outside the city of Knoxville because of the mountainous terrain that made reception problematic until cable came along. “Knoxville was not just a morning town, it was an *early morning town*. Everybody got to work by eight o’clock and got up at six. Without public transportation, they couldn’t buy the paper to read it on the train or the bus. That had a lot to do with the *Journal’s* lack of growth.” Daley points out that this phenomenon would be found in a belt that went from Roanoke, Virginia, to

²¹⁴Pilgrim, Tim A., “Newspapers As Natural Monopolies: Some Historical Considerations,” *Journalism History*, Vol. 18, 1992, 3.

Birmingham, Alabama, and even northern Florida, where afternoon papers generally were predominant.²¹⁵

And, while the area has remained predominantly Republican, the 1930s and 1940s saw an influx of people to East Tennessee from other areas attracted by TVA, Oak Ridge and the industries these operations spawned. In the 1950s, there was an outward migration from the surrounding mountain counties to northern industrial cities as unprofitable coal mines began to shut down. The new residents perhaps were not as intrigued by the steady diet of local politics served up by the *Journal* and may have found in the chain-owned *News-Sentinel* a newspaper more similar to those they had left behind. It is impossible to determine at this point just how much of a factor this might have been, if indeed it was a factor at all.

On the other hand, Daley and several others interviewed for this study felt that the *Journal's* strong Republican position actually was a help, not a hindrance, both in circulation and advertising. As Daley pointed out, Guy Smith was very attuned to the need to get adequate advertising and was not above using his political clout to bring Republican advertisers into the newspaper. That Smith favorably influenced circulation would seem to be borne out by the fact that in the years following his death, circulation steadily declined. It went from 67,778 for the year ending September 20, 1970, to 59,190 for the year ending September 30, 1974, while the *News-Sentinel* circulation climbed from 105,694 to 107,130 during the same period. Following the *News-Sentinel's* takeover of circulation operations of both papers, the *Journal's*

²¹⁵Roger Daley, telephone interview with the author, March 15, 1994.

circulation dropped from around 80,000 daily to the mid-60,000s. According to Roger Daley this was because the *News-Sentinel* cut out several unprofitable circulation areas in North Carolina, Virginia and Kentucky and eliminated free distribution to peace officers, county officials and school teachers. This free circulation, he said, "affected their income, their ability to pay, their ability to hire people, their overall outlook."

The key to the *Journal's* loss of dominance appears to be above all financial. Unfortunately, the financial records of the *Journal* for this period were not available and perhaps no longer exist. Being a privately held corporation, the *Journal* did not have to publish an annual financial statement. This researcher worked through the *Journal's* former law firm, Frantz, McConnell and Seymour, but was unable to uncover the paper's old files. Attorney Arthur Seymour Jr. provided a copy of the 1957 joint operating agreement but said no records of the *Journal's* pre-1957 operations were available in his office. Attempts to ascertain if they were stored elsewhere were fruitless.

Without those records, any detailed analysis of the *Journal's* financial position in those years is impossible. However, the anecdotal evidence and clues in the *Carter vs. Lotspeich* Chancery Court case indicate that the *Journal* operated close to the edge during the entire period. The lawsuit pointed out that Lotspeich had no money of his own when his wife staked him to buy the paper in 1936. From that time through the 1940s, anecdotal evidence shows that *Journal* employees were paid in coins from weekly circulation collections, in scrip and, at times, with checks that bounced. Such cash flow problems surely prevented the *Journal's* managers from pursuing circulation

and advertising promotion schemes they might otherwise have used. Certainly the editorial product could have been enhanced had more money been available to increase the news staff and to allow reporters to cover out-of-town sports events and major news stories.

While nothing turned up in this study to indicate that Lotspeich and his department heads were poor managers, Lotspeich is said to have played heavily in the stock market and he heavily invested his personal funds in real estate. It is possible that had he poured some of these resources into the *Journal*, the situation might have been different. Still, it should be noted that Lotspeich inherited many of the paper's financial difficulties, which stemmed from the Depression and the personal financial failure of then owner Luke Lea, which sent the *Journal* into a period of receivership and lack of aggressive management. It was in this period that the *Journal* lost its predominance as an advertising vehicle and its circulation lead began to slip. And, it should also be noted that the *Journal's* decline accelerated in the years immediately after Lotspeich's death, indicating that his management was superior at least to that of his squabbling heirs.

On the other hand, the *News-Sentinel*, with the backing of the resources of Scripps-Howard, not only weathered the Depression but emerged from it strengthened vis-à-vis the *Journal*. Under the aggressive management of business managers such as M.G. Chambers, Frank Powers and Roger Daley, the *News-Sentinel* promoted circulation throughout the area, touting the slogan "Evening Time Is Reading Time," and fielded a cadre of outstanding advertising salesmen. Daley feels the *News-*

Sentinel's success can be attributed primarily to its superior teams of advertising sales, promotion and circulation people.

"We had good promotion people and we worked at it. And they didn't," Daley said. "I had good people, a good team in advertising. They (the *Journal*) didn't pay anything. Every ad man they had was on a waiting list to get on at the *News-Sentinel*. Good men like Fred Ramsey, Bob Luttrell switched over. They just never put forth the effort. Our people were well coached and had good equipment. It was that much different. They (the *Journal*) were their own worst enemy." He added that the *Journal* staff worked out of cramped offices from unpainted desks and straight-backed chairs using hand-cranked adding machines. "Those conditions don't attract a lot of good people," he said. "We had good benefits; they didn't. Our guys were happy."²¹⁶

At the *Journal*, a vicious circle had set in that kept wages low and led to high personnel turnover. This also hampered the *Journal's* efforts to maintain a consistent effort in these areas.

