

THE ST. MARYS JOURNAL AS A PRIME SOURCE OF CONFLICT
IN ST. MARYS KANSAS--1894 TO 1908

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

St. Marys is a quiet community nestled in the Kaw Valley equidistant between Topeka and Manhattan. It is conservative Democrat, depending on farming and Topeka for its economic survival. It is a placid community and its current newspaper, the St. Marys Star, engages in a minimal amount of conflict. It effectively represents dominant forces within the community, replicating many other newspapers in similar situations.

Once St. Marys had a newspaper battling dominant forces within the community, daring to antagonize those who controlled the community economically. That paper was the St. Marys Journal. From its first issue on June 7, 1894, to its death in 1908, the Journal and the family that controlled it battled those who dared oppose it politically and personally.

The St. Marys Journal was founded by the Graham family and contains the record of their antagonisms. It had no existence independent of the Grahams. Without the Grahams, whatever conflict that may have existed in the community at the time probably would not have been recorded. When we say that the Journal was a source of conflict in the community, what we really mean is that the Grahams were the

source of conflict and the vehicle for publishing their views was the Journal.

Who were the Grahams that created so many enemies? There were three who were of importance to this thesis: James Graham and two of his sons, Clint and John. The father of the family exercised considerable influence over the Journal, though he apparently left the day-to-day running of the paper to his sons. James Graham was a force to be reckoned with, and it was he who incurred the greatest wrath of Journal opponents.

James Graham is one of the minor figures in history who led a colorful life in the 19th century. One of the more important men in Pottawatomie County history, he must be considered a major figure in the history of St. Marys. He was born in County Cork, Ireland, December 26, 1845. Shortly after his birth, his family came to America, living for short periods of time in New York, Cincinnati, and settling in St. Louis where, in 1849, his parents died of cholera. James was taken by the Sisters of Charity and placed in an orphanage where he remained until 1854 when he came to St. Marys Mission on board the steamboat Excel.¹

Upon arrival, Graham was taken in by Doctor Luther R. Palmer, a founder of St. Marys and a signer of the Kansas Constitution. James lived with the doctor until 1863 when he

¹"James Graham Dead," [St. Marys] Eagle-Journal, February 18, 1909, p. 1.

enlisted in the Sixth Kansas Cavalry as a private. After seeing action in the war in Missouri and Arkansas, Graham was mustered out in 1865 as a second lieutenant.² Returning home, Graham settled in Louisville, Kansas, then the Pottawatomie County seat, and in 1867 married Miss Azzie Jackson, who bore him five sons and a daughter before dying in the early 1890's. In 1868 he was commissioned a first lieutenant by the governor and served in the 19th Kansas Cavalry which took an active role in the wars against the Indians during the winter of 1868-69. Following the campaign he returned to Louisville and ran a hotel for some time.³

In 1874 Graham's life was marred when he was convicted of shooting with intent to kill and sentenced to two years in the state prison. Only a year later he was pardoned by the governor. (State prison records provide apparently the only extant description of him; Graham was 5 feet 4 inches tall, of florid complexion, sandy hair, and blue-grey eyes.)⁴

After serving time in prison, Graham served at different times as deputy county sheriff and as deputy United States marshal.⁵ In 1881 James was elected county sheriff and served two terms.

²"Our Candidate for Sheriff," St. Marys Express, October 28, 1881, p. 3.

³Eagle-Journal, February 18, 1909, p. 1.

⁴Register of Prisoners. Kansas. State Historical Society Archives.

⁵St. Marys Express, October 28, 1881, p. 3.

During the 1870's and 80's James was in and out of the newspaper business running the St. Marys Express and St. Marys Star. In 1894 he and son Clint founded the St. Marys Journal.

In 1898 James was commissioned a lieutenant colonel in the 22nd Kansas Volunteers at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War and got as far as Chickamauga before the war ended. On his return to St. Marys, Graham practiced law for a time, continued to be a force behind the Journal, and maintained his life-long interest in politics.

In 1907 and 1908 his health failed repeatedly and Graham was in and out of the Old Soldiers Hospital in Leavenworth, where he died February 12, 1909. His remains were returned to St. Marys for burial.⁶

The editor of the St. Marys Star described James Graham as a man who made many friends "and at the same time bitter and unyielding enemies." It was his observation that no history of Pottawatomie County would be complete without the inclusion of James Graham.⁷

Clint Graham was active in running the Journal from 1894 to 1898. In 1898 he joined the Army and was killed in China during the Boxer Rebellion two and one-half years later.

⁶Eagle-Journal, February 18, 1909, p. 1.

⁷"James Graham Dead," St. Marys Star, February 18, 1909, p. 8.

Clint Graham was born January 11, 1868, in Louisville. At the age of nine, his family moved to St. Marys where at eleven Clint started helping his father in the newspaper business. At thirteen he served as assistant postmaster to Dr. Palmer, the postmaster. After a year at St. Marys College, Clint again went to work for his father in the Star office. In 1886 Clint went to Atchison, Kansas, where he finished learning the printing trade, and then worked for three years for the Haskell Printing Company in Atchison.

In 1889 Clint Graham returned home and became associate editor of the St. Marys Star until 1894. Clint assisted in the founding of the St. Marys Journal in 1894 and helped produce the Journal until the arrival of the Spanish-American War. In May 1898 Clint enlisted as a private in the 22nd Kansas Volunteers. Contracting typhoid fever while in the service, he was mustered out and returned home to regain his health. In 1899, his health restored, the lure of adventure caused him to join the regular army. Clint was sent to the Philippines to help put down the rebellion, and spent five months at the front without relief.

In July 1900 Graham's regiment was ordered to China to aid the Allies in putting down the Boxer Rebellion. On August 6 he was injured in fighting at Yang Tsun and died two weeks later at Tien Tsin.⁸ On January 25, 1901, Clint's body

⁸"His Wounds Proved Fatal," St. Marys Journal, August 31, 1900, p. 1.

was returned to St. Marys and on the 27th he was buried in what one paper called one of the largest funerals ever held in St. Marys.⁹

From 1898 to the demise of the Journal in 1908, John J. Graham was the day-to-day editor. Unfortunately, he died in 1948 after the days of glowing obituaries.

Born in 1872 at Louisville, Kansas, John Graham entered the newspaper business with his father and brother, and helped run the Journal from its inception. When father and brother Clint went off to war, John took over the paper. In 1904 he married Ada Moss, the daughter of the owner of the First National Bank. She bore him one son, Audley.

In 1908 John Graham moved from St. Marys, ran a paper in Blue Rapids for a while, and then moved to Kansas City, Missouri, where he ran the Specialty Printing Company. Approximately ten years before his death, John moved to Topeka where he was employed by the State Welfare Board at the time of his death on September 6, 1948.¹⁰

In reporting his death the St. Marys Star noted that John Graham was best remembered for his newspaper war against M. M. Lee in 1908.¹¹ According to the Star Graham's death

⁹"Funeral of C. W. Graham," St. Marys Eagle, January 31, 1901, p. 1.

¹⁰"John J. Graham," Topeka Daily Capital, September 7, 1948, p. 2.

¹¹See Chapter Eight.

"removed a character who held the center of the stage when journalistic life here was at its most militant."¹²

There were four other children of James Graham, but they played very minor roles in terms of this account and need not be discussed.

There were two other papers in St. Marys during the life of the Journal, but they never matched it in consistency or temperament. The Journal is a small town example of yellow journalism. During its fourteen-year existence there was no conflict waged in which the Journal did not play some role, and in most cases it was the Journal that drew first blood. The life of the Journal is to be found in these intense conflicts; only the most important of them can be considered here.

The temper of the Journal is best shown in the feuds with Dr. George Miller and George C. Welsh. Off and on for five years the Journal and Miller battled, with the Journal seemingly printing everything malicious it could say about the man. The feud with George Welsh was longer and bloodier, and has to rank as the most sordid feud in the long history of St. Marys. While the Journal reviled Welsh continually, he, unlike Dr. Miller, obtained some vengeance.

One problem with the Welsh affair is its ties to the administration of Thomas J. Ryan. While the connections are great, there are matters concerning the Ryan administration

¹²"Journal Editor, Foe of Old '76 Is Dead," St. Marys Star, September 16, 1948, p. 1.

that did not directly relate to Welsh, but they have to be presented before one can totally understand the entire affair. In addition, an examination of the Journal years would not be complete without at least a partial look at the Journal battles with the Ryan administration.

From its founding in 1894 to 1904, the Journal stood resolutely with the Democratic party and its candidates. In the election of 1904, however, the county Democrats had a major battle among themselves and the Grahams were a major force in wrecking the Democratic party that year. The election of 1904 shows the bitterness that could be generated by the Grahams, and gives some helpful hints on how to ruin a party.

In examining the city elections in which the Journal participated, the Journal's standing in the community becomes apparent, as do the lengths to which it was willing to go in trying to carry an election. The election races from 1895 to 1901 are presented in one chapter and the races 1902 and 1903 are considered in the chapter on Tom Ryan's administration. In order to complete the picture, the races of 1905 and 1907 are considered separately.

Finally, the Journal-Eagle newspaper war of 1908 is the last episode of the Journal's career, and is what John Graham was most remembered for. In 1908 the Journal's advertising had evaporated and in that year it became a battle to see which of the two smaller papers would survive.

A favorite historian, Dr. Loren Pennington, once said in a lecture that the historian in writing history attempts to bring order out of chaos. The Grahams facilitate this with their characteristic practice of taking on one foe at a time. Seldom were they battling several individuals at a time except when those individuals were related to one another in actions. For that we may be eternally grateful.

The reader is also encouraged to note the pattern that the Journal seems to follow in its battles. It tends to start out slowly with an isolated comment in an issue concerning someone's veracity, then builds to some sort of a conclusion. Once the conflict climaxed, the Journal quickly terminated its exchange on the subject. It is this pattern that seems prevalent throughout the years of the Journal.

The reader would do well to note that many charges may be wild accusations. These wild accusations are the ingredients that made the Journal the center of conflict that it was for fourteen years. Defended by a few, hated by many, the Journal was a divisive force in that serene little community.

One final note, the importance of the accusations and counter-accusations that you will read lies not in their validity, but what they contribute to making the Journal the center of conflict in St. Marys from 1894 to 1908. The validity of the accusations are incidental, not central, to the demonstration of the thesis.

Chapter 2

THE JOURNAL VERSUS DR. MILLER

Dr. George Miller was the first major foe of the Journal. The feud lasted on and off for six years with the year 1895 the most intense period of conflict. It indicated what a newspaper could do to a person if the paper perceived itself to be threatened in some way by that individual.

Dr. George Miller was born in Williamsport, Pennsylvania in 1854 and received his medical training at St. Joseph's Institute of Baltimore, graduating in 1877. In the fall of 1878, Miller came to St. Marys to practice medicine, and remained in the community the rest of his life. He was St. Marys College physician for forty-two years and had a large practice in the community. On April 25, 1881, he married Mary A. Caplice and she bore him nine children, none of whom resides in St. Marys today. He died in April of 1927.¹ Harold Ryan claimed that Miller was the best diagnostician in the area, and one of the most respected individuals in the community.²

¹T. C. Baurlein, "Death Lays Claim to Beloved Brother," St. Marys Star, April 28, 1927, p. 1.

²Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Harold Ryan, December 20, 1973.

The first indications that a feud was developing occurred with the Democratic primary of 1894 that selected delegates to the county convention. The St. Marys delegates included Miller and thirteen others. At that primary the Journal charged that Populists and a few Republicans voted in the Democratic primary. In the Journal's view the primary was a deliberate effort to throttle the Democratic organization, done to benefit the needs of a few individuals, and it "bodes nobody good."³

The next issue which stirred the fires of the feud was the city election of 1895. In early March the Journal reported that a closed caucus had occurred in the office of the St. Marys Star.⁴ The sole goal of the group, with Miller serving as "master of ceremonies," was to spill the spiritual blood of James Graham. The caucus proposed a ticket that would do its bidding and proceeded to nominate Peter O'Connor for mayor. The Journal considered O'Connor an all-around crook.⁵

When Peter O'Connor won the city election, the Journal claimed that Miller would dominate city government, and no one would dare interfere with the operations of an opera house he owned. With the O'Connor victory, the Journal charged that

³"Primaries," St. Marys Journal, June 7, 1894, p. 5.

⁴The St. Marys Star was founded in 1884 and continues to the present. It has been controlled by many individuals, but in 1895 was run by Perry L. Jackson. See Appendix I for a listing of editors.

⁵"The Star Caucus," St. Marys Journal, March 21, 1895, p. 1.

Miller went on a vendetta, jumping on one Dan O'Brien for an old bill, and threatening the Journal with vengeance.

