GOVERNMENT PRINTING PATRONAGE AND THE PRESS, 1829-1837

THESIS

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National and selected local newspapers, executive and congressional sources from 1829-1837, personal correspondence, and autobiographies are studied to consider the use of public funds for government printing patronage. A limited examination of printing patronage for the years prior to and immediately following the Jackson administration was made for comparative purposes. The printing patronage of various departments of the executive branch, including especially the publication of the laws, and of both houses of Congress are studied.

This study shows that congressional printing funds were far more extensive than the executive printing funds. The thesis concludes that during the Jackson administration the press patronage of the executive branch served as a counterbalance to the substantial patronage available from Congress and the Bank to the established presses.
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CHAPTER I
THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRINTING PATRONAGE
PRIOR TO THE JACKSON ADMINISTRATION

The federal government patronized the press from the first congressional session in 1789. Congress quickly authorized the publication of the acts and journals of Congress, although it delayed funding until the second session in 1790. Congress, at that time, provided a contingency fund for its financial needs as well as one for the needs of the executive branch.¹ These funds paid, among other things, for printing requirements. In addition to the acts and journals, the government needed to buy stationery and envelopes; to print forms, documents, and reports; and to place advertisements in order to carry out its business. Congress specifically named stationery and the public printing as items to be paid from the contingency fund in the appropriations bill for 1792. It made printing and stationery not only a separate item in the appropriations bill for 1793 but divided the amounts for congressional spending and for each executive department.² Through the

²Statutes at Large, 1: 227; ibid., pp. 326-28.
public printing Congress ostensibly intended to provide citizens with as much information as possible about the laws and regulations of their new government and the opportunity for private citizens to obtain contracts from it. Self-employed printers received the printing job work. As they vied for printing patronage the choice of the printer most often depended on the printer's political party affiliation in relation to those dispensing the printing.

The early history of the press in the United States is primarily an account of the establishment of newspapers for the service of the political parties. Thomas Jefferson, secretary of state under George Washington, utilized patronage of the Department of State to entice Philip Freneau to Philadelphia to establish the National Gazette in 1791. The National Gazette would provide a Republican voice in opposition to John Fenno's Federalist Gazette of the United States, which was supported by the patronage available to Alexander Hamilton as secretary of the treasury. Jefferson promised Freneau, as outlined in a letter to James Madison, a job as translator in the Department of State at a salary of

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$250 per year, and both "the publication of all proclamations and other public notices" for the Department of State and "the printing of the laws." By way of further assistance, Jefferson promised to make available to Freneau his "letters of foreign intelligence" and the foreign newspapers. The support of newspapers by elected officials in the interest of political parties soon became commonplace. Sidney Kobre in his Foundations of American Journalism has written that "for a newspaper to exist independently . . . its publishers would have had to develop other sources of revenue."6

The newspapers published in Washington were widely regarded "as the personal organs of successive administrations." Early nineteenth-century Washington has been called the journalistic capital of the United States. It was a "period when the political newspaper dominated the publishing field and when governmental funds provided the financial base that allowed the publications to stay in business."8

Joseph Gales, Jr., son of the editor of the Raleigh [North Carolina] Register, and joined later by his brother-

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7North, History of Newspapers, p. 97.

in-law, William Winston Seaton, published from 1807 until 1865 the National Intelligencer, which early earned the reputation of "the aristocrat of Washington, D.C., journalism." The historian of the National Intelligencer has attributed its long life "to the editors knowledge of the workings of federal patronage, which allowed them to piece together publishing projects," even though they were not always in favor with the occupiers of the White House, who also controlled Congress during part of the period. The National Intelligencer began as a paper of record reporting the proceedings of Congress and printing the official notices, proclamations, and advertisements. Although during the administration of Andrew Jackson the Intelligencer would become associated with the Bank of the United States and the Whigs, during the presidential administration of Thomas Jefferson it became regarded as "the quasi-official organ."9

Much of the printing patronage available to the executive branch can be traced from official acts of Congress which specified the duties of the respective government officials. One of the earliest domestic functions, for example, assigned to the secretary of state was to publish every "law, order, resolution, and vote" of the Congress. The secretary was initially instructed to publish them in "at least three newspapers in the United States." The latter led the government

9Ibid., pp. vii, 38.
in time into a substantial subsidization of the press. This act for the promulgation of the laws of the United States, approved 15 September 1789, also authorized the beginning of a pamphlet edition of the laws, later termed slip laws, by requesting that one copy of each statute be given to each senator and representative and that two copies of each be sent to the executive authority of each state. The terms, so general in their wording, permitted the secretary not only to choose any number of newspapers to receive the printing of the laws, creating newspapers if he wished, but also to establish the amount to be paid for the work.10 According to John Quincy Adams, secretary of state in 1820, a rate of fifty cents per page, based on the page size of the pamphlet edition, had been paid before 1818.11 These first acts contained no safeguards against abuses. It was only after years of experience and extensive abuse that Congress enacted more specific legislation.

The request of Congress to the secretary of state for the publication of various territorial acts periodically augmented the printing patronage for the publication of the

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laws of the United States. An act approved 8 May 1792, for example, authorized Thomas Jefferson, secretary of state, to publish 200 copies of the laws of the northwestern territories. Furthermore, as the corpus of law expanded, it was only natural that a cumulative edition of the laws of the United States should be published. The second session of the third Congress on 3 March 1792 authorized the secretary of state to publish 4,500 copies of a complete edition of the laws and treaties of the United States with an index. This act also provided for the publication of a like number of all future acts and treaties. Although a limit had been placed on the number of copies to be printed, no limit had been placed on their cost. The fourth Congress added a weak and ineffectual monetary provision. The act approved 21 December 1796 directed that the laws of the current session be printed provided it could be accomplished "at an expense which he [Secretary of State Timothy Pickering] shall judge reasonable."\(^{12}\)

An act approved 2 March 1799 revised the secretary of state's instructions for the publication of the laws. Although not the ostensible intent, the act increased the amount of patronage available to that official. The act authorized Pickering to publish all orders, resolutions, and laws passed by Congress in at least one newspaper per state. When, however, he did not find the latter to be "sufficiently extensive for

\(^{12}\)Statutes at Large, 1: 285-86, 443, 496.
the promulgation thereof," the act further authorized him to publish the laws in up to three newspapers in any state. The act also increased the number of copies of the laws printed at the end of each session from 5,000 to 9,500. To each of the copies of the laws of that session Congress required the secretary to append a copy of the Constitution and its amendments.¹³

A newly elected administration could not always reward its party press immediately with the authorization to publish the laws of the United States. William Duane, who succeeded Benjamin Bache as editor of the Aurora, a prominent anti-Federalist organ in Philadelphia, described the problem and offered a solution in a letter written to James Madison within a week after Madison became secretary of state in May of 1801. Duane believed that his plan "would counteract . . . the artful stroke of the late administration of pensioning papers in advance to oppose the present administration." He suggested that the "republican printers" who would have been authorized to print the laws of the United States should be authorized even though they could not be paid if the contracts made earlier used up the full allocation, unless Congress might grant an additional sum.¹⁴ There is no indication of the implementation of Duane's suggestion.

¹³Ibid., pp. 724-25.

Both the creation of newspapers and the publication of the laws within their territorial boundaries accompanied the expansion of the population into the territories. An act approved 27 March 1804 authorized Madison as secretary of state to publish the laws passed, not only during that session of Congress but all future sessions, in one newspaper printed in each territory. Congress incorporated in the act an appropriation of $2,000 to take care of this additional expense. An act approved on 21 November 1814 further authorized the secretary of state to publish the laws in two newspapers printed in each territory, if he regarded it as both "necessary and expedient."^15

Congress passed a specific law relative to the manner in which the session laws were to be printed on 18 April 1814. This authorized the publication of 1,000 copies of a new edition of the laws to be published by John Bioren and William Duane in Philadelphia and by Roger C. Weightman in Washington. In addition to the laws, Congress specified the inclusion in the set of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution, as well as the treaties and conventions both with foreign nations and with the Indian tribes. They expected this edition to be executed in such a way that it would serve as an example for the publication of future session laws and treaties. The price per set could not

^15 Statutes at Large, 2: 302-03; ibid., 3: 145-46.
exceed $15. Congress appropriated $18,750 to cover the cost of the edition. Duane as editor of the Philadelphia *Aurora* had given "yeoman service to the Republican Party," and Republican administrations compensated him for his services with such patronage as this edition of the laws.

A law passed 20 April 1818 provided revised instructions for the general promulgation of the laws of the United States. This law repealed the provisions of all previous acts respecting the publication of laws of the United States. It further provided for the publication upon enactment of all acts and resolutions in one newspaper in the District of Columbia and in not more than three newspapers in each state and territory. The law instructed the secretary of state to publish the public treaties and amendments to the Constitution in either some or all of these same newspapers. The law set the rate of compensation at $1 for the amount of material contained in the pamphlet edition printed page. This act

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17 Ames, *History of the National Intelligencer*, pp. 30-32. North in his *History of Newspapers*, pp. 32-33 commented that for Duane "no epithet was so opprobrious that his types shrank from its use, and no federalist was too high to escape his constant and denunciatory attack." For examples of the press patronage that Duane received during Jackson's administration see also Philadelphia *Aurora*, 9 August 1834. This issue included a translation by the Department of State for the information of the public of a royal order issued by the Spanish government on the regulations for trade between Spain and other countries, particularly South America; an advertisement placed by the Navy Department; and a listing by the Treasury Department of the names of banks selected as depositories for the public money.
further provided for the publication of 11,000 copies of the acts, resolutions, amendments to the Constitution and all public treaties since the last publication of the laws to correspond with the revised edition, published by Bioren and Duane.

Two provisions of an amendment of 11 May 1820 reduced the extant potential printing patronage. One provision eliminated the publication of private orders, resolutions, and laws. Another provision limited publication of the Indian treaties to one newspaper located in the state or territory "to which the subject matter of such treaty shall belong." 18

The publication of the laws of the Michigan territory provided Secretary of State John Quincy Adams with an opportunity for additional patronage, although under the provisions of the act dated 24 April 1820 the expenditure was limited to $1,250. From time to time various printers received authorization to print one or more volumes of the laws of the United States. An act passed 3 March 1823, still during Adams's secretaryship, authorized the purchase of 550 copies of volume six of the laws to be published by William A. Davis and Peter Force at a cost of $2,200.19 An act


19 Ibid., pp. 565, 786. Before the end of the year Peter Force established the National Journal in Washington, D.C. A brief comment on the "favored" status of this newspaper during the presidency of John Quincy Adams is provided by George
approved 9 May 1828, provided similar arrangements for volume seven though Congress did not name a publisher in the act. 20

The loss of publication of the laws was, on occasion, significant enough to cause the editor of a newspaper to change his politics, if his paper survived. John Quincy Adams, writing in his Diary about the forthcoming candidacy of William H. Crawford for the Republican nomination in 1824, stated that "among the most powerful of his agents have been the editors of the leading newspapers." At least one newspaper, "the Democratic Press of Philadelphia, because I [Adams] transferred the printing of the laws from that paper to the Franklin Gazette." 21

The House of Representatives on at least two occasions requested the secretary of state to furnish a list of the newspapers in which he had published the laws and the sum of money paid to the newspapers. The first of these requests covered the disbursements for publishing the laws of the fourteenth Congress (1815-17), the fifteenth Congress (1817-19), and the estimated disbursements for publishing the laws of the sixteenth Congress (1819-21). The total cost for


20 *Statutes at Large*, 4: 267.

publication of the laws of both sessions of the fourteenth Congress in fifty-eight newspapers was $13,232. The number of newspapers utilized increased to sixty-five for the first session of the fifteenth Congress and to sixty-seven newspapers for the second session. The cost for both sessions had nearly doubled over the fourteenth Congress and stood at $22,479.50. Both the number of newspapers utilized and the estimated cost continued to escalate with sixty-nine newspapers and an estimated cost of $19,750 anticipated for only the first session of the sixteenth Congress. John Quincy Adams, secretary of state, noted that part of the rise in cost was due to the granting of a 100 per cent increase in the printing allowance. The rate per page of the pamphlet edition or its equivalent amount in newspapers had been increased from 50 cents per page prior to 20 April 1818 to $1 per page after that date.22

The second report was submitted by Henry Clay as secretary of state in 1826. It provided the cost for publication of the laws for the first and second sessions of the eighteenth Congress (1823-25) in seventy-five newspapers at a total disbursement of $17,785.25. The total cost varied, of course, not only with the number of newspapers but also with the number and length of the laws passed at each session of Congress.

This second report revealed the additional perquisite of authorizing the editors of the National Intelligencer, for a subscription fee of $637.50, to supply a subscription of their newspaper, containing the text of the laws, to each of the seventy-five newspapers that published the laws.  

Apparently this meant that Clay had even provided for the Intelligencer to supply itself with its own subscription in order that it might be able to work from an accurate text of the laws.

One of the local papers that published the laws was the Courrier de la Louisiane of New Orleans. The choice of the Courrier has been attributed to the regard that territorial governor William C. C. Claiborne had for J. B. Thierry, its editor, and for Claiborne's "recognition that the Courrier seems disposed to render justice to the measures of the local and federal government." As early as October 1808 Claiborne had forwarded a Memoire by Thierry to Thomas Jefferson with the comment, "It seems to be written with some ability, and will probably be found worthy of your approval." Locally, Thierry in the Courrier had supported

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Governor Claiborne against Claiborne's rival, Daniel Clark, who had for a time represented the Orleans Territory in Congress. Thierry characterized the Louisiana Planter, a newspaper that supported Clark, as "extending to the Rapides a new brand of his propaganda." In 1813 the Courrier de la Louisiane became the "Imprimeur du Gouvernement des Etats-Unis," during the administration of James Madison, when Thierry received notification that the Courrier had been selected to "'promulgate' the laws of the current Congress." Madison added that the laws were to be copied from the National Intelligencer, which had been told to send a subscription to the Courrier.

Government printing patronage to the press also included subscriptions to newspapers at public expense. A resolution considered in May and June 1789 called for retrenchment in supplying each member of Congress with all the newspapers printed at the seat of Congress. The proposed resolution recommended instead that each member of Congress receive at public expense one paper of the member's choice. But both the House and the Senate failed to concur in this matter. The

27 Ibid., 27 January 1813, pp. 53, 260.
Senate postponed a decision, and then, on 20 December 1790, ordered the secretary to furnish each member of the Senate with three newspapers of their choice.29

The House, on the other hand, continued to debate the report of the Select Committee appointed to study the importance of subscriptions at public expense. Representative Egbert Benson of New York attributed the origin of the practice to two grounds. He regarded the representatives from the states under the Articles of Confederation as members of "a diplomatic body." This construction would, of course, imply a need for the representatives to receive various sources of intelligence in the capital where they served. Furthermore, Benson regarded the national press as a unifying force for the representatives from the various scattered states.30

Representative Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts praised the government's encouragement of the press, whereby not only did one's constituents receive the news from Congress, but government support was a prime factor in maintaining a variety of newspapers. He stressed that if only one or two were to be given a monopoly for supplying subscriptions for members of Congress either an undue control over the press would result or the press would become "the tool of a party."