An argument could be made for the concept of a natural monopoly of newspapers in the Knoxville experience. The *Journal* initially lost its dominant advertising position because of the Depression-caused receivership which stripped it of competent management and left it with perennial cash flow problems. As the *News-Sentinel* widened the circulation-advertising lineage gap, it became increasingly difficult for the *Journal* to remain profitable. Thus, one might speculate that a monopoly situation through the joint operating agreement with the *News-Sentinel* was inevitable,

²¹⁶Roger Daley, interview with author, September 1, 1994.

and the only way to keep the *Journal* alive and allow it to share in the increased profits that the business monopoly produced. According to Pilgrim, this theory has been codified in the Newspaper Preservation Act of 1970, which blessed earlier unions such as that between the *Journal* and *News-Sentinel*, and allowed future mergers to occur without threat of anti-trust action. Pilgrim says:

According to the 1970 Canadian Special Senate Committee on the Mass Media, natural monopoly means a larger newspaper can produce papers at a lower cost per issue. Such economies of scale are passed on to advertisers, who flock to the larger-circulating paper in order to send their advertising messages to a greater number of readers more inexpensively. Over time, the leading daily grows larger, while competition withers.²¹⁷

The phenomenon of newspaper monopolies is one of the second half of the twentieth century and parallels the rise of radio and television and the proliferation of suburban and small town dailies in the circulation areas of metropolitan dailies. This has resulted in ever-greater competition for the advertising dollar and the loyalty of readers. The Knoxville situation would seem to present an ideal laboratory for a future study on the theory of newspapers as natural monopolies in the second half of the twentieth century. It is, however, beyond the scope of the present study.

Knoxville, whose first newspaper was published in another city before this city was founded,²¹⁸ has a rich newspaper heritage. Newspapers have always played a vital and integral role in the life of the community and that role deserves further study. The only in-depth study of Knoxville's newspaper heritage is the 1933 master's thesis by

²¹⁷Pilgrim.

²¹⁸The *Knoxville Gazette* was first printed in Rogersville in 1791 and moved to Knoxville the next year when the city was founded.

Clara Estelle Masterson. It is hoped that this study expands upon her work in this field and perhaps will inspire other studies of the Knoxville newspaper industry. Particularly interesting would be an in-depth study of the life and times of Captain William Rule.

APPENDIX A

The 1957 Joint Operating Agreement

APPENDIX

The following is the full text of the initial joint operating agreement between the Roy N. Lotspeich Publishing Company and the Knoxville News-Sentinel Company. It was provided for this study by Arthur Seymour Jr. of the law firm Frantz, McConnell and Seymour in Knoxville.

AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT made and entered into this 21st day of September, 1957, by and between KNOXVILLE NEWS-SENTINEL COMPANY (hereinafter called the "News-Sentinel"), First Party, and ROY N. LOTSPEICH PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC. (hereinafter called "Journal"), Second Party,

WITNESSETH: That,

In consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements herein contained, the parties agree with each other as follows:

1. The period of this Agreement shall begin at noon on the 1st day of October, 1957 (hereinafter called "the effective date of this Agreement") and shall continue for an initial period of thirty (30) years, ending at noon on the 30th day of September, 1987. This Agreement shall automatically renew for succeeding renewal periods of ten (10) years each, unless either party notifies the other at least two years before the end of the initial thirty (30) year period or at least two (2) years and not more than three (3) years before the end of the then current renewal period, of the desire of the party

giving such notice to terminate this Agreement shall terminate at the end of the initial period or the current renewal period during which such notice is given. The term "period of this Agreement" as used in this Agreement shall mean the initial period and any renewal period or periods.

2. During the period of this Agreement, the News-Sentinel shall own and publish in Knoxville, Tennessee, a six-day evening newspaper, Monday through Saturday, known as "The Knoxville News-Sentinel" and a Sunday newspaper known as "The Knoxville News-Sentinel," and Journal shall own and publish in Knoxville, Tennessee, a six-day morning newspaper, Monday through Saturday, known as "The Knoxville Journal." All said newspapers taken together are herein sometimes referred to as the "Newspapers."

3. The News-Sentinel is authorized to and shall use its best efforts to collect all advertising and circulation accounts receivable of the Journal which are outstanding on the effective date of this Agreement to the extent that it is possible to collect such accounts in the ordinary and normal manner and without suit or other legal proceeding, and the News-Sentinel shall remit the sums so collected to the Journal weekly, less any outside cost or expense incurred in the collection of such accounts. All accounts described in this Paragraph 3 which have not been collected by the News-Sentinel within six (6) months after the effective date of this Agreement shall be returned to the Journal and the News-Sentinel shall have no further obligation with respect thereto.