According to the Journal, the doctor had grown rich from the misfortunes of others. Miller had come to St. Marys as a drunken pauper and now despised the poverty of the people he impoverished. The Journal promised it would "puncture his carcass oftener than the bicycle boys puncture their pneumatic tires."⁶

In the following issues the Journal proceeded to attack Miller's competency as a physician. For instance, a young girl got a grain of corn in her nose and she was taken to Dr. Miller for treatment. The doctor was unable to get it out and she was taken to Dr. Gundry who removed the grain.⁷ One John Shuler was almost blind when he stopped going to Dr. Miller and began going to Dr. McLellan who restored his eyesight.⁸

On another occasion the Journal reported that Miller had been seen sitting on a stump near Cross Creek in full view of a passing funeral in a "besotted" condition. But Miller was sober enough to warrant a Journal claim in the same issue that the doctor was running the city. Miller was willing to persecute anyone who got in his way, but he could not push the Journal around.⁹

⁶"A Public Pest," Ibid., April 11, 1895, p. 1.

⁷St. Marys Journal, May 9, 1895, p. 5.

⁸Ibid., June 8, 1895, p. 5. ⁹Ibid., p. 1.

The Star attempted to defend Miller from the Journal's attack by noting that the community should not be surprised to see such accusations coming from men

who are so utterly devoid of manly principle and so near brute creation as to fight among themselves like common barnyard animals like the Journal gang always have done, may be expected to do anything that honorable people won't do.¹⁰

The Star went on to describe how two of James Graham's sons gave their father such a beating that Dr. Miller had to be called to care for him and the doctor never told a soul about it, except the Star. The Star indicated its willingness to bet that Miller never increased his bank account by his services, yet the Grahams abused Miller in their paper.¹¹

The Journal responded to the personal attack a week later with the statement that Miller had started the exchange and it had responded with a few facts. In a long article describing Miller's sins against society, the Journal claimed that the doctor had

allied himself with the leeches, thinking to perpetuate his boasted influence and began a personal fight. He boasted he would wage a war of extermination upon us; HE was going to drive us out of town.¹²

The abuse continued back and forth until August 3, 1895, when the Journal printed a story that Miller felt went

¹⁰ St. Marys Star, June 13, 1895, p. 5.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "A Brief Biographical Sketch," St. Marys Journal, June 6, 1895, p. 1.

too far and resulted in criminal libel charges being filed against the Journal. The article stated that

Doc Miller went out to Tom Hyett's to doctor his baby. Doc was so stinking drunk that he staggered over the cradle and pretended to pour medicine, but after a few spasmodic lunges, failed, went out of doors and charged Tom \$5. Yet he didn't give the baby one drop of medicine. If this don't brand him as a thief, what would? It is a fact substantiated by Mr. Hyett. Probably Doc got drunk because Jim Graham was sober. We regret to be compelled, as a public journal, to give this [account], but it is our duty, because the people should know what kind of a man he is. In such a drunken state, he might give medicine that would kill.¹³

A week later the Journal reported that Miller had asked the county attorney to prosecute the Journal for libel. The Journal did not think that County Attorney B. H. Tracy would file charges without investigating the matter and staunchly maintained the story was true and that it could recite many cases of Miller's debauchery.¹⁴

The Journal was wrong and on August 12, 1895, James Graham, Clint W. Graham, and John J. Graham were charged with criminal libel.¹⁵ The state defined criminal libel as the

malicious defamation of a person, made public by any printing, writing, sign, picture, representation or effigy, tending to provoke him to wrath, or expose

¹³Ibid., August 3, 1895, p. 1.

¹⁴"Miller's Libel Suit!" Ibid., August 10, 1895, p. 1.

¹⁵In Pottawatomie District Court, State of Kansas v. James Graham, C. W. Graham, and J. J. Graham, no. 626. The number at the end refers to the number of the case as it appears in the court records. It means that this case was the 626th criminal case to be heard in the Pottawatomie District Court.

him to public hatred, contempt or ridicule, or deprive him of the benefits of public confidence and social intercourse¹⁶

The Grahams were charged with doing these items to Miller. The problem for Miller was that if the libelous matters were true, "and . . . published with good motives and for justifiable end," the defendants had to be acquitted.¹⁷ It was a problem that Miller was not able to overcome.

News of the indictment was greeted with joy in the Star office and it devoted two columns to the story. Editor Perry Jackson printed a copy of the indictment and added some charges of his own to back up the indictment. According to Jackson:

During the six years the Grahams have individually published and controlled a paper in St. Marys [,] they have "written up," slandered and abused in the vilest manner, and almost every case without just cause, more, people, widows included, than any other paper in the state.¹⁸

According to the Star, when James Graham controlled that newspaper from 1884 to 1889, he abused a long list of people who were named in the article. For his opinions James was soundly thrashed more than once, and on one occasion Graham shot it out on the streets of St. Marys with another man. Since taking over the Journal, the Grahams had abused

¹⁶General Statutes of Kansas, 1868, Chapter 31, Section 270.

¹⁷Ibid., Section 272. Section 271 specifies the penalty to be not more than one year in the county jail, a fine not exceeding \$1,000.

¹⁸"For Criminal Libel," St. Marys Star, August 15, 1895, p. 4. James Graham owned the St. Marys Star from 1884 to 1889.

many of the citizens and had pounded away at Miller for fourteen months.¹⁹

Most important in the Star's statement was that the alleged Hyett incident occurred in 1889. During the next two years Dr. Miller was repeatedly called to the Graham residence to take care of the family. In the spring of 1891, the doctor made daily visits to see Mrs. Azzie Graham as she neared death. While she was on her deathbed Jim Graham went away and was in Oklahoma when she died. Jackson asked rhetorically: "Does this look like they are now publishing this stuff about Miller being drunk six years ago for the 'public good!'"²⁰

What we know about the criminal case comes chiefly through the Journal and the Westmoreland Recorder, a reliable source of information during the period. Court records give only the basic actions of the court, and not what was said during the trial.

The Star, after its very long article applauding the suit, printed a very short article on the outcome. It simply noted that everyone who had heard the evidence expected at least a hung jury.²¹ They did not get a hung jury, nor a verdict of guilty.²²

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹"That Libel Suit," Ibid., September 12, 1895, p. 5.

²²In Pottawatomie County District Court
no. 626.

The Journal on the other hand gave the trial banner headlines: "VENI, VIDI, VICI!"/ "Doc Miller Mired in His Own Filth----He is on Record."/ "THE JOURNAL'S ACTION COMMENDED."/ "We Have Kept Our Word and Smeared Him With His Own Debauchery."²³

According to the Journal, it got Miller "where truth and right prevails," and where he could not lie or appeal to the passions, religion, or the prejudices of the people. The Grahams buried Miller under his own filth and proved his debauchery, "and were acquitted on the charges of 'libel' after the jury had been out only long enough to read the judge's instructions and the law."²⁴

The Journal reported that Miller denied on the stand that he was drunk while tending to the Hyett child. For the defense, the witnesses who were most important were Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hyett. Tom Hyett swore that Dr. Miller came to his house between nine and twelve o'clock one night in October 1889 giving indications that he was drunk. When asked how he knew the doctor was drunk, Tom reportedly responded that Miller "'fell and staggered around like a drunken man and smelled like a whiskey barrel when you pull the bung out,'" and that the doctor's breath was "'awful.'" Mrs. Tom Hyett was called to the stand and said much the same with the Journal emphasizing all the luxuriant details.²⁵

²³"VENI, VIDI, VICI," St. Marys Journal, September 11, 1895, p. 1.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

What details the Journal failed to mention were given to us by the Westmoreland Recorder. According to the Recorder, Hyett acknowledged that he had told James Graham the libelous material, "but warned him not to publish it."²⁶

On the stand James Graham swore that he had seen the doctor drunk in dozens of places in St. Marys and in the Westmoreland Courthouse. He said he was fighting Miller because the doctor was fighting him and trying to get rid of the Journal. Clint Graham swore he wrote the story because it was true, and gave as his reasons that he was determined not to allow Miller to run the Grahams out of town.²⁷

The issue that was most hotly contested was whether the materials had been "published with good motives and for justifiable end."²⁸ In his instructions to the jury, the judge stated that if they believed from the evidence that the Grahams had published the allegedly libelous material identified in the indictment concerning Miller, that the material was true or substantially true, and was published by the Grahams for "justifiable ends," then the Grahams were to be acquitted.²⁹

²⁶"The Graham Libel Suit," Westmoreland Recorder, September 12, 1895, p. 1.

²⁷"For Criminal Libel," St. Marys Journal, September 11, 1895, p. 1.

²⁸General Statutes of Kansas, 1868, Chapter 31, Section 272.

²⁹In Pottawatomie County District Court no. 626.

It was on this point that the Recorder indicated that while "the Graham's had reason to believe the article true, the evidence that it was published for the benefit of the public was very slim."³⁰ While James Graham claimed that the purpose was to benefit the public, Clint did not make such a claim. It was shown by other witnesses that both James and Clint Graham had said they planned to write up Miller until they drove him out of business.³¹ Therefore, the Grahams could have been found guilty even though the article was true, and the fact that the incident had occurred in 1889 made Miller's case fairly strong.

However, the jury, after hearing the arguments, took only an hour and ten minutes to find a not guilty verdict on the first ballot.³² The jury evidently found sufficient justifiable ends to warrant a not guilty verdict.

Commenting on the case, the Recorder said from what could be learned Miller drank heavily until five or six years before the trial, but had restrained himself since, except for being drunk at the Democratic county convention in Westmoreland a year earlier. The turmoil between Miller and the Grahams had begun at the Democratic central committee meeting when Miller and the Grahams belonged to opposing

³⁰"The Graham Libel Suit," Westmoreland Recorder, September 12, 1895, p. 1.

³¹Ibid.

³²"For Criminal Libel, St. Marys Journal, September 11, 1895, p. 1.

factions, and the feud was enhanced by the city and school elections of 1895.³³

The charges of criminal libel never slowed the Grahams down in roasting Miller before, during, and particularly after the trial.

On August 21, 1895, the Journal charged that Dr. Miller collected \$64 from Michael Sweeny, a farmer, last year and was now demanding \$23 more.³⁴ However, the Journal had gotten its Millers mixed up. According to the Star the doctor in the Sweeny case was spelled Mueller not Miller. The Journal, in Jackson's eyes, was trying to mislead the public.³⁵

On August 31, the Journal called Miller the most "insolent, abusive, and despicable rowdy that ever disgraced the medical profession in Pottawatomie county."³⁶

On October 2, 1895, Miller received a full page of publicity from the Journal. Miller had been up to mischief and refused to rest in his abuse of the Journal. Miller jumped on Matt Rezac, informed him that the Journal was pushing him for county commissioner, and pointed out that "Graham is a damn poor tail to your kite." Rezac reportedly

³³"The Graham Libel Suit," Recorder, September 12, 1895, p. 1. I have not been able to determine what the school election fight was over.

³⁴St. Marys Journal, August 21, 1895, p. 1.

³⁵St. Marys Star, August 22, 1895, p. 1.

³⁶St. Marys Journal, August 31, 1895, p. 1.

did not appreciate the doctor's advice and told him not to drag others into his personal quarrels. The Journal also wondered why St. Marys College retained Miller as its doctor in the face of the evidence it had presented against him. The paper charged that Miller was promoting a religious war against the Grahams because they were patrons and defenders of the public school. The Grahams said that after the suit they had not continued to attack the doctor, but extended charity to Miller, although not much charity. The doctor was bent on revenge and the Journal would not allow him that privilege. The Grahams claimed that Miller was a poor doctor and lost eight of the eleven people who had died in St. Marys the last few weeks. The paper claimed that Miller had more cripples than all the other doctors combined.³⁷

At the end of October the Grahams charged that Miller threatened to throw renters out of the building he owned if they advertised in the Journal. The Grahams warned they were willing to furnish the material for another libel suit and would arrange it so that some of the materials left out of the Hyett case could be introduced into court.³⁸

On November 6, 1895, the Journal reported that the daughter of James Cunneen had died of membranous croup, as diagnosed by Dr. McLellan. The Journal had been informed

³⁷"Doc Can't Rest," Ibid., October 2, 1895, p. 1.

³⁸"An Explanation to Our Friends," Ibid., October 30, 1895, p. 8.

that another doctor had informed Catholic Church authorities that it was diphtheria. According to the law, the corpse was not admitted to the church and the services were held in the church yard. The Journal said it had heard many expressions from relatives and friends regarding the doctor that were extremely derogatory.³⁹

A week later the doctor was identified by the Journal as George Miller. Miller used his position as city health officer

to gratify his hate and vengeance against James Cunneen because he employed other doctors who he considered able and competent to treat his family instead of Miller.⁴⁰

Miller allegedly went to Father Krier, the pastor of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, and by deliberately convincing him that Cassie Cunneen had died from diphtheria, got the Father to refuse the body admission to the church. Doctors McLellan and Thomas said the child died of membranous croup, not diphtheria. Not content with simply denying the family the privilege of a church service, Miller

followed the distracted parents to the grave to present a dun for medical service rendered some-time ago He reveled in the thought that he would cause Mr. Cunneen pain for employing other doctors His acts cannot be defended. He is a persecutor of the dead and enemy to the living. He has sacrificed his manhood for it and for his soul, if he has any, we will leave that to his Maker.⁴¹

³⁹Ibid., November 6, 1895, p. 1.

⁴⁰"A Madman," Ibid., November 13, 1895, p. 1.

⁴¹Ibid.