29 Senate, Annals, 1st Cong., 3d sess., 1790, 2: 1777.
30 House, Annals, 1st Cong., 2d sess., 1790, 2: 1581.
At the conclusion of the debate on 14 April 1790, the House rejected the effort to eliminate subscriptions to newspapers for members of Congress at public expense and endorsed the payment of the subscriptions from the House contingency fund. 31

Representative Hugh Williamson of North Carolina introduced a motion on 9 December 1790 to limit the number of newspaper subscriptions for each member of the House to three. During the debate James Madison of Virginia argued the need to patronize all newspapers at the seat of Congress rather than to give preference to individual presses which "would savor of partiality." Williamson, on the other hand, feared that not to limit the number of subscriptions would, as representation in the House increased, lead to a heavy expense, not to mention the possibility of an increase in number of newspapers from ten or fifteen to perhaps a hundred if Congress made it a rule to take all printed in the city. The resolution carried and the House, thereafter, provided only three subscriptions for each member. 32

Tradition in the House had been to select the newspapers from those published at the seat of Congress. A motion introduced on 13 November 1794, after attempts by a few members to enlarge the geographic area to include newspapers published

31 Ibid., pp. 1580-82.
32 Ibid., 3d sess., pp. 1835-36.
in the southern or eastern states, provided the inclusion of the words "printed in this city" in the renewal order for subscriptions for the year. The following year a clause was added to the House order for subscriptions which provided that the cost of a subscription should not exceed that paid by a private citizen. The Senate had a similar clause which required the newspapers to be provided at the "rate of the usual annual charge." The Senate did, however, allow their members to choose newspapers printed in any state. Similar resolutions continued to be passed by succeeding congresses.

According to Samuel J. Marino, a newspaper cost the same in New Orleans as in Philadelphia and New York, eight or ten dollars a year. In contrast, however, to other price levels such as coffee at nineteen to twenty cents a pound and hams and bacon at twelve to fourteen cents a pound, the subscription of ten dollars a year, or five cents an issue, seems high. For today although daily newspapers have only gone up to fifteen cents, a pound of coffee has escalated to approximately

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33 Ibid., 3d Cong., 2d sess., 1794, p. 876.
34 Ibid., 4th Cong., 1st sess., 1795, p. 128.
36 See, for example, Ibid., 2d sess., p. 1519; Ibid., House, p. 1591; Ibid., House, 6th Cong., 1st sess., 1799, p. 187.
three dollars. Ten dollars for a newspaper, seems extravagant, also, by comparison with the price of an early nineteenth-century season ticket to the Theatre d'Orleans. For one hundred dollars, the New Orleanian might rent a parquet, with a key, to attend one hundred and two performances. 38

Members of the House interpreted the resolution for furnishing newspapers variously. A resolution introduced and carried in December 1802 regularized the practice of permitting a member to take any number of newspapers published once, twice, or three times a week as long as the total price did not exceed the price of three daily newspapers. Speaking for the motion Representative Samuel W. Dana, Federalist from Connecticut, admitted that he "had always received an equivalent to three daily papers." Representative John Rutledge, Federalist from South Carolina, regarded the resolution to furnish newspapers as permitting members to subscribe to as many copies of a weekly as would be equivalent in cost to three dailies. One practice, he noted, had been to subscribe to the Universal Gazette, published in Philadelphia, and to send the duplicates to one's constituents who did not live close to a press in order that they might be kept informed of the congressional news. 39

38 Courrier de la Louisiane, 22 November 1819, cited in ibid., p. 81.
In 1806, members of the House passed a resolution which permitted them to subscribe to such newspapers as they "shall choose" equivalent in price to three daily newspapers. These provisions were maintained into the Jackson period. Thus neither the House nor the Senate were any longer limited to newspapers published at the seat of government. This change, of course, transformed the earlier concepts of the justification of the subscriptions at public expense.

A surprising number of officials in the executive branch of the government paid for newspaper subscriptions from their departmental contingency funds. Representative Enoch Lincoln of Maine submitted a resolution in the House in January 1823 requesting the secretaries of the departments of state, treasury, war, and navy to submit a list of the newspapers, journals, and other periodical publications as well as books which they had purchased at public expense between 1817 and 1822.

John Quincy Adams, secretary of state, submitted a list of twenty-two American newspapers to which his department subscribed. He omitted the cost of each subscription and did not provide the number of subscriptions to each newspaper.

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40 Ibid., 9th Cong., 2d sess., 1806, p. 256.
41 Ibid., 17th Cong., 2d sess., 1823, p. 637.
42 U.S., Congress, House, Letter from the Secretary of State, 17th Cong., 2d sess., 1823, H. Doc. 81, p. 16.
William H. Crawford, secretary of the treasury, provided a list of the newspaper subscriptions for each treasury office. The secretary subscribed to seventeen different American newspapers. The first comptroller subscribed to ten, the second comptroller—eight, the first auditor—two, the second auditor—five, the third auditor—one, the fourth auditor—one, the fifth auditor—six, the general land office—five, the treasurer—four and the register—six. Out of seventy-one subscriptions to American newspapers, the treasury department subscribed to twenty-nine different newspapers. This department had numerous multicopy subscriptions; for example, subscriptions to the National Intelligencer totaled fourteen and to the Washington Gazette—nine. The treasury department spent a total of $596.38 on these newspapers for the year 1822.

Smith Thompson, secretary of the navy, furnished a list of twenty-four American newspapers for his office and twenty-five for the navy commissioners office under John Rodgers. Rodgers, in a cover letter to Thompson, sought to justify the subscriptions on the basis that they provided a check on advertising and a general monitoring of the nature of the import and export trade of the country.

\[^{43}\text{Ibid., Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, H. Doc. 96, pp. 5-7.}\]
\[^{44}\text{Ibid., Letter from the Secretary of the Navy, H. Doc. 56, pp. 5, 10-11.}\]
John C. Calhoun, secretary of war, listed twenty-six newspapers for his office, seven for the second auditor's office, one for the engineering department although "until lately" they had subscribed to five, one each for the paymaster general's office, the adjutant general's office, the quartermaster general's office, the surgeon general's office, and two each for the office of the commissary general of subsistence and the ordnance department.\(^{45}\)

The minority report on the retrenchment of the government expenses in 1828 revealed that newspaper subscriptions within the executive departments had increased significantly. The Department of State gave two reasons for the increase. The very nature of the work of the department required the possession of "a considerable number of leading journals from every part of the country." Furthermore, traditionally, the report stated, the department had subscribed and sent "some of the principal newspapers" to the foreign ministers. The Navy department showed an increase in newspaper subscriptions because of subscribing to "a copy of two newspapers for each squadron at a distance from the United States."\(^{46}\)

Examples selected from disbursements by the State Department from the contingency fund for foreign intercourse from

\(^{45}\)Ibid., Letter from the Secretary of War, H. Doc. 68, pp. 4, 8, 19, 28, 33-34.

from 1825 to 1827 revealed the variety of items available for printing patronage to the press. In 1825, for example, Peter Force, editor of the National Journal, received a payment of $59.50 for publishing exequaturs; in 1826 Gales and Seaton, publishers of the National Intelligencer received a payment of $43.00 for publishing exequaturs and $350.00 for publishing "ordinances, &c., relative to St. Domingo exiles"; Peter Force received a payment of $30.00 for printing thirty copies of the treaty with the Federation of the Centre of America; and in 1827 he received a payment of $125.00 for twenty-five sets of the five volume National Calendar while Gales and Seaton received a payment of $28.00 for one ream of sea letters.47

The postal act of 1792 permitted every newspaper publisher to send one newspaper to every other newspaper publisher in the United States free of postage. Furthermore, newspapers also received a break in the postage set by this early act. They paid only one cent postage for distances of less than one hundred miles and one and one-half cents if at a greater distance. In contrast, letters paid postage according to weight and distance.48 By 1798 this free exchange of newspapers had become "very troublesome," and the

47"Expenditures in the Department of State," ibid., pp. 1005-07. An exequatur is the written recognition of his authority given to a consular officer by the government to which he is accredited.

48Statutes at Large, 1: 238.
assistant postmaster general made the suggestion that the privilege should either be withdrawn or the number of papers received by any one publisher should be limited. The principles adopted, however, in this first postal act remained the same for half a century.

Government advertisements were another source of patronage to the press. Before the passage in 1819 of the joint resolution on electing a printer for Congress, the clerk of the House advertised for bids, for example, for supplying the House with stationery and printing. The clerk was instructed by a resolution of 28 February 1805 to advertise "three weeks, successively, in two newspapers printed in the District of Columbia." Both the House and the Senate adopted a similar resolution on 3 March 1815. Congress proceeded to ballot for a printer to execute the printing for the next Congress after passage of what became known as the Resolution of 1819. This resolution also established the format and the price rate for the printing.

The executive departments assigned their printing jobs to the press of their choice. The Post Office Department,

50 North, History of Newspapers, p. 138.
51 House, Annals, 8th Cong., 2d sess., 1805, pp. 1207-08.
52 Ibid., 13th Cong., 3d sess, 1815, pp. 1967-68.
for example, in a report to the Senate in May 1830 provided a list showing the amounts paid to the Washington newspapers in which the post office had advertised for carrying the mail during the years following 1823. Between 1824 and 1828 Gales and Seaton of the National Intelligencer and Peter Force, of the National Journal, shared the Washington advertising of the Post Office Department. Fascinatingly, Postmaster General William T. Barry stated that "there are no records or documents in the Department which show all the different papers in which these advertisements have been published in the several States." Duff Green's United States Telegraph received the Washington advertising of the Post Office Department in 1829. The amount Gales and Seaton received for the printing increased from $1,012.00 in 1824 to $3,167.87 in 1828. Similarly, Peter Force received $1,001.87 in 1824 and $3,127.50 in 1828. By comparison Duff Green received advertising amounting to $2,623.50 in 1829.54 The size of the whole postal organization increased significantly. In 1792 there were 195 post offices with 5,640 miles of post roads, whereas, by 1828 the number of post offices had increased to 7,631 connected by 114,536 miles of post roads.55

54 "Advances for Printing; Changes in Certain Contracts; Newspapers in which Advertisements for Proposals are Published; Extra Clerks; Alterations, Repairs, and Furniture; Incompetent Contractors; Duties of the Assistant Postmaster General," ASP: Post Office Department, 1: 251.

55 "Condition of the Post Office Department," ibid., p. 183.
The very increase in the size of the country increased the number of post offices and the mileage of post roads. This, of necessity, increased the amount of advertising and the opportunity for printing patronage.

A select committee of the House looked into the growing governmental bureaucracy to determine areas where retrenchment might be effected. Their report to the House in May 1828 in which, among other things, they examined the contingency funds set aside for printing and found that to be only one source of printing patronage. Upon examination of the departmental contingency funds, where disbursements received justification "in the exercise of Executive and official discretion," they found the inclusion of printing items. Out of the contingency fund of the Department of State for foreign intercourse, for example, a public notice alerting former inhabitants of St. Domingo of a convention between the French government and that island which provided an indemnity for losses earlier sustained revealed upon close scrutiny a total cost of $4,253 for printing the notice in eighteen newspapers.56 The committee also questioned a payment of $1,000 to Jonathan Elliott, editor of the Washington Gazette, for one hundred copies of a book entitled The Diplomatic Code. The committee viewed the payment as unnecessary as well as

"a misapplication of the contingent fund for foreign intercourse."57 The minority report sought to justify the publication of the public notice providing the indemnity for those who suffered in the St. Domingo revolution by upholding the principle of "comity to the friendly foreign power" and "liberality toward the unfortunate exiles," who have in the meantime been good American citizens. The additional wealth received, they further noted, will add "to the aggregate of the public wealth." As for Elliott's Diplomatic Code the copies of "that very valuable work" went to the ministers and others employed in the foreign service.58

The select committee noted in their report in 1828 that the advertising expense of the treasury department had increased substantially. In 1825 the expenditure amounted to $3,507.44, and by 1827 it had grown to $6,503.31. The minority report pointed out that the increase resulted from the need to provide "due notice" to the holders of government loans which were to be redeemed by drawing lots. Congress did not provide for this payment in 1825 but made up for it


later by appropriating a total of $12,000 for 1825, 1826, and 1827.\textsuperscript{59}

The select committee, concerned about the extent of executive patronage of the press, warned that by the use of departmental contingency funds, "a Government press is, to all intents and purposes, effectually established." The contingency funds used in this way was likened to the purchase of "the joint and harmonious action of one hundred papers in the uncompromising vindication of those in power, and in the unsparing abuse of those who are not." The committee strongly recommended, as one solution, "as far as practicable," the abolition of this means of government patronage by transferring the publication of the laws from the department of state to the clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives.\textsuperscript{60}

The contingency funds of the House also underwent the attention of the select committee. They advised their colleagues that since much depended on the speaker's discretion and the clerk's vigilance, they should give closer attention to the appropriations and the amount of printing ordered. The committee cautioned against the continued

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., p. 1058.
\textsuperscript{60}Ibid., p. 1063.
printing of numerous copies of lengthy documents which were of doubtful usefulness. 61

Writing shortly after the close of the pre-Jackson era and during the early months of the Jacksonian administration, the National Intelligencer bewailed the contrast. The Adams administration had been charged with "subsidizing the press," and branded with corruption because "Mr. Clay transferred, in some few cases, the printing of the laws from one press to another. The 'by authority' presses became a by-word, and newspapers were stigmatized as mere channels of corruption. . . ." The National Intelligencer ridiculed the congressional investigation that had followed. With jaundiced eyes the editors of the Intelligencer lamented that the press is no longer to be endangered by employing editors in their proper vocation--it is no longer to be 'subsidized' [sic], and the mouths of editors to be stopped, by extravagant salaries of eighty or one hundred dollars per annum--by no means--the press is to go along with the other machinery of the late 'corrupt Coalition,' through the ordeal of 'reform.'--Editors are to be metamorphosed, by the dozen, into Comptrollers, Auditors, Surveyors, and Postmasters, with salaries of three thousand dollars per annum! This is the mode in which editors are to be rendered independent! And who dare deny that $3000 a year is a handsome independency? 62

61 Ibid., p. 1064.
62 National Intelligencer, 15 May 1829.
CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PATRONAGE TO THE JACKSONIAN PRESS

Printing patronage by 1829 in the United States had become a natural appendage to partisan politics. The principal political groups frequently showed concern over the amount of printing patronage available. The difference between being able to count upon the public printing to subsidize, as it were, the partisan press and not being able to count upon public printing had become the difference between having a strong or weak voice to support the program of the administration or the viewpoint of the opposition. Numerous newspapers assisted in the successful campaign to elect Andrew Jackson president of the United States, and Jackson's subsequent rewards to his partisan editors provided a topic of controversy in Congress and outside Congress throughout his two terms from 1829 to 1837.¹

Carl Russell Fish, a close student of the civil service, over fifty years ago recognized the influence of the press

¹Clayton W. Downing, "The Role of the Journalists During the Presidency of Andrew Jackson" (M.A. thesis, North Texas State University, 1968), assesses the role of the kitchen cabinet journalists [Amos Kendall, Francis P. Blair, and Isaac Hill] in communicating Jackson's ideas to the masses and in defending administration policy. Downing is unconcerned with the details of congressional printing patronage and with the multitudinous specific types of press patronage.
in the election of 1828. At the same time he noted that the local press was seldom a profitable venture and often stood the chance of being ruined if it came out in support of a candidate who lost. Fish argued, therefore, that because of the risks involved an editor deserved the reward of an office.\(^2\)

The publishing requirements of Congress and of the executive departments provided two basic sources of public printing ready for tapping. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate elected their own printer for documents and reports. Congress also awarded special printing contracts to other printers during each session. The executive departments were not bound to assign their printing jobs to a particular printer. In times when support was needed, however, Jackson willingly applied pressure; he did so when trying to secure support for establishment of the Washington Globe by issuing an order which compelled members of the cabinet to report quarterly the amount paid by their department to the respective printers. Given Jackson's known predilections, this assured the proprietors of the Globe of what might modestly be described as a substantial part of the public printing for the executive departments.\(^3\)


In Washington since 1826, and working for the election of Jackson as president of the United States was Duff Green, editor of the Telegraph. He had formerly edited the St. Louis Enquirer in Missouri. Green was recognized at the beginning of the Jackson administration as the editor of the administration organ. As the months went by, however, Green aligned himself more and more closely with John C. Calhoun and his followers, thus becoming entangled in Democratic Party infighting. Green failed to attack Congress zealously when it opposed Jackson's nominations or acts. Moreover, Green, at that time printer to Congress and eager to be reelected when the next election should occur, was naturally far more moderate in his criticism of congressional action than the Jackson administration would have preferred.