4. From and after the effective date of this Agreement, the News-Sentinel shall

supervise, manage and perform all operations involved in printing, selling and distributing the Newspapers; shall solicit and sell advertising space in the Newspapers; shall, except as provided in Paragraph 3 hereof, collect the circulation and advertising accounts receivable of the Newspapers; shall do any and all acts and things necessarily connected with the foregoing activities or necessary to carry out and effectuate the terms and provisions of this Agreement, and shall pay all "operating expense" as that term is hereinafter defined. The News-Sentinel agrees that it will use its best efforts to sell and distribute The Knoxville Journal, the newspaper owned and published by the Journal, as widely as possible in its natural territory.

5. The News-Sentinel shall print the Newspapers on the equipment of the News-Sentinel at the News-Sentinel's plant in Knoxville, Tennessee, and all operations under this Agreement shall be carried on and performed by the News-Sentinel with the News-Sentinel's equipment and from the News-Sentinel's said plant. As part of the operations under this Agreement, the News-Sentinel shall furnish the Journal adequate office space in Knoxville, Tennessee, for the separate use of the employees of the editorial department of the Journal, including separate dark rooms, separate rooms for wire service, an office for the Journal's editor, and no more than two (2) executive offices.

6. The News-Sentinel agrees that the Journal shall have no financial responsibility or obligation under this Agreement except the obligation to make such payments as may be specifically required of the Journal under Paragraphs 8, 10, 12, 15 and 17 of this Agreement. The parties agree that except as otherwise provided in this

Agreement, neither shall be charged with or held responsible for any contract, debt, claim, demand, damages, suit, action, obligation or liability arising by reason of any act or omission on the part of the other.

7. The News-Sentinel shall maintain full and accurate books of account and records showing all transactions hereunder. Such books and records shall be kept on a calendar year basis and under the accounting method employed by the News-Sentinel and shall be kept at all times at the principal place of business of the News-Sentinel in Knoxville, Tennessee. Periodically, statements shall be drawn from these records and payments as provided in Paragraphs 16 and 17 shall be determined therefrom. The Journal shall have access to and may inspect such books and records at any time and from time to time.

8. The amount of reading content of each edition of each of the Newspapers shall be determined in accordance with the schedule marked Appendix A, attached hereto and made a part hereof. The cost of additional reading content of any edition or editions of the Newspapers, as determined under Appendix A hereof, is to be paid by the News-Sentinel or the Journal, as the case may be.

9. Within ten (10) days after the effective date of this Agreement, the Journal shall furnish the News-Sentinel complete information respecting all contracts then held by the Journal for the purchase of newsprint paper and ink, and all other contracts that would be helpful or beneficial to the News-Sentinel in the performance of its duties and obligations hereunder. As soon as possible after such list is furnished to the News-Sentinel and in any event within ten (10) days thereafter, the News-Sentinel shall

notify the Journal of the contracts which the News-Sentinel will assume and agree to perform. The contracts specified in such notice shall be assumed and performed by the News-Sentinel and the News-Sentinel shall relieve the Journal of and from any and all further liability under such contracts.

10. The News-Sentinel shall retain complete control and direction of the editorial content of its newspapers, The Knoxville News-Sentinel (evening and Sunday) and complete control and authority over the editors and editorial employees for such newspapers, including the exclusive right to hire and fire said editors and editorial employees. It shall also retain complete control of and the right to fix advertising and circulation rates. The Journal shall retain complete control and direction of the editorial content of its newspaper, The Knoxville Journal, and complete control and authority over the editors and editorial employees for such newspaper, including the exclusive right to hire and fire said editors and editorial employees. It shall also retain complete control of the right to fix its advertising and circulation rates. All costs and expenses (similar to those defined in Paragraphs 14.2 and 15 of this Agreement with respect to the News-Sentinel) relating to the Journal's editorial department shall be borne by the Journal. The News-Sentinel and the Journal each agrees to preserve the present quality, character and reputation of its respective newspaper or newspapers, and to maintain as far as practicable the present editorial makeup and format of its respective newspaper or newspapers in order to preserve their respective identities and characteristics.

11. The News-Sentinel and the Journal each agrees to maintain its separate

corporate entity, to take all corporate action necessary to carry out and effectuate the intent, purposes and provisions of this Agreement, and to cooperate with each other in every proper way that will promote the successful operation under this Agreement.

12. If either party shall violate any of the terms, provisions or conditions of this Agreement, then, in addition to all other remedies, liabilities and obligations herein provided for, such party shall hold and save harmless, and indemnify the other party from and against any and all claims, demands and actions that may arise out of or by reason of such violation of the terms, provisions and conditions of this Agreement.

13. The term "operating expenses" as used in this Agreement is hereby defined to mean and include only the ordinary and necessary expenses, including administrative expenses and expenses for general management service, incurred by the News-Sentinel in printing, selling and distributing the Newspapers, in soliciting and selling advertising space in the Newspapers, in collecting the circulation and advertising accounts receivable of the Newspapers, in keeping records necessary or incidental to said operations, and in paying national advertising representatives selected by the News-Sentinel. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the items of expenditure set out and described in Appendix B, attached hereto and made a part hereof, shall be excluded from, or included in the term "operating expenses" to the extent set forth in said Appendix B. Adjustment shall be made as set forth in Appendix B attached hereto for inventories of consumable supplies, prepaid and accrued expenses, and prepaid subscriptions in existence at the effective date of this

Agreement.

14. The following items are not to be included within the meaning of the term "operating expenses" as used in this Agreement:

14.1 Except as otherwise set forth in Appendix B hereof, any cost or expense of whatever kind incurred by the News-Sentinel prior to the effective date of this Agreement or arising by reason of any act or thing done or omitted by the News-Sentinel prior to the effective date of this Agreement.

