II. THE ATTITUDE OF THE TERRITORIAL PRESS (1895-1901)

HAVING discussed the attitude of the political leaders of the latter part of the 1890's toward statehood, we shall now consider that of the newspapers of the territory. 1

In 1901, when the movement for statehood for New Mexico had assumed the proportions of a real boom, Governor Miguel A. Otero made a significant statement. In his report to the Secretary of the Interior, he said: “Prior to the advent of the railroads and the introduction and maintenance of the public school system it is an admitted fact that New Mexico was not prepared for statehood.” 2

Certainly the coming of the railroad promised to do much for the development of the frontier territory, nor did this escape observers at the time. In spite of thousands of traders who had followed the Santa Fe trail to the ancient city, New Mexico remained isolated for thirty years after the American occupation. In the early 1880's Geronimo and hostile Apaches were making destructive raids into the territory, yet Governor Lionel A. Sheldon in his reports for 1881 and 1883 made only a passing mention of these matters. 3 The thing which he featured in both reports was

1. The distinction between political leaders, newspaper men and ‘the people’ is made for convenience only. Naturally, there was considerable overlapping. Thus Max Frost and Thomas Hughes both belonged to the first group as well as the second, while Solomon Luna and J. Francisco Chaves were leaders in business as well as in politics.


3. Ibid. (1883), p. 551. No mention was made of the Indian raids in the report for 1881, and no report was made for 1882.
the progress made in the construction of railroads into the territory. Among other developments, he pointed out that by June, 1881, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe had been completed to Deming, where it connected with the Southern Pacific; and that the Atlantic and Pacific, beginning at Albuquerque, already extended for some two hundred miles toward the California coast. The establishment of better means of communication with the outside world, the governor claimed, had already brought about thirty thousand people into the territory. He added: "Along the lines of the railroad the old towns show considerable growth, and many new ones have been founded, some of which are quite large, and all have the appearance of activity and thrift."

If Sheldon had followed a practice, adopted by later governors, of listing the newspapers of the territory, he would probably have noted that their number had greatly increased almost over-night. While the figures do not inspire complete confidence, one recent historian says that nine weekly newspapers and one daily were being published in New Mexico in 1879. He continues: "In the short space of three years the number of publications increased to thirty-eight, consisting of six dailies, twenty-seven weeklies, two semi-weeklies, one monthly and one semi-monthly." In 1900 Governor Otero stated in his Report to the Secretary of the Interior that the territory had five dailies and fifty-eight weeklies. In 1910 there were only three dailies and eighty-six weeklies.

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4. Report of the Governor of New Mexico (1881), p. 987. The original plan was for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe to run from Deming to Guaymas, Mexico. This seaport on the Gulf of California is the center of a fruit and vegetable country. Later, a deal was made and the Southern Pacific went into Guaymas, while the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe bought the Atlantic and Pacific. The destination of the latter railroad was San Francisco, Los Angeles being unimportant in 1880.

5. Ibid. (1883), pp. 553, 557.


When one checks the figures given in the reports of the governors of the territory with those in Ayers, American Newspaper Annual, they do not agree. These discrepancies are due partly to carelessness, and partly to the fact that weekly papers sometimes sprang up in small frontier towns like Jonah’s famous gourd, and as quickly withered away. It took very little money or equipment to make a start. A few cases of type, a Washington hand press and a Gordon job press were sufficient. On the other hand, subscribers, advertisers, job printing, territorial contracts, and even subsidies were needed to keep going. One rather influential weekly was discontinued in the thirteenth year of its existence, because the newspaper office had been washed away in a flood! Many others—not fortunate enough to last so long—were practically still-born, while some lost their identity through being merged with rival sheets.

Col. Ralph E. Twitchell, who as an attorney for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Company, possessed much inside knowledge, had a rather contemptuous attitude toward the press. Speaking of the backwardness of culture under the American regime, he said: “The publication of a newspaper in English and Spanish accomplished little inasmuch as only a very small percentage of the people could read or write either language.” This was true to a large extent. However, whether it was read or not, the common type of newspaper in New Mexico in territorial days was the small town weekly. Yet the dailies, located in the more progressive centers of population along the railroads were to exercise an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. This was due, not only to their strategic location, but also to their abler leadership, their more frequent publication, larger circulation and better chances for continued support. While they, too, occasionally changed hands or politics, as a rule, they enjoyed longer life and greater con-
tinuity in editorial policy. This may be illustrated by a brief glance at the early newspaper history of Albuquerque.