Amos Kendall, faithful voice and supporter of Jackson as editor of the Frankfort [Kentucky] Argus, during the campaign of 1828, learned shortly after the election that

4Smith, Blair Family, 1: 57; Dictionary of American Biography, s.v. "Green, Duff." "These incidents, and more of like tendency, created an impression among the friends of General Jackson that General Green was more the friend of Mr. Calhoun than of the President, and was already embarrassing the administration by intrigues looking toward the succession," Amos Kendall, Autobiography of Amos Kendall, ed. William Stickney (Boston: Lee and Shepard, Publishers, 1872), p. 371.

5Erik McKinley Eriksson also confirmed that Green's Telegraph "rendered much more important services to Jackson as a campaign organ than it did as administration organ," Erik McKinley Eriksson, "Jackson's Propaganda Agencies," Pacific Historical Review 6(1937): 51.
Jackson would offer him an appointment in Washington. Kendall was selected to carry the electoral vote of Kentucky to the capital. He arrived early to await the president-elect and remained for distribution of the spoils. Writing to his wife, Kendall discussed a proposal of several of Jackson's principal supporters whereby he [Kendall] would, in alliance with Duff Green, seek election as printer for both Houses of Congress. The proposal provided further that Green and Kendall would divide the printing patronage of the executive departments. Kendall explained to his wife that he "would not on any account have partnership with him [Green] in money matters or in editing a newspaper," but rather "I will take one half of the printing, and start a newspaper myself." He admitted that though a printing effort would be "much more laborious . . . than an office with a salary," he would "probably make more by one half of the printing than by any office," thus recognizing the lucrative nature of printing patronage. Even though this joint proposal did not work out, and the House of Representatives elected Green printer, Jackson offered Kendall a place as the fourth auditor of the Treasury at a salary of $3,000 a year. Kendall assured his wife that she could look

6Kendall, Autobiography, p. 303.
7Kendall to Jane Kendall, 23 January 1829, ibid., p. 281.
8Ibid., 10 February 1829, p. 283; ibid., 22 March 1829, p. 287.
forward to better days now as "$3,000 a year sure income is a little more comfortable to look upon than the subscriptions to the 'Argus.'"\(^9\)

Kendall related that it was William T. Barry, then postmaster general, who suggested Francis P. Blair as a suitable editor for a solid administration organ. Blair was at that time writing for Kendall's paper in Kentucky. Blair consented to come if Kendall would share the responsibilities as well as promise to join him as an equal partner if he [Kendall] should ever resign his public office. Kendall stated in his Autobiography that neither he nor Blair had any capital to invest in such an undertaking.\(^{10}\) "The Globe was established without a dollar of capital furnished by its proprietor." It was, according to Blair, "like the great globe we inhabit, . . . created out of nothing." The Globe first appeared on 7 December 1830, begun as a semiweekly with prepaid subscriptions, the printing done by contract. It became increasingly apparent that Duff Green, when forced to decide, would support Calhoun rather than the administration, thus necessitating operating the Globe as the official organ of the administration. To raise funds to place the Globe in a position to publish daily, Blair "called on the friends of the President in Washington and elsewhere, who subscribed and

\(^{9}\)Ibid., 8 June 1829, p. 293.

\(^{10}\)Kendall, Autobiography, p. 372.
paid in advance for six hundred copies of the 'Daily Globe,' at ten dollars per annum."\textsuperscript{11}

Duff Green, according to Amos Kendall, was said to have lost the confidence of many of Jackson's supporters even before the organization of the new administration, although neither Jackson nor Kendall at that time doubted Green's fidelity.\textsuperscript{12} In 1829 a combination coalesced intent on rejecting the editors of newspapers whom the president had appointed to office. Isaac Hill of New Hampshire was among those rejected. Duff Green allegedly tried to convince Hill that he had been rejected by an "Eaton and Van Buren influence." Kendall, while not aware of that influence, was familiar with Green's friendship with Calhoun. Congressional leaders sought to send the rejected editors home, "under the impression that they owed their rejection to an interest adverse to Calhoun." Kendall made it quite clear to Green that he would not return to Kentucky in the event that his confirmation as fourth auditor were rejected. Consequently, when the Senate divided equally, Calhoun, then vice president, cast the confirming vote in Kendall's favor. These incidents and similar ones, according to Kendall, established a need for another paper which would firmly support the administration. The desire of Kendall's

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 373.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 370.
friends to secure Jackson's reelection in order that he might consolidate the programs he had recently initiated made a firm administration organ even more necessary. Initially Jackson gave his approval to a new paper reluctantly, fearing, according to Kendall, that there would be a "collision between the papers should another be established." Several public offices quickly indicated their willingness to support the new venture with a portion of their printing. Martin Van Buren, then secretary of state, purportedly declined, according to Kendall, stating that he [Van Buren] wanted to be able to say that "he had nothing to do with it."14

Blair's biographer, William Ernest Smith, has recorded that "Blair was penniless when he first reached Washington

13Ibid., pp. 370-71. Duff Green most likely convinced his friend Calhoun that it was better for Kendall to be fourth auditor than competing with him [Green] for public printing. Cf., J. B. Gardiner to Green, 28 October 1830, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., on microfilm North Texas State University, where the rejection of the appointment of one of Jackson's editors to a federal office is attributed to local rivalries.

14Kendall, Autobiography, p. 372. Beginning in 1831 Blair received State Department printing jobs. Van Buren's resignation as secretary of state became effective 23 May 1831, therefore the printing may have come from Edward Livingston, his successor in the Department. See U.S., Congress, Senate, Statement Showing the Amount of Money Paid in Each Year, from the 1st Session of the 16th Congress to the 2d Session of the 23d Congress, For Printing and the Purchase of Books for the Use of the Senate and House of Representatives, and for Each of the Executive Departments, In Pursuance of a Resolution of the Senate of 15th January, 1835, 24th Cong., 1st sess., 1835, S. Doc. 11, pp. 34, 63-64.
in 1830." Smith added that "when he [Blair] severed his connections with the Globe fifteen years later, he did not know how much he was worth." He further noted that "the books at the Globe office showed that he [Blair] had spent a quarter of a million dollars in fifteen years!"

The establishment of the Globe as the Jacksonian organ did not remedy the lack of accuracy in reporting debates and news. Samuel H. Laughlin, editor of the Nashville Union, writing to James K. Polk, complained that "Duff I have long given up as being damned and unworthy of all trust & patronage. The Globe I take with a next door neighbor, and it is not upon the whole a much better paper. . . ." Laughlin, wanting "news" and "a fair report of your [Polk's] Debates," requested that Polk send to him "Joe's paper [National Intelligencer], bad as his politics are. . . ." Another Polk correspondent wrote, "I want to read the news this winter and therefore want you [to] send me the 'Globe' and the 'Intelligencer.'" He asked for these two because he wanted "the papers on both sides of questions." As for Duff Green's paper, he would have taken it too except that "he is such a hell fired rascal that I being myself a virgin in

15 Smith, Blair Family, 1: 182.
16 Ibid., p. 245.
17 Laughlin to Polk, 8 January 1833, James K. Polk, Correspondence of James K. Polk, ed. Herbert Weaver and Paul H. Bergerson (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969-), 2: 11-12.
politicks or in other words knowing nothing about them I am afraid he might beget me with bastard opinions." 18 "It is true," wrote another correspondent, William Brady, "that Blair sustains the President personally, and in the main measures of his administration but how is it, that every apologetic article which has appeared in the Nashville papers or elsewhere, in relation to Bells [sic] election to the Speakers [sic] chair" may be found in the Globe? Brady thought that Blair should present "both sides or neither."

Brady asked, "is he playing the same game that Bell played so successfully? Is he to reach the Printers [sic] chair of the house by the union of the true friends of the President in conjunction with Mr. Speaker Bell and his followers?" 19 Polk's former law partner, Aaron V. Brown, also expressed doubts about Blair's Globe in a letter to Polk requesting receipt of the Congressional Globe "if you think it well conducted--not the Globe simply, for I have never relished that nor Greens [sic] Telegraph, in the best days of its orthodoxy." 20 The Globe, however, also had its supporters.

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18 Thomas J. Porter to Polk, 23 December 1832, ibid., 1: 586.

19 Brady to Polk, 26 December 1834, ibid., 2: 607. See also Betty L. Duke, "John Bell--Jacksonian Rebel" (M.A. thesis, North Texas State University, 1972), p. 52, which alleges that Bell became alienated from Jackson when Bell chose to support the presidential candidacy of Hugh Lawson White instead of Martin Van Buren.

20 Brown to Polk, 22 December 1833, Correspondence of Polk, 2: 192-93.
Polk received a letter from William Dearing, for example, requesting a subscription to the *Globe* adding that "I am pleased with his [Blair's] paper."\(^{21}\)

Blair sought the printing patronage of both the House of Representatives and the Senate in 1833, but the Jackson forces were not able to carry a majority in either house. Blair lost the election in the House of Representatives to Joseph Gales, Jr. and William Seaton. An editorial in the *Globe* cast reflections on the conduct of the election; Blair advised his readers that the reason for the loss was known and would be revealed at the appropriate time.\(^{22}\) Thomas Hart Benton, senator from Missouri, on 19 February 1833, pleaded on the floor of the Senate to delay election of a printer, saying that it was not within their constitutional rights to elect a printer for a forthcoming session. It had only been done in the past, Benton stressed, because Washington, as the new capital, did not have immediately at hand the supplies and the printing presses needed as had been the case in both New York and Philadelphia. It was necessary, therefore, in Washington to hold the election of a printer as early as possible to allow time for the printer to arrange for his materials that Congress might not be inconvenienced when the session began. This was no longer

\(^{21}\)Dearing to Polk, 7 February 1833, ibid., 2: 63.

\(^{22}\)Washington *Globe*, 16 February 1833.
necessary; and the Senate did not have the right, Benton stressed, to impose a printer upon the next Senate. Benton revealed the true motive for delay when he explained that Jackson did not have a majority in that Senate; and a vote then could only lead to the selection of an individual, "for the annoyance, the subversion, the overthrow, and the destruction," of the next Congress, whereas "the new Congress might prefer to choose one from its own side..." 23

The Senate, however, declined to delay the election; Blair lost to Duff Green. 24 An editorial in the Globe on 22 February 1833 sought to explain the loss. Blair blamed it on a coalition of the friends of Clay and Calhoun who combined to elect Clay's friends, Gales and Seaton, as printers for the House of Representatives, and Calhoun's friend, Duff Green, as printer for the Senate. 25

23 Remarks of Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri in the Senate, 19 February 1833, printed in the Globe, 22 February 1833. The House of Representatives did delay the election of their printer at the end of the 23d Congress, thus permitting the House of the 24th Congress to elect their own printer, which turned out to be Blair and Rives, by an overwhelming majority. U.S., Congress, House, Register of Debates, 24th Cong., 1st sess., 1835, 12, pt. 2: 1947-48: "It had been the practice of the preceding Congresses to choose the printer for their successors. The last House was not kind enough to perform this duty for us, and it is now become the province of this House to make its own selection..." Whereupon Blair and Rives were elected printers for the twenty-fourth Congress.

24 Globe, 21 February 1833.

25 Ibid., 22 February 1833. Fletcher Green in Dictionary of American Biography, s.v. "Green, Duff," apologetically states that "when the break came Green followed Calhoun thus
Jackson expressed his disappointment at Congress's rejection of Blair as printer in a letter to Hardy M. Cryer, a clergymen, on 20 February 1833: "altho, I have been reelected by such an overwhelming majority," he wrote, "still, congress has elected Gales and Seaton printers for the House of Representatives, and Green for the senate, so you see congress pays Gales and Seaton for abusing me for the last twelve years, and Duff Green for the last three." Jackson pinned the blame on "the marriage lately consummated between Clay and Calhoun, with the corrupting influence of the Bank. . . ."26

Jackson was not alone in his disappointment. After Blair's defeat in the contest for the public printing, Martin Van Buren wrote to Jackson that "the disappointment of our true and zealous friend Blaré [sic] has distressed me exceedingly. I know his firmness, and therefore count with losing his position in the party and the government printing." Actually he only lost the printing patronage of the executive branch. Green's maintenance of his relationship with Calhoun, partially because of Calhoun's own position and partially because of the working relationship on printing matters between the followers of Calhoun and the followers of Clay, enabled him to preserve his highly lucrative position as printer for the Senate.

confidence on his bearing it with more equanimity than his friends." 27

Contrary to Van Buren's expectations, Blair, not reconciled to his loss in the House, canvassed the representatives, inviting their reply to the question "WHO VOTED FOR THE EDITOR OF THIS PRINT ON THE LAST BALLOT?" With replies in hand, Blair, on 13 December 1833, printed a tabulation of the replies in the Globe showing that by the word of the members, Gales and Seaton had not been elected printers to the House of Representatives. 28 Gales and Seaton were, nevertheless, continued as printers to the House until 1835, when Blair finally secured election.

