



Missouri Press Association

The Missouri Press Association is credited with establishing the Missouri School of Journalism and the State Historical Society of Missouri.



In 1869, Norman J. Colman, second from right, suggested a School of Journalism.

Missouri's first newspaper was the Missouri Gazette in St. Louis in 1808. As the years passed and communities grew, more papers were started across the state.

Newspaper leaders first gathered in St. Louis in May 1867, and

organized what is known today as the Missouri Press Association. There were 38 newspapers represented; nearly 100 were there the next year.

Throughout its history, MPA members have recorded the history of Missouri, its growth, its government, industry, education, political and other interests.

In addition to its continuous work with publishers, the MPA is credited with establishing two of the state's major centers of learning and research: first, in 1898, the State Historical Society of Missouri, and second, in 1908, the Missouri School of Journalism. Both institutions are located on the University of Missouri campus in Columbia.

The State Historical Society's objectives include the "collection, preservation, exhibition and publication of materials for the study of history, especially the history

of this State and the Middle West."

During the first year, 171 newspapers contributed their copies regularly,

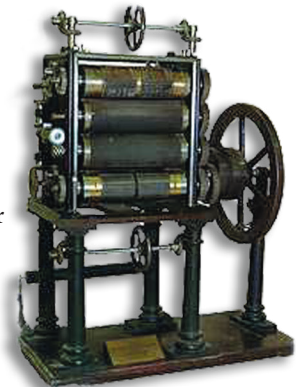
forming the foundation for today's collection of millions of pages of history. In addition to the newspaper foundation, there are microfilm files of U.S. Census reports for studying family histories. And there is a valuable art collection, along with manuscripts, maps and other historical items of value.

As early as 1869, the Missouri Press Association called for a "course of study in journalism" at the University of Missouri. Through the decades, members continued to stress the need for a formal study of newspapering.

It wasn't until 1908 that the School was underway, with a three-man faculty (all trained on newspapers) and a newspaper, the *University Missourian*. Walter Williams, who began his newspaper career while a teenager in Boonville, and who had risen to the MPA presidency, was named the first dean. During the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904, he organized the first World's Press Parliament. During the School's 50th anniversary in 1958-59, a World Press Congress was held in Columbia. Newsmen from around the world attended. President Harry Truman spoke at the banquet.

Today, the Missouri Press Association, with headquarters in Columbia, includes nearly 300 newspapers in the state. The MPA staff coordinates meetings and conventions of newspaper people, sells and places advertising in newspapers, and its Foundation offers scholarships and internships to college journalism students and promotes Newspaper In Education programs.

A Rotary Press invented by Thomas Nelson, Jr. in 1850, was one of the first Web Presses.



— Written by Dr. William H. Taft, Missouri Press Association Historian