But first a word regarding the origin of the town itself. This may well be quoted from a little booklet published anonymously by "George F. Albright, Printer, Albuquerque" in February, 1892. This unknown writer says:

The site of the present city of Albuquerque was staked out for a town in the summer of 1880. There had been a Mexican town of the same name on the banks of the Rio Grande, about a mile and a half distant, for some two hundred and fifty years, but the founders of the new town wisely determined that they would not attempt to engraft the new upon the old, consequently, upon the arrival of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railway at this point, passing about two miles distant from the old town, they purchased a tract of land adjoining the railway and laid out a new town according to modern methods, with broad streets running at right angles, but little dreaming that the village of which they were then laying the foundation was to become in the course of one decade, the commercial, financial, educational and railway centre of all that empire known as the southwest."

About 1880 New Albuquerque consisted of only a few tent saloons and dance halls in the vicinity of the railroad tracks, but newspaper men were willing to gamble on its winning out over the rival towns of Socorro, Las Vegas and Santa Fe. While six weeklies had been published in Old Albuquerque up to and including the year 1880, the first daily published there was the Golden Gate, established in that year by E. W. Deer, a Kentuckian. Deer died in the fall of the same year, and his paper was continued for a few months only. James A. Spradling, a newcomer from Las

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Crucés with some experience in newspaper work, carried it on after the death of Deer. In 1880 he organized a company and began to publish the *Albuquerque Morning Journal.*\(^{15}\) After conducting this paper in Old Albuquerque for a year or two, Spradling sold out and moved to Santa Fe. He and Deer passed quickly from the scene, but the years 1880 and 1881 witnessed the arrival of four men with newspaper experience—all directly from Missouri or Kansas—who were to be connected with one or more of the daily newspapers of the growing center on the Rio Grande for an average of about thirty years.

One of these newcomers who was to be an outstanding leader in the newspaper business in Albuquerque was Thomas Hughes, a native of famed Pike County, Missouri.\(^{16}\) Having picked up an education in printing offices in Kansas and Missouri, Hughes started his own paper at the age of nineteen. Arriving in Albuquerque in the spring of 1881, he bought the *Morning Journal* from Spradling and conducted it for one or two years. In 1886 he purchased the *Evening Citizen,* and he and W. T. McCreight managed it for twenty years. "They were a pair of hustlers, and put out the snappiest paper in the state," said an anonymous contributor to the *New Mexico State Tribune.*\(^{17}\) The *Citizen* claimed the largest circulation of any newspaper in New Mexico. Both Hughes and McCreight frequently visited various points in the territory to boost their paper. In 1902 the former traveled over the territory a good deal and the *Citizen* featured a series of articles describing the resources and educational facilities of the leading towns.\(^{18}\) Extra copies of these issues were sent to Delegate Rodey for distribution. Hughes was as closely identified with Republican

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17. *New Mexico State Tribune.* Sept. 24, 1932. The article, which appeared under "The Public Forum," was signed "The Pinhead." The *Tribune* for Sept. 25 contained a letter from W. T. McCreight, in which he stated that he agreed fully with statements made by this anonymous writer.
18. See the *Citizen* for February and March, 1902.
politics as he was with the newspaper business. A shrewd political leader, he served for four terms in the Territorial Council,\textsuperscript{19} where he gave able support to the founding of a state university in his home town.\textsuperscript{20} He was regarded as quite a character, as well as one of the best editorial writers in the Southwest.\textsuperscript{21}

Hughes' partner, W. T. McCreight, arrived in Albuquerque the year before the Pike County man, and was connected with the newspaper game there for about sixteen years with Hughes and then for twenty after the death of the latter.\textsuperscript{22} While in St. Louis to purchase a new printing outfit, Spradling had advertised for a printer to go to New Mexico. Thus on his return to the territory he was accompanied by this young Kentuckian, who had recently sold his interest in a newspaper in his native state for sixty dollars. A fast typesetter and an all-around newspaper man, McCreight possessed a wonderful memory and a likeable disposition. He promoted the first baseball club and the first typographical union, as well as a fire department for Albuquerque. He always celebrated his birthday by passing out cigars or other gifts for his associates.\textsuperscript{23} An old timer who did not quit the newspaper business until 1924,\textsuperscript{24} he was frequently called upon "to write a few words" about friends or acquaintances who had passed beyond.