In 1835 Benton again reiterated to his fellow senators his objections to the election of a printer for the following Congress. Benton knew that only a postponement—until the makeup of the Senate might be more favorable to the administration—could secure the election of Blair. On 3 February Benton brought to the Senate's attention an alleged abuse caused by having a printer when Congress was not in session. The printer, he noted, "went to work in order to discover what ought to be printed." He would "rummage the files of Congress, ... the larger the document the better." All

27 Van Buren to Jackson, 20 February 1833, Jackson, Correspondence, 5: 21.

28 Globe, 13 December 1833.
that was then necessary was to "persuade the members to bring in a resolution, towards the close of the session, so as to obtain them a job to occupy their presses during the vacation, and to give them great profits on it." 29

Clay blamed the rise in the cost of printing on abuses in the administration. "It ought not to surprise any one," Clay said, "that the friends of the administration should get up and oppose any printing which was calculated to disseminate the knowledge of these abuses among the people. The less the printing that was done, so much the better for them." Clay told the Senate that if the committees could have gotten hold of all of the information about abuses that they needed from the administration, "the printing would have been so considerable that the friends of the administration would have had more reason still to get up and talk of extravagance in more doleful strains." 30

Benton continued to remind his fellow senators that if the abuses which arose out of the present method of electing a printer "could have been foreseen by those who passed the joint resolution [to elect printers] in 1819, the proposition would not have received the slightest countenance," for they thought the expenditure too large and had introduced the joint resolution "in the hope of correcting it." Two ballots for


30 Ibid., col. 494.
postponement and seventeen for printer were required before Gales and Seaton obtained election with a majority of the votes. 31

The act which authorized the publication of the laws, dated 20 April 1818 and amended on 11 May 1820, remained the basic statute during the presidential terms of both Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren. In his first annual message Andrew Jackson called attention to the work of the Department of State, which had so increased that there was a need, if not for the establishment of a home (interior) department as suggested by his predecessors, at least for a reorganization of the department so as to permit the secretary to "devote more of his time to our foreign relations." 32 Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state had only needed a staff of five clerks in 1789. By 1833 Louis McLane as secretary required seven bureaus. The establishment of the Bureau of Archives, Laws and Commissions indicated clearly that the publication of the laws had developed into an extensive operation. 33

31 Ibid., cols. 696-98.
The publication of laws was the patronage plum most sought by the press. Thomas Cooper of South Carolina, for example, in a letter to Secretary of State Martin Van Buren recommended the transfer of the printing of the laws from the *Columbia State Gazette* to the *Columbia Telegraph*. Cooper reminded Van Buren that D. W. Sims, editor of the *Telegraph*, "is your fast friend & of Jackson's politics. He ought to have the printing." Cooper further pointed out to Van Buren that "it is good policy to reward friends, & not enemies."

The opposition press exclaimed loudly against such transfers. The *Missouri Republican* in 1829 acknowledged publicly, for example, that it was aware that "the office of publisher of the laws of the U. States" in St. Louis would go to a pro-administration press in January, 1830. It accused the *St. Louis Beacon* of showing "such zeal in the cause" as to defeat any opposition and secure the office. The Department of State notified the *Beacon* early in January 1830 that it had been selected as one of the Missouri papers to publish the laws and resolutions of Congress. The loss of the patronage of publishing the laws brought a stinging

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35 *Missouri Republican*, 26 May 1829.

36 *St. Louis Beacon*, 6 January 1830.
accusation from the Republican, when the Beacon announced its support of the candidacy of Andrew Jackson for reelection early in 1831. The Republican accused the Beacon of being "in the pay of Mr. Van Buren's department" and thus printing whatever was required.37

The importance of the publication of the laws to a newspaper may be seen in the example of one that almost folded because of the loss of printing patronage during the administration of John Quincy Adams. The Southern Patriot, published in Charleston, South Carolina, by J. N. Cardoza, had been deprived of all public printing by Secretary of State Henry Clay in 1825. Cardoza petitioned Congress for relief in 1830. He had not only been deprived of the printing income but also the "popularity" derived from its publication. The Southern Patriot had been purchased from agents of the United States government in 1820 on long term credit. In his petition, Cardoza claimed that the value of printing patronage had been taken into account in arriving at the price of the newspaper. The loss that resulted from transfer of public printing had so reduced the paper's income that Cardoza could no longer meet his contractual obligations with the government. He requested a reduction in the amount of his loan balance and an extension of time for repayment. The Committee of the Judiciary, to which the petition had been assigned in 1830,

37Missouri Republican, 26 April 1831.
agreed that Cardoza had an equitable claim against the
government.38 A year later on 2 March 1831, Congress
granted Cardoza relief. Congress authorized the secretary
of the treasury to reduce Cardoza's loan and to extend
Cardoza's repayment period to the extent that it would, "in
his opinion, be consistent with equity and justice."39

It was a fait accompli when Editor E. P. Walton of the
Montpelier Vermont Watchman and State Gazette discovered the
omission of his paper from the list of those selected to
publish the laws of the United States. He blamed Isaac Hill
of New Hampshire for effecting the removal without his
knowledge under the guise of "economy and reform."40

In 1833 Congress attempted to increase the available
printing patronage substantially. Congress appointed a
select committee to study the feasibility of providing for
an even more general distribution of the journals of Congress
and laws of the United States among the people. The committee
agreed on the importance of every citizen knowing the laws he

38U.S., Congress, Senate, Report of the Judiciary
Committee, 21st Cong., 1st sess., 1830, S. Doc. 86. See also,
U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Committee of Ways and
Means, 21st Cong., 1st sess., 1830, H. Rept. 306, for the
identical report of the House.

39U.S., Statutes at Large, 6: 459. For a broader
discussion of several aspects of the significance of the
Cardoza family in South Carolina see William P. Vaughn,
Schools for All: The Blacks & Public Education in the South,
1865-1877 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974),
p. 65 n. 27.

40Montpelier Vermont Watchman and State Gazette, 12
January 1830.
was to obey, ignorance not being an adequate plea in the event of a violation. The committee, also cognizant of the infeasibility of furnishing a copy of the laws to each citizen, recommended that all public laws be published in every newspaper in the country. The committee believed that the expense to be incurred would be moderate with only a small sum offered since the publisher would be permitted to choose when to run them as filler. Moreover, the committee held that the value of the newspaper would increase through such service, and "he [the publisher] would find ample compensation" in an increased subscription list. The committee also recommended publication of a sufficient number of copies of the laws of each session in order that a copy might be placed in all offices of the national and state governments, libraries, literary institutions, and courts of record in the United States.\(^4\) This report would have led, if adopted, to an unparalleled printing bonanza.

Jared Sparks, with whom the serious documentary study of American history had begun, had edited at the request of the government the first twelve volumes of the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, which he published in 1829-30. Congress failed, however, to specify an editor when they appropriated money to continue the set for an additional seven volumes. Thus Sparks became the victim of

printing patronage, according to a review in 1834 of these last seven volumes, which were published by the Globe's editor, Francis P. Blair. For "Reasons of State," the review noted, a scholarly work was turned into "a printer's job" with the secretary of state disposing of it "on the principles, which usually govern the dispensation of public patronage."\(^{42}\)

The new territories had long beckoned to industrious printers; the first printer to arrive on the scene was virtually assured of appointment as public printer. William Edward Woodruff, editor of the Arkansas Gazette and the first printer to arrive in the Arkansas territory, had been reappointed each year "as a matter of course," regardless of his politics, because he had been the only printer in that territory. When, however, in 1830, a former apprentice on the Gazette staff began his own paper, the Advocate, and went on record as a pro-Jacksonian, Governor John Pope had to

intervene in order to enable Woodruff to keep his appointment as publisher of the laws of the United States for Arkansas. Thankful for his reprieve, Woodruff hastened to announce in his paper that although "he had privately favored Adams' re-election in 1828 . . . he had patriotically accepted the will of the majority and . . . found Jackson's administration highly commendable thus far." 43

Turning to a somewhat different but even more lucrative area, periodic attempts were made in the House of Representatives to arrange for publication of sets of laws to reward those whom the secretary of state had not chosen. The friends of Duff Green, editor of the U. S. Telegraph, which had been replaced by Francis Blair's Globe as the Jackson organ in Washington, sought authorization in 1832 for Green to publish 5,000 copies of the laws and treaties of the United States at an estimated cost of $75,000 to $100,000. The proposed authorization had passed the House during the previous session but failed in the Senate. The House hotly contested the revived bill. The $2.50 per volume bid by Green ultimately failed when bids of $1.25 and $1.12 were offered—especially since a printer of unquestioned competence, publisher of the reports of the decisions of the United States.

Supreme Court, the P. H. Nicklin firm in Philadelphia, offered the $1.25 alternative bid.\(^{44}\)

Opposing views on the operation and the implications of the Jacksonian press were, perhaps, most clearly delineated by Representative Henry A. Wise of Virginia and by then Representative James K. Polk of Tennessee. Wise, chairman of a House committee which toward the end of Jackson's second term looked at the amount per annum of executive patronage to the press, insisted that it appeared "sufficient to influence, to a dangerous extent, the political sentiments and power of the public press, particularly at the seat of Government, and the great number of country or village newspapers throughout the United States." Wise deplored the discharge of

a long-established press, with extensive circulation and numerous subscribers, from the printing of the laws and public advertisements, because its politics happened not to agree with the powers that be, or with the men who were to be in power; and to establish, with pledges of the Government patronage, a new press, without subscribers and without circulation, except through the franking privilege of privileged partisans, for the uses of party; and to organize these pensioned presses, thus brought into existence by the generating power of corruption, into a combined phalanx of types from one end of the Union to the other, speaking the same words, echoing the same sentiments, praising or denouncing the same men or measures, dependent, and living, and moving, and having their being, in the same feat of executive will!\(^{45}\)


Admittedly there was an element of truth in Wise's presentation, but it was only half of the truth. James K. Polk delineated elements of the other half in a letter earlier to Francis P. Blair following publication of an article on the relationship between the Bank of the United States and the National Intelligencer, which appeared in the Globe on 27 July 1833. The National Intelligencer, Polk stated, "cannot longer be pretended by any . . . as a free press, so far . . . as the Bank's interests are concerned." Polk added that "the influence of the Bank upon the freedom of the press, is visible in every quarter of the Union, though its power is perhaps not so absolute over any other single press, as it is over the Intelligencer." Polk related the recent publishing by the Bank through, "its organ", the National Banner of Nashville, Tennessee on the eve of the congressional election of "several extra sheets . . . Entitled 'National Intelligencer Extra' . . . purporting to have been published at Washington, filled with Bank matter, and eulogies on the Bank" and including references to Polk "in terms of censure" for his part in congressional discussions on the Bank question.  

Jackson explained to his cabinet his interpretation of several of the more salient interrelated factors in his

46 Polk to Blair, 8 August 1833, Polk, Correspondence, 2: 97-98.
message on the removal of the public deposits, that had originally been prepared by Roger B. Taney, at that time Jackson's attorney general and afterwards chief justice of the United States. It is now clearly established, he wrote, "that the bank controls, and in some cases substantially owns, and by its money supports some of the leading presses of the country." He noted that "editors to whom it [the Bank] loaned extravagant sums in 1831 and 1832, on unusual time and nominal security, have since turned out to be insolvent, and to others apparently in no better condition accommodations still more extravagant, on terms more unusual, and some without any security, have also been heedlessly granted." 47

Faced with powerful entrenched economic and political forces, Jackson had in effect incorporated into the spoils system, in an even more thoroughgoing manner than previously, the printing patronage of the government. In the process scandals had admittedly surfaced. Nevertheless, Jackson believed, perhaps correctly, that one of the principal goals behind the actions of his administration had been the preservation of press freedom.

CHAPTER III

ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL PRESS PATRONAGE
DURING THE JACKSON ADMINISTRATION

A resolution designed to curtail patronage to the partisan press was referred to the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives in 1835. The resolution proposed an inquiry

into the expediency and economy of so altering and amending the laws of the United States that thereafter all printing whatever required to be done for the United States, in any part of the public service, shall be done and performed within the District of Columbia; and that no such printing shall be done by any person or persons who may be concerned in any way of emolument, with any public journal or newspaper.¹

An unsympathetic committee reported that the proposition which directed all public printing be done in the District of Columbia was impracticable, as it was desirable that the laws of Congress should be widely published in newspapers throughout the Union. The second proposition was contrary to the existence of free government, for it proposed "to establish a new principle in our Government, which is no less than the proscription, by law, of a particular profession of men from a particular kind of public employment." In regard to the latter proposal the committee pointed out that Congress

had no power to prescribe a disqualification for office which was unknown to the Constitution. They noted further that "every American citizen having the qualifications specified in the constitution, is eligible to all the appointments in the gift of the President." Congress lacked the power to limit his authority "by requiring him to select his officers from a particular class, occupation, or profession." The committee further concluded that public printers should be employed, either by election or contract, who are known for their "fidelity and punctuality in the performance of their agreements, and to regulate and supervise the prices and execution of the work, so as to prevent all possible imposition."

The legislative history of the period illustrates not only tentative efforts to limit public expenditure for printing but also efforts to increase the public funds for printing. The Senate had earlier adopted a rule that required arrangements to be made with the clerk of the House of Representatives to print enough copies of those documents for both houses. This system avoided paying twice for setting the document in type. A resolution came before the Senate on 23 February 1836 to rescind this rule. Thomas Hart Benton spoke against rescinding, recalling times past

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2 Ibid., pp. 394-95.
3 Ibid., p. 398.
when large quantities of printing were ordered and paid for twice, the bulk of the documents being sold to the trunk makers and grocers. Samuel L. Southard, senator from New Jersey, attempted to justify the waste. He pointed out that documents not printed by the Senate were unavailable in the bound volumes of the Senate documents. Senators, therefore, often had to search among the House documents to find a document they had ordered printed. He noted further that since the printer of the House was not under their control, an important document upon which a Senate committee waited might be delayed until it was ordered printed by the House. This delay Southard noted, "caused the loss of more money than if printed under the order of the Senate." The Senate printer, required to be ready to do Senate printing promptly, invested a large outlay of capital for employees. It did not seem fair to withhold from him the printing due to him. This effort to expand public printing, like the previous effort to contract it, was defeated. The immediate instrument of defeat in the current case was to lay the resolution on the table.  

Isaac Hill, then senator from New Hampshire, referring to a book entitled Legislative and Documentary History of the Bank of the United States, compiled by Matthew St. Clair Clarke and D. A. Hall, of which each senator was to have a

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copy, pointed out to his fellow solons that "the members of Congress will undoubtedly be credited for great liberality by the gentlemen printers who are favored with the munificent contracts" to furnish books for their private libraries "at the expense of the public treasury." The senators took their "great liberality" in stride and continued to grant "munificent contracts" to "gentlemen printers."