14.2 The costs and expenses of the editorial department of the News-Sentinel, including, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, all salaries and expenses of all editorial employees; all press associations' assessments and charges; all charges for editorial features, daily comics, pictures and other editorial material of every kind and character; the cost of editorial mats; all telegraphic, telephone and long distance telephone charges of such editorial department, and all charges for the repair and maintenance of editorial department typewriters and other editorial department equipment. The term "editorial department" shall be understood to include the photographic department.

15. The entire cost and expense of defending, settling or paying and discharging any liability or other claim on account of everything published in the News-Sentinel (evening and Sunday) shall be borne by the News-Sentinel as part of its editorial expense, and any such cost and expense on account of anything published in

the Journal shall be borne by the Journal as part of its editorial expense.

16. In the events the amounts collected by the News-Sentinel in any calendar year under Paragraph 4 of this Agreement shall exceed the operating expenses, as hereinabove defined, for such year, then the News-Sentinel shall remit to the Journal as net collections Thirty per cent (30%) of the amount by which such excess does not exceed One Million One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,100,000.00); Twenty-five per cent (25%) of the amount by which such excess exceeds One Million One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,100,000.00) and does not exceed Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000.00) and Twenty-two and one-half per cent (22 1/2%) of the amount by which such excess exceeds Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000.00).

17. In the event that the operating expenses, as hereinabove defined, for any calendar year shall exceed the amounts collected by the News-Sentinel in such calendar year under Paragraph 4 of this Agreement, the Journal shall pay to the News-Sentinel as further compensation for services rendered by the News-Sentinel hereunder Thirty per cent (30%) of the amount by which such excess does not exceed One Million One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,100,000.00); Twenty-five per cent (25%) of the amount by which such excess exceeds One Million One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,100,000.00) and does not exceed Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000.00) and Twenty-two and one-half per cent (22 1/2%) of the amount by which such excess exceeds Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000.00).

18. Except as provided in this Agreement, no charge or deduction of any kind shall be made by the News-Sentinel for its services hereunder.

19. An annual settlement shall be made and accounts shall be rendered by the News-Sentinel to the Journal not later than the first day of March of each year covering all transactions hereunder during the next preceding calendar year, and all payments due to either party hereunder as shown by such statement shall become due and payable within thirty (30) days thereafter. Statements shall be rendered and partial settlements hereunder shall be made monthly, except as the News-Sentinel and the Journal mutually agree otherwise, subject to adjustment when the annual settlement is made for the calendar year.

20. If either party to this Agreement becomes insolvent, makes an assignment of its assets for the benefit of its creditors, is adjudged a bankrupt by a court of competent jurisdiction or has a receiver appointed for its business and property by a court of competent jurisdiction, then this Agreement may be terminated by either party upon ten (10) days notice. If either party to this Agreement fails or refuses to make any of the payments due hereunder to the other party when due, then such other party may, at its election, terminate the Agreement upon sixty (60) days' notice.

21. The Journal represents and warrants that more than two-thirds (2/3) of the voting stock of the Journal is now owned by Ethel Moore Lotspeich, an individual; Ethel Moore Lotspeich, Trustee of the Lotspeich Family Trust under the will of Roy N. Lotspeich, deceased; Ethel Lotspeich Smith, an individual, and Charles H. Smith, Jr., an individual. Whenever the right to vote more than one-third (1/3) of the voting stock in the Journal passes to or is held by any person or persons other than Ethel Moore Lotspeich, Ethel Moore Lotspeich, Trustee as aforesaid, Ethel Lotspeich Smith

and/or Charles H. Smith, Jr., or the lineal descendants of Ethel Moore Lotspeich, Ethel Lotspeich Smith and Charles H. Smith, Jr., the Journal shall immediately notify the News-Sentinel, in writing, of that fact and furnish the News-Sentinel with the names and addresses of the person or persons to whom more than one-third (1/3) of such voting stock has passed or by whom it is held and within one hundred and eighty (180) days after receipt of such notice, the News-Sentinel may terminate this Agreement upon thirty (30) days' written notice given to the Journal at any time during such one hundred and eighty (180) day period. The News-Sentinel represents and warrants that more than two-thirds (2/3) of the voting stock of the News-Sentinel is now owned by The E.W. Scripps Company. Whenever the right to vote more than one-third (1/3) of the voting stock of the News-Sentinel passes to or is held by any person or persons other than The E.W. Scripps Company, The Edward W. Scripps Trust or the lineal descendants of Edward W. Scripps, the News-Sentinel shall immediately notify the Journal, in writing, of that fact and furnish the Journal with the names and addresses of the person or persons to whom more than one-third (1/3) of such voting stock has passed or by whom it is held and within one hundred and eighty (180) days after receipt of such notice, the Journal may terminate this Agreement upon Thirty (30) days' written notice given to the News-Sentinel at any time during such one hundred and eighty (180) day period. The word "person" as used in this Paragraph 21 means any individual, trust, partnership, corporation, association or legal entity of any kind or character whatsoever, and the term "persons" means more than one such "person."

22. This Agreement shall be construed under and in accordance with the laws of the State of Tennessee and shall be binding upon and shall inure to the benefit of the parties hereto and their respective successors and assigns but neither of the parties shall assign or attempt to assign this Agreement, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the other party.