On November 21, Miller responded with a statement in the Star denying the accusations concerning Cassie Cunneen. According to Miller, Father Krier and mortician Oscar Verschelden asked him if there was any danger in taking the remains into the church. The doctor regarded membranous croup as contagious and advised them to handle the body as if it were a diphtheria case. He claimed to have sent a statement of his account before he knew the child was sick. To the Journal Miller stated:

I have felt what Mr. Cunneen did in the loss of his child, and wish to inform the Journal editor that my thirst for accumulating wealth hasn't caused me to forget the natural feeling of a father and husband.⁴²

Father Krier and Oscar Verschelden added their names attesting to the accuracy of Miller's statement. Also included was a statement from Thomas Kirpatrick, Secretary of the State Board of Health, vouching for the accuracy of Dr. Miller's actions.⁴³

A statement of that nature would quiet most, but the Journal was not most. On November 23 the Journal reiterated its charges. It called Miller's statement a "flimsy excuse" to avoid the consequences of his vindictiveness. The "cowardly" Miller sought protection from Father Krier and through the Father dragged the entire congregation into the

⁴²"A Statement," St. Marys Star, November 21, 1895, p. 5. Also in St. Marys Eagle, November 19, 1895, p. 1.

⁴³Ibid.

fight. The Journal accused Miller of having a Catholic priest violate the commandment saying: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." The citizens of St. Marys knew Miller was unfit to go inside a church, and the truth of the Journal story was vouched for by James Cunneen, whom the people were urged to ask about the matter.⁴⁴

One would have thought that Miller might have had grounds for a libel suit, but none was filed. The Journal appears to have been baiting Miller, but the doctor was not biting.

A few days later the Journal reported another sad story of Miller's incompetence. Henry Trieber told the Journal that on September 26, 1895, his daughter became sick with a sore throat and he went to see Dr. Miller. Without seeing the girl, Miller wrote out a prescription for medicine, gave it to Trieber, and continued to prescribe the medicine until one hour before her death. The medicine made the girl vomit everytime she took it and did nothing to stop the disease. On the third day Miller said the girl would develop the croup in four or five days then die. That day he changed the medicine and she died one hour after taking the new medicine, not the four or five days forecast by Miller. One week later Trieber's son became sick. Miller started the same treatment he had used with the dead child, and the disease grew worse. After giving the child three

⁴⁴St. Marys Journal, November 23, 1895, p. 4.

doses, Trieber stopped giving the medicine to the boy and he got well. Trieber claimed that had Miller given the girl the proper medicine she would have gotten well. In spite of all that, Miller charged Trieber \$30.50 for the treatment. The statement was signed by Henry Trieber.⁴⁵ There was no response from the Star or Dr. Miller.

With the Journal's preference for taking on one foe at a time, it toned down the attacks on Miller and occupied itself with others. In 1896 the Journal turned its attention from Miller to serious charges of corruption against the Journal's most hated and dangerous foe--George Welsh.⁴⁶

The anti-Miller vendetta picked up again in 1897. In May of that year, Miller presented a bill to the city council for services rendered. He swore before a notary public that the work was ordered by Marshal McCabe and Night-Marshal Quigley, when in fact the records showed that McCabe was not appointed until two weeks after Miller had done the work. The bill was for medical services with which the city had nothing to do, but it was a repetition of the game played in the city and township for years, swear to a bill, present it, and have easy-going officials allow the bill. The Journal claimed that Miller had violated the city ordinances for years with impunity and it was time he was stopped. The Journal

⁴⁵Henry Trieber, "A Sad Story," Ibid., November 26, 1895, p. 1.

⁴⁶See chapter four.

resolutely promised to continue its war against such "leeches."⁴⁷

Two weeks later the Journal specified its charges against Miller. It maintained that Miller lied to obtain \$7.50 by swearing to notary public John A. Moss that on April 20, 1896, McCabe ordered medical services performed. The records showed that McCabe was not appointed until May 5, 1896, 15 days after the work was done. Yet the city council paid him and allowed the fraud to occur. In the Journal's eyes the county should have paid the doctor, but Miller "don't care a fig for law, ordinance or rule that conflicts with his personal interest." The Journal assured the people they had not questioned the integrity of the mayor and council, but ventured the view that the council should not give any citizen special privileges over the rest of the people.⁴⁸

On July 8, 1897, the Journal reported another of Miller's transgressions. The doctor allegedly became upset because the St. Marys band did not place Miller on the committee of reception for the band ball. According to the Journal:

We are informed by trustworthy members of the band that Doc acted as though he were drunk and was raving

⁴⁷"Boodle," St. Marys Journal, May 20, 1897, p. 1. City Council Records show Miller was paid \$7.50 on May 4, 1897. There is no evidence that the Council's action was rescinded.

⁴⁸"Let the People Judge," Ibid., June 3, 1897, p. 1.

like a mad man, saying he was disgraced because he was not put at the head of affairs.⁴⁹

The band was said to have been composed of some of the best young men from St. Marys and the doctor should not have treated them in such a manner.⁵⁰ A week later the Journal reported that a resolution denouncing the Journal for reporting Miller's insult to the band had been voted down.⁵¹

On August 5, 1897, the St. Marys Eagle commented that among the Democrats there were two factions, one headed by Miller and the other by the Journal, which had been going at it for nearly three years.⁵² A week later the Eagle reported that Dr. Miller had taken exception to the article. Miller said he was not a politician and had no faction, but that he

⁴⁹"War! War!" Ibid., July 8, 1897, p. 1.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., July 15, 1897, p. 1. Miller must have been a major contributor to the social life in the community. On two other occasions the Journal roasted Miller for similar activities. In September 1897, Miller was accused of wrecking the ball of the annual celebration of the Modern Woodmen Association because they neglected to rent the Miller Opera House for their ball. "Miller's Dirty Principle," Ibid., September 9, 1897, p. 1. And in March 1899, the Journal noted that Miller's demand for an apology from the church band for not inviting him to a ball had caused several of the members to resign rather than suffer the humiliation of an apology. Miller's arrogance, in the Journal's eyes, was destroying a band that had worked together for over three years. "Resigned," Ibid., March 17, 1899, p. 8.

⁵²"Case of Bad Blood," St. Marys Eagle, August 5, 1897, p. 1. The Eagle was founded in 1895 by Milo M. Lee and was controlled by him throughout its existence. In 1908 the Eagle became the Eagle-Journal Consolidated and lasted until 1912 with Lee the editor and owner.

The background to the Eagle's comment must be explained. On a July night in 1897, Night-Marshall Gassman attempted to arrest M. E. McCabe for drunkenness, but McCabe

advocated any party or faction that opposed the Grahams.⁵³ A week later the Journal noted that Miller would sacrifice honor, principle, or anything to gratify personal spite. Miller was called "narrow" and would "sell out his best friend for an imaginary revenge. He is a democrat simply for personal purposes."⁵⁴

In December 1897, the Journal made one of its most serious charges on Dr. Miller's competency. It reported that one Tom Kennedy had been injured when his team of horses dragged him some distance, and was taken to Dr. Miller.

In the "true professional" style he wiped off a small part of the blood on Tom's face and slapped a piece of court plaster on the ugly gash near the eye with the grace that a kitchen sloven would throw a sick cat over a tub of plum butter.⁵⁵

resisted and a fight ensued. The friends of both men were forced to intervene and McCabe was persuaded to spend the night in jail. In a dispatch to the Topeka Capital M. M. Lee reported that the two men were members of opposing factions and there was bad blood between the two men. The dispatch expressed the fear that the hostilities might escalate to firearms. The Journal denied the report calling it an attempt by an officer to do his duty and arrest drunks, and blasted Lee for sending in the report. Lee responded that the community was much divided over the circumstances surrounding the arrest and many felt that excess force was used. Lee said let the people decide, for he presumed the Journal would admit that for three years a vicious political fight had been carried on by the local Democratic party with Miller heading one faction and the Journal the other. Lee said it was a war "to the knife," and the Journal had attacked McCabe, Miller, and others in its pages. This set the stage for Miller's denial that he headed a faction. "Case of Bad Blood," Eagle, August 5, 1897, p. 1.

⁵³Ibid., August 12, 1897, p. 8.

⁵⁴"He's That Kind," St. Marys Journal, August 18, 1897, p. 1.

⁵⁵"Is He Fit to be a Butcher," Ibid., December 3, 1897, p. 8.

After a minimum amount of work, Miller told Kennedy to come back Sunday morning. Tom then went to Dr. McLellan who washed and dressed the wounds in a humane and professional manner. Dr. McLellan said the neglect of the wound probably would leave an ugly scar for life. Kennedy had other injuries which were not noticed by Miller, but which McLellan discovered immediately. Concerning the scar, the Journal stated that "Tom will be another walking evidence of Miller's skill."⁵⁶

A week later Miller responded with a letter to the Eagle and the Star questioning the accuracy of the Journal's story. Miller claimed he gave the man the only attention that could be given--a temporary dressing. In his opinion adhesive plaster caused less disfigurement than stitches. Miller then made some pointed comments concerning Dr. McLellan:

This M.D. forgets when airing his opinion so freely for the Journal's benefit, that there are a few cases in and around St. Marys that reflect on his skill, and might have a tendency to cause people to doubt his expert opinion, for instance the case of the little girl a few months ago suffering from tuberculos osteo mielitis whom he treated first for erysipelas and then blood poisoning until I was called and diagnosed the true condition of affairs, and advised the father to send the child to the hospital for surgical treatment.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Dr. George Miller and Mrs. Tom Kennedy, "A Letter," St. Marys Eagle, December 9, 1897, p. 8. "A Statement," St. Marys Star, December 9, 1897, p. 5.

Miller claimed that the mother of Tom Kennedy had called at his office and expressed indignation at the way Miller had been treated by the Journal. Miller said the article was characteristic of the Journal's lying and was not worthy of notice.⁵⁸ However, it was worthy enough for Miller to respond.

Not content to let a matter drop, the Journal stated that Andy McCure was with Kennedy when Miller treated him, and would vouch for the report. It asked Mrs. Kennedy if Miller had treated her son properly, why did he have to visit McLellan the following morning?⁵⁹

On December 17, the Journal reiterated its charges. Kennedy refused to return to Miller the following day and went to Dr. McLellan where he received humane treatment. McLellan did not mention Miller's name, but in answer to a direct inquiry as to whether Kennedy's face would be scarred for life, said the wound was unclean, had been exposed all night, the sides of the cut had grown hard, were gaping open, and the adhesive plaster was not on the cut at all. McLellan never said anything in reference to sewing up the wound. The Journal stood by its charges of Miller's sins and criticized Mrs. Kennedy for signing the statement, but the Journal believed she was under a misapprehension of the facts for she

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹St. Marys Journal, December 10, 1897, p. 1 & 8.

had no personal knowledge to justify the statement that the Journal's charges were untrue.⁶⁰

In 1898 John Graham took over the Journal as his father and two brothers went off to war. In 1898 one finds little evidence of the Journal attacking Miller. The year 1898 was devoted to the Spanish-American War, and afterward John was not as enthusiastic as father James and brother Clint in attacking Miller. While the abuse was not terminated, it was toned down considerably.

It is interesting that in April 1899 it was reported that at a city council meeting, Mayor Urbansky appointed recently elected Councilman James Graham as a member of the city board of health, but Graham declined in favor of Dr. George Miller.⁶¹ In December of that year, the Star reported that Miller had been given charge of the quarantine of smallpox cases in the city by the city council.⁶²

All was not yet rosy with Miller and the Journal. It reported that several citizens were discussing different cases of sickness and Miller became enraged at one of the gentlemen present when he indicated he would want his family physician (Dr. McLellan) to take care of his family in case of smallpox. Miller became so incensed that he threw off his coat and struck several blows at the one who had offended him,

⁶⁰"Who Lied?" Ibid., December 17, 1897, p. 8.

⁶¹Ibid., April 28, 1899, p. 8.

⁶²St. Marys Star, December 14, 1899, p. 5.

while using foul language and saying uncomplimentary things about McLellan and the other doctors in the community. The Journal reported that it had learned that Miller had been under the influence of alcohol at the time.⁶³

On December 29, 1899, the Journal reported that a "prominent" physician from St. Marys had recently visited Topeka and drank so much that he became violently ill, was unable to ride to meet his train in a street car, and had to be carted to the train station in a wagon.⁶⁴

On January 12, 1900, Dr. Miller was alleged to be attending to two girls who had scarlet fever, a contagious disease, and yet Miller's children were allowed to attend parochial school and mingle with children from all parts of the city. Dr. DeBacker's children were told to stay home because their father was treating a smallpox case. The Journal demanded that all be treated alike and the discrimination against the DeBacker children cease.⁶⁵

This was apparently the last attack on Miller by the Journal. In fact, on March 28, 1901, the Star in reporting the city election, noted:

One of the most amusing sights incident to the election is to see Dr. Geo. Miller and James Graham riding

⁶³"They Had a Hot Time," St. Marys Journal, December 15, 1899, p. 8.

⁶⁴Ibid., December 29, 1899, p. 8.