\textsuperscript{19} Coan, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{20} W. T. McCreight in \textit{New Mexico State Tribune}, Feb. 28, 1928.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{History of New Mexico}, vol. 1, p. 472.
\textsuperscript{22} McCreight arrived in Old Albuquerque on Sept. 17, 1880; for some months in 1882 he was business manager and editor of the Socorro \textit{Sun}; he bought a half-interest in the Albuquerque \textit{Citizen} in 1888; retired from the newspaper business in 1924; died on April 26, 1937. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 471-473. See also his obituary in the \textit{Albuquerque Tribune}, April 27, 1937, as well as the \textit{Albuquerque Morning Journal}, July 7, 1933, \textit{New Mexico State Tribune}, Sept. 24, 1932, and the McCreight Papers in the University of New Mexico Library. For a convenient resume of much of this material, see Goff, Harold R., "History of the Daily Newspapers in Albuquerque," an unpublished paper in the University of New Mexico Library.
\textsuperscript{23} Albuquerque Evening \textit{Journal}, Aug. 4, 1933.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{History of New Mexico}, vol. I, p. 473, says: "McCreight is probably the oldest American printer from the states, not in age, but in actual service, in the southwest." This statement appeared in print in 1907. McCreight continued in the newspaper business for seventeen years after this.
W. S. Burke was a veteran of the Civil War who came to Albuquerque in 1881 or a little later. He never attended school in his life, but learned the printer's trade in West Virginia and practiced it in Iowa and Kansas. Though handicapped by poor health, he worked as an editorial writer for the *Journal* and other papers. Taking his cue from the policies of the paper for which he was working, he made a skillful use of both satire and scripture. A friend of A. A. Grant, the railroad contractor who was one of the founders of the modern city of Albuquerque, Burke's chief aim was to boost the climate and other resources of his adopted home. His enthusiasm was not even dampened by the spring sand storms, which he said clarified the atmosphere. Since he was self-educated, it is interesting to note that he founded the school system of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. It is also of interest that his native state was Pennsylvania—a commonwealth which was to contribute generously both in men and capital to the fortunes of New Mexico. Whether this pioneer editor in the distant territory had anything to do with starting the migration of sons of the keystone state along the Santa Fe trail must, however, be left to conjecture. Time was to show, however, that for one reason or another, leading politicians of Pennsylvania were to work mightily for the admission of New Mexico to the union as a state.

John G. Albright was an Ohio man of German ancestry who migrated to Kansas in 1870. Having acquired some newspaper experience there, he went to New Mexico ten years later and started the *Santa Fe Evening Journal*. Eighteen months later he moved his press in a wagon drawn by two oxen to the new town of Albuquerque. Though he had difficulty in finding a place to spend the first night, there being no hotel in the village just springing up by the railroad, he was soon publishing the *Albuquerque Evening Democrat*. Later he bought out the *Morning Journal* and another rival paper and combined them into the *Journal-
Albright sold this paper to a stock company headed by A. A. Grant in the fall of 1886 and quit newspaper work for five years. Later, however, he became the publisher of the New Mexico State Democrat. A Democrat for years, Albright finally turned Republican in disgust when Woodrow Wilson was nominated over Judson Harmon, favorite son of the “colonel’s” native state. “Both as a newspaper man and as an individual citizen,” says one historian of New Mexico, “no one has ever contributed more loyally to the progress of Albuquerque than Mr. Albright.” He and his associates fought in determined fashion to make Albuquerque, instead of Socorro the metropolis of New Mexico.

Newspaper men have the reputation of being great wanderers, but it is evident from the facts given above that during the last thirty years of the territorial period the daily newspapers of Albuquerque were being conducted by professional newspaper men who regarded New Mexico as a permanent home. While no other town in the territory could quite match these facts, there were a number of other men in New Mexico who were connected with the newspaper business over a period of years during the course of the statehood fight. Under these circumstances it was natural that the territorial press should take a very active part in the movement. Not just to fill up space, or because as the least inaudible members of society “the gentlemen of the press” are naturally drawn into any agitation. But rather because the men who owned the papers and wrote the editorials were themselves American citizens who felt that they were being unjustly robbed of the full rights of citizenship which each of them had enjoyed prior to taking up his home in a territory. They resented being ruled like a conquered province by carpetbaggers. They looked forward to statehood as the dawn of a better day. Doubtless they also thought of it in terms of a substantial increase in population, greater prosperity and larger newspaper circulation.

27. Ibid., p. 286.
However, one must not think that the newspaper men acted solely or even chiefly on their own initiative. As a matter of fact, the press in New Mexico during territorial days was, as a rule subsidized directly or indirectly by corporations—principally railroads and their affiliates—and by political leaders and a few others who had special interests in legislation and in territorial or local affairs. Few, if any, of the newspapers made their expenses. Most of them did job printing, and the awarding of printing contracts by territorial and county officials greatly affected political alignments, and may be considered in the light of subsidies. Passes issued by the railroads were highly prized by editors and publishers, and the railroads were quite liberal in distributing them among the members of the press.

