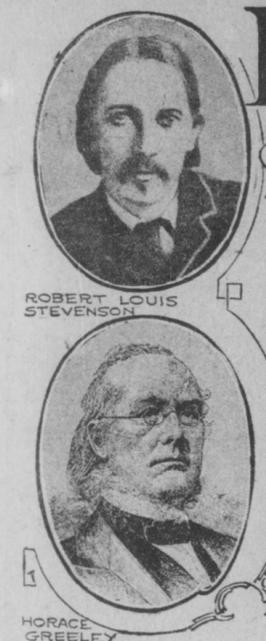


Printer Journalists in the DAYS OF GOLD

The Vast Growth and Change in Newspaperdom Of San Francisco Will Be Emphasized by The Convention of The International Typographical Union to Be Held in This City in August



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

NEWSPAPER making, whether it be in the editorial or the mechanical departments, has a fascination for the average person. The power of the press, the growth of printing facilities and the interest taken in the medium whereby thoughts are committed to paper and given to the reader, attract naturally, for the progress of latter days is closely associated with publicity.

California has a romantic history. The eyes of the world were riveted upon her gold days, and ever since writers and printers have clasped hands to give all the information they could about those stirring years.

Just think of the famous names that are linked with early Pacific coast history. Mark Twain did his newspaper work in Nevada and California, as well as in the Hawaiian Islands. Bret Harte, William Wright (Dan de Quille), Prentice Mulford, Dennis McCarthy, Joseph T. Goodman, Rollin M. Daggett, Judge Charles C. Goodwin, Judge T. H. Reardon, Sam Davis, S. E. Gillis and the brilliant writers who contributed to the Overland Monthly—all are names to be remembered.

Coming down through the years one recalls Henry George, Robert Louis Stevenson, Joaquin Miller, the visit of Horace Greeley, and the changes that have taken place during the transition from the old to the new era of men and conditions.

There was close association between the printers and writers of the gold days. In many instances they followed both vocations. Harmony of interests and the absence of typesetting machines, newspaper presses and the multiplicity of inventions that have revolutionized the printing industry, combined to draw men together in the business of writing words and printing them.

It was no uncommon event for the papers of 1849 and subsequent years to suspend publication until editors, reporters and printers returned from the mines. Each new discovery of gold was a magnet for the population. The records show that those connected with the fourth estate were not immune from the call.

In the early days pressrooms and composing rooms were usually blocks apart. The forms were locked up in the composing room with the old style wooden galleys driven home with a shooting stick and mallet, and then packed downstairs and carried to the pressroom on a specially constructed handcart. A flat press was always used to print the papers. It was years before the invention of the rotary and cylinder presses now so common.

There was a paper famine in the early fifties. It took six months for sailing vessels to come from New York around the Horn, or it cost a fortune for freight from New York across the isthmus. A vessel with a supply of printing paper was delayed. The Alta and other publications met the situation by issuing on the reverse side of wall-paper, on gray filtering paper and on yellow straw wrapping paper, with an occasional sheet of manila grade.

Proprietors accommodated themselves to conditions, and did not care so much for style as do the night editors of the present day, who make up the pages with that nicety necessary to get everything "just so." On one occasion George K. Fitch, part proprietor of the Bulletin, went to the foreman of the composing room and told him that he wanted a "head" set just as written without running over. Fitch had a reputation for knowing what he wanted and wanting it. The foreman tried every display type at his disposal, and was obliged to report that he could find nothing that would fit. "Well," said Fitch, "if you haven't got any type to fit, go to Palmer & Rey, around the corner, and get a font of type that will fit." The foreman did. Many are the stories that are told about Mark Twain. Before he became famous he had experiences he never forgot.

In August, 1858, the Pacific Union Printer was published by San Francisco typographical union No. 21. A copy of the issue of the following month was mailed to Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain), and the following characteristic reply was received: Hartford, October 13, 1858. My Dear Mr. Editor: Little World! Is he alive yet? And Steve Gillis? Well, he carries one back over a long stretch. How hard they tried to corrupt me, because I was young and trusting, but they failed—they failed signally. And they lived to be thankful that they had failed for, through observing me, and copying my ways, they insensibly learned to be different, and became what they are now. Their names bring up in my mind whole columns of reminiscences, but I can't indulge my impulse to put them on paper, for I am grown old and lazy, and besides am burdened with a mass of work which must be done and can not be avoided. So I will wish the Printer all success and prosperity, and betake me to less pleasant occupations than gossiping with old friends. And these same—may they be fortunate, and live long, and die lamented. It is my project. Truly yours, S. L. CLEMENS. The "Little World" referred to by