⁶⁵"Treat All Alike," Ibid., January 12, 1899, p. 1.

peacefully along in the Buell Band Wagon with the rest of the boys singing "Hail to the Chief!"⁶⁶

The Star said there must have been something unusual going on when the two leaders of the two factions which disturbed business and social life for years shook hands uniting their forces and marching under the Buell banner.⁶⁷

The attacks on Miller stopped when the Journal no longer perceived the doctor as a threat. By 1900 Miller no longer headed a faction, and therefore no longer warranted the attention of the Journal.

There is little doubt that the warfare between Miller and the Grahams revolved around politics. The Westmoreland Recorder called it a political dispute in 1895 when it commented on the Miller libel suit against the Grahams.⁶⁸ M. M. Lee claimed factionalism in the local Democratic party between the Miller and Graham forces as the source of conflict when he commented on the cause of the McCabe-Gassman affair of 1897.⁶⁹ In 1908, in responding to the Eagle, the Journal stated that its disputes with a long list of individuals, including Miller, was over politics.⁷⁰ And Harold Ryan

⁶⁶St. Marys Star, March 28, 1901, p. 1.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸"The Graham Libel Suit," Westmoreland Recorder, September 12, 1895, p. 1.

⁶⁹"Case of Bad Blood," St. Marys Eagle, August 5, 1897, p. 1.

⁷⁰"'Old '76'," St. Marys Journal, July 16, 1908, p. 1.

indicated that it was his view that politics centered around the Journal's criticisms of St. Marys citizens.⁷¹

The difficulty in balancing the antagonisms is that Miller lacked the means to communicate to us his feelings and comments concerning the Journal. While the Star defended Miller, it did not attempt to keep up with the Journal. Miller may have engaged in activities that rivaled the Journal, but they were seldom put into print and thus we are left to speculate on them.

⁷¹Interview with Mr. & Mrs. Harold Ryan December 20, 1973.

Chapter 3

CITY ELECTIONS: 1895 TO 1901

Dr. Miller was a member of one of the factions battling for control of the city during the period 1895-1901. One means of determining whose faction was in or out of power is to examine the city elections. As the voice of one of the factions, the Journal, as shown by the election results, was generally unable to convince the populace to accept its candidates for public office.

These elections show the extent to which some were willing to go in carrying an election. While reading this chapter, note the position of the Journal in the races, the names continually recurring for mayor, the tactics or issues used in the elections, the positions of Miller and the Grahams in 1895 and 1901, the Journal's tendency to see some elections as anti-Graham vendettas, and the Journal's inability to take defeat gracefully.

In an attempt to preserve some degree of continuity, the year 1901 has been selected as the cut-off date for this chapter. In 1902 Thomas J. Ryan came to power, and his years are discussed separately. The years 1895 to 1901 show us how

much could change in local politics, and how important politics was to the Journal.¹

1895

The election of 1895 was the first during the Journal era, and was one of the factors that embittered the Miller-Graham feud. The election of 1895 saw the Journal in an unusual position with its friends controlling city government.

The Star started its campaign to unseat the city officials on March 7, 1895, by noting that it was hard to understand why it was necessary for the street commissioner to hire an extra force of men every year, three or four weeks before the election. The Star did not believe it was necessary for the street commissioner to use public money to carry an election. The street work was limited to election time and given to the laboring man who would vote the right way to secure a job.²

The Journal responded that James McGovern was the "crowd" of men working on the streets and he was working out a citizen's poll tax. McGovern had not had a day's work from the city in over a year. The Journal also suggested the voters stop by its office before voting, presumably to assist them in making a proper choice.³

¹Appendix II contains a list of mayors during the Journal years.

²St. Marys Star, March 7, 1895, p. 5.

³St. Marys Journal, March 14, 1895, p. 5.

Between March 14 and 21 two meetings were held, and both offered tickets for the city race. One ticket was called the Taxpayer's Ticket and was headed by Peter O'Connor for mayor. The other meeting nominated John F. Buell for mayor with a full slate for city offices.⁴

The Star charged that James Graham was behind the Republican caucus called to nominate a city ticket. The Star said it found out there was a political meeting even though the blinds were drawn. It reported that after the meeting started, a number of regular Republicans appeared and asked who had called the meeting. They were informed by one present that Graham had told him about the meeting. According to the Star, the whole thing had the earmarks "of that astute political jobber and fixer James Graham."⁵

The Journal, in the same week, chided what it called "The Star Caucus." In the Journal's view the sole unifying theme of the caucus was to get James Graham because he refused to do their bidding and was opposed to the theft of public monies. The satirical article noted that the meeting was held behind closed doors at the Star office. Miller acted as "master of ceremonies," Peter O'Connor as "prompter," and editor Perry Jackson was elected "to keep up the fire." Among the others in attendance were "Granny" Cass, Tom Byrnes, James Byrnes, and "four other intellectual giants . . .

⁴St. Marys Star, March 21, 1895, p. 5.

⁵"Graham's Fiasco Republic Caucus," Ibid.

. . . " All the speakers told how much they despised James Graham, even though he was not a candidate. The Journal gave the distinct impression that it felt the caucus was composed of crooks. O'Connor drew the particular scorn of the Journal, which charged that he supported those who tried to rob the township, tried to get his cattle across the river toll bridge for nothing, and committed other sins.⁶

The Star responded that the Journal attempted to give the impression that O'Connor supported the appropriation of city money for personal gain. O'Connor paid more toll on the river bridge than "the whole Graham gang" would in a 100 years. The Star endorsed the entire Taxpayers Ticket calling it the best ever nominated. It promised political "jobbery" would be eliminated, and stated that O'Connor would favor public improvements if the voters authorized them, but not without such authorization.⁷

The Star also charged that an election banquet was held in McMahan's saloon and three kegs of beer were tapped toasting Buell's success. When not enough of the doubtful showed up, three or four of the "henchmen" were sent to get them.⁸

In its round of electioneering, the Journal eulogized the Buell administration as one of the best in St. Marys

⁶"The Star Caucus," St. Marys Journal, March 21, 1895, p. 5.

⁷St. Marys Star, March 28, 1895, p. 4.

⁸"The Banquet," Ibid., p. 5.

history.⁹ But most of the Journal's attention was devoted to O'Connor and why he should not be elected mayor. The following reasons were offered: violating the law; standing with crime and championing men who defied the law; being tied to those who bankrupted the township; opposing public improvements on flimsy pretences; being the representative of a Kansas City syndicate and paying no taxes on the cattle under his charge; setting himself up as a dictator; being "a stool pigeon and a dummy;" and voting \$160 from the city for his own self-interest.¹⁰

The "stool pigeon and dummy" carried the election with a majority of 50, with a clean sweep for the Taxpayer's Ticket.¹¹

In reporting the election, the Journal was not the least bit complimentary to the O'Connor forces. It stated its opposition to O'Connor because his platform was full of spite and vengeance. O'Connor was a figurehead of Miller's, while Buell was a clean man deserving of support. The Journal charged that a howl was made against Buell claiming that he was a Free Mason, a serious charge in a town dominated by Catholics, and he was accused of raising taxes.¹²

The Journal said it had nothing to regret in the campaign and was willing to prove everything it had said about

⁹St. Marys Journal, March 28, 1895, p. 1.

¹⁰"Why O'Connor Should Not Be Elected," Ibid.

¹¹"A Clean Sweep," St. Marys Star, April 4, 1895, p. 4.

¹²"O'Connor Wins," St. Marys Journal, April 4, 1895, p. 5.

Peter O'Connor. Concluding, the Journal stated:

We have too warm a regard for the welfare of St. Marys to oppose men who are elected because they were not our choice. We have had a sample of that kind of business--of a crowd of unprincipled, lying men simply because they could not dictate its policy. That is not good citizenship. We will support whatever we believe to be right, no matter when or from whom it originates.¹³

1896

In 1896 the Grahams were out of power, wanted back into power, and were willing to try most anything to accomplish their return. The mildest description of the city race in 1896 is acrimonious. Few other elections matched it for the amount of vitriol expended by all sides.

The unique feature of this election was a letter signed by "A Mother" that appeared in the Journal columns on March 11. The letter appealed to the officers of St. Marys to do their duty. The letter claimed that during the past year the city had fallen into a deplorable state of affairs and lawlessness reigned supreme. All the city officers knew of the "cut-throat gambling dens" in the city, but they refused to do anything about it. Young men were ruined and married men spent their nights gambling and drinking with money which their families needed. The city officials were in those "gambling holes" long into the night. They should have done their duty, kept young boys away from such places, and stopped the fleecing of poor men with needy families.

¹³Ibid.

"This outrageous way of conducting a city government should be brought to a close by the honest manhood and womanhood of St. Marys." The voters were urged to investigate the illicit activities going on in St. Marys. The men who ran the "dens of vice and gambling" had no respect for the law and should be compelled to obey or be prosecuted. She condemned the fact bullies had been allowed to insult ladies on the streets of St. Marys.¹⁴

Specifically, "Mother" charged that on

Saturday night February 29, 1896, at Barney Montague's gambling den, married men were kept there until nearly daylight Sunday morning, shooting craps and drinking his "rot-gut" whisky with city officials.¹⁵

She called the saloon worse than "a Chinese opium joint" and said it should be closed or its proprietors locked up.

"Mother" appealed to the Grahams "to continue your good work in the JOURNAL, until the people of St. Marys are fully made aware of the disgraceful situation in this city."¹⁶

Was there any basis for the charges made by "Mother?" The answer is that there were saloons in St. Marys in 1896, and one of the saloons was run by Barney Montague. The number varied from five to as many as nine at one time in the city. The number of saloons and who owned them is determined by the police court records for the period. In St. Marys there was an interesting practice taking place. Almost every month

¹⁴"A Mother's Plea," Ibid., March 11, 1896, p. 8.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

saloonkeepers were called before the police judge and assessed a "fine" ranging from \$10 in 1893, to \$50 in 1902, the last year the saloons were allowed to operate, for violating the prohibition law. The "fine" was assessed consistently and indicates the city regarded the saloons as a source of substantial revenue.¹⁷

Whether or not gambling was going on in the city cannot be determined as easily. It is likely some was going on, though how much is conjecture. It would not be accurate to call the places "gambling dens" but it is likely some gambling went on in the establishments. As far as young men being ruined by prostitutes, there were more accusations than arrests.

In a ringing endorsement of the "letter," the Journal said of the city officials:

We believe that they are guilty, not only of violating the laws of the state, in allowing cut-throat gambling dens to flourish in the city, but women of bad character have been protected and allowed to ply their vocation with the full knowledge of some of our city officials.¹⁸

A day later the Star responded to "A Mother's Plea." In the Star's mind "Mother" was none other than James Graham. "Ma" had been known to the citizens for thirty years. "She" could be seen standing on a street corner or in a saloon "studying" how to get into the marshal's office.

¹⁷Examination of police court records 1893 to 1908.

¹⁸"What is Their Answer?" St. Marys Journal, March 11, 1896, p. 8.

"Ma" said "she" desired reform, but "she" was outside and wanted in. "She" was admonished to go home and take care of "her" own children.

The Star continued, calling Graham's charges "a harangue of lies and insinuations" for the purpose of deceiving the citizens. There was no more gambling in St. Marys than in any other town, and one could find a poker game in any city in Kansas. According to the Star, "Out of 800 newspapers published in Kansas the Journal is the only one that will lie about and seek to disgrace the good name of the town that supports it." The Star defended the city officials saying there had been fewer disturbances, less fighting and drunkenness than for many years. The streets were in good condition, and the administration of Peter O'Connor had done an excellent job of governing the city.¹⁹

On March 14 the Journal condemned Editor Jackson of the Star for belittling the pleadings of a mother. James Graham denied he was seeking the marshal's job and stated the Journal was doing its duty in public affairs.²⁰

Four days later the Journal, in a full page article, responded to the Star's accusations. It noted that the Star stood in favor of the present condition of the city, denied that crime was being committed in the city, and admitted that

¹⁹"A Public Nuisance," St. Marys Star, March 12, 1896, p. 5.

²⁰"Will See You," St. Marys Journal, March 14, 1896, p. 1.

a "cut-throat gambling den" was running full-blast with the knowledge of city officials. Graham denied that he had written the article. He claimed that a letter was received through the post office, and after reading it, visited the lady and tried to determine the truth regarding Montague's saloon. The lady convinced the Journal that she was responsible for the letter and stated that the conversation took place before two reliable citizens, her parents.

Regarding specific Star allegations, the Journal replied that the letter had named the individual who had insulted her as Barney Montague. How that was drawn from the letter is questionable, for the letter refers only to Montague's "gambling den," not to Montague insulting anyone. The Journal said the lady did not wish to give her name because she did not wish to disgrace her husband. The Star said it did not endorse "crap-shooting," yet in the same breath asserted that it went on in all communities, and thereby excused it. The Journal held the assertion that a poker fanatic could find a game in any town an insult to law and order. The Star's attitude was that one should keep silent about crime, but the Journal felt that "crime should be exposed."²¹ The Journal concluded:

We now say that the mother's appeal is true, that a gambling den of the lowest order has been run in the city all winter. Harlots have made their homes here,

²¹"As We See It," Ibid., March 18, 1896, p. 1.

and city officials have violated the gambling laws of the state.²²

The Star responded that the Journal failed to note that the streets were in better shape than they were when Graham was street commissioner. Graham tied his string to the "moral" kite instead of public improvements for the people. Editor Jackson charged that while Graham talked reform to the church people, his cohorts could be found in the saloons pledging protection. The Star stated it had positive information that the editor of the Journal read an article like "A Mothers Plea" to a certain married lady in St. Marys. With the assistance of others, Graham tried to bluff her into signing it. The Star wanted the Journal to indicate who the author was or the people would conclude it was the Journal editor.²³

On the 21st the Journal called Jackson's accusations a lie and claimed the Star had no information to prove its charge.²⁴ The Star replied that when "cornered he resorts to such epithets, characteristic of the low breeding of the creature" Jackson asserted that Graham read the article to Mrs. Andrew Mead in George Taylor's washhouse and asked her if she thought it was a good one. George Taylor was his authority, and no one could accuse Taylor of lying.²⁵

²²Ibid.