The greatest influence over the press was exercised by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Company, whose chief representative in New Mexico for twenty-five years was Henry L. Waldo of Las Vegas. The son of a Missourian, who had been a freighter and trader over the Santa Fe trail as early as 1829, Waldo soon gave up his father's occupation to study law. His success in this profession is indicated by his appointment by President Grant as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New Mexico in 1876. A few years after the railroad entered the territory, Waldo became the chief counselor for the corporation in all of its business relations in New Mexico. He was a likeable man who combined great integrity, a keen legal mind, vision, and real concern for the prosperity of the section which his railroad served. Although he was a Democrat, he usually went along with the Republicans. While never a member of the territorial legislature, his influence in that body and with the authorities was very far-reaching. With the assistance of able lieutenants who stood close to the territorial administrations and who were on the inside of many maneuvers to control the legislature, he protected corporate interests from "demagogues and agitators." As

he was at the same time sympathetic with the people of the territory, his friends felt that he served two masters, and did it well.

Only tentative conclusions may be stated regarding the attitude of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe toward statehood. Railroads are naturally interested in the development of the region which they serve. Frank Hodder showed some years ago that plans for a railroad to the Pacific coast were behind the bill which Stephen A. Douglass forced through Congress in 1854 to organize the territories of Kansas and Nebraska. We shall see later that the promoters of the New Mexico Central Railroad pushed strongly for the admission of New Mexico as a state during the opening years of the twentieth century. Furthermore, Waldo was such an outstanding man that it was often predicted that he would be a United States senator when statehood came. However, it is said that the Santa Fe was opposed to statehood in 1902, and that this was told to Beveridge when he visited the Southwest in that year. As we shall see, the railroads and large mining corporations fought the joint admission of Arizona and New Mexico in 1906. Since the Santa Fe was the largest taxpayer in New Mexico, and ranked alongside of the mining corporations in Arizona, we need not be surprised if its officials lacked enthusiasm for the immediate assumption of the heavier burden necessary to support one or two state governments in semi-desert country. Dodging taxes was a general practice in territorial days, and farsighted men realized that it would not be as easy under a state government.

Very likely in earlier days Waldo and other representatives of the railroad shared Catron's faith that statehood would bring a great increase in population and boom land values. The newspaper campaign for the admission of the territory doubtless seemed good publicity for the section served by the corporation. Furthermore Congress could be depended on to delay the longed for event until there were many more people and corporations in the territory to
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share the higher cost of statehood. When the movement had become popular, it was felt to be unpatriotic to oppose it, and representatives of the Santa Fe resented Beveridge's methods of investigation and his conclusion that New Mexico was unfit for statehood. Doubtless at times they regarded statehood as a necessary evil which was bound to come, but which might be delayed by subtle propaganda. In the long run, however, officials hoped that the increase in freight and passenger traffic would more than make up for the higher taxes. Certainly the powerful lobby which the railroads maintained in Washington helped to bring about the final enactment of the enabling act.

The key man through whom the railroads and other corporations influenced the weekly press of the territory was Colonel Max Frost of the Santa Fe New Mexican. As secretary and dominating mind of the Bureau of Immigration, he circulated tons of propaganda to interest settlers in coming to New Mexico. Governor Herbert J. Hagerman stated in 1907 that about $60,000 had been appropriated and spent for this publicity work which might well have been carried on by the railroads to increase their own business. The young reform governor would hardly deny, however, that Frost was a master of the art of propaganda. The latter had also organized a secret press bureau to influence the smaller weeklies throughout the territory. He supplied these papers with news items and editorials, speaking favorably of legislation or movements in which Waldo or other representatives of the railroads and corporations were interested. Many of these papers were subsidized by being sent occasional checks ranging from ten to one hundred dollars.

Easily the most influential newspaper man in New Mexico for years, Frost deserves more than passing mention. Even a brief sketch of his career will recall many phases

29. See the Biennial Report of the Bureau of Immigration.
30. Message of Herbert J. Hagerman, Governor of New Mexico to the 37th Legislative Assembly, January 21, 1907 (Santa Fe, 1907), p. 25.
of the history of the territory for a third of a century prior
to the passage of the enabling act by Congress nine months
after his death in 1909. A native of Vienna, Austria, Frost
had come to Santa Fe a few years before the coming of the
railroad to construct a military telegraph line into the terri-
tory.31 A little later he led an expedition to suppress out-
laws and renegade Navajos and Utes who were stealing
cattle and committing other depredations in the San Juan
country. Frost was a handsome man, of distinct military
bearing and persuasive eloquence. He soon became a great
favorite with the ladies, and won the friendship of the
officers at Fort Marcy. Through such contacts, and by vir-
tue of the positions of influence which he held, he became an
outstanding figure in territorial affairs. He was register
of the United States land office in Santa Fe, was a member
of the Republican central committee for twenty-five years,
and dominated the Bureau of Immigration almost from its
inception.