23. Any notice required or permitted to be given hereunder shall be deemed to have been duly given if and when the same is deposited in the United States mails, registered mail, postage prepaid, and addressed to the party to be notified, at such party's address as hereinafter set forth. Per the purposes of this Agreement, the address of the News-Sentinel shall be: Knoxville News-Sentinel Company, 204 West Church Street, Knoxville 1, Tennessee, and the address of the Journal shall be: Roy N. Lotspeich Publishing Company, Inc., P.O. Box 711, Knoxville, Tennessee. Either party may change its address hereunder by notice mailed to the other party, and such change of address shall be effective as to each party so notified upon receipt of such notice by such party. Any notice given by mail as above provided shall be deemed to have been given at the time it is deposited in the United States mails.

24. Nothing herein contained shall constitute the parties hereto partners, joint venturers, an unincorporated association, or as having any relationship other than as specifically provided by this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the corporate parties hereto have caused these presents to be signed and sealed in triplicate by their respective corporate officers thereunto duly authorized, on the day and year first above written.

KNOXVILLE NEWS-SENTINEL COMPANY

(First Party - "The News-Sentinel")

(CORPORATE SEAL)

By /s/?? Chambers

President

By /s/Loye W. Miller

Vice-President

By /s/Frank S. Powers

Business Manager

ROY N. LOTSPEICH PUBLISHING COMPANY

(Second Party - "The Journal")

(CORPORATE SEAL)

By /s/Ethel Moore Lotspeich

President

By /s/Charles H. Smith, Jr.

Vice-President

By /s/Ethel Lotspeich Smith

Secretary

APPENDIX A

The parties intend that initially the reading content of the Newspapers, averaged over any period of two (2) consecutive calendar months, shall be in accord with the following schedule:

The Knoxville Journal (Morning) - 78 columns per day -
Monday through Saturday.

The Knoxville News-Sentinel (Evening) - 86 columns per day -
Monday through Saturday.

The Knoxville News-Sentinel (Sunday) - 240 columns on
Sunday only.

At Any time after consultation with the Journal or its representatives, the News-Sentinel may (1) change the schedule of number of columns of reading content of any of the Newspapers, and (2) determine what, if any, payment is to be made by a party whose newspaper has exceeded or shall exceed the reading content specified in the schedule as then in effect, such payment not to exceed cost including materials.

It is the understanding and intention of the parties that the reading content of the Newspapers is to be fixed so that neither of the Newspapers will be favored over the other with respect to reading content.

APPENDIX B

I

The following items of expenditure shall be excluded from the meaning of the term "operating expenses" as used in the Agreement:

1. Use and sales taxes on capital investments, state franchise and excise taxes and permit taxes based upon capital investments, the Tennessee Corporation Personalty Tax and all like Tennessee taxes based upon corporate net worth, and Federal, State and City taxes based upon net income other than City license taxes.
2. Salary of the secretary of the President of the News-Sentinel.
3. Interest paid of every kind, except on carrier deposits.
4. Charitable contributions.
5. Premiums paid on policies of life insurance in which the News-Sentinel is the named beneficiary or owner.

II

The following items of expenditure shall be included within the meaning of the term "operating expenses" as used in the Agreement:

1. A charge by Scripps-Howard Newspapers for general management services at a rate and on a basis which is no less favorable to the operations under the Agreement than the charge for similar services to any Scripps-Howard Newspaper of a size comparable to the operation under the Agreement.
2. Depreciation on the buildings, equipment and all real and personal property

used by the News-Sentinel in the operations under the Agreement at the rate taken by the News-Sentinel in its Federal income tax returns.

3. An amount equal to six per cent (6%) per year on the net fixed asset value of the buildings, equipment and all real and personal property used by the News-Sentinel in the operations under the Agreement.

4. All ad valorem taxes paid by the News-Sentinel on buildings, equipment all real and personal property used by the News-Sentinel in the operations under the Agreement.

5. The cost of all comic supplements, magazines and special material printed by someone other than the News-Sentinel and purchased by the News-Sentinel for distributions with or as part of the Sunday editions of The Knoxville News-Sentinel.

6. All franchise, permit or license taxes based upon gross receipts. All license, permit and registration fees for use of equipment, including but not limited to motor vehicles, used by the News-Sentinel in the operations under the Agreement.

III

Adjustments

A. The following adjustments shall be made at the beginning of the period of the Agreement:

1. No part of the collection or receivables of the News-Sentinel at the effective date of the Agreement shall be considered as amounts collected under Paragraph 4 of the Agreement. Charges for advertising and circulation up to such date,

thereafter billed shall be considered as receivables of the News-Sentinel on the effective date of the Agreement.