²³St. Marys Star, March 19, 1896, p. 5.

²⁴"Jumbo Will Lie," St. Marys Journal, March 21, 1896, p. 1. "Jumbo" was a derisive name for P. L. Jackson.

²⁵St. Marys Star, March 26, 1896, p. 4.

The Journal responded again by denying that James Graham was the source of the letter. The Journal, after making corrections, took the letter to the lady and asked her if it was correct, if it met with her approval, and she indicated the affirmative. Jackson lied when he charged that the Journal had tried to bluff a certain lady into signing the article. Jackson was accused of stooping to a low level when he tried to bring the name of a lady into the disgraceful affair, and in seeking to have the Journal divulge the name of the letter writer.²⁶

Regarding George Taylor, the Journal blew Jackson's statement apart. In a signed statement Taylor admitted that he and his family knew who wrote "A Mothers Plea," and the charge that it came from James Graham, or that he attempted to bluff anyone into signing it, was false. No one denied that the article was read in his house after it had been arranged for publication, but it was done so that the corrections, if there were any, could be made. Taylor suggested that the question of who lied could be answered by Jackson's conscience. Taylor said that neither he nor the Journal lied in the matter. "I told Jackson the truth, but he would not give it in his paper."²⁷

The Star said that the Journal spent two columns trying to let itself down as easily as possible. Jackson

²⁶"Jumbo Answered," St. Marys Journal, April 1, 1896, p. 1.

²⁷George Taylor, Ibid.

claimed the Journal admitted it wrote the letter and the "spy" wrote the letter for political purposes. When cornered he lied his way out of it. The letter, in Jackson's eyes, bore the earmarks of the "spy," but if someone else wished to father it, he did not care. The Star said it never dragged any private citizen into public print unless they criticized the Star first.²⁸ The Star appeared to be letting itself down as easily as possible.

Who wrote the letter? Mrs. Andrew Mead may or may not have written the letter. Taylor knew, but he was not saying. He destroyed Star accusations that the Journal had written it. No one can be sure who wrote the letter, but it is important to note that the Star never denied the accuracy of the statements made in the letter. We can be sure that at least some of "Mothers" statements were true, though possibly exaggerated.

Despite the attention devoted to "Mother," there was still time for a mayor's race. On March 26 the Star reported that a caucus called by James Graham and Welcome Johnson had required six ballots to select a secretary, and Andrew Nelson was nominated as candidate for mayor over Aaron Urbansky.²⁹ Urbansky was nominated to head the other ticket of which the Star approved.³⁰

²⁸St. Marys Star, April 2, 1896, p. 4.

²⁹"Graham Caucus," Ibid., March 26, 1896, p. 4.

³⁰Ibid., April 2, 1896, p. 4.

"Mother" did not stop the two sides from developing other issues. The Journal and the Star each gave different statistics on how much the city had spent from 1895 to 1896, how much it was in debt, and how much it had on hand. Each read into the figures what was wanted, and the public was left bewildered. The Journal did manage to make the credible statement that no quarterly report had been filed as required by law.³¹ Both papers also engaged in a comparison of the records of ex-marshal James Graham and the current marshal, Mike McCabe. They attempted to present evidence that their man had turned over more money from the police court than had the other fellow. Both managed to interpret the figures to read what they wanted them to read, and both seemed to advance the idea that the more money collected by the police court, the better the marshal.³²

Despite "A Mother's Plea," crime and vice carried the day easily as the ticket headed by Urbansky won handily. The Star said the Nelson ticket had been made up of good men but they were in bad company. Had they been elected, it would have been an endorsement of the Journal's abuse of officials.³³

³¹"Where The Money Went," St. Marys Star, April 2, 1896, p. 4; "No Report," St. Marys Journal, April 4, 1896, p. 1.

³²"About the Marshal," St. Marys Star, April 2, 1896, p. 4; "No Report," St. Marys Journal, April 4, 1896, p. 1.

³³St. Marys Star, April 9, 1896, p. 4.

Unable to take defeat gracefully, the Journal made excuses, but the real explosion came when the Journal responded to a dispatch written and sent to the Kansas City Times by Perry Jackson. According to the Journal, the dispatch attempted to give the impression that the city race was a party issue with Nelson being a Republican and Urbansky a Democrat. That impression was a lie, and the Journal charged Jackson with being a tool of a group "who have for the last two years worked up a personal, religious and a public school fight in this community," and had succeeded. Nelson was said to have been defeated on the issue of the public school. He was charged as an enemy of the parochial school, and in favor of taking away the \$1,000 of public school money that had been allowed by the district to the Sisters for operating the parochial school. Nelson never sought to interfere with the money the parochial school was receiving, but rumors were afloat that he would. The Journal noted that the patrons of the public school had sought to have some management over the public school, but had been denied that privilege.

The Journal also charged that certain Catholics accused Nelson of being an American Protective Association member or a Mason, not the kind of groups one would want to be associated with in a Catholic town when seeking public office. The Journal was sorry to say that some Catholics believed the charges.³⁴

³⁴"Why Nelson Was Defeated," St. Marys Journal, April 15, 1896, p. 1. Little appeared in print concerning

The problem with the Journal's charges was that Urbansky was Jewish, not Catholic. The political issue of the campaign was the forces of the Journal backing one candidate and the forces of the Star backing the other candidate whom the community seemed to approve.

1897

The city election of 1897 produced none of the acrimony that occurred in the 1896 race. The Journal centered most of its criticism on Marshal Mike McCabe who, it believed, had allowed the break-in of the Journal office in June 1896.³⁵

In its attacks on McCabe, the Journal charged the marshal with making a "jargled" report to the council. The report, according to the Journal, conflicted with the city treasurer's books. The treasurer showed receipts of \$3,610.91 and the marshal's report showed an income of \$2,206.60. The reports showed the acting marshal buying 100 hitching posts for \$79.18, and paying an additional \$20.00 to have them readied for use. The Journal called this squandering the people's money. In addition to receiving \$40.00 a month

public school problems. I am under the impression that there was always a certain degree of tension as long as this town had competing school systems. I can recall a need on the part of the Catholics to maintain some control of the school board to insure that the parochial grade school got bus service. With the closing of the parochial grade school, the tension dissipated.

³⁵See Chapter four for a full explanation.

salary, McCabe charged the city \$92.00 for sanitary work. The city spent \$199.84 for lumber and \$104.44 for hardware, and the Journal demanded to know where the money had gone. The report of the marshal showed this had been "the most extravagant, malicious and corrupt administration in the history of the city." The Journal suggested that a new mayor and council investigate and force McCabe and his henchmen to refund the money they had taken from the city.³⁶ There is no record that this was done.

In the same edition the Journal charged that the issue in the campaign was crime and corruption. According to the Journal

vulgar women have paraded their decayed charms upon our streets and in places of disrepute; a city official has been drunk and debauched; burglars and thieves have been the pets of the city marshal, and immorality with brazen face has put to shame the graces of virtue, honor and chastity.³⁷

In the Journal's eyes the only way to correct such activities was to select the Journal's candidates, John Aylward for mayor and Charles Dimler for marshal.³⁸

The Journal also predicted defeat for the Urbansky and McCabe ticket because they had been nominated by "The Fatal Thirteen." They had been nominated by petition with 13 signatures, headed by the Journal's old foe, Dr. Miller.³⁹

³⁶"How Do You Like It?" St. Marys Journal, April 1, 1897, p. 1.

³⁷"The Issue," Ibid. ³⁸Ibid.

³⁹"The Fatal Thirteen," Ibid.

The Journal got its wish, and Aylward and Dimler were elected in what it called the quietest election ever held.⁴⁰

1898

On March 17th the Eagle endorsed a "Citizen's Ticket" headed by John F. Buell for mayor. Editor Lee called the Citizen's caucus a good gathering of the solid and substantial taxpayers of St. Marys. The ticket was called a strong one and one that would not be controlled by any clique or faction.⁴¹ The Star concurred noting that the Citizen's caucus was attended by those representing the entire political spectrum of the community.⁴²

With endorsements like that the Journal had to object. Graham said the Tuesday caucus was a very quiet, secretly arranged affair held in Buell's office. The Journal indicated its disapproval of secret affairs that tended to be for personal gain rather than public good.⁴³

The Journal endorsed John Aylward for re-election and called Buell's desire for office "insatiable." It warned that the post office clique was trying to gain control

⁴⁰"The People Win," Ibid., April 8, 1897, p. 1.

⁴¹"Citizen's Ticket," St. Marys Eagle, March 17, 1898, p. 1.

⁴²"Citizen's Caucus," St. Marys Star, March 17, 1898, p. 5.

⁴³"Private Nomination," St. Marys Journal, March 18, 1898, p. 1.

of everything in the city, and wished to know who had issued the call for the Buell caucus.⁴⁴

The Eagle's chief comment on the caucus which nominated Aylward was that "A good crowd was present, the special feature being the absence of businessmen and taxpayers."⁴⁵

One of the Journal's chief concerns was keeping the opposition candidate for marshal, Mike Quigley, from being elected. Quigley's problem was that he was supposedly on duty when the Journal office was broken into. Quigley either allowed the office to be broken into or was negligent of his duty, and the Journal wondered how any businessman could support Quigley.⁴⁶

The Eagle, in its electioneering, denied that Buell sought the mayor's job. Buell refused the nomination until he was presented with a petition signed by a large number of businessmen and taxpayers. Editor Lee of the Eagle believed St. Marys needed a mayor who would not be controlled by any man or group of men.⁴⁷ Lee also denied the charge that the

⁴⁴"Democratic Caucus," Ibid., p. 8.

⁴⁵"The Aylward Caucus," St. Marys Eagle, March 24, 1898, p. 1.

⁴⁶St. Marys Journal, March 25, 1898, p. 8. (See chapter four for a full story on the break-in of the Journal office. Briefly, the Journal office was broken into in June, 1896, and the Journal alleged conspiracy on the part of several individuals.)

⁴⁷"Off As Usual," St. Marys Eagle, March 31, 1898, p. 1.

Buell ticket was nominated in secret by dishonest methods, and the character of the men who attended the meeting precluded such a practice. Lee made the point that the majority of a "Public" caucus nominated James McGovern for marshal but he lost to Charles Dimler in a "one-horse sideshow" at an attorney's office which nominated the same ticket except for McGovern. Lee indicated his objection to John Aylward was that he allowed himself to be dictated to by outside parties with "axes to grind."⁴⁸

The Journal's electioneering occurred a day later. The Journal listed the names of some of the taxpayers at the Aylward caucus and invited Lee to list the taxpayers attending the Buell caucus.⁴⁹

Quigley was again attacked as being involved with the break-in of the Journal office. On the night of the Journal break-in the lights in the vicinity of its office were out, but it was Quigley's duty to see that they were on. The Journal asked if "he put the lights out?"⁵⁰

The Journal's greatest concern was to prevent Mike Quigley from becoming marshal. The activities surrounding the break-in seem sufficient to have warranted the Journal's fear of Quigley.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹"Eagle Please Copy," St. Marys Journal, April 1, 1898, p. 1.

⁵⁰"Why Were the Lights Out?" Ibid.

In the same issue Charles Dimler reported that he had withdrawn from the race for marshal and urged the voters to vote for James McGovern.⁵¹

In this election everyone was pleased with the outcome for everyone got someone elected. The ticket endorsed by the Star elected the police judge, city clerk, and three councilmen. The Star, pleased with winning a majority of the council seats, noted that Buell had lost by only 20 votes.⁵²

The Journal was pleased that it elected the mayor, street commissioner, marshal, and two councilmen. The Journal reveled in the "unmerciful" defeat McGovern handed to Quigley. The Journal, however, did find excuses for losses by three of its five candidates for council.⁵³

1899

The 1899 race was a quiet one with the Journal reaching the peak of its influence; its friends composed a majority on the city council.

The only electioneering occurred on March 10 when the Journal indicated where it stood. It was opposed to any man who was in favor of running the city into debt, opposed to class legislation in St. Marys, opposed to the election of

⁵¹"To the People," St. Marys Star, April 7, 1898, p. 1.

⁵²"The City Election," St. Marys Star, April 7, 1898, p. 1.