Frost will be remembered, however, as the editor and
owner of the New Mexican. When a newcomer to the ter-
ritory, he became a correspondent on the staff of the paper,
at that time the only daily in New Mexico. In seven years
he was its editor, and in 1883 he became its owner.32 "As
managing editor of the New Mexican Colonel Frost achieved
his greatest success," says Twitchell in his Leading Facts
of New Mexican History. "Through the columns of that
newspaper he was able to mold public opinion in a manner
unsurpassed by any journalist in the West. In the ranks
of the party press of Republican faith there has appeared
no successor to Colonel Frost. He exercised great power
and influence in the councils of his party, and through the
columns of his newspaper did more than any other in the
upbuilding of the territory."33

31. Twitchell, Ralph E., Leading Facts of New Mexican History (Santa Fe,
33. Twitchell, op. cit., p. 499.
Frost was a man of strong prejudices and intense dislikes, but of unwavering loyalty to his friends. He came into conflict at times with Thomas B. Catron and others34 whose interests ran contrary to his own, or who would not bow to his desires. Governor Otero and Judge Waldo were among his friends.35 After the war with Spain, he distrusted those of the Rough Riders who had the ear of Theodore Roosevelt. Secretly, if not always openly, he fought men of the type of W. H. H. Llewellyn,36 although he often utilized the major to further legislative and political objectives. All in all, the editor of the New Mexican was a unique figure who in many ways, directly and indirectly, dominated the political and journalistic scenes in the territory for more than two decades.

Always a quick thinker, when illness confined him to his bed, he still kept in contact with different parts of the territory by telephone. He was afflicted with locomotor ataxia and finally became blind. This and failing health compelled him to relinquish the conduct of the paper to an understudy,37 but such was the magic of the name he had built up38 that the policies he had established were maintained even after he was totally incapacitated. Gradually, however, and almost imperceptibly old feuds were dropped and new issues advocated. Statehood, however, remained a favorite issue, although objections on the part of some of the interests—because of the certainty of increased taxes—at times made themselves felt.

34. Such as Governor L. Bradford Prince, George H. Wallace, and Albert B. Fall.
35. Charles A. Spies, W. A. Hawkins and Arthur Seligman may also be counted among his friends.
36. These included Capt. Frederick (Fritz) Muller and Capt. W. E. Dame.
38. Frost was so intimately tied up with the life of old Santa Fé that an old timer who visited that city in 1929 wrote in the Albuquerque Morning Journal: "I looked around for Col. Max Frost, the man with a brilliant brain, but with a seriously decrepit and afflicted body, and blind, but there was no Max Frost. However, the paper—the New Mexican—on which he wielded a stinging, wicked pen, against his political and personal enemies, is still in existence, ..." W. T. McCreight in Albuquerque Morning Journal, July 2, 1929.
While a paper of the same name had appeared as early as 1847, the *New Mexican* as Frost knew it was started as a weekly by Manderfield and Tucker in 1863. It was printed partly in English and partly in Spanish. Becoming a daily five years later, it remained the only one in New Mexico up to 1880. Between 1881 and 1883 the paper belonged to a company organized by officials of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Company. From 1883 until his death—with the exception of the years 1894 to 1897—Max Frost was one of its owners. During the three years' interval referred to, it was owned by Governor W. T. Thornton and his associates, and was of course a Democratic paper. With this exception, it always advocated Republican principles. Being the only daily newspaper at the territorial capital, the *New Mexican* naturally was in closest contact with territorial and federal officials, legislators, and visitors of note—a situation of which Frost took advantage with Machievellian skill. He reproduced in the columns of the *New Mexican* excerpts from other newspapers, which he had supplied in the first place, as well as interviews which he bent to his own purposes. He ran a feature under the heading "Men of the Hour," in which pictures of territorial notables were reproduced with flattering biographical sketches. Even the society columns of the paper were utilized to show preference to those who were friendly, rigid instructions being given to reporters to list names of those attending social functions in accordance with the individual's official or social standing. While the *New Mexican* had less than two thousand paid subscribers in those days, the fact that it gave the cue to most of the papers of the territory, made it the most influential paper in the entire Southwest. Marked copies were often mailed to persons of influence throughout the United States, and a lively personal correspondence was maintained with those who could be of use in furthering the ends in which Frost was interested at the moment.