During the debate on the general appropriations bill in May, 1836, the controversy over public printing became heated. This particular argument stemmed from an inadequate initial estimate of the cost of a projected printed edition of the documentary history of the Revolution by Matthew St. Clair Clarke and Peter Force. With no end in sight, $20,000 had already been expended on the job; and the revised estimates of the ultimate total expenditure, according to Isaac Hill, ranged from $500,000 to $4,000,000. The bill authorizing this history was only one of a number of printing bonanzas. It came to the floor with two other bills. The first extended the Gales and Seaton compilation of State Papers by eight volumes at a cost of $63,000; the second authorized Duff Green to publish a stereotype edition of the

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5 Ibid., 22d Cong., 1st sess., 1832, 8, pt. 1: 531-32.
6 Ibid., 24th Cong., 1st sess., 1836, 12, pt. 2: 1399-1409.
7 Ibid., col. 1403; ibid., col. 1405.
laws of the United States at a cost of $125,000.\textsuperscript{8} Both the Clarke and Force and Gales and Seaton bills passed, leaving only Duff Green disappointed; "this disappointment was made up at the beginning of the next session, (1834)" through a resolution which authorized Green to publish the land documents at a cost of $57,327. Hill pointed out that the above printing jobs were given to each branch of the opposition: Gales and Seaton, along with Clarke and Force, "were to have a fat job, and Duff Green's friends insisted that he should have one also."\textsuperscript{9} Hill subsequently presented the amount expended for printing by the Senate and House from 1817 to 1835. The Senate's costs had increased by twenty fold and that of the House by ten fold. Henry Clay's accusation of "utter and reckless extravagance" on the part of the administration was turned by Hill, who pointed to "the extravagant expenditures by the Senate and House, of millions for public printing," for which they alone were responsible. The figures, when averaged, showed payment to Gales and Seaton over a sixteen year period of more than $40,000 per year; to Duff Green over a nine year period of nearly $50,000 per year; and to Francis P. Blair, over a five year period of approximately $3,900 per year. Gales

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\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., col. 1404. Stereotype is a process of making metal printing plates in order to save them for use in printing additional copies of a work at a later date.

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., col. 1405.
and Seaton and Duff Green, Hill stressed, "are inveterate opponents" of the administration whereas Blair "is friendly to the administration." Hill added that the figures showed over $1,000,000 paid to Gales and Seaton and to Duff Green, much of it since 1829, "whose newspapers have been constantly employed to batter down the administration."¹⁰

Another line of investigation into the patronage of the partisan press involved excessive expenditures on advertising for contracts to carry the mail. As early as 1830 a Senate inquiry instructed Postmaster General William T. Barry to notify the Senate in what newspapers both he and his immediate predecessor had published the advertisements for contracts to carry the mails. The law required the postmaster general to provide notification in one newspaper in Washington, D.C., and in one or more newspapers published in the state or territory where the contract was to be performed. In regard to the second requirement, the postmaster general weakly replied that "there are no records or documents in the Department which show all the different papers in which these advertisements have been published in the several states." Concerning the other requirement, Barry admitted that although his predecessor, John McLean, for the previous five years had split the advertising approximately equally between two journals published in Washington, D.C., during 1829 he

¹⁰Ibid., col. 1406.
had placed the entire amount of this advertising in Duff Green's *Telegraph*, which of course was the initial organ of the Jackson administration. Three printers in Washington, D.C., appointed to examine and report on the advertising for proposals for post contracts studied the advertising accounts for the year 1832. They tried to determine what the cost of advertising the same amount of information the same number of times would have been in another publication. The inquiry revealed that the amount paid to the *Globe* was $8,386.50. The charge for the same advertising in the *National Intelligencer* would have been $2,763.37½, a difference of $5,623.12½.

The problems and opportunities inherent in press patronage had become so obvious by the time of the congressional session of 1834-35 that the Senate seriously discussed without finally passing "A Bill to Regulate the Publication of the Laws of the United States and of Public Advertisements." This bill would have taken responsibility for selection of newspapers to print the advertisements in the various states out of the hands of executive offices and departments and

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11 "Advances for Printing; Changes in Certain Contracts; Newspapers in which Advertisements for Proposals are published; Extra Clerks; Alterations, Repairs, and Furniture; Incompetent Contractors; Duties of the Assistant Postmaster General," *American State Papers: Post Office Department*, 1: 249-53.

placed it in the hands of the senators and representatives in Congress. It provided that there be no less than three newspapers per state with the provision that the number be equal to half the number of representatives to which such state was entitled in Congress. In each territory there would be one, and in the District of Columbia three. The selection of the latter would have been made by the secretary of state, with preference being given to newspapers with the largest circulation.\textsuperscript{13}

Other post office printing had on occasion been effectively combined to reward "the favored partizan." The editor of the Louisville, Kentucky, Advertiser, for example, received a contract "to print all the blanks for the post offices in the western country, from Pittsburg to Orleans, and from the Alleghany to the Rocky Mountains." This printing had formerly been done at various presses near the local post offices. The opposition press alleged that economy could scarcely have been the principal motive since the new printer quickly suggested that all form stock on hand "be thrown away, that he may have the benefit of furnishing a new supply, fresh from the economical mint of Jackson and reform."\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13}U.S., Congress, Senate, A Bill to Regulate the Publication of the Laws of the United States and of Public Advertisements, 23d Cong., 2d sess., 1835, Senate Doc. 109, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{14}Louisville [Kentucky] Focus quoted in Missouri Republican, 26 May 1829.
Patronage to press proprietors was not limited to printing jobs. An investigation into the furnishing of wrapping paper and twine for the use of the post offices revealed that no effort had been made to secure the most economical purchases and that purchases had been made by the postmaster, or by someone in his office, without public notice or competition. An example of a paper and twine contractor involved Nathaniel Green, a co-owner of the Boston Statesman, who in April, 1829, had been appointed postmaster at Boston. Soon after the appointment, Nathaniel Green gave his brother, Charles, his share in the Statesman. At the same time he gave his brother the contract for paper and twine for the Boston Post Office. Further investigation revealed that Nathaniel Green, while postmaster, became a partner in a paper mill which manufactured paper for his brother Charles, who, in turn furnished paper to the Boston Post Office. With regard to the latter, since "such a fuss was made about his ... owning a paper mill and furnishing paper to the Government while he was postmaster," Nathaniel Green agreed to sell his share in the mill.15

15U.S., Congress, Appendix to the Register of Debates, 23d Cong., 2d sess., 1835, 11, pt. 2, 353-54. See also, J. B. Gardiner to Duff Green, 28 October, 1830, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., on microfilm North Texas State University: "The President has more to fear from the avarice and sycophancy of some of his sun-shine friends in Ohio, than from the open warring of Mr. Clay and all his host of servile followers, in this state."
The partisan press abetted and intensified the spirit of politics in the country. The plea for fair play and freedom to criticize the administration without fear of reprisal found its defender in Balie Peyton, representative from Tennessee, whose political principles followed Jackson's, but who, in the debate in the House in February, 1836, on the issue of executive patronage lamented that "you cannot propose to discuss a great question of national policy, but ... it is an attack upon the President..." Peyton added that "these little Jacksons are springing up, like May-apples in the spring season, every where, all over the country, and to attack one of them is to attack the President himself!"16

During Jackson's last year in office, the House of Representatives appointed a select committee of nine members to make "a preliminary inquiry into facts and evidence, to show whether a process of impeachment ought not to be instituted by the House of Representatives against the Executive and the heads of departments."17 Henry A. Wise, an anti-Jackson Democrat from Virginia in the 24th Congress and a Whig in the 25th Congress, chaired the committee.18

Wise had moved the resolution in the House calling for the investigation. Unfortunately, from the standpoint of Wise, he had called for the investigation during the previous session of Congress; and it was not granted until within six weeks of the adjournment of the second session of the 24th Congress. Even more unfortunate for Wise, from the standpoint of the outcome, the committee contained a heavy majority of administration supporters, including Representative Abijah Mann, Jr., Democrat from New York, who was in close contact with the president and who had himself previously benefited from Jackson's patronage.\textsuperscript{19}

Wise had sought to have the committee require from the head of each executive department the sums of money paid within the year ending on the 1st of December last, by such departments, respectively, their agents or deputies, to printers or editors of newspapers, specifying the names and residences of such printers and editors, and also the names and places of publication of the newspapers owned or published by them, and showing the services or considerations for which such sums have been paid, giving each item as stated in the accounts of such printer or editor.\textsuperscript{20}

Jackson stated that this and a series of succeeding resolutions that Wise had submitted to the committee called upon the

\textsuperscript{19}U.S., Congress, Appendix to the Register of Debates, 24th Cong., 2d sess., 1837, 13, pt. 2: 195, 199, 202-203. See also Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1961, s.v. "Mann, Abijah, Jr." which lists Mann's appointment by Jackson as postmaster of Fairfield, New York from 1830 to 1833, prior to election to the House.

president "not to answer to any specific charge; not to explain any alleged abuse; not to give information as to any particular transaction; but, assuming that they have been guilty of the charges alleged, calls upon them to furnish evidence against themselves!" 21

Kendall, at the Post Office Department, referred Wise to the contingent accounts of the department whose accounts and vouchers were on file in the Register's Office. Kendall added

in this Department an answer cannot be given without a minute search through the books, and overhauling probably more than 30,000 accounts. Nearly the whole force of the Department and of the Auditor's office would have to be withdrawn from the current business, to the incalculable injury of the public service, and employed in searching out thousands of items. . . . 22

In basic agreement with Kendall's position, a majority of the committee held that if Wise's position had been adopted and carried into effect it would have embraced all of the details of newspaper advertising involving

every letter remaining in post offices, every proposal for mail contracts, for work, for supplies, and the like. . . . Had such returns been made in an answer to the proposed call, this committee, instead of inquiring into the condition of the executive departments, must have res gloved itself into mere auditors of newspaper accounts. 23

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22 Kendall to Wise, 3 February 1837, quoted in ibid., p. 209.

During the committee hearings Wise asked Daniel Azro Ashley Buck, a clerk in the War Department, "Do you know the amount of patronage of the War Department to the press, and the principle upon which printers are selected to do the public printing; whether they are selected on account of their political opinions?" Gorham Parks, Democrat from Maine, a member of the committee, objected to the question and by vote of six to three the question was omitted.\textsuperscript{24}

The majority report refused to believe "that the employment of a newspaper to publish what the law requires to be published, for a fair equivalent, is to be regarded in the light of favor, or patronage, any more than the employment of any other mechanical labor by the Government or by private citizens." Any further inquiry into the selection of the individual newspapers would, the representatives believed, be an inquiry into the motives.\textsuperscript{25} The committee rejected all questions except those which would reveal an illegal connection of an officer of the government with the press. The majority of the committee repeatedly insisted that the investigation did not involve the motives with which the heads of the executive departments and the president had exercised "their lawful official patronage."\textsuperscript{26} The investigation in

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., p. 215.
\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 193.
\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., p. 192.
the view of the majority of the committee failed to produce any evidence on the part of any officer or agent of an executive department "to sustain the grave charge of a violation of public duty in subsidizing and corrupting the public press." This report urged the passage of a resolution which acknowledged that various executive departments had been conducted with ability and integrity and that the president had fully and faithfully discharged his public duties.27

The views of the minority, subsequently published, held that the committee majority had so circumscribed the scope of its inquiry as "to preclude and suppress the investigation. . . ." Wise chose to append to the minority view his reasons for dissent. One of the most important avenues for inquiry, he perceived, was the subject of executive patronage to the public press.28 The Virginian urged that "the most hampering restraint" upon press freedom "is that imposed by party pains and penalties." The committee, however, included six members friendly to the administration. Wise believed that even this pro-administration committee majority acknowledged "that it was notorious that the present executive administration did distribute its patronage to presses favorable to its party purposes; and more than one

27 Ibid., pp. 193, 198.
28 Ibid., pp. 198-200.
of the committee was ready to enter a cognovit [an acknowledgment] to the charge of dismissing one press, and establishing or employing another, for reason of their politics."29

The House of Representatives in 1838 specifically investigated the issue of public printing. Public printing for Congress had increased from $30,000 to over $100,000 a year since 1829. Duff Green, for example, received over $84,000 from the Senate alone in 1835. Although the 1829 figures for the executive departments were not supplied, by 1838 the printing patronage of the executive departments totaled approximately $150,000. Furthermore, by 1838 "some eighty or more newspapers" enjoyed "the peculiar patronage of the Government." Congressional testimony suggested that the previous means of publishing the laws should cease and that some other scheme should be devised for their publication. After all, as George W. Hopkins, of Virginia noted, "the selection of the papers was not always confined to that press having the largest circulation in its neighborhood, or the State wherein it was published." Hopkins believed that copies of laws could be widely distributed without corrupting the press by paying newspapers for their publication. The House opposition doubted the availability of a printer who was not partisan. "It was not in human nature," according to Samuel Cushman, representative from New Hampshire,

29 Ibid., p. 200.
"to be indifferent and listless upon the great and vital subjects that agitate the public mind." 30

Congressional agitation increased with regard to both the patronage and power of the press. Friendly newspapers had assisted Jackson through two terms and more recently had supported Jackson's choice, Martin Van Buren. When the opportunity at last arose, Congress finally acted to place restraints on this growing partisan press. They reduced the press patronage that had previously been granted to the secretary of state. By law on 26 August 1842, Congress drastically altered the procedure for the publication of the laws of the United States in the newspapers. The act authorized the secretary of state to publish the laws, resolutions, treaties, and amendments "in not less than two nor more than four of the principal newspapers" published in Washington, D.C. Preference should be given under the law to those newspapers with "the greatest number of permanent subscribers and the most extensive circulation." Compensation

remained at $1 per page of the pamphlet edition or of its equivalent amount in newspapers.\textsuperscript{31}

A report from the Senate Committee on Printing, which preceded passage of this act, blamed the abuses "of late years" with "its heavy cost" for the necessity to make changes. The committee expressed the hope that the resulting legislation would be free from "favoritism to a party press," which tends to minister "to the cupidity of mere party men" as well as permitting the growth "of a vast corrupting patronage with the funds of the nation." It likened its recommendation for the removal of the "newspaper press patronage from the personal depositories of official power," to the shortening of "Samson's locks." The obligation of Congress to separate the executive departments "from every possible means of accumulating forbidden and dangerous power," ranked, the committee believed, among its first and most important duties.\textsuperscript{32}

The patronage available to the secretary of state had resulted from specific provisions of acts passed by Congress. The abuse of power by the secretary of state in patronizing a partisan press must at least partially be attributed to the failure of Congress to write detailed and specific legislation. Had the Congress retained the power to select the printers

\textsuperscript{31}U.S., Statutes at Large, 5: 527.

there is little indication that the resulting selections would have been either fewer or made apart from partisan interest. When Congress originally gave the power to the secretary of state, it had not anticipated the degree of partisanship, the influence of the press, or the cost to the national treasury that ensued over a period of time. Reform, however, brought loss as well as gain. With the resulting reduction in the printing patronage after 1842 never again would the American people have such ease of access to the laws which governed them. With the shrinking of the patronage plum, the press on the other hand had to work harder to obtain other forms of advertising; editors and publishers became more influenced by their new readers and less influenced by public men. The provisions in the laws relevant to printing patronage during the first half century of national history, while the United States was expanding westward, played a far more significant role than they are ordinarily credited with in the decentralization of the press. They certainly contributed to the development of a vigorous national party system.
CHAPTER IV

THE INVOLVEMENT OF PATRONAGE OF THE PRESS WITH
STATE POLITICS: THE EXAMPLE OF MISSOURI

The story of press patronage in St. Louis, Missouri, from 1829 to 1832 provides an example of such patronage in the areas of state politics and a situation in which state politics and national politics intertwined. The history of the St. Louis Beacon is the narrative of a newspaper created with government patronage to serve as a party voice in its region and state. The opposition's taunt that "that paper [the Beacon] would have gone down long ago, but for the name and influence of Col. Benton and the small, but zealous band of partizans who yet follow his standard" stood much closer to fact than to propaganda.¹

The first issue of the St. Louis Beacon greeted the citizens of St. Louis early in 1829. This newspaper was the joint effort of Charles Keemle of St. Louis, and, at least according to the opposition press, of Thomas Hart Benton, United States senator from Missouri.² Neither was new to

¹St. Louis Missouri Republican, 31 August 1830.
²Ibid., 3 March 1829, states that the first issue of the St. Louis Beacon "was delivered to its city subscribers yesterday"; Ibid., 14 July 1829.
newspapers or politics or to the relationship between newspapers and politics.