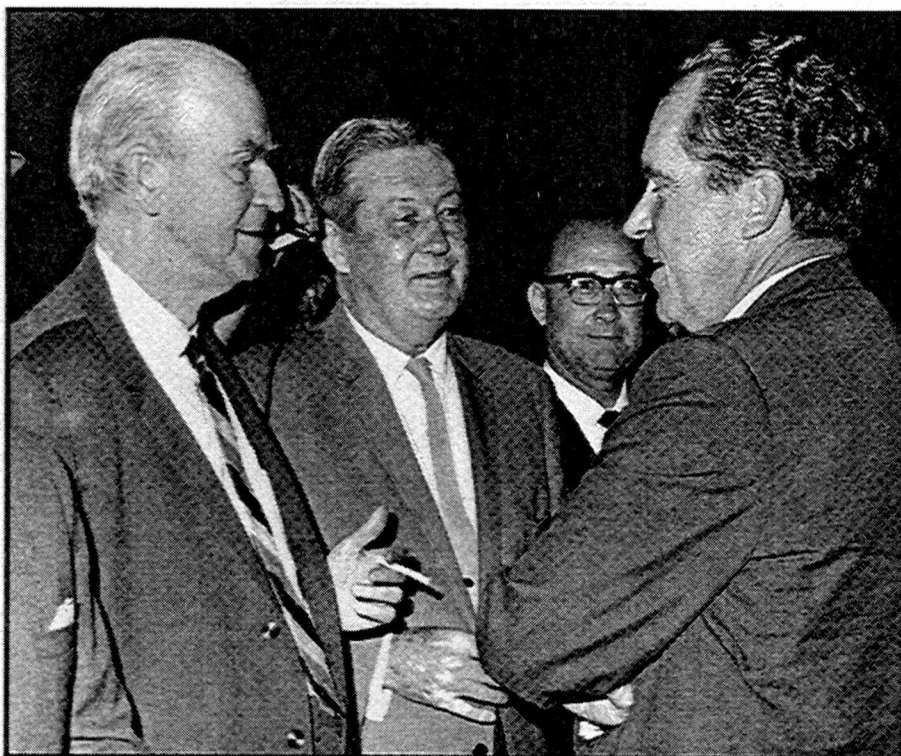
2. The cost of inventories of newsprint, ink and other consumable supplies, owned by the News-Sentinel at the effective date, and any prepaid items of "operating expenses" shall be charged to "operating expenses."

3. In addition to the payments specified in Paragraph 6 of the Agreement, the Journal shall pay to the News-Sentinel the amount of the Journal's prepaid subscription liability at the effective date and at the rate received by the Journal. The News-Sentinel shall credit to circulation income under Paragraph 4 of this Agreement, the amount of the News-Sentinel's prepaid subscription liability at such effective date. Either party may pay or credit such amount in full or prorate it over the term of the pre-paid subscriptions.

B. Upon the termination of the Agreement, adjustments shall be made under the same general principles as set forth in the foregoing Section A.

APPENDIX B

The Knoxville Journal in Pictures



LAST PICTURE — Guy Smith, left, Charles Smith, center, and Richard Nixon during Nixon's 1968 campaign for president. The other man is unidentified. The picture was taken shortly before Smith died that year. (Photo courtesy of the *Daily Times*, Maryville)



FAREWELL FOR HENRY — The *Journal* staff gathered in 1942 for a farewell party for "Henry," seated on the floor with the mock-up of the newspaper page. On Henry's right is Jim Golden, longtime advertising manage of the *Journal*. Seated behind Henry is associate editor Steve Humphrey. On Humphrey's right is publisher Roy N. Lotspeich and, on the other side, is editor Guy L. Smith. Old-timers who looked at the picture could not remember who "Henry" was. The word "Henry" is spelled out in front of the group in Quaker Oats boxes. (Photo courtesy of Al Roberts)



MILK FUND — After she became publisher, Ethel Moore Lotspeich continued to support the annual Journal Milk Fund during the Christmas season. Here, in a picture published in the *Journal* on November 24, 1958, she holds one of the “milk bottles” used to collect for the fund on Gay Street.

(Photos courtesy of the *Daily Times*, Maryville)



Guy Smith in 1939 and in the 1950s ...