Bernard S. Rodey, Delegate to Congress from 1901 to 1905 and leader of the statehood movement during those years, commended the *New Mexican* in 1902 as "the warmest and strongest friend that statehood has in the territory." Prominent citizens and representatives of the territorial press joined in this praise; while Max Frost himself claimed that his paper was the first newspaper in the territory to champion the cause. On May 10, 1902, in referring to the passage of the statehood bill by the House of Representatives, the *New Mexican* said: "This had not been brought about by a miracle, but by hard and persistent effort in conducting a campaign of education which has overcome deep rooted prejudices within as well as without the territory. It is a matter of pride to the *New Mexican* that it has always stood in the very van in the fight for statehood and has not only been one of the leaders, but the leader in the campaign for New Mexico's rights. There were times when the *New Mexican* stood almost alone among newspapers of the Southwest in demanding statehood and there were times when the *New Mexican* knew that the political leaders and businessmen and others of the territory were nearly all either secretly or openly opposed to statehood and it nevertheless kept up the fight to make New Mexico a state. It was gratifying, therefore, to observe how one newspaper after another followed the *New Mexican*'s example, how political leaders, one after the other found it expedient to announce themselves in favor of statehood. What seemed to be insurmountable walls of prejudice melted away one after the other and several times it seemed as if statehood was within the grasp of New Mexico, but then came disappointment and defeat again and again. But the *New Mexican* in season and out of season, kept up the fight for statehood until now victory seems assured. Should disappointment come again, the *New Mexican* will carry on

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40. *New Mexican*, Nov. 19, 1902.
41. Ibid., June 10, 1901.
this fight on the present lines, if necessary, for another cen-
tury and all alone."

Anyone who thumbs through the files of the New Mexi-
can today will very likely feel that its editor was completely
justified in the pride which he felt in the part his paper was
taking in the statehood fight. In 1888 the New Mexican
conducted a popular referendum on statehood, sending out
questionnaires to leading citizens and publishing their opin-
ions for and against statehood in its columns.\textsuperscript{42} So ably did
the New Mexican present its arguments that Governor
Ross, Democratic governor of the territory, was converted
to the cause.\textsuperscript{43} And the printer-governor of New Mexico
was no easy triumph, either. One could hardly accuse a
United States Senator from Kansas who voted for the
acquittal of Andrew Johnson of being a "yes, yes" man.
One need not wonder, however, if Ross and many another
during those years had their opinions changed by the con-
stant barrage of propaganda which filled the pages of the
Santa Fe paper. One finds countless editorials, presenting
the arguments for statehood, evaluating the prospects for
early success, or urging that letters and telegrams demand-
ing favorable action be written to members of Congress, or
that delegations be sent to Washington. Interviews with
leaders, letters from contributors, and hundreds of news
items all helped to keep the cause before the public. Occa-
sionally there was a special edition, copies of which were
sent to every state and territory and even foreign countries,
and which served to advertise the resources of New Mexico.

No other paper in the territory was as consistent a
supporter of statehood as the New Mexican. In 1888, the
Silver City Enterprise, which was opposed to statehood,
declared that the Santa Fe paper was "the leader of the
movement," while the Albuquerque Democrat and the Las

\textsuperscript{42} See the New Mexican, January to March, 1888.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., March 15, 1888. The New Mexican, which was strongly opposed to
Gov. Ross, was not enthusiastic over the governor's conversion, and declared that his
support was injurious. Ibid., April 12, 1888.
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Vegas Optic were opposed. 44 During the next decade statehood gained wider support from the territorial press, but some papers such as the Albuquerque Citizen were inclined to oppose the movement when the wrong political party was in control of the legislature. Thus after the Democrats had "stolen" the legislature in 1895, Hughes' paper had said: "Ponder this question from the Raton Range: "How do you like the idea of paying $100,000 to live in the state of New Mexico to be governed by the character assassins who are now running the territory?" 45 The New Mexican, on the other hand, urged "those narrow-visioned Republican organs which are endeavoring to introduce territorial politics into the statehood movement" to follow the example of the people of Oklahoma, who, regardless of party distinction were petitioning Congress for admission to the union. 46 Six years later a prominent Republican politician urged that no enabling act for the territory should be passed until after the election of 1902. 47 Many Republicans throughout