⁵³"The People Win," St. Marys Journal, April 8, 1898, p. 1.

men who allowed themselves to be used by "some bigheaded boss," and opposed to those who would attempt to injure the interests of another citizen. It favored city improvements as far as the taxpayers were able to pay for them, favored the strictest economy in city government, favored holding city officials responsible for the collection of revenues and expenditures, and favored the enforcement of ordinances by the marshal and his assistants.⁵⁴

With Aylward refusing to seek re-election, two caucuses, the Citizen's and Democratic, nominated the same men for mayor and council, with one exception. The tickets were headed by Aaron Urbansky for mayor and James Graham was one of the nominees for councilman.⁵⁵ Opposition was offered by a ticket, filed by petition, with Buell the candidate for mayor and John Erbacher, an old foe of the Journal, one of the candidates for councilman.⁵⁶

This election was noted for the absence of charges and counter-charges. If there was any political activity, it was not expressed in the papers.

Urbansky was elected mayor and James Graham was elected by one vote over his old "foe" John Erbacher to the city council. The Citizen's ticket elected three to the

⁵⁴"Where We Stand," Ibid., March 10, 1899, p. 1.

⁵⁵"Citizen's Caucus," Ibid., March 24, 1899, p. 1; Democratic Caucus," Ibid., p. 8.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 1.

council while the Buell ticket elected two.⁵⁷ However, the voting patterns of the council did not follow the election results, and Urbansky sided with the individuals elected on the Buell ticket.

Perhaps the most important part of the race was the post-election verbosity the Journal engaged in. According to it, the only elements or factions which took any interest or worked to defeat a Democrat were the "Millerism, Ryanism, and the Erbacher octopus." The fight against James Graham was supposed to have been invincible, but he defeated the "gang." Speaking of Graham's victory, the Journal stated:

The people are not ruled by jealousy, spite, hatred, which are the trinity of evils that represent the political god of the traitorous gang of fallen angels once called democrats. Shall we have peace or war? We are ready for either.⁵⁸

It was to be war.

During the year that the Journal and its friends controlled city government, two issues divided the community and helped bring their downfall in the city election of 1900.

The first issue was city printing. The Star and Journal fought viciously over that morsel. Shortly after taking office, Mayor Urbansky, along with Councilmen George Mohler and Ed Roberts, wanted to let the city printing contract to the lowest bidder. Councilmen Graham and P. H. McHale

⁵⁷"City Election Results," St. Marys Eagle, April 6, 1899, p. 4.

⁵⁸"The Gang Defeated," St. Marys Journal, April 7, 1899, p. 1.

were opposed and Councilman Joseph Cunneen was undecided.⁵⁹ The problem was that the Star proposed to do the city printing free, and this the Journal and James Graham would not accept.⁶⁰ The Journal regarded the move as a cheap proposal and claimed that at one time the Star charged 60 per cent of the legal rates. It believed the Star was engaging in spite work in order to get the city printing.⁶¹ This issue was fought over for four months and forced city business to a standstill. The Journal was close to the truth, because city printing traditionally went to the city council's pet newspaper. The Eagle had a good time lampooning the Star and Journal, calling the city printing fight a "Democratic battle" and using military descriptions to describe the dispute.⁶²

Not until Councilman Graham, President of the Council, was sitting in the chair as acting mayor for the absent Urbansky did the dispute cease with the passage of an ordinance fixing the legal rates at 35¢ per square (approximately one inch) for the first insertion and 25¢ for those

⁵⁹"City Council Proceedings," St. Marvys Star, April 13, 1899, p. 1.

⁶⁰"City Printing," Ibid., April 20, 1899, p. 4; St. Marvys Journal, May 5, 1899, p. 7 & 8.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²"Fight Er Out," St. Marvys Eagle, May 18, 1899, p. 4.

thereafter and, most important, the Journal was made the official paper.⁶³

The second issue which divided the council was the night-watchman. On April 24 the mayor refused to appoint a night-watchman hoping he could keep Quigley on. Councilman Graham proposed Quigley be removed as of May 1, and the motion carried.⁶⁴ The Journal blasted the mayor for attempting to appoint Quigley night-marshal, and accused Quigley of a multitude of sins.⁶⁵ The failure to appoint a night-marshal who acted as lamplighter enraged the Star. Whenever a burglary, fire, or some other infamous act occurred, the Star made the Journal responsible. The Star repeatedly urged that Councilmen Graham, McHale, and Cunneen be censured for their actions.⁶⁶

In response, the Journal continually repeated its displeasure with Quigley, centered on the fact that he was to have been on duty when the Journal office was broken into in June, 1896. The Journal hinted that Quigley had been involved in some way. The Journal wanted to know what made the Star think Quigley could stop burglaries in 1899 if he did not stop

⁶³St. Marys Eagle, August 10, 1899, p. 1.

⁶⁴"Council Meeting," St. Marys Journal, April 28, 1899, p. 1.

⁶⁵"We Wonder," Ibid., p. 8.

⁶⁶St. Marys Star, August 17, 1899, p. 4.

them in 1896. The Journal's final point was that the failure to appoint a night-marshal saved the city \$200, which the financially embarrassed city needed.⁶⁷ The city never did get a night-marshal, and the Star never let anyone forget the city did not have a night-marshal.

These are just two of the items which raised havoc during the year. The first two months of the council meetings had the appearances of parliamentary brawls. After this two-month period Mayor Urbansky apparently excused himself often and James Graham guided city affairs.

1900

The year of the Graham machine soured St. Marys on the Grahams for good. Never again was the Journal able to put its friends in control of city government.

On March 22 the Star reported that three caucuses had been held to nominate city tickets. One, the Citizen's caucus, called one of the largest and most enthusiastic meetings ever held in St. Marys, was attended by all classes and affiliations. The Republican caucus endorsed the Citizen's ticket, and the Democratic caucus expressed differences only on the city clerk and marshal positions.⁶⁸ In endorsing the Citizen's and Democratic caucuses the Star said the people were tired

⁶⁷"Now For Some Fun," St. Marys Journal, September 8, 1899, p. 1.

⁶⁸"City Caucuses Held," St. Marys Star, March 22, 1900, p. 1.

of the way city affairs had been conducted. St. Marys needed a good, clean "business administration of city affairs."⁶⁹

With the Eagle backing the Citizen's ticket, the Journal was the odd man out. Nevertheless, it took up the challenge. While admitting the Citizen's caucus drew a large crowd, the Journal ridiculed it. The caucus was chaired by William Costello and the secretary was "Willie Green of the Twinkler."⁷⁰ The caucus had difficulty deciding whether or not to endorse the Citizen's caucus and a heated discussion took place revealing "the fact that the same old gang, whose breasts are filled with rancor and hatred for James Graham," were in control of the caucus. It noted that in endorsing the Citizen's caucus, the Democrats had nominated a good Republican, Ed Johnson, to head the ticket.⁷¹

A week later the Star reported that opposition had developed in the form of a "People's Ticket" headed by William Zeigler, nominated by a petition signed by 15 citizens. One nominee had declined the nomination and another

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 4. Occasionally, in order to attract as broad a constituency as possible, several caucuses would be organized and would nominate the same individuals. By and large, city races were non-partisan affairs. The caucuses themselves were not all that important. The importance lay in which paper was supporting their candidates.

⁷⁰A derisive name for William J. Moriarty, editor of the St. Marys Star, and the paper he ran. Moriarty took over the Star in 1897 and ran it to 1903.

⁷¹"City Politics," St. Marys Eagle, March 22, 1900, p. 8; "What Will They Gain?" St. Marys Journal, March 23, 1900, p. 1.

was on one of the other tickets. The Star claimed that the ticket would not do much on election day, and it bore the earmarks of James Graham, containing names of men who were defeated at the Citizen's caucus by 16 to one. According to the Star, the Grahams, after their defeat at the Citizen's caucus and being ignored at the Democratic caucus, put up a ticket by petition. Editor Moriarty of the Star presumed the People's ticket was done in harmony with a resolution (not described by the editor) offered at the Democratic caucus by James Graham and not seconded until John, "like a dutiful son," did so. According to the Star, "Were it not for these disturbers, St. Marys people would be united in many things for the common good of the city." If the people wanted the city run as James Graham desired, they were urged to vote for the "people's ticket." But if they wanted the town run in a businesslike manner, they should vote for Ed Johnson.⁷²

In endorsing Zeigler the Journal stated that he had worked his way up the business ladder until he ranked with the leading businessmen of the community. The group supporting Johnson had done certain things that called for rebuke, but the Journal failed to give any indication what they were. Of all the tickets in the field, only the "people's ticket" was representative of the laboring people of the city.⁷³

⁷²"People's Ticket," St. Marys Star, March 29, 1900, p. 4.

⁷³"City Election," St. Marys Journal, March 30, 1900, p. 1 & 8.

The city election was a complete victory for the Citizen's ticket which won the elections by majorities of 80 to 90 votes.⁷⁴

The Star was gratified with the results of the election. During the past year the people had lost confidence in city government and the Star rejoiced that a change had taken place.⁷⁵ Commenting on the Graham faction's control of the city, the Star stated:

The city was never in a worse condition, partly on account of the small-pox epidemic, but largely on account of the bad administration of public affairs and the inability of the old officials to discharge the grave duties which fell to their lot.⁷⁶

The Journal ended the season with two closing outbursts. First it denied that it had put up the "people's ticket," claiming that James Graham had disapproved of the course, but was prevailed upon to apply his expertise in drawing up a petition. The Journal denied that any of the Grahams played any part in selecting the ticket, and branded Moriarty a "first-class liar."⁷⁷

A week later the Journal blasted the Star for saying the last administration had not done anything for the city. The Journal then took it upon itself to defend the actions of that administration.⁷⁸

⁷⁴"City Election," St. Marys Star, April 5, 1900, p. 1.

⁷⁵"The Result," Ibid., p. 4. ⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷"A First-Class Liar," St. Marys Journal, April 6, 1900, p. 1.

⁷⁸"They Did Very Well," Ibid., April 13, 1900, p. 1.

The Grahams proved that the voters did not want them controlling the city government, and James Graham did not test the voters feelings toward him by standing for re-election. James Graham may have found life more interesting on the outside looking in with none of the responsibilities and all the opportunities to criticize.

1901

On March 21 the Star reported that a petition signed by 70 persons had endorsed Mayor Johnson and his council for another term. They had done a good job for the community and had not served for the gain of someone or some group. In the Star's view, everyone felt they should be retained but a "few disgruntled saloon men" and a "few petty politicians who always want to make political capital out of the city's business affairs." That group, according to Editor Moriarty, had by clever manipulation drawn two forces together with enough people to muster another ticket.⁷⁹

In the same issue the Star defined those malicious enough to oppose Johnson. To be in this group, one had to oppose Johnson and believe in free saloons. This group held a caucus at city hall and put up a slate which had been previously decided upon at the Buell grain office by the "Lee--Buell--Graham--Powers combine." The ticket was headed by Buell for mayor and a full slate was put up.⁸⁰

⁷⁹"Citizen's Party Ticket," St. Marys Star, March 21, 1901, p. 4.

⁸⁰"Voters Caucus," Ibid.

Lee did not like the advertisement and responded a week later. Lee categorically denied that he was in favor of free saloons and charged that six months earlier Moriarty had tried to "make capital" against the Eagle by pretending to be a friend of the saloons, and insinuated that the Eagle was their enemy. Lee went on to add that there was a drinking club, the Harmony Club, in the city, open nights and possibly on Sundays, in which Moriarity was said to be a member. The Eagle had nothing against the club, but disliked the Star's insinuations that Lee favored free saloons.⁸¹

On March 28 the Star did its electioneering. It said a vote for the old administration was one for clean, economical city government, that there would be a rivalry between Welcome Johnson and James Graham for marshal if Buell was elected, and that Buell was the only individual anxious to be in office, while the candidates on the Johnson ticket were only interested in the town, not the office. Moriarty stuck with his belief that the Buell ticket had the support of the saloonkeepers. "Saloon men as a class are shrewd and usually know which side their bread is buttered on."⁸² The Star also noted that several of the candidates on the Buell ticket had withdrawn.⁸³

⁸¹"Who Believes in Free Saloons?" St. Marys Eagle, March 28, 1901, p. 1.

⁸²St. Marys Star, March 28, 1901, p. 1.

⁸³"Don't Want the Honor," Ibid.

Finally the Star noted the strange bedfellows of St. Marys politics. In its view there was something unusual going on when two leaders of the two factions who had disturbed business and social life for years shook hands, united their forces, and marched under the Buell banner.