Benton had edited the *St. Louis Enquirer* for three years immediately preceding his election in 1821 to the United States Senate. According to one historian, Benton's main objective as editor had been to secure political influence. The Missouri press in "campaign years" was "nothing if not political." Benton's purpose had certainly not been to become the public printer; and the extinction of his paper after his election "concerned him little if at all."³

Keemle had founded and edited, with Stephen W. Foreman, the *Missouri Advocate*, first issued at St. Charles, Missouri in 1824 and at St. Louis in 1825 as the *St. Louis Advocate* and *St. Louis Advertiser*. The paper had been sold in 1827, and Keemle joined the staff of the *St. Louis Herald* and later affiliated with the *People's Organ* and *Reveille*.⁴

Patronage, especially for a new paper, was essential. It was much easier for Jacksonians to make adequate arrangements for patronage in 1829 than it would have been several years earlier when John Quincy Adams was president. Benton, writing to James T. Preston on 6 May 1826, admitted that he

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[Benton] "could have no influence on federal patronage" while Adams was in the White House. Benton's influence over state patronage had improved, however, when in 1825, John Miller, a Jacksonian and a close friend, had been elected governor of Missouri. The Beacon was designated the official paper from the beginning and became the recipient of city, state, and federal patronage.

Federal patronage available to the Beacon included both presidential and departmental printing requirements. In a young country where information traveled slowly, it was necessary to print various types of government information in the newspapers in order to keep the public informed. The party in power found a favorable press useful in maintaining public opinion. The best way to assure continued press support was to support selective newspapers with printing jobs. The dollar value of the federal patronage which was available was substantial and had been increasing for some time. Benton had served on a Senate committee during 1825 and 1826 which had examined executive patronage for the purpose of finding ways to reduce it. Looking back some thirty years later, he acknowledged abuse in the publication of government advertisements. "Large advertisements"

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published for long periods of time, he admitted, were found in newspapers with little or no circulation, the objective being "to conciliate the support of the paper, or to sustain an efficient one."\(^7\)

Benton first arranged for the *Beacon* to publish the public advertisements, and then, in 1830, when the contract with the *Missouri Republican* expired, to publish the laws of the United States. In 1829 Benton secured for the paper, for example, advertisements from the Navy Commissioner's Office for Navy beef and pork for the year 1830.\(^8\) Similarly, Benton arranged for the advertisement, from the Assistant Quarter-Master's Office, for transporting 500 bushels of shelled corn from St. Louis to Fort Winnebago.\(^9\) The Post Office provided several kinds of advertising. Readily available to the *Beacon* was the "List of Letters Remaining at the Post Office," which if not claimed, would be sent to the dead letter office.\(^10\) There were also circulars for public

\(^7\) Thomas Hart Benton, *Thirty Years View, or A History of the Working of the American Government for Thirty Years, from 1820 to 1850* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1854), pp. 80-82. In 1825-26, Benton estimated that of federal revenue of approximately twenty-two million dollars, little more than half involved patronage.

\(^8\) *St. Louis Beacon*, 11 July 1829; ibid., 18 July 1829; ibid., 25 July 1829; ibid., 1 August 1829.

\(^9\) Ibid., 18 July 1829; ibid., 25 July 1829.

\(^10\) Ibid., 4 July 1829; ibid., 11 July 1829; ibid., 18 July 1829.
information written by the postmaster.\textsuperscript{11} When postal routes were periodically open for public bids they had to be advertised. The requirements for the postal routes included such detailed specifications that an advertisement for a single route often filled two columns.\textsuperscript{12}

The office of the commissary general of subsistence of the United States Army provided the Beacon with frequent and lengthy advertisements often running three columns. Each commodity and the amount required was repeated for each post where the provisions were to be delivered.\textsuperscript{13} President Andrew Jackson, from time to time, provided for the insertion of letters of public notice such as one to the Creek Indians requesting that they turn over several murderers.\textsuperscript{14} Jackson frequently announced the sale of public lands through the commissioner of the General Land Office.\textsuperscript{15} Presidential proclamations, though infrequent, were sometimes lengthy. Examples might include the text of a convention signed between the United States and the King of Denmark, and the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 27 June 1829.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 18 July 1829; ibid., 25 July 1829; ibid., 1 August 1829.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 27 June 1829.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 1 August 1829; ibid., 15 August 1829.
\end{itemize}
text of a treaty between the United States and the Emperor of Brazil.  

As the Missouri Republican lost more and more federal patronage to the Beacon, it lashed out at its rival for attempting to effect removal of the incumbent postmaster. It blamed the attempt on the Beacon's desire to have "the remnant of 'government pap'" which remained with the Republican. It assured readers that it was not dependent on this patronage as its means of support were not so "precarious" as the Beacon's which, it claimed, depended "upon the will of an unprincipled dictator." 

Publishing the laws which emanated from each congressional session had become an especial plum sought by the press. As early as May of 1829, the Missouri Republican acknowledged publicly its awareness that "the office of publisher of the laws of the U. States" in St. Louis would go to an administration press in January 1830. It accused the Beacon of showing "such zeal in the cause" as to defeat any opposition to secure the office. The State Department notified the Beacon early in January, 1830, that it had been selected as one of the Missouri papers to publish the laws and resolutions

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16 Ibid., 2 September 1830; ibid., 9 September 1830.
17 Missouri Republican, 6 October 1829.
18 Ibid., 26 May 1829.
of Congress. The Beacon began publishing these laws on 16 January 1830. Most issues thereafter carried the text of one or more laws. A few issues toward the end and immediately after the session devoted the equivalent of a full page to the text of these laws. Attacking the veracity of the description of Jackson with which the Beacon had accompanied the announcement of his presidential campaign, the Missouri Republican added that since the Beacon was "in the pay of Mr. Van Buren's department," if it were held accountable for its statement it would "probably print whatever is required of them," changing their opinions "as often as the cunning man at the head of that department," chose "to change his attitude before the public." 21

The Beacon also received state patronage. Governor John Miller's office published, for example, a proclamation for the arrest of an individual accused of murder. 22 The state treasurer's office published announcements of the redemption of state warrants and certificates. 23

19 St. Louis Beacon, 6 January 1830.
20 Ibid., 16 January 1830; ibid., 22 July 1830; ibid., 19 August 1830; ibid., 26 August 1830.
21 Missouri Republican, 26 April 1831.
22 St. Louis Beacon, 29 June 1829; ibid., 4 July 1829; ibid., 11 July 1829.
23 Ibid., 18 July 1829; ibid., 15 August 1829.
The Beacon also published "By Authority" the laws of Missouri. The Republican, reprinting several of these laws in one of its issues, complained of the governor's choice of the Beacon to publish the laws. It claimed the choice defeated the end desired, which was to give the laws publicity. It accused the governor of uniformly selecting newspapers with "a very limited circulation, of little respectability . . . simply because they are of his party in politics and have been his willing instruments." Their paper, the editors claimed, had "a circulation as extensive as the whole of those selected" by him. The Beacon also published public announcements of impending cases from the Circuit Courts.

The Beacon received local government patronage including advertisements, for example, from the mayor's office on behalf of the board of alderman requesting the presentation of a "plan of watering the city" or again in a notice offering a $1,000 reward for the capture of an arsonist. In 1831 the Beacon won the bid for the city printing which included, besides the public advertisements, the job work for stationery

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24 Ibid., 3 February 1831.
25 Missouri Republican, 8 February 1831.
26 St. Louis Beacon, 27 June 1829; ibid., 15 August 1829.
27 Ibid., 27 June 1829; ibid., 4 November 1829.
and forms. The opposition accused the Beacon of irregularities in the submission of bids for the city printing.28

Nevertheless, patronage from local advertisers was also significant. Subscriptions to the paper formed, of course, another basic source of income. Local advertisers and subscribers were often influenced by local events, and their continued support was even more tenuous than government patronage. The only monetary figure available on the Beacon's overall advertising support was given in January 1830, when it was not quite a year old and before it had the patronage of the laws. At that time it enjoyed about $1,000 income a year, but the editor admitted the patronage was "rapidly increasing."29

When, on 29 July 1830, the Beacon presented the ticket of the Jacksonian Republicans for the forthcoming state election, the language used against some of the members of the opposition led to a libel suit and sorely affected the Beacon's local patronage. After commending the slate of Jacksonian Republicans, the Beacon called attention to two candidates who claimed to be Jackson men, W. C. Lane and F. Nash, but who, according to the Beacon, were part of the opposition. Two other candidates, George Strother and Stephen W. Foreman, editors of the St. Louis Times,

28 Missouri Republican, 21 June 1831.
29 St. Louis Beacon, 30 January 1830.
who claimed to be supporters of Jackson, were alleged by the Beacon, to be "running on mongrel tickets, fabricated in a variety of forms to entrap the unwary." In the following issue, Keemle wrote of a "combination against the press" which had caused approximately twenty of his subscribers to request him to discontinue their subscriptions and/or their advertisements. He published a number of their letters and then begged the citizens of Missouri to unite behind him and to sustain "the only republican press" left in St. Louis.

A letter from Hill & M'Gunnegle, a leading mercantile firm, received at the Beacon on 6 August 1830, the day after the other letters were published, withdrawing their advertising and cancelling their subscription, was withheld from publication until 9 September 1830. The Beacon may well have been trying to get Hill & M'Gunnegle to retract their letter. They were the Beacon's largest local advertiser. A recent issue of the Beacon had carried 163 lines of advertising by Hill & M'Gunnegle. When Keemle objected to Hill & M'Gunnegle's expectation of being charged on a yearly basis for less than a year's advertising, the firm angrily retorted by publishing a letter in the Missouri Republican stating that

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30 Ibid., 29 July 1830.
31 Ibid., 5 August 1830.
32 Ibid., 9 September 1830.
33 Ibid., 27 May 1830.
they had been denounced "for refusing to contribute . . . dollars towards its [the Beacon's] support." The next step was surely, they protested, to force everyone "to subscribe to support the papers of the administration, or be denounced as a traitor to his country!" So it goes with those, they declared, who receive the "Treasury pap." The Republican answered the Beacon's charge of a "combination against the press" with an article claiming "we never hear of illiberality, persecution and oppression, until Mr. Keemle's ox is gored." The Beacon did indeed, however, receive help in the form of 200 new subscriptions as well as an increase in the amount of government patronage.

The libel suit was settled in the spring of 1831. Keemle lost. A local court awarded Stephen W. Foreman $5,000 for the libel on his character. Keemle vowed to continue his editorship. The Beacon pleaded with the citizens of Missouri to suspend their judgment until he could show "what sort of a character is worth $5000 in Missouri." The Missouri Republican questioned Keemle's ability to pay the penalty and surmised that within a few weeks the Beacon would "'douse its

34 Ibid., 9 September 1830; Missouri Republican, 14 September 1830.
35 Missouri Republican, 10 August 1830.
36 St. Louis Beacon, 21 October 1830.
37 Ibid., 21 April 1831.
glim, or procure a new hand to trim its lamp." By July 1831, pressure for payment to Foreman was mounting. The Beacon stated, for example, that out of necessity "all incidental Job Work and Advertising" would have to be paid for in cash.

1831 was becoming a bad year for Keemle. The indiscretion which had led to the suit for slander had cost him not only local patronage but had also laid his character open to the charge of being a convicted slanderer. The latter would have been hard for anyone to overcome, but as a highly partisan conveyor of information it severely handicapped Keemle. With Keemle's reputation tainted, it became increasingly difficult for the Jackson party to depend upon the Beacon for its voice. The time was not propitious nor the crime so great, however, to abandon that voice in the midst of an off-year election. Samuel Pettis, a Jacksonian, who opposed the recharter of the Bank of the United States, was running against David Barton, spokesman for the Bank, former senator, and bitter foe of Benton, for Missouri's only seat in the United States House of Representatives.

Andrew Jackson had set the wheels of the Bank controversy in motion when, in his first annual message in December 1829,

38 Missouri Republican, 19 April 1831.
39 St. Louis Beacon, 28 July 1831.
even though the charter did not expire until March 1836, he questioned "both the constitutionality and the expediency of the law" creating the Bank of the United States. His message gave him the opportunity to "present it to the deliberate consideration of the Legislature and the people."\(^4\) Again, in his second annual message in December 1830, Jackson focused attention on the Bank question. This time he suggested that a bank might be organized as a branch of the Treasury Department, which would have "no means to operate on the hopes, fears, or interests of large masses of the community. . . ."\(^4\) Benton agreed fully with Jackson that the Bank should not be rechartered. The Missourian came to view the Bank as a power-hungry monster controlled by private individuals, some of whom were foreigners, and others who lived in "a remote and narrow corner" of the United States, a great distance from "the fertile regions of the Great Valley" with no sympathy for it. An apt illustration of the injury to the West, Benton claimed, was the refusal by the St. Louis Branch of the Bank of the United States to accept bank notes issued south of the Potomac and Ohio Rivers. This, he stressed, was extremely hard on an area whose trade

\(^{40}\) Andrew Jackson, *The Statesmanship of Andrew Jackson as Told in his Writings and Speeches*, ed. Francis Newton Thorpe (New York: Tandy-Thomas Co., 1909), p. 64. See also *Missouri Republican*, 18 May 1830, which points out that Jackson's views on the Bank were opposed not only by the opposition party but also by "the friends who helped make him president."