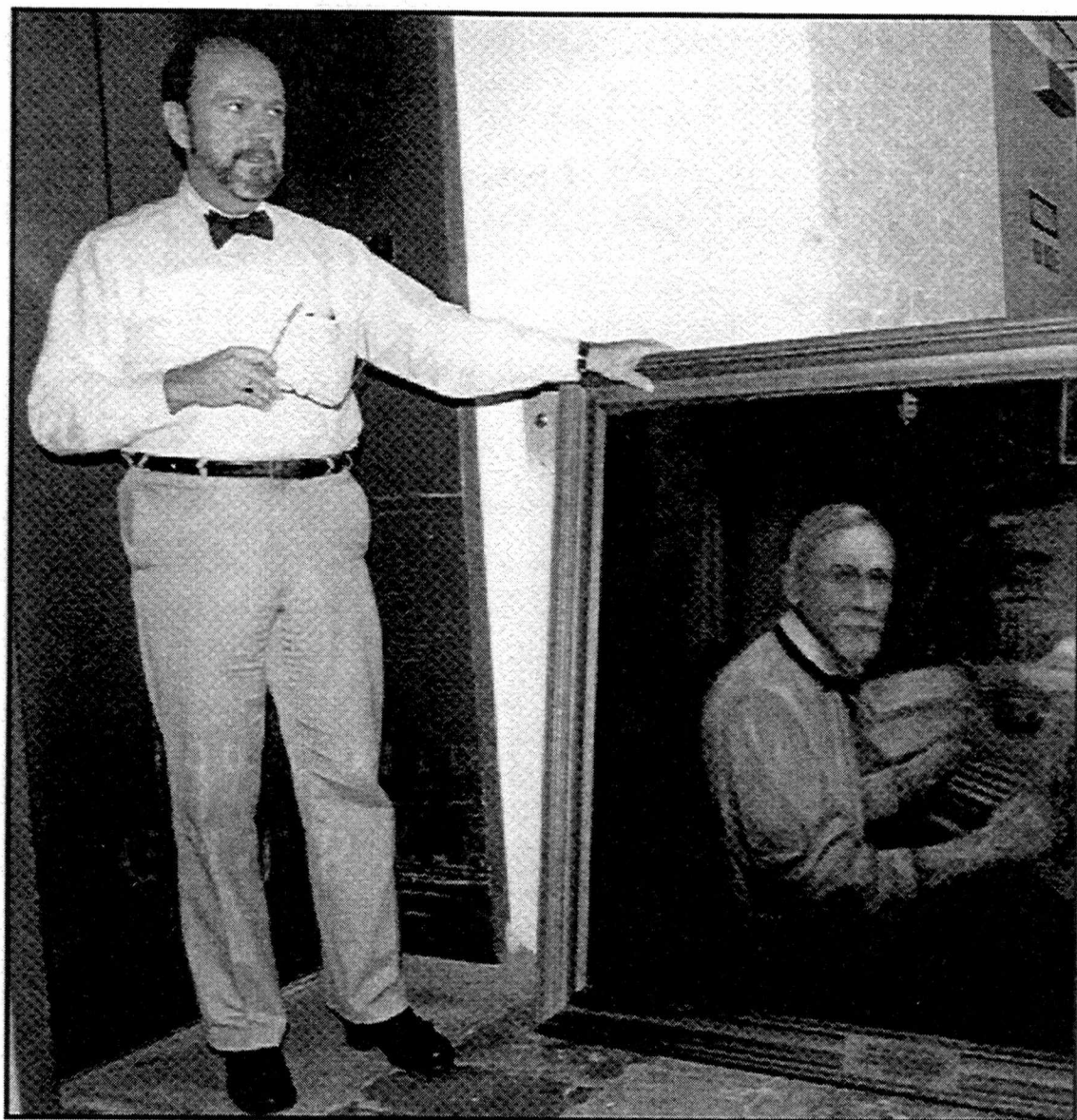


SCHOLARSHIP FUND — Roy
Lotspeich looks over a Christmas greeting honoring the Roy N. Lotspeich Scholarship Fund at the University of Tennessee. (Photo courtesy of the *Daily Times*, Maryville)

THE COLUMNIST AND THE 'POSSUMS

— Vic Weals, who wrote a popular column about the people, places and things of East Tennessee, looks over a mess of opossums he and photographer Al Roberts came across while on an assignment in the 1950s. (Photo courtesy of Al Roberts)