44. Silver City Enterprise, March 2, 1888.
45. Albuquerque Citizen, Jan. 7, 1895.
46. New Mexican, Dec. 9, 1895. The Optic charged that the Citizen "has deliberately set itself to work to defeat statehood," and was attempting to prejudice the eastern mind by partisan appeals." Citing two editorials from the Denver Times and the Republican, "which no doubt originated in the Citizen's office," the Optic stated that it disapproved of what the Democrats had done. However, it continued: "We regard the malignant effort to defeat statehood, through personal spite and vindictiveness, as a baser crime against the welfare of our Territory. In fact, one of the very things which statehood will prevent, will be the recurrence of legislative steals." Optic, Jan. 16, 1895.
47. New Mexican, May 21, 1901. Apparently the Springer Stockman distrusted the sincerity of Delegate Catron's statehood efforts in 1896. It said: "... Catron, Elkins and Reed would rather see New Mexico sink into perdition than see her become a state. Two silver senators will go from this territory if she should become a state, that is why the combine do not want to see her as such. Selah." Springer Stockman, as quoted by New Mexican, April 6, 1896: On the other hand, while distrustful of the Republican party in general, the Silver City Eagle was hopeful that Catron and Elkins, who were "both heavily interested in New Mexico, would prove sincere in their statehood efforts. Admitting that it was not to the interests of the Republican party to admit New Mexico at that time, the Eagle said: "Mr. Catron's personal interests in the matter will doubtless outweigh his political interests and he is certainly very deeply interested personally in the early admission of New Mexico. The passage of a bill providing for statehood for New Mexico might be worth a million dollars to Mr. Catron, but he will have to use some mighty persuasive language to get his gold bug political friends to vote to admit New Mexico and thus increase the strength of the silver men by two in the senate and one in the house." Silver City Eagle, quoted by New Mexican, Dec. 18, 1895.
the territory were reported to favor the suggestion, but the *New Mexican* declared, that the best plan was "to get together, adjust all differences of opinion and push for statehood until attained." This attitude was highly commended in a vigorous letter from Delegate Rodey who declared that if the choice was put up to him, "to live in a Democratic state or a Republican territory," he would favor the former any time." The brainy editor of the *New Mexican* was not wholly disinterested, however. Two months later he cautioned: "Never fear, the *New Mexican* will be at hand and will take a hand in the senatorial fight upon the admission of New Mexico to statehood, and what is more the men supported by it for those positions will represent the state of New Mexico in the Senate of the United States. Paste this in your hat and read it every once in awhile."

None of the five dailies listed by Governor Otero in his report for 1900 are known to have opposed statehood outright. However, no copies of the Las Vegas *Republican* have been found so that one can only guess from the name that it probably agreed with other papers of that party in supporting the movement. It was apparently short-lived, its name appearing on the official list for the one year only. On the other hand, the Las Vegas *Daily Optic* has been published from 1879 to the present. When the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe built into New Mexico in that year, Russ A. Kistler had started the *Optic* in Otero, the first railroad town in the territory. Six months later he moved his plant to Las Vegas, where he conducted the paper for nineteen years. In 1898 he sold out, and the paper was managed for five years by the Allen brothers, only to be sold again in 1903. Kistler was a brilliant writer, but rather erratic, and the *Optic* was not very stable in its policies. During the critical year of 1896 it deserted its Republicanism

48. Ibid., May 27, 1901.
49. *New Mexican*, July 1, 1901.
to support Fergusson and free silver, but reverted to its former policies with the change of ownership in 1903. The Optic spoke favorably of the appointment of Otero, but later became one of the few papers in the territory bitterly opposed to "the little governor" and "the ring" which surrounded him. Generally favorable to statehood, the Optic declared on October 15, 1901, that this should come with certain safeguards in the constitution. These should include a limitation on the rate of taxation, open bidding for state contracts, compulsory education, an educational or property qualification for voters, the Australian ballot, and the provision that lands given the state for public institutions shall never be sold or leased for a longer period than twenty years.

While no copies have been found of many of the fifty-eight weeklies listed by Governor Otero, the attitude of a number of these is indicated by editorials quoted in papers which have been better preserved. Usually these expressions of opinions were short and often they were rather well put. Thus the New Mexican for April 29, 1901, quoted the Springer Sentinel as follows: "New Mexico has outgrown her short dresses and feels that at the advanced age of over fifty years, she is entirely too conspicuous in her youthful attire, and is earnestly pleading that she may be permitted to assume the more becoming and appropriate robes of statehood." However, in spite of a considerable amount of such evidence, less than one-third of the total number of weeklies are definitely known to have favored statehood at one time or another between 1895 and 1901, and to have taken some part in the fight for the admission of New Mexico to the union. As we have seen, many of the smaller weeklies took their cue from the New Mexican, so that there was nothing original in their attitude. Doubtless a number of the papers that received Frost's secret press service echoed the statehood sentiments which he supplied, but the evidence is insufficient to prove this. Some were indifferent, while a few are known to have been doubtful or opposed. Occasionally an editor dared to express sce-
ticism regarding the material prosperity supposed to follow statehood. Thus in October, 1901, the Las Cruces *Rio Grande Republican* asked: “Will statehood cause the falling of any more rain?” 52 while six months later the Roswell Record stated editorially: “We have always doubted that statehood would prove such a boon as many people think.” 53 The attitude of the Santa Fe Capital was summed up by the sympathetic Las Vegas Optic: “The Santa Fe Capital is teeth and toe nails for statehood. However, it is opposed to taking the progressive step with the present corrupt ring in power in New Mexico. Exterminate the treasury-loomers and tax-dodgers and then give us statehood.” 54 Nuevo Mundo, published in Old Albuquerque between 1897 and 1905, was apparently hostile, as, according to the Albuquerque Morning Democrat, it announced an editorial on “The Noisy Question of Our Admission to Statehood.” 55 The White Oaks Eagle, a Lincoln County paper, is one of the few papers in New Mexico known to have opposed statehood openly at this time. However, the reasoning of the editor on the subject is known only through a lengthy refutation by Delegate Rodey which appeared in the Journal-Democrat for September 21, 1901. Few editors cared to openly oppose the movement and the Journal-Democrat noted on August 8, 1901: “The few territorial papers that for a time decried statehood are keeping mum on the subject these days.”