UNION PRINTERS' HOME, COLORADO SPRINGS



JOAQUIN MILLER



WELLS DRURY



CHAS. WARREN STODDARD



MARK TWAIN



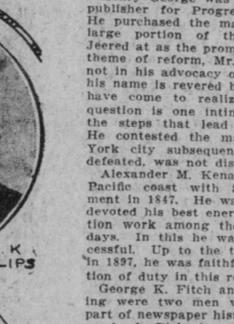
JAMES KING OF WILLIAM



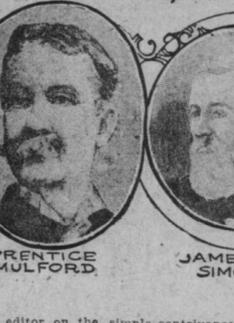
LORING PICKERING



ROBERT FERRAL



GEORGE K. FITCH



PRENTICE MULFORD



JAMES A. SIMONTON

Twain was L. P. Ward, a noted athlete in his younger days, and a member of the Olympic club. As a printer he acquired a name for himself. He held high offices in the various organizations of the typesetters, but his claim on public attention lay in the unconscious humor he displayed in setting the large headings that appear in metropolitan papers. Some of these "slipped-through," as they say in newspaperdom, and were quoted from one end of the land to the other. It became necessary to carefully watch the product of his hands, even at the expense of general mirth. L. P. Ward, fired with ambition, started out on a lecture tour through the smaller cities of California and Nevada. During this year—March, 1867—he published his first book, "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras," a collection of his best fugitive sketches, and this immediately aroused public attention, not only in America, but also in England. His subsequent successful career is known of all men.

The "old timers" are proud of the visit of Horace Greeley to the west. He arrived in San Francisco on August 12, 1859, and was given an ovation. This was due to the fact that he had gone through the Yosemite and big tree regions on horseback and was tired out. The committee on arrangements met him at Benicia and accompanied him to San Francisco. He addressed a meeting on the subject "Pacific Railroad and Its Necessity." He also spoke to a large gathering of mechanics.

On August 22 Greeley addressed the printers' union. J. K. Phillips presided. The event was noteworthy. The speaker of the evening was the first president of New York typographical union. He believed in his theme, and was ever an earnest trade unionist. His position later in American life, when he became a famous editor, a candidate for the presidency, and one of the most potent of those who molded public opinion, recalled his visit to the Pacific coast, and many an interesting reminiscence is told in connection therewith.

J. K. Phillips, who was chairman of the committee that welcomed Horace Greeley, is still an active member of San Francisco typographical union. He is speeding along to his ninetieth year, is recognized as the oldest trade unionist in the west, and it is doubtful whether his record has a peer in the land. For over 60 years Phillips has set type and issued papers of all kinds. Today he follows the trade and his mind is alert and clear. He proclaims the doctrine that man need not die if he lives as he should. Phillips is doing his best to practice that which he preaches. His kindly face is seen frequently at meetings called to discuss the problems of the day, and from his wealth of recollections have come many an inspiration to younger men. Especially is the labor movement indebted to him for services rendered, for during the last two generations "J. K." (as he is usually called) never shirked the task ahead.

James Townsend was a thorough printer and journalist. He spent 10 years in Chapattepec, Mex., and after the surrender of that place to the American troops he came up to Monterey and then to Yerba Buena (as San Francisco was once called). Townsend was a well preserved man of 58 at the time, and possessed an excellent imagination. One of his stories was that when he landed in Yerba Buena he could find no milk for his 11 months' old babe. He ran across a Mexican woman who had a tubful of dirkin butter that had come around the Horn and which she had got from some whaler's stores. To oblige Mr. Townsend, she took the butter, washed the salt out of it, and churned it backwards until it turned into the richest of cream. The baby thrived.

With a partner, Mr. Townsend decided to start a paper at Antioch. They succeeded, but financially it was a failure. He was an "agate newspaper" in a long primer town. After returning to San Francisco Townsend left for Reno, where he was caught in a snowdrift and died. His name is treasured among those who were in the newspaper business in the days "when the water came up to Montgomery street."

Wells Drury, now the prosperous secretary of the Berkeley chamber of commerce, was a printer-writer of charm, and still is, for the matter of that. He used to delight in contributing reminiscences of pioneer days, and many a little bit of history of the "fourth estate" came from his pen. General John McComb was first an expert printer, and then a writer of ability. Besides these attributes, he was a citizen who left his mark on California's history. He was warden of both San Quentin and Folsom penitentiaries for many years secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and served with credit as an officer of the state militia. General McComb graduated from the printer's case on the Alta, the leading paper of early days, to part ownership of that journal. He traveled the steps frequently taken—first to the foreman of the composing room, then to the reporter's desk, and finally to the higher ranks of the ladder.

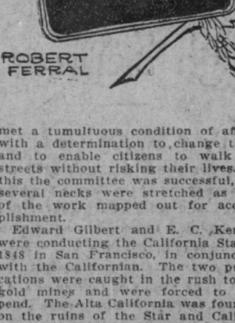
The name of James King of William is interwoven with the records of the Pacific coast. His assassination in May, 1865, while editing the Bulletin in a fearless manner and rebuking the evil doers of those days, aroused the people to frenzy. Within a few hours of the firing that ended King's life, the vigilance committee was formed. It met a tumultuous condition of affairs with a determination to change them, and to enable citizens to walk the streets without risking their lives. In this the committee was successful, and several necks were stretched as part of the work mapped out for accomplishment.