One of the most amusing sights incident to the election is to see Dr. Geo. Miller and James Graham riding peacefully along in the Buell Band Wagon with the rest of the boys singing "Hail to the Chief."⁸⁴

In its bout of electioneering, the Journal hoped that the voters would not vote along party lines or as cliques, pointing out that a mayor was a small figure once the appointments were made and confirmed by the council.⁸⁵

The Journal endorsed the entire Buell ticket with one exception, and asked the laboring men what they thought of men running for re-election to the council who hired teams from the country to do the work on the city streets.⁸⁶

The incumbents prevailed and the Johnson ticket was elected by majorities of 60 to 120. The only close race was the one for police judge with the incumbent winning by ten votes. The Star was pleased with the result. It had nothing against the men who composed the Buell ticket, but "they allowed themselves to become parties to an opposition to the

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵"The City Election," St. Marys Journal, March 29, 1901, p. 1.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 1.

present Mayor and Council for which there was no valid reason whatever."⁸⁷

In its columns the Journal noted that in the election political lines were obliterated, and the issue, though concealed for a while, became visible when the Eagle declared for high licenses and waged war on the Harmony Club. The saloons and druggists played a prominent role in the battle for supremacy. The Johnson side was well managed and saw that the day had passed when the saloon element alone could elect the city ticket. "This sentiment alone was enough to defeat the Buell ticket." When Lee came out with his attack on the Harmony Club and Moriarty, "war was immediately declared against every man on the Buell ticket." The Journal found the result a good lesson for the Democrats of St. Marys. They had been used by the two Republican factions to "pull their chestnuts out of the fire." The Journal urged that the Democrats thereafter select a straight Democratic ticket for city offices.⁸⁸

In examining the city elections from 1895 to 1901, we have seen that the opposing forces tended to back their man to the hilt and were willing to use whatever means they could to discredit the opposition. It is interesting that the same paper could question the ability of a man to be mayor one

⁸⁷"The Result," St. Marys Star, April 4, 1901, p. 1.

⁸⁸"The Result," St. Marys Journal, April 5, 1901, p. 1.

year and turn around and find him to be an fine outstanding individual the next year, e.g., J. F. Buell.

When the period started, Miller and the Journal were in bitter opposition. At its conclusion, they were supporting the same candidate. We can only conjecture on the reasons for the turn of events, but there are some possibilities. In the 1901 election the Journal may have offered the explanation. The day may have passed when the saloon element could dominate city government, and the saloons were closed down completely in 1903. The Graham and Miller forces competed for support from the saloon element and the victor won the election. It could also be suggested that the Miller faction had disintegrated and sought new leadership. If, as the Star stated, the Miller and Graham forces united in the election and lost by a whopping margin, then someone's faction was very weak. Since Miller was not heard from after 1901, it is to be assumed that it was the Miller faction that had sought new leaders. The leadership may have transferred to Tom Ryan, who dominated city government from 1902 through the rest of the Journal's period.

Chapter 4

THE JOURNAL VERSUS GEORGE WELSH

The Journal fought no other individual as long and as hard as George Welsh. This feud lasted seven years and was the most bitter of the Journal battles, and included some actual violence. Almost all that we know of George Welsh is contained within this chapter, for he left abruptly and we have no definite obituary on him.¹

What we do know of George Welsh is that perhaps no other individual graced the confines of the Pottawatomie house of correction as often as he did. His record of rascality, corruption and evasion of the law rival any in the annals of Pottawatomie County. He was the prime example of those who did not wish to see the prohibition law enforced, and his corruption was thoroughly explored by the St. Marys Journal.

The county courthouse has a record of George Welsh's existence long before the birth of the Journal. In December 1883 George Welsh was charged in two separate indictments with a total of 26 counts of selling alcohol, and in a third indictment with maintaining a saloon. The incidents occurred

¹The April 4, 1912 issue of the St. Marys Star reported that George C. Welsh had died in Muskogee, Oklahoma. There were no remarks on a residency in St. Marys, and it is uncertain if this is the same George C. Welsh of this chapter. "George C. Welsh Dead," St. Marys Star, April 4, 1912, p. 6.

in St. Marys and the county sheriff ordered to abate the nuisance of Welsh's saloon was James Graham.² Prior to the origin of the Journal the court records show Welsh made compulsory appearances at the county seat in 1890, 1891, and 1894 for violations of the prohibition law.³

In 1892 and 1893 while Clint Graham was in partnership with P. L. Jackson, the comments on George Welsh were for the most part favorable. The Star complimented Welsh on his lunch counter and opening of a hotel. However, there was one note of discord. The Star reported that Welsh had denounced the Democratic party and had taken sides with the Republican party. It had not been ascertained whether he had done it for political office or to help his trade.⁴

In September of 1895, the Journal gave its first inklings of problems with Welsh. The Journal noted that Welsh had opened a saloon in the Hagert building and was having trouble with a gentleman named Sly Struble who had rented the building for a billiard hall, with an option to buy, over possession of the building. The Journal noted that Welsh was a "disturbing element" wherever he was, and if he came back to St. Marys to violate the law and create turmoil, he would not meet with public tolerance.⁵

²In Pottawatomie County District Court, State of Kansas v. Geo. Welsh, nos. 316, 319, 320.

³Ibid., nos. 460, 498, 583.

⁴St. Marys Star, March 3, 1892, p. 5; August 11, 1892, p. 5.

⁵St. Marys Journal, September 14, 1895, p. 5.

A week later the Journal said Welsh was lying when he said Jim Graham closed down the saloons. Welsh threatened to kill the Journal proprietors if they ever mentioned his name again. The Journal said it had nothing to do with the closings, but was reliably informed that Welsh's place had been open much of the time since the others were closed, and he should have no objection since he was making money while the others were forced to obey the county attorney.⁶

In April of 1896, the Journal noted that an individual of "unenviable notoriety" took the liberty of visiting its office and threatening death to anyone connected with the Journal if they dared publish his name, or the name of his favorite female visitors again. The cause of the outburst, the Journal noted, was the arrival in the city of Miss Alice Dykeman "who is well known to the citizens of St. Marys," and was reported as a visitor to the town the previous week. The unnamed individual revealed he must be closely related to the lady of ill repute. The man was a married man and the Journal did not wish to disgrace his family, "but his acts with this and other female characters are a public scandal." The Journal warned that men of his character were not to come to the office and dictate their will. "He stands today in

⁶"A Misrepresentation," Ibid., September 21, 1895, p. 1. The Graham's position on the saloons is hazy, but seems to have been that it opposed anything that it could not control. While the Journal often railed against the saloons, the other papers occasionally reported on the Graham's drinking problems. The Journal seemed to be alleging that the county attorney favored Welsh.

If Welsh's establishment was open he was not paying the city "fine."

the clutches of the law, [and] if a prosecution for blackmail is started against him, he will land where he belongs."⁷ The Journal did not name the individual, but it is a safe bet that it was referring to Welsh.

In May of 1896, the Journal reported that on orders of George Welsh all the saloons were closed. In what proved to be an ominous warning, the Journal stated:

we are onto the whole game from beginning to date and will venture the prediction that somebody will get pinched before this "joint game" is played out.⁸

The Journal was correct that someone would get "pinched," but unfortunately the Journal was the one that got "pinched."

On May 30 two articles appeared in the Journal and created some trouble. The first entitled "Same Old Gag" stated:

We are informed that the attorney general of the state has served notice that the saloons and gambling houses in St. Marys must close. "Rats," this old chestnut is stale; [sic] It is another scheme to extort money out of the boys by the "agent" who has been making them put up from \$15 to \$30 per month for the past three years. What we want to find out is, who has commissioned George Welsh to demand money from saloon men? By what authority does he ply his illegal blackmailing? Men are in the penitentiary for less crime than this "agent" is guilty of.⁹

If that was not enough, the same issue of the Journal ran another article titled "Corruption" indicating that the

⁷"Our Right," Ibid., April 22, 1896, p. 1.

⁸Ibid., May 6, 1896, p. 8.

⁹"Same Old Gag," Ibid., May 30, 1896, p. 1.

Journal did not wish to start warfare against anyone with its commentary on the style and manner in which the liquor situation had been handled. But the matter was of public concern and was to be treated as such. The charge of bribery was serious, and the Journal was treating it seriously.

Concerning the charges that had been made on page one:

Those CAN be made out, and this monkey business that has been carried on for the past three years in connection with the saloon business, will be fully exposed. The JOURNAL is not afraid of a libel suit.¹⁰

A week later the Journal stated that the "Agent" had warned the Journal to keep silent about the way the saloon "business of St. Marys has been conducted." The "Agent" had said that saloons could open if the Journal would keep silent. The Journal said it did not care where he got his authority to "ply his nefarious business" in the community, but said that the laws of the state could be used by the people of St. Marys as "well as by the county attorney." The Journal said it did not want trouble, but it would not be deterred from what it considered to be its duty. This is one of the few times it is difficult to question the Journal's motives. The Journal indicated that if the individual could be induced to cease his activities then it would "let well enough alone." But it warned that "No 'Agents' are recognized by the JOURNAL; the statutes of the state of Kansas must control in the future."¹¹

¹⁰"Corruption," Ibid., p. 8.

¹¹"Our Position," Ibid., June 3, 1896, p. 8.

The Journal got more trouble than it had bargained for. The statement came out on June 3, 1896. That night the office of the Journal was entered, the press smashed, and the type deposited in the Kansas River. The Journal was not back in operation until June 11, 1896, and then it was published on the Eagle press.

On June 11 the Journal gave an extensive account of the burglary and destruction.

On Wednesday night of last week the Journal office, situated in the very heart of the city, under the protecting care and vigilant(?) eye of our nightwatchman, was broken into by three or more of the lowest and most debased scoundrels ever permitted to go unhung, the press smashed to pieces and the type pied and taken away, we know not where.¹²

The damage included a big balance wheel broken and a revolving ink disc destroyed. The cost was about \$50. The greatest loss was approximately 225 pounds of various kinds of type.

According to the Journal, investigation showed the press had been struck no less than 50 times by a small hammer or hatchet. Found strewn about the room were a dozen burnt matches, and the noise was loud enough to wake people over half a block away. From this the Journal assumed the destruction had taken some time, and the felons had little fear of detection.

The first real clue to the perpetrators of the deed was furnished by William Moore, a Negro from Kansas City, who

¹²"Outlawry," Ibid., June 11, 1896, p. 1.

said George Welsh offered him five dollars Wednesday if he would break into the Journal office that night, steal the type, and bring it to Welsh. Moore was assured that there would be no danger "as the night marshal knew all about it and would not bother him," and James Graham was in Topeka not due to return until about midnight when Welsh would be at the train and warn of Graham's return. "Other parties have also heard Welsh threaten to demolish the office."

Among the tracks made in the Journal office Thursday morning was one set by someone who wore rubbers, the grain of the rubber sole showing in the dust on the stairway leading to the street. A buggy track leading to the river was followed; the foot track covered with rubber was plainly visible; another track at a uniform distance indicated two men walking side by side as if carrying something between them.

A search warrant was issued and Sunday morning Welsh's saloon was visited. On an ice chest was a pair of rubbers that measured the same as the tracks in the office and near the river. A pair of old shoes were found that indicated they had been in sand recently. Also found were three pieces of type of the kind used by the Journal, and a hatchet with its face battered and covered with a black substance similar to the paint and ink of a press. Welsh was subsequently arrested and, unable to make the \$1,000 bond, was taken to jail.¹³

¹³Ibid.

The Journal further charged that the marshal and his assistant were involved in the plot to destroy the Journal, and accused them of being tools "of vice and immorality." All the evidence obtained was collected without the assistance of the officers and "in spite of their strenuous efforts to suppress evidence." It called the arrest of a principal witness against Welsh (not identified) an attempt to run him out of town and "repulsive to all sense of manhood or honor." Their dismissal from office was urged. The Journal concluded by saying that it believed the night marshal was implicated with the burglars and was now defending them.¹⁴

The Star and Eagle responded to the event with uncharacteristic sympathy for the Journal. The Star indicated that destruction for spite could not be tolerated in any community. The Star urged that the guilty parties be brought to justice, and if the individuals responsible needed revenge, they should have gone about it differently.¹⁵

The Eagle commented that the felons were Too cowardly to openly attack the editor of the Journal, they sneak under the cover of night and wantonly destroy his property. . . .They would do the same to others who happen to incur their enmity. Mr. Graham is often outspoken and vindictive, and yet this is no excuse for the outrage perpetrated Wednesday night. . . .Every citizen, whether he likes Jim Graham or not, should help ferret out the destroyers of the Journal office.¹⁶

¹⁴"Incompetency or Rascality, Which?" Ibid.

¹⁵"A Mean Act," St. Marys Star, June 4, 1896, p. 5.

¹⁶"Vandalism," St. Marys Eagle, June 5, 1896, p. 1.

The Westmoreland Recorder gave the break-in extensive coverage noting that the Journal had been severely criticizing the manner of enforcement of the prohibitory law. The Recorder hoped that the charges that County Attorney B. H. Tracy accepted money through George Welsh from saloonkeepers would be cleared up. The Recorder did not believe Tracy guilty of any wrong doing. It also believed that Welsh had acted on his own and used Tracy's name. However, Tracy owed it to himself and the Republican party to show he was not involved. The Recorder, as a good prohibition paper, concluded that "The destruction of the Journal office of St. Marys is an illustration of the law defying methods of saloon power."¹⁷

Despite the fact that George Welsh had been arrested, the Journal's case against him must have been fairly weak. On July 23 the Journal offered a \$150 reward for any evidence that would convict one or more the parties who had broken into the Journal office, or \$25 for any clue that would implicate or lead to the implication of any person connected with the act. In addition, James Graham pledged to deposit \$100 as a guarantee that he would not make public the name of the party giving the clue without his consent.¹⁸

When the case was brought to the district court on the second of September 1896, the case was continued at the

¹⁷"Go To The Bottom," Westmoreland Recorder, June 11, 1896, p. 1.