\(^{41}\) Jackson, *The Statesmanship of Andrew Jackson*, p. 124.
depended on the southern markets, to say nothing of the
difficulty experienced by southern travellers and emigrants.
Another consequence of having the Bank, which Benton deplored,
was the drain of hard money from the West.42 One historian
has pointed out that many Missouri pioneers "had suffered
loss by the failures of the territorial banks in Missouri"
and thus were willing listeners and supporters of Benton's
arguments for hard money.43

The Beacon was created specifically to become the St.
Louis voice of the Jackson administration. The opposition
press accused Benton's editorials of "a systematic perversion
of the truth and facts." Even after the Senate pronounced
his Bank resolutions, in the words of the Missouri Republican,
"totally unworthy of consideration," Benton was accused by
the Republican's editor of "harping on the same string in the
'Beacon.'"44 The Beacon, in the first two years of its
existence, sounded only praise for Benton, proclaiming, for
example, that "he is the able and industrious advocate of the
of the principles we have espoused and supported in common
with the majority of our fellow citizens."45 The Missouri

42 U.S., Congress, Senate, Register of Debates, 21st Cong.,
2d sess., 1831, 7: 51, 60.
Missouri Historical Review 15(1921): 316.
44 Missouri Republican, 14 July 1829.
45 St. Louis Beacon, 1 April 1830.
Republican, spokesman for the Bank, said that the president's recommendations on the Bank were the result of "sinister motives, and unlawful and ungenerous ends."46

The opposition press consistently refuted the portrait of the detrimental effect of the Bank on the West that Benton had portrayed in his great Senate speech of 2 February 1831. This press carefully monitored the congressional proceedings for appropriate remarks that might justify polemical discussion. Missouri at the time had only one delegate in the House of Representatives. Samuel Pettis was a Jacksonian and a frequent irritant to the opposition party. The opposition claimed that the majority of his constituents were favorable to the Bank, and they watched anxiously to see if Pettis would represent them or, from the standpoint of the Missouri Republican, "become the humble and pliant tool" of the Jackson administration. Pettis's vote on a resolution by a representative from Georgia against the Bank of the United States found Pettis voting for the resolution and thus against the Bank. He acted, according to the Republican "as the trained instrument of the party."47

The National Republican opposition viewed the Bank as valuable to both farmers and merchants, who supposedly had confidence in the soundness of its currency. They feared that

46 Missouri Republican, 11 January 1831.
47 Ibid., 2 February 1831.
the destruction of the Bank of the United States would lead
to a large number of "those mushroom banks which only benefit
speculators and sharpers," as well as creating "distrust and
suffering" among all elements of the community. 48

The Republican joyfully reprinted from the ordinarily
pro-Jackson Quarterly Review a questioning of Benton's con-
cern over the foreign stockholders of the Bank. "What more
harm," they asked, "is there in selling bank stock to a
Frenchman, if he will give a high price for it, than there
is in selling cotton, or pork, or flour, to him?" 49 The
intensity of the debate on recharter of the Bank as a
western issue continued to mount. Sides were closely drawn;
names were called; tempers ran rampant. Over one issue,
which grew out of it, the opposition press moved slowly. It
realized both the advantages and the dangers which could
result from the quarrel, which some regarded as developing
and others felt was being fomented between Representative
Pettis, then up for reelection, and Major Thomas Biddle,
paymaster in the United States Army and a director in the
St. Louis Branch of the Bank of the United States. The
opposition press campaigned vigorously in the election for
David Barton, a pro-Bank man. It would have been extremely
easy to pick up the quarrel between Pettis and Biddle and

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., 20 March 1831.
use it to its advantage, but the Missouri Republican took no notice of it until the quarrel led to a public fight. Even then the Republican discussed it only after Pettis had, in its view, "attempted to convert that private affray into a political incident." 50

The Beacon assigned the origin of the quarrel between Pettis and Biddle to the anonymous publication by Biddle in the spring of 1831 of a charge that Pettis was unfit to represent Missouri. 51 James Earl Moss, in an article in the Missouri Historical Review, has attributed the origin to a speech by Pettis made during "the bitter and heated campaign" in the summer of 1831. Pettis, Moss wrote, "violently attacked the Bank of the United States and maligned the Bank's president, Nicholas Biddle" who was Thomas's brother. According to Moss, the battle of words which followed led Biddle to ridicule Pettis's claims as a congressional candidate and to speak of him as "a dish of skimmed milk." 52 An increasing harangue between the two led on 22 July 1831, to Thomas Biddle's violent physical assault on Pettis, who was asleep in the back gallery of Town's Tavern in the City Hotel. Pettis, feeling ill, had retired after a bout with the mosquitoes in his room. The depositions taken

50 Ibid., 26 July 1831.
51 St. Louis Beacon, 28 July 1831.
following the fight set the time of the attack at "about
daybreak." Pettis had been awakened "by several blows with
a stick, or something of that kind, perhaps a cowhide, and
also with fist." As the struggle continued, Pettis realized
Biddle also had a pistol. Pettis, dressed only in a shirt
and drawers "which had fallen down" about his legs, was not
well in the first place, and thus, was not strong enough to
repel Biddle, who knocked him down and "stamped on him."
During the struggle Biddle threatened to kill Pettis. They
were finally separated by one William Pelham. When Biddle
left, Pettis came out of his room with a bleeding face. "He
appeared," William Town noted, "to have been much beaten."53

The election returned Samuel Pettis to his seat in the
House of Representatives, but the quarrel was far from over.
Pettis had resolved, after the attack the previous month, to
challenge Biddle to a duel. He was held back at the time
only by the pleading of Benton, who had arrived at his
friend's side at the end of the fight. Benton was concerned
that Pettis might be killed at a juncture when it would be
inconvenient to nominate another suitable candidate.54 The
ultimate result confirmed Benton's fears. The duel, with
pistols at five feet, was fatal to both parties. It took

53 St. Louis Beacon, 28 July 1831.

54 William Nisbet Chambers, Old Bullion Benton: Senator
from the New West (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1956),
p. 178.
place on Friday, 26 August 1831, on a sand bar in the Mississippi River. The shots were fired a few minutes before five o’clock in the afternoon. Pettis died the following day; Biddle lingered on until Monday morning. 55

Friends of the Jackson administration met in several counties to recommend a candidate for the congressional by-election to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Samuel Pettis. The pro-Jackson corresponding committee of Callaway County urged all Missouri Jacksonians to join them in their support of General William H. Ashley of St. Louis County to fill Pettis’s seat. Ashley would, they assured their friends, “create such a degree of harmony, and give such general satisfaction, as will unite the friends of the administration and ensure success in the ensuing election.” 56 Citizens, “friendly to the present administration,” in Cooper County met and recommended their “distinguished fellow-citizen,” Robert W. Wells, to represent Missouri in Congress. 57

Ashley, in a letter to the Callaway County correspondence committee and later in a letter to the people of Missouri, announced that he favored rechartering the Bank. He assured the citizens that “nothing is so perfect that it may not be

55 St. Louis Beacon, 1 September 1831. See also a letter from William H. Ashley to the citizens of Missouri in ibid., 6 October 1831, wherein the five foot distance was attributed to Biddle’s nearsightedness.

56 Ibid., 8 September 1831.

57 Ibid., 22 September 1831.
made better," and expressed his willingness, if elected, to "adopt and advocate any modification of the charter [of the Bank] which may be contemplated to guard more effectually against the dangers anticipated from its operation, and which may not impair its usefulness." He acknowledged his association with the Bank as a director of the St. Louis Branch, but stressed that he did not own any Bank stock.58

Robert W. Wells, in a circular to his "Fellow Citizens of the State of Missouri," published at "their request" his views on certain political issues stating that he had "emphatically, nothing to conceal on political subjects" and that in order to "prevent all unfairness and all suspicion of double dealing," he would state his "political views and opinions publicly."59 At no time in the circular did he comment, however, upon his views on the Bank of the United States.

Pettis had been a consistent Jacksonian who was an outspoken critic of the Bank. Those opposed to the recharter of the Bank of the United States raised the specter of the ugly possibility of Pettis's murder by advocates of the Bank in order to silence his opposition. They declared that had the fight led to Pettis's death or had the duel taken place immediately before the election, Barton would have almost

58Ibid.; ibid., 6 October 1831.
59Ibid., 6 October 1831.
certainly been elected. The Missouri Republican attributed such accounts to James H. Birch, editor of the Western Monitor and "alternately, the friend and tool of Thomas H. Benton." Birch was quoted as having said that Pettis "will have died in vain if a Bank-man is elected in his place," and further that Pettis "never ceased to ascribe the controversy into which he was forced . . . to the desire . . . to elect in his place, a friend and supporter of this man-destroying institution." The editors of the Missouri Republican denounced such reports as emanating "from a heart blackened by moral and political turpitude."60 This same thought appeared again in 1833, when preparations were in the making for Pettis's monument. The St. Louis Free Press begged the committee to have it read: "Dedicated to the memory of the Hon. Spencer Pettis, martyred by the United States Bank Faction in St. Louis, Mo."61

The convention met in Columbia, Missouri, on 3 October 1831, to nominate a candidate for the Democratic Republican Party. R. W. Wells, and William H. Ashley were among those nominated. After five ballots the delegates "arrived at a compromise" and selected R. W. Wells as the candidate of the convention to represent Missouri in the United States Congress. Wells, they stated, was "by virtue of the democratic

60 Missouri Republican, 20 September 1831.
61 St. Louis Free Press, 14 March 1833.
principles" which they profess, "against re-chartering" the Bank, "with any of its present essential defects." The convention ultimately approved its decision by unanimous vote. 62

Although the *Beacon* carried both Wells and Ashley in the column where it ordinarily carried endorsements, Ashley's name was placed in the favored top position. The *Beacon's* support for Ashley is further implied by the insertion of the non-committal editorial comment that "we have no reply to make to 'A Subscriber,' who asks, whether it is true that we have 'refused to insert communications in favor of Mr. R. W. Wells, and against the re-chartering of the U. S. Bank.'" Ashley explained to the *Beacon's* readers that he had decided to remain in the race without the support of the convention because he had promised a number of citizens that he would be a candidate prior to the convening of the convention. 63

The Bank issue was the focal point of the ensuing election. The *Beacon* published Benton's speech before "a very large and respectable body of citizens" concerning the legality of most of the bills or drafts of the Bank of the United States in circulation at that time. Benton claimed that their issuance exceeded the powers granted to the Bank.

62 *St. Louis Beacon*, 13 October 1831.
63 Ibid.; Ibid., 6 October 1831.
by its charter. He warned of "a great struggle" impending between the Bank and the people. 64

Wells followed Benton on the platform, stating that the upcoming election was not just between the candidates but "was a contest about principles" which affected every citizen, the nation and its posterity. The question of utmost importance, for Wells, was rechartering of the Bank. Jackson, "aware of the danger to the liberties of the people," according to Wells, had made the decision against rechartering the Bank in order to "save the country." After recounting the growing abuses of the bank, Wells warned of the Bank's influence over elections. The Bank could, by placing a million dollars into a congressional district at election time, and then applying pressure to its borrowers at the polls, influence the result. 65

The election date set by the governor was 31 October 1831. The returns came in slowly. The Beacon projected a victory for Ashley. At the same time editor Keemle announced that an "impaired and declining state of health" induced him at that time to offer the Beacon for sale not wanting "to place it in the care of any other person." Keemle's editorial on 10 November 1831, with the returns still pointing toward a victory for Ashley, stated that the vote was really based on

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64 Ibid., 20 October 1831.
65 Ibid.
the support of the American System and not over the Bank issue. Keemle assured his readers that Ashley would not do anything "to clog the wheels of the administration." In order to counteract statements in the opposition press that the Beacon was for sale "for the want of patronage," Keemle reiterated his declining health and urged anyone who was seriously interested in purchasing the Beacon to give him an opportunity to prove the paper's stability. 66

The vote was close. It teetered first to Ashley then to Wells and finally back to Ashley. When Wells appeared in the lead there was a renewed attack upon the Bank in the Beacon. The Bank was referred to as "the great engine of the monarchical party for overthrowing the liberties of America." The Beacon also carried Benton's reply to the question, could he vote for renewing the Bank's charter with modifications? He considered "all the proposed modifications as nothing." He further noted that he looked "upon the Bank itself as an inadmissible institution in a republic, or even in a limited monarchy." Furthermore, he declared it to be hostile to the American form of government, one which constantly interferes with "the freedom of the Press, and the freedom of Elections." 67

The final returns, however, did not disappoint the Bank's

66 Ibid.; ibid., 3 November 1831; ibid., 10 November 1831.
67 Ibid., 17 November 1831.
supporters. Out of over 25,000 eligible voters in Missouri, only 9,800 had cast their ballots; Ashley had won.68

The Bank had won its first major state electoral victory in Missouri. The Missouri Republican reprinted an article, following Ashley's victory, which they called "very sensible" from the Missouri Intelligencer of Callaway County in which the Jackson party was purported to have "descended the 'tomb of the Capulets.'" Even Colonel Benton, it continued, "cannot reanimate it."69 The Beacon, upon which the rural Jacksonian voters depended for their cue, had supported Ashley. Most of the rural counties either gave a majority to Ashley or turned out few voters. The Beacon's editorial policy, while supporting Ashley, had continued to publish reports unfavorable to the Bank by Benton and Wells. Keemle had gambled; he had played both sides of the issue until the voters had returned Ashley. The Beacon then cast its lot with the Bank. On 8 December 1831, the Beacon published the report of the Circuit Court of the United States which ruled that bank drafts drawn on a Branch Bank were legal for the very "act of establishing a Branch is per se the creation of an agency," and therefore "all acts and transactions of the officers of the Branches," even though there was no written authority, were recognized as performed by

68 Ibid., 24 November 1831; ibid., 8 December 1831.
69 Missouri Republican, 22 November 1831.
the agent of the parent Bank. On 22 December 1831, the Beacon copied an article from the National Intelligencer which showed the tremendous effect of the Bank of the United States in assisting the western states by providing capital, which "was most needed, yet unattainable but by the aid which has been afforded by the Bank." The Intelligencer, therefore, regarded the opposition of the West to the Bank as "a marvel." This article also quoted figures from the Boston Transcript which showed the debtors of eight states, four of which were western, owing but one-third of a million dollars in Bank loans. Would the curtailment of this money not cause "great distress and great reverses, in those states?"70

The 29 December 1831 Beacon carried the president's third annual message of 6 December 1831. Jackson, in an election year, and one in which the Bank was regarded as a strong influence against him, limited his comments on the Bank. He briefly remarked that since he had previously directed the attention of Congress to the Bank in order that the issue might in time be "disposed of in a manner best calculated to promote the ends of the Constitution and subserve the public interest," he now left it to "the investigation of an enlightened people and their representatives." The Beacon

70St. Louis Beacon, 8 December 1831; ibid., 22 December 1831.
was delighted not only with the president's message but also by the report of the secretary of the treasury, Louis McLane. The Beacon regarded both messages as indicating that the president's cabinet was a unit. For the editor of the Beacon, the secretary's report settled both the question of the constitutionality of the Bank of the United States and the expediency of rechartering it. The Bank thus became the instrument through which the government would be able to extinguish the national debt by the time provided for in the report. Moreover, the president appeared to concur with the secretary in submitting the question to Congress for its decision. Not only was the Beacon pleased with these two reports; but it rejoiced that Missouri's representative, William Ashley was regarded as entertaining "opinions corresponding so exactly with those expressed by the President and the Secretary." 71