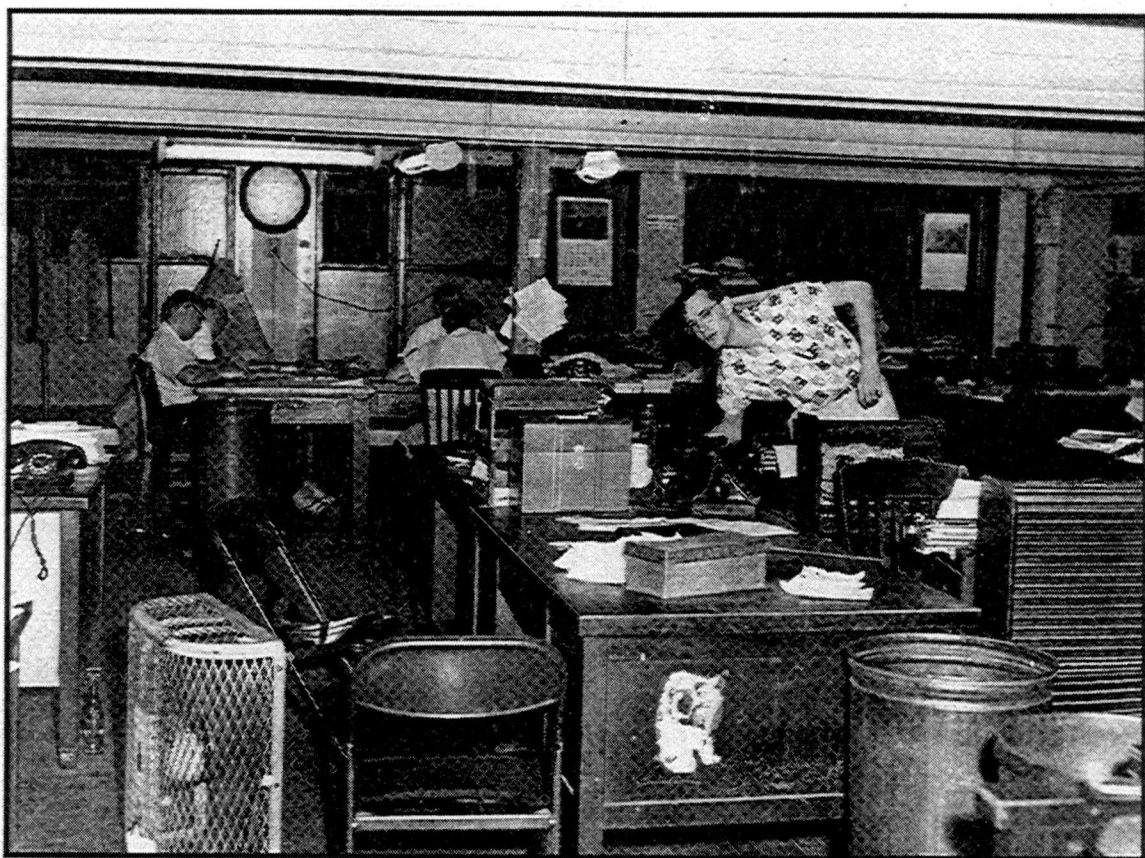




CAPTAIN RULE — Steve Cotham of the McClung Historical Collection of the Lawson McGhee Library, displays the portrait of Captain William Rule that hung for many years in the *Journal* newsroom. The painting is now stored in the basement of the McClung Collection building in downtown Knoxville. A smaller painting of Captain Rule, which came from old Rule High School, hangs in the library itself. (Photo by Edgar Miller)



PHOTO AWARD — The *Journal's* photographers look over one of the many awards they received during the years they shot pictures for the paper. This picture was taken in the mid-1950s. They are, from left, Tommy Greene, chief photographer, Hugh Lunsford, Al Roberts and Brownie Colquitt. Greene and Colquitt are deceased. (Photo courtesy of Al Roberts)



OLD JOURNAL NEWSROOM — The *Journal* newsroom was a grungy place littered with paper, cigarette butts and cluttered desks. It had its distinctive smell of paste, ink, newsprint, cigarette smoke and body odor. Al Webb, pictured above leaning over the city desk, was day police reporter when this picture was taken on a Sunday afternoon in the summer of 1955. Webb left the *Journal* a few years later to join UPI where he became one of the wire service's crack foreign correspondents. His assignments took him to the world's trouble spots including the Middle East and Vietnam. He now heads European operations of a market news wire in London. Seated at the copy desk in the background are Walter Amman, in the slot, and, clockwise around the desk, Frank Jordan, Bob Adams, the telegraph editor, and John Slack (wearing green eyeshade). The man sitting behind Webb cannot be identified but it likely is Vic Weals. (Photo from the author's collection)



STEVE HUMPHREY — There was no date on this picture of Steve Humphrey found in the *Journal* archives, but it likely was taken about the time he retired as associate editor in 1967. (Photo courtesy of the *Daily Times*, Maryville)

DICK EVANS — Succeeding Humphrey was Clarence Richard "Dick" Evans, who became managing editor on January 1, 1968. Evans joined the *Journal* as a copy boy in 1939, later becoming a reporter. He was in the Army during World War II and saw service in the Pacific. He returned to the newspaper in December 1945 as a reporter. He became assistant city editor in 1948. He worked for the Associated press in Knoxville in 1952 but returned to the *Journal* in 1953 as city editor. Evans left the *Journal* in 1970 to become editor of *Commerce Today*, a Washington, D.C.-based magazine published by the U.S. Department of Commerce. He died of a heart attack in Washington in 1973 at age 53. (Photo courtesy of the *Daily Times*, Maryville; caption information from the *Knoxville Journal*, February 7, 1973, Page 1).





'\$64,000 QUESTION' — After his defeat for mayor, largely engineered by *Journal* editor Guy L. Smith, George Dempster went on the nationally televised quiz show, "\$64,000 Question," winning \$32,000 in the semi-final round in October 1957 before he missed the final question. He is shown here with show host Hal March. (Photo courtesy the *Daily Times*, Maryville)

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Hugh Branson, political ally of Guy Smith

Ben Byrd, Journal sports editor

Roger Daley, former News-Sentinel business manager

Jim Dempster, son of George Dempster, president of Dempster Brothers

Don Ferguson, former News-Sentinel city editor

Dave Garrison, Journal city editor

Ralph Griffith, Journal political reporter

Jim Golden, Journal advertising manager

Steve Humphrey Jr., son of Steve Humphrey

Garrett Loftis, Journal circulation man

Hugh Lunsford, Journal photographer

Ron McMahan, Journal reporter, editor, publisher

Charles Mason, former Journal publisher

Mike Miller, former News-Sentinel reporter, son of Loye Miller

Virginia Ragsdale, Journal society editor

Bettie Carter Ramsey, niece of Roy N. Lotspeich

Al Roberts, Journal photographer

Diana Carter Samples, daughter of John P. Carter

Ann Dempster Smallman, daughter of George Dempster

Reuben Smith, son of Guy L. Smith

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VITA

Edgar H. Miller Jr., born in 1934 in Jellico, Tennessee, is a graduate of the University of Tennessee College of Communications. He began his newspaper career in 1955 as a copy boy for the *Knoxville Journal* where he later worked as a Wirephoto operator, reporter and assistant city editor. He joined the Associated Press in Knoxville in 1959. With AP he worked in Nashville, Chattanooga, New York, Baltimore, Dover, Delaware, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. He was named chief of Caribbean Services for AP in 1973 and chief of bureau for Brazil in 1975. Returning to the United States, he became managing editor of the *Chattanooga Times* in 1979. Later he joined United Press International in Washington, D.C., on the Foreign Desk. He was named deputy foreign editor in 1987 and assistant managing editor/news in 1989. Miller returned to Knoxville in 1991 to finish work on his bachelor's degree, which he received in 1992, and began work on a master's degree in communications. He currently is founding editor of the *East Tennessee Catholic*, a biweekly newspaper serving Catholics in East Tennessee.