Edward Gilbert and E. C. Kemble were conducting the California Star in 1848 in San Francisco. In conjunction with the California. The two publications were caught in the rush to the gold mines and were forced to suspend. The Alta California was founded on the ruins of the Star and Californian and it had a lively career for a time.

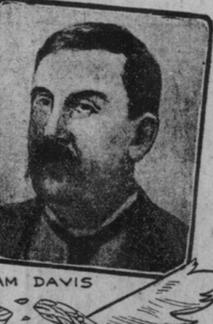
In 1852 the Alta printed an editorial severely censuring Governor Bigler. James W. Denver, a close personal friend of the governor, became incensed at the publication, and wrote to Gilbert, asking who was responsible for the editorial. The editor replied that he was, and a challenge followed. The duel was fought with rifles at Oak Grove, Sacramento county. Gilbert was killed. Denver left the state and went to Kansas, where he became governor. This duel was not the only one fought in connection with the editorial utterances of the Alta. Charles A. Washburn was the editor after Edward Gilbert. He espoused the cause of David C. Broderick, Benjamin F. Washburn, editor of the Times and Transcript, did not like something Ed. Washburn wrote, and he issued a challenge. There was a prompt acceptance. Washburn was wounded in the shoulder, but recovered, and afterward was appointed minister to Paraguay. Judge Robert Ferral, known high



SAM DAVIS



HENRY GEORGE



GENERAL J. S. M'COMB

and low as "Bob," was editor on the Sacramento Reporter in 1870. A big strike of printers took place that year in both San Francisco and Sacramento. Editor Ferral stood by the typesetters loyally, and they have never forgotten his aid. He fought the proposal to reduce wages, and did it with all his energy. Today he is practicing law in San Francisco, and still retains his old time interest in matters pertaining to the press.

Charles and M. H. de Young started the Dramatic Chronicle in 1845. On the staff at different times were Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Charles Warren Stoddard and Prentice Mulford. This galaxy of gifted writers has, perhaps, never been equaled on one paper. The Daily Chronicle followed the Dramatic Chronicle.

A name to conjure with is that of Henry George. The noted single taxer set type, and was a member of the printers' organization in this city. In 1874 he and William M. Hinton, a pioneer printer, started the Post as a co-operative publication.

Henry George was unable to find a publisher for Progress and Poverty. He purchased the material and set a large portion of the type himself. Jeered at as the promulgator of a new theme of reform, Mr. George faltered not in his advocacy of single tax, and his name is revered by thousands who have come to realize that the land question is one intimately related to the steps that lead to advancement. He contested the majority of New York city subsequently, and though defeated, was not disgraced.

Alexander M. Kenaday came to the Pacific coast with Stevenson's regiment in 1847. He was a printer, who devoted his best energies to organization work among the crafts of early days. In this he was eminently successful. Up to the time of his death in 1897, he was faithful to his conception of duty in this respect.

George K. Fitch and Loring Pickering were two men whose names are part of newspaper history in this western land. Pickering came to San Francisco in 1849. After conducting a general merchandise store he purchased an interest in the Placer Times, published in Sacramento. In June, 1851, the Times was consolidated with the Transcript, of which Fitch was part proprietor.

An old age pension is paid members who are approaching the serene and yellow leaf. They are not forgotten by their fellows, even though the world at large is not prone to remember services rendered.

A course of instruction is given men and youths in the intricacies of the printer's trade. Improvement of workmanship by giving needed tuition is a factor in making this great trade organization one of the leaders of its kind of the day and are now spending evening of life amid pleasant surroundings.

An arbitration contract covers the composing rooms of nearly all the large newspapers of the country. The old method of settling disputes has been changed. Recognition of organization on both sides is conceded to be the natural outcome of modern industrial conditions.

The printers of the west, with a knowledge of the legacy that comes out of past history, are striving to make the coming convention of the International Typographical Union the best that has been known. Committees are engaged in building for that purpose. The entertainment features will be of the western kind. Hospitality will reign supreme.

The finest piece of printing ever turned out on the Pacific coast will be the official souvenir of the fifty-seventh convention of the printers. Every branch of the art preservative will be covered. Special paper will be used instead of elaborate design. Expert printers, photo-engravers, pressmen and bookbinders have been engaged to do justice to the opportunity.

Writers of international renown have promised to contribute to the literary section. The outcome will be a revelation in workmanship, and a delight to the eye. Latter day printer-journalism has changed from olden times, and yet it is substantially the same. The evolution of the printing business, the powerful influence of the press, the special preparation that writers undergo for their life's work—all these are very different from the styles of "the days of gold." And yet the simplicity and force and strength have not been superseded to any extent. A review of the names on this page of the printer-journalists of bygone decades shows that to be true. Memory bridges the time. History tells the past. To those who were associated with the "fourth estate" in past stick and rule of the pioneers, Modern years California owes many a debt of gratitude.