The affirmation that the president and McLane were in agreement on the Bank question is not borne out by Jackson's correspondence. Writing to Martin Van Buren on 6 December 1831, to enclose his message, Jackson alluded to Secretary McLane's report. "It is an honest difference of opinion," Jackson wrote, "and in his report he acts fairly, by leaving me free and uncommitted." 72

71 Ibid., 29 December 1831.
72 Jackson to Van Buren, 6 December 1831, Andrew Jackson, Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, ed. John Spencer Bassett,
Others, besides the *Beacon*, were confused by McLane's report. In a letter replying to the concerns of John Randolph of Roanoke, Jackson reiterated that he had not changed his views on the Bank. McLane's report was his own, Jackson emphasized, made "in conformity with his sense of a positive duty which he did not feel at liberty to disregard and which it would have been unbecoming in me to controul [sic]." McLane's report had suggested modifying the Bank in order to eliminate Jackson's objections. Jackson himself did not feel in any way committed to support McLane's views on rechartering the Bank. Perhaps, unless one is to regard Jackson as guilty of substantial duplicity, the president may not have been aware of the degree of personal warmth between his secretary of the treasury and the president of the Bank of the United States. A memorandum written by Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank, dated 19 October 1831, following a visit from McLane shows the secretary most favorable to recharter. The president would, in his forthcoming message, McLane said, leave the Bank issue with the representatives of the people since he had formerly brought the matter to the attention of the Congress. McLane would then recommend


73 Jackson to Randolph, 22 December 1831, ibid., p. 387.
renewal. He hoped to do so in such a way "that even Mr. Benton would not attack it."\(^74\)

The *Beacon* had come full circle; it could now completely support the rechartering of the Bank of the United States. Even though some communications were received and published which "were not in unison with the course which the *Beacon* holds on the subject of the United States Bank," the editors of the *Beacon*, "as the conductors of a public press," printed them "believing that the people will see their fallacy, and act accordingly."\(^75\) The battle against the *Missouri Republican* also appeared over; the two papers now, it seemed, helped each other. The *Beacon* reported that it was with "the aid of our contemporary of the Republican" that it was enabled to publish the president's message in the issue of 29 December 1831.\(^76\) The *Beacon*'s conciliatory nature continued into the new year. An editorial of 19 January 1832 commended the work of Missouri's two senators and representative.\(^77\)

A notice in the *Beacon* on 23 February 1832 about a change of editors for the *St. Louis Times* referred to the *Times* as

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\(^75\) *St. Louis Beacon*, 29 December 1831.

\(^76\) Ibid. See also *Missouri Republican*, 5 May 1829, where an angry editor wrote: "we can publish nothing which is not seized upon [by the *Beacon*] as a cause of quarrel."

\(^77\) *St. Louis Beacon*, 19 January 1832.
"this respectable journal." The notice continued that although the editors "differ in some respects," the Beacon would never cease to entertain for them sentiments of friendship and profound respect. . . ."78 This indeed represented a change for the Beacon, which had been successfully sued for libel by the Times.

The altered editorial policy of the Beacon was made emphatically clear in the issue of 1 March 1832. A subscriber requested not the Beacon itself but the Western Monitor to reprint an article that had been published in the Beacon during the previous year "before it was 'turned over to the Bank'." The Beacon's editor commented that this article had originally been published "at the request of a subscriber." He went on to emphasize his personal belief that the Bank of the United States was constitutional, useful, and indispensable. The Beacon shall, therefore, he insisted, "continue to give the institution our most cordial and unwavering support."

As debate in both Houses of Congress over rechartering the Bank progressed, the Beacon published excerpts from the proceedings and urged its readers to give "most careful consideration" to the debates. The facts issuing from these debates, the Beacon editorialized, have been "sufficient to convince any unprejudiced mind" of the necessity of having a Bank, that the present

78 Ibid., 23 February 1832.
Bank is better than any predecessor, and that there is "an absolute necessity for rechartering the Bank." The prosperity of the West, the paper claimed, was the result of the Bank loans; its withdrawal would assuredly spell doom. With Benton's views on the Bank, the Beacon would have to differ, but it would "with pleasure publish the reasons and arguments" which he put forward.79

The Beacon now claimed that the Bank question was not a political issue. It urged readers not to test the issue "on party grounds, but on its own intrinsic merits, as an independent and open question." The majority and minority reports in Congress on the Bank question followed in May and early June. The Beacon editorial on 14 June 1832 noted that all that now appeared left for the opponents to hope for was a presidential veto, which it believed the president would not present. After all, if Congress passed the bill, it ought "to be received as the deliberate act of the majority of the people of this country." It expected the president to sign the bill when presented. Benton, the Beacon noted on 21 June 1832, had submitted to the Senate a plan whereby there would be three banks instead of one. The Beacon stated that it had "neither time nor inclination to discuss the merits of this scheme, (if it has any)." The editor

79Ibid., 1 March 1832; ibid., 22 March 1832.
chastized those who presented such "speculative schemes" as only seeking "to keep up the excitement (already too great)" on the Bank question.80

The president received the Bank bill on 4 July 1832 and returned it to the Senate with his veto on 10 July 1832. The Beacon carried the president's veto message on 26 July 1832. The editorial in that issue stated that the Beacon had supported the rechartering of the Bank and that the veto message had given them "no reason to change that opinion."81

In mid-September 1832, Keemle announced in his editorial column that for "the last nine months" all editorial policy had been relinquished into other hands due to "circumstances beyond his control." He was now resuming the editorial responsibility, and he thanked his readers for the "very liberal patronage" which his paper had received during his entire tenure as proprietor and publisher and begged their understanding if there appeared "any seeming inconsistencies" in the Beacon. Any such inconsistencies, he stated, were because he had been publisher but not editor during that time. The Beacon denied the charge that Ashley had been "writing under the Editorial head of this paper," though Keemle did not say who had been.82 The Missouri Republican had noted an

80 Ibid., 10 May 1832; ibid., 14 June 1832; ibid., 21 June 1832.
81 Ibid., 26 July 1832.
82 Ibid., 13 September 1832; ibid., 20 September 1832.
editorial change in the *Beacon* almost a year earlier. In a supposed experiment, a "whole hog" Jacksonian was first given an old issue of the *Beacon*, full of "the terrible alarms" which it habitually printed, and then he was given a later issue that contained "the favorable prospects" for Ashley's election. The Jacksonian is reputed to have exclaimed, "*if this is the Beacon it is damnably Twisted!*" The editors of the *Missouri Republican* agreed.\(^3\) As the time grew nearer for the presidential election, the *Beacon* advocated Jackson's reelection but reserved the right to differ with him on occasion.\(^4\)

By 8 November the *Beacon* informed its readers that St. Louis County and St. Charles County voters had both given a majority to the Clay ticket. The veto message was one of the factors attributed to Jackson's defeat in those counties. The *Beacon* commented, however, that it had always supported Jackson and had fearlessly tried to warn of measures which it felt "would injure the President in the estimation of his countrymen." Within a week, the *Beacon* although not specifically advocating a change, gave reasons that had been submitted against Benton's reelection "such as the necessity for rotation in office--a favorite maxim with President Jackson." By 22 November, the *Beacon* announced Jackson's

\(^3\)*Missouri Republican*, 11 October 1831.

\(^4\)*St. Louis Beacon*, 4 October 1832.
reelection which "we long expected," even though his majorities were less in some states "owing to causes which we have averted to more than once."  

Charles Keemle announced on 29 November, that with that issue of the Beacon "his responsibility, as Editor, ceases" for the Beacon was to pass into other hands.  

An issue appeared on 6 December, but credit for its issuance remained anonymous. That the Beacon expired in 1832 while both Benton and Jackson still held office by vote of the people and while the Bank issue was still unsettled would indicate either a change in editorial policy on the part of the paper or a Jackson-Benton decision that such a paper was no longer needed. After losing the libel suit and with the death of Pettis and subsequent election of a Bank man whose election the Beacon had supported, it is no wonder that "the senior editor" put his support in a journal whose reputation was clean and whose support for his views was solid. This paper was the Free Press. It was designated the official paper in 1833, receiving henceforth the government patronage including the prize plum--publication of the laws.

85 Ibid., 8 November 1832; ibid., 15 November 1832; ibid., 22 November 1832.
86 Ibid., 29 November 1832.
87 Chambers, Old Bullion Benton, p. 187, erred in stating that the reversal of the Beacon's position had left Benton without newspaper support in St. Louis.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Anyone who has examined that recent body of literature known as United States government documents and has seen, for example, the large and elaborate volumes on quaint minutia published with government funds could readily wonder to what extent earlier periods of American history had witnessed a questionable use of public funds for printing. Given its historic association with the spoils system, the Jacksonian period of American history seems to provide an especially appropriate test situation. After making an extensive examination of personal correspondence, autobiographies, national newspapers, selected local newspapers, executive and congressional sources of the period 1829 to 1837 and scanning many of these same sources for the years before and immediately after Jackson's term as president, it is possible to confirm a more extensive use and abuse of public funds in the granting of government printing patronage than had originally been anticipated.

Printing patronage had been made available to the executive branch of the United States government since the first congressional session in 1789 through the appropriation of departmental contingency funds and through special
appropriations providing for implementation of various laws and directives. Congressional failure to provide specific guidelines left each administration to its own discretion. What began as practical laws to meet the ordinary requirements of the various departments established the precedent. By 1829 Jackson found ample justification for continuing the tradition and, under the guise of reform, made widespread transfers of this more than ample printing patronage to his party loyalists. This study has been able to show that although Jackson was the first president to use printing patronage to establish a newspaper, the Washington Globe, he was not the first member of the executive branch to use printing patronage to support a newspaper. Thomas Jefferson, secretary of state under George Washington, utilized State Department patronage to support the National Gazette in 1791; and, at the same time, Alexander Hamilton utilized Treasury Department patronage to support the Gazette of the United States. Jackson, however, had established the Globe "out of nothing." Moreover, he had gone one step further; he had issued a directive on behalf of the Globe which encouraged members of his cabinet to give the Globe their printing patronage.

Jackson has been credited with an extensive number of removals from office for party reasons as well as with providing appointments and dispersing government funds under his control for the benefit of party loyalists. This study reveals, however, that congressional printing funds were far more extensive than executive printing funds. Congressional funds were utilized to award munificent contracts to the opposition press. Congress voted money, for example, for the documentary history of the Revolution with estimates for completion ranging from $500,000 to $4,000,000. Congress also authorized thousands of dollars to favored editors for printing many cumulative editions of laws, state papers, and land documents. Jackson, while utilizing to the fullest the printing patronage available to him from the executive contingency funds to support his press, could not vote himself new funds to support his press, could not vote himself new funds to support his press.

See also, for example, U.S., Congress, "An Act making appropriations for the civil and diplomatic expenses of Government for the year eighteen hundred and thirty-seven," Appendix to the Register of Debates, 24th Cong., 2d sess., 1837, 13, pt. 2: 16, 21: "For the expenses of the distribution in boxes, and by the ordinary modes of transportation, of the compilation of the State Papers printed by Gales and Seaton, as directed by the joint resolution of the tenth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-two, to the several States, Territories, colleges, and athenaeums of the United States, one thousand five hundred dollars; For the purchase of nineteen copies of the American State Papers, printed by Gales and Seaton, pursuant to the resolution of the Senate of the first day of March instant, four thousand five hundred and eighty-eight dollars and fifty cents; For two hundred and forty-four copies of the Debates of the First Congress, and of the Register of Debates to the end of the present Congress, as published by Gales and Seaton, to be distributed to the members of the present House, fifteen thousand five hundred dollars. . . ."
sources of money. Furthermore, it was a select committee of
the Congress which suggested in 1833 that the laws of the
United States be published in every newspaper in the country.
It was Isaac Hill, senator from New Hampshire, former news-
paper editor, and loyal Jackson supporter in a plea for
reform, on the other hand, who accused his fellow senators
of providing "gentlemen printers" with "munificent contracts"
to furnish books for their private libraries "at the expense
of the public treasury." 3

Congress, with little opposition from its members, also
gave large printing jobs to the House and Senate printers
during the time when Congress was not in session. These
printers were known to "rummage the files of Congress" looking
for a large document to keep them occupied and "to give them
great profits." 4 Isaac Hill reported on the growth of the
Senate's printing bill of twenty fold and of the House's
printing bill of ten fold between 1817 to 1835.

Jackson's administration was not the first to transfer
the publication of the laws from one newspaper to another.
John Quincy Adams had transferred the printing of the laws,
for example, from the Philadelphia Democratic Press to the
Franklin Gazette. Jackson, however, consistently rewarded

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3 U.S., Congress, Senate, Register of Debates, 22d Cong., 1st sess., 1832, 8, pt. 1: 531-32.
his faithful editors throughout the country by arranging for them to publish the laws. Jackson went much further, however, than his predecessors. Not only was he more thorough in granting printing patronage, but he gave key editors who had supported him like Amos Kendall, editor of the Louisville, Kentucky, Argus, a position as fourth auditor in the Treasury Department and Nathaniel Green, editor of the Boston Statesman, a position as postmaster at Boston. The National Intelligencer summed up the situation well; it lamented that the editors were no longer to be subsidized but rather were to be "metamorphosed, by the dozen, into Comptrollers, Auditors, Surveyors, and Postmasters."\(^5\)

Jackson, from time to time, appeared to abuse the printing patronage under the control of his administration. A report, for example, which compared an equal amount of advertising by the Globe and the National Intelligencer showed the Globe charged over three times as much as the Intelligencer. Even Thomas Hart Benton, reflecting on his career in politics, admitted that "Large advertisements" published for long periods of time were found in newspapers with little or no circulation in order "to conciliate the support of the paper, or to sustain an efficient one."\(^6\) Jackson effectively combined, on

\(^5\)National Intelligencer, 15 May 1829.

\(^6\)Louisville [Kentucky] Focus quoted in Missouri Republican, 26 May 1829.
occasion, printing patronage. Printing patronage, for example, available to the Post Office Department was effectively used to reward the editor of the Louisville, Kentucky, Advertiser. He received a contract to print the forms for all the western post offices "from Pittsburg to Orleans, and from the Allegheny to the Rocky Mountains," instead of following the previous practice of distributing this patronage at the local level.7

The struggle for control of the press continued throughout Jackson's tenure as president. Some in Congress, in spite of cries of unconstitutional restriction upon a particular class of citizens, sought to prevent editors from being appointed to offices by the executive. In a significant effort to shift even further the balance of press patronage, some in Congress also suggested the transfer of the arrangements for the publication of the laws from the State Department to the clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives.

During the Jackson administration the press patronage of the executive branch of the federal government served as a counterbalance to the patronage of the wealthy, of the elite, and of the Congress for the established presses. In this sense the press patronage of Old Hickory's presidency through the Washington Globe at the national level and through such

cohorts as the *St. Louis Beacon* at the state and city levels enabled many of the farming and mechanic classes as well as some of the professional class to obtain readily the views, proposals, and actions of the Jackson administration. In this way Jacksonian press patronage also contributed to a more vigorous political debate and a better understanding of the issues involved by a broader segment of the American people.
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