In May, 1901, the New Mexican called attention to the fact that newspaper after newspaper was “beginning to carry a statehood headline.” 56 The slogan most commonly used was “New Mexico demands statehood from the 57th congress.” 57 No doubt the visit of President McKinley to the territory just at this time helped to focus the attention

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52. Clipping from the *Rio Grande Republican*, October, 1901, found in the Rodey Scrap Book, p. 51.
53. Las Vegas Optic, Oct. 8, 1901. See also ibid., Oct. 10, 1901.
54. *New Mexican*, May 24, 1897.
55. *Journal-Democrat*, May 27, 1897.
56. *New Mexican*, May 24, 1901.
57. Ibid., May 11, 1901.
of the press and people of the territory upon the issue. Apparently some of the opposition press were converted to the cause the following fall by the accession to the presidency of the territory's Rough Rider champion. At least this was alleged by the Carlsbad Argus, which said: "President Roosevelt is favorable to the admission of New Mexico, and as this fact is well known certain territorial journals, until now apathetic or against the movement, are now urging action, and in a few weeks will be posing as the original promoters of the statehood crusade." 58

While in the East in February, 1902, Thomas Reynolds, a mining man from Denver, gave an interview to a New York Tribune reporter in which he criticized New Mexico newspapers for not doing all that could be done for statehood. The Tribune quoted him as follows: "New Mexico is in many ways entitled to Statehood, and together with Arizona, is a much richer community than most Easterners suppose. Both territories are wonderfully full of mining possibilities. The trouble with New Mexico has been, to no slight extent, I believe, its lack of a good press to advertise it, and put its claims before the country. A powerful newspaper in that Territory or in Arizona could do a great deal toward bringing about what the people want." 59

Such a criticism may be attributed to the impatient desire of the business man for greater publicity for his mines and the territory in which they lay. Of course, with its few towns, its small reading public and lack of development, New Mexico could not support a strong press. Had she possessed more leaders like Max Frost and more papers like the New Mexican, certainly the campaign to rally the citizens of the territory to the cause and to overcome the objections of the East would have been much more effective. On the other hand, however, opponents of statehood complained of "cock-sure" editorials on what the people wanted, and

58. Carlsbad Argus, Sept. 27, 1901.
declared that the demand for statehood was largely created by the politicians and editors.60

Before passing on from our consideration of the relation of the press to statehood, we may pause to analyze the chief arguments used in editorial after editorial, as well as in official resolutions. These are as follows:

1. Statehood has been promised in the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and in the Republican and Democratic platforms.
2. The area, population, and resources of New Mexico entitle it to statehood.
3. A territory is governed by “carpetbaggers,” is under the complete control of congress, and has no rights under the constitution.
4. The people of New Mexico are quite capable of governing themselves.
5. It is humiliating for the leaders of New Mexico to be forced to go to Washington to scramble for office.
6. New Mexico needs a vote and fuller representation in Congress to push for irrigation, and to protect the waters of the Rio Grande.
7. The shameful way in which property is returned and the low valuation of all property in the territory will be remedied by statehood.
8. Capitalists regard a territory as the home of outlaws and desperadoes and insecurity of property, and hesitate to invest in it. Accordingly statehood will bring rapid development and great material prosperity to New Mexico, just as it did to Colorado.
9. The majority of the people want statehood, and the majority should rule.
10. Property owners need not fear home rule as brains will rule New Mexico as they do everywhere else.61

The third article in this series will attempt to analyze the attitude of the citizens of New Mexico toward statehood during the latter part of the 1890’s, and to discover how much opposition there was within the territory at that time.

60. See “The Other Side,” an anonymous letter signed “Fair Play,” contributed to the Journal-Democrat, Aug. 18, 1903.
61. Citizen, April 11, 1901.