

Twenty Years Ago-And Today

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It was just twenty years ago today, January 13, 1913, that I became managing editor of this newspaper, the Kankakee Republican-News. January 13 that year, however, fell on Monday instead of Friday as it does in this year.

This publication was founded in 1903. During the ten years prior to 1913, the management had changed completely five times, an average of once every two years. At that time there were three newspapers in Kankakee, all well-established, each claiming a large following and each supporting opposing political interests. The Evening Democrat was of the political creed that its name indicated; the Daily Gazette was independent, and the Daily Republican, of course, supported the party of Lincoln. None were financial successes, although the editors privately boasted he made a fair living by trading advertising for necessities of life.



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I was entirely inexperienced in this line of work except for some editorial training with the Optimist, the Kankakee high school paper, and business training obtained while employed at the First National bank. Fired with ambition, as all new newspaper men are, I set out to sell a lot of advertising. On the day previous to January 13, 1913, there had been two paid advertisements—one by Gelino Brothers and one by the First National bank.

My experience in politics, in regard to publishing a paper, and I refer to local elections, is that if the candidate the newspaper supports is successful he and his friends think it is due to his personal popularity. If he loses he usually feels that his defeat was brought about by something the paper said or did.

I recall one case to the contrary in 20 years of newspaper work, and that was M. F. Baker. During his campaign for mayor I insisted on publishing certain facts against which he protested. After his election he thanked me and expressed the conviction that victory was possible only through the support he received from this newspaper.

I wonder what his reaction would have been, however, had he lost?

There are many other things I might tell you about the newspaper business, cost of operation, etc. Twenty years ago two to three cars of print paper a year were required to print our paper while today our annual use is nineteen cars at a cost of \$26,611.00.

One might gather from this article that I am entirely satisfied with our paper and that it has reached the peak of its career. Far be it from such. For just as soon as one reaches that conclusion at that very moment his work begins to disintegrate.

I can see just as many opportunities for improvement today as there were 20 years ago, and as rapidly as business conditions warrant I expect to see them put into effect.