¹⁸"\$150 Reward," St. Marys Journal, July 23, 1896, p. 1.

request of the state, and continued again at the December term of the court. Finally, on April 7, 1897, the county attorney entered an nolle prosequi and the court ordered Welsh discharged.¹⁹ The failure to convict was the failure of James Graham to obtain the two witnesses whom he said would implicate George Welsh. According to the affidavits, one William Moore, who was located in the Douglas County jail in September, and in December was in the state penitentiary, would state, if he were brought before the court, that Welsh offered him five dollars to destroy the Journal printing office, and told him there would be no danger for the night-watch was posted and would not interfere. Moore refused to have anything to do with the break-in and the deed was committed later that night. The second witness was Issac Henderson, who was hiding somewhere outside the county. If present Henderson would have stated that he was acquainted with Welsh, and Welsh had told him he would destroy Graham's printing office if Graham said anything more about Welsh. At both terms of court, the affidavit signed by James Graham indicated that the non-appearing pair could be brought to the next term of court.²⁰ Upon them rested the case.

On July 16 the Journal charged that one Fred Chipman, "an inoffensive boy," was struck in the back of the head with

¹⁹In Pottawatomie County District Court, State of Kansas v. George Welsh, no. 638. A nolle prosequi is an entry made upon the records of a court when the plaintiff or prosecutor will proceed no further in a suit or action. Its effect is to dismiss an action.

²⁰Ibid.

a large match box by a bar keeper in Welsh's "gambling saloon and bagnio." The boy was confined to bed for several days with spasms, yet no arrests had been made. The Journal condemned such cowardice and urged the city officers to purge the city of such scoundrels.²¹

In 1898, Welsh, not confining his activities to the city of St. Marys, was tried in the police court of Onaga for violating the city ordinance against selling liquor. After a trial he was found guilty on three counts and fined \$300 and costs. An appeal was taken to the district court with Welsh giving bond.²² In the district court the case would eventually be decided against Welsh, but not before it dragged through the courts for a couple of years. On September 8, 1898, in the district court, a motion to quash was denied, and on the 13th a motion to arrest judgement was made and denied by the court. On the same day the defendant presented a bill of exceptions and it was allowed. In April of 1899, the appeal taken by Welsh to the Court of Appeals Northern Department, Eastern Division of the state of Kansas was denied and the defendant not being in court, the court ordered Welsh's appeal bond to the Onaga Police Court forfeited and Welsh arrested.²³

²¹"An Outrage," St. Marys Journal, July 16, 1896, p. 1.

²²Onaga Courier, August 18, 1896, p. 8.

²³In Pottawatomie County District Court, City of Onaga v. Geo. C. Welsh, no. 683.

Not until 1901 did the Onaga city council order the mayor and marshal to St. Marys to arrest Welsh who owed Onaga some forfeited bonds, fines, and assessments for selling alcohol within the city limits.²⁴

In August 1898 Welsh made another court appearance charged with 17 counts of selling alcohol during 1897 and 1898. He was found guilty on 8 counts and not guilty on 9, fined \$273.65 and costs, and sentenced to 30 days in jail on each count. Welsh appealed and failed to appear in court when ordered to do so. In this case, the state again, in 1900, entered a nolle prosequi.²⁵

In September of 1900, the St. Marys city council was faced with a problem. There had been many complaints made against Marshal Howerton for dereliction in his duties, and in regard to the manner in which certain ordinances were enforced. The marshal as an elected official could not be fired by the council, so his salary was reduced to one dollar per month, and the office of assistant marshal was established with the mayor to name the assistant and fix the assistant's salary at \$20 per month.²⁶ Mayor Johnson appointed George Welsh!²⁷ The Journal was not very pleased with Welsh's

²⁴"Council Meeting," Onaga Herald, February 7, 1901, p. 4.

²⁵In Pottawatomie County District Court, The State of Kansas v. George C. Welsh, no. 689.

²⁶"Council Proceedings," St. Marys Star, September 27, 1900, p. 1.

²⁷Ibid., p. 5.

appointment, and the Journal's attacks became long and frequent.

The first problem that Welsh had with the Journal was over possession of a slot machine. The Journal said he had it, but that this was wrong. In October of 1900, the Journal asked the city council why their assistant marshal was allowed to run a gambling machine in open violation of the law.²⁸ There was no response.

The Journal started off 1901 by reporting that several parties had a dispute over who should operate slot machines in the city. The marshal who had had a slot machine running at different places in the city for several months was compelled to move it to city hall so as to be in a position to prevent another party from doing the same thing. The Journal wondered if Mayor Johnson intended to give the marshal the privilege of violating state laws and not allow others to do the same. The Journal urged that the mayor and council be removed for appointing Welsh.²⁹

In February the Journal reported that Judge McFadden had fined Welsh a one dollar for giving Al Croutcher a black eye. The Journal thought it was a cheap black eye, and the mayor was urged to teach his marshal better tricks.³⁰

²⁸St. Marys Journal, October 26, 1900, p. 5.

²⁹"Slot Machines," Ibid., January 4, 1901, p. 1.

³⁰Ibid., February 15, 1901, p. 12.

On May 10 the Journal noted that the Star had reported a week previously that W. F. McCarthy had been arrested for gambling by the city marshal and fined five dollars. The Journal wanted to know why all gamblers were not arrested. Two weeks earlier Welsh told a Journal reporter that he "straightened up" a gambling deal in which one of the city's prominent citizens had lost a watch and \$10. The Journal wanted to know why the city records did not show any arrest record. All violators of the law should have been prosecuted and urged the mayor and council to do something about it. The Journal then said of Welsh:

The Journal wants to say right here, however, that Marshal Welsh in some respects makes as good a marshal as the city of St. Marys ever had, but his stand on the gambling question is entirely out of the bounds of reason.³¹

On the fifth anniversary of the Journal break-in, the Journal reported that "six years ago" its office was broken into. The Journal claimed that Welsh had recently admitted he knew who had broken into the Journal office, but declined to name the guilty parties, and proclaimed his own innocence. The Journal said it was not convinced of Welsh's innocence, and condemned the mayor and council for allowing a man to continue in office who knew who committed the act, but declined to expose the criminals. The marshal's duty was to expose felons, not to protect them.³²

³¹"All Gamblers Look Alike to The Journal," Ibid., May 10, 1901, p. 1.

³²"The Black and Disgraceful Cloud Still Hovers Over St. Marys and Who is to Blame," Ibid., June 7, 1901, p. 1.

In the same issue the Journal wanted to know why the mayor and council did not have the marshal arrested for gambling in certain saloons. Welsh was accused of violating the law and arresting individuals for doing the same thing. Numerous individuals reported seeing Welsh playing cards for beer in a tavern recently, and they further stated that Welsh watched individuals playing cards for money and allowed them to go unmolested.³³

In order to understand the Journal's vendetta which occurred from the middle of 1901 to 1903, we must turn for a moment to B. H. Tracy who was county attorney in 1896 when the charges were leveled against Welsh. In 1901 Senator Burton nominated Tracy to the position of United States District Attorney for Kansas, an appointment which the Wamego Times successfully fought.³⁴

On July 9 the Topeka State Journal reported that the Wamego Times had filed serious charges against Tracy. In an affidavit signed by Welcome Johnson and Edward Leonard on July 8, 1901, it was charged that saloons had been allowed to remain open in St. Marys between 1894 and 1896, and there were no arrests for violations of the prohibitory law so long as County Attorney Tracy was paid \$25 to \$35 a month by each saloonkeeper. The agent was George Welsh, "who was well understood to be Tracy's agent to receive the money." The

³³"And Still They Gamble in St. Marys," Ibid.

³⁴"For United States Attorney," Ibid., February 1, 1901, p. 1.

two swore they once refused to pay Tracy's agent, and under threat of immediate prosecution, paid it to Tracy in person. On another occasion they refused to pay Welsh, but were told by Tracy to pay A. F. Armstrong of St. Marys. They refused to do this and were ordered by Tracy to send it directly to him, under pain of prosecution. The two signers said the other saloonkeepers were forced to do the same thing.³⁵

On July 19, 1901, more charges appeared in the Wamego Times, with an affidavit signed by James Graham supporting the statements of Johnson and Leonard. Graham stated that during the years 1893 and 1894, while serving as city marshal, he had cause to arrest men who were engaged in selling alcohol illegally. Several of the men protested on the ground that they were already paying Tracy a sum of money for protection from criminal prosecution. Graham was informed money was paid to George Welsh by Hugh Leonard, Lewis Aubert, Edward Leonard, Welcome Johnson, Bert Grooms, Ferdinand Meister, and Dan O'Brien. According to Graham, he informed the men that if anyone should receive revenue from whiskey, it was the taxpayers, and directed them to pay fines through the police court, whereupon Welsh threatened them with prosecution if they resisted payment to him. Nearly all the men were arrested during Tracy's administration and their cases

³⁵The affidavits appeared in the "Fight On Tracy," Topeka State Journal, July 9, 1901, p. 1; "Tracy's Rotten Record," Wamego Times, July 12, 1901, p. 1; "Murder Will Out," St. Marys Journal, July 19, 1901, p. 1.

were usually compromised without trial, or with some form of understanding with Tracy. Those who displeased Tracy and Welsh were severely dealt with. James Graham then recited how he exposed the corrupt county attorney by having Johnson and Leonard send their payment to Tracy by special delivery in his presence, and on another occasion watched as the two paid Tracy personally at his Wamego home. The affidavit indicated that he had exposed Tracy's corrupt practices and got the Journal press and type destroyed for his efforts.³⁶

One wonders why James Graham never made the affidavit in the 1890's? Why did he wait until 1901? As a city marshal, why did he not file felony charges against Tracy and Welsh if he had such evidence? The charges against Tracy were never contradicted, but one wonders why it took so long for the Journal to prove its accusations. The five year lag does make one wonder about James Graham's motives.

One more affidavit appeared to back up the charges in the two previous affidavits. Signed by ex-saloonkeeper John Condon, it said essentially the same thing as the others.³⁷

With evidence like that, Tracy lost his bid to be United States district attorney for Kansas when United States Attorney General Knox refused to endorse him for the office.³⁸

³⁶"Tracy's Rotten Record," Wamego Times, July 19, 1901, p. 1.

³⁷"Do You Believe Such Men Should Hold Public Offices?" St. Marys Journal, July 26, 1901, p. 1.

³⁸"Tracy Rejected," Wamego Times, October 4, 1901, p. 1.

Tracy's defeat justified the Journal's attacks on Welsh, and the Journal made life more uncomfortable for the marshal and his supporters in St. Marys. While the Tracy appointment was being fought, the Journal was repeating the charges that Welsh had been Tracy's agent in St. Marys and had engineered the break-in of the Journal office. Graham said the case was dismissed because

with Tracy as county attorney we could not even hope for an honest prosecution of his "agent" and because the Negro spoken of had been bulldozed and browbeaten out of the county before the case was called.³⁹

The Negro, William Moore, "browbeaten" out of the county, was "browbeaten" into the Douglas County jail. Rising to eloquence, the Journal stated:

Our exposure of Tracy and Welsh, corroborated now by sworn testimony, inspired an outrage that only the blackest of criminals would be guilty of. Welsh now says that he knows who did the deed, but makes no effort to bring the guilty parties to justice. Yet, Edward Johnson mayor of this city, has appointed this man city marshal (no one pretends that he could be elected), and with consent and support of the council, retains him in authority.

Oh, St. Marys, we blush for shame and ignominy such official conduct places upon you, for the moral standard it represents as yours, for the lack of civic virtue and manly honor it attributes to your government! Rank, rank, indeed, is this travesty upon decency, justice and law-abiding citizenship.⁴⁰

With the denial of the appointment, the Journal's columns bristled with reminders of Welsh's corruption. But

³⁹"Of Such Is Not the Kingdom of Heaven," St. Marys Journal, July 19, 1901, p. 1.

⁴⁰Ibid.

during the summer of Tracy's appointment fight, Welsh was not helping his own cause any.

On August 8, 1901, the Onaga Republican reported that George Welsh and Dave Whitney had "quite a scheme." The two had rented a grove in Onaga, where they planned to dispense beer on the Modern Woodmen Association logrolling day. If the woodmen desired to occupy a portion of the grove, Welsh was willing to accommodate them. The Republican reported that the lease obtained was likely invalid as it proposed to conduct an unlawful activity in the grove. Since the grove was outside the city limits and the logrolling was planned for the city streets, it doubted there was much likelihood of beer being obtained in the grove on logrolling day. But the paper hoped "that the attempts of certain St. Marys parties to interfere with our logrolling is not sanctioned by any great numbers of her citizens."⁴¹ The Journal picked up the story, reported the scheme, and noted that the city marshal was up to his usual stunts. The Journal asked what the people thought of the activities for an officer of the law.⁴²

Later in August Welsh took a few days off from his duties to take his slot machine out of the city to a new location. The Journal wondered if Tracy was getting a percentage from the gambling apparatus.⁴³

⁴¹Onaga Republican, August 8, 1901, p. 1 & 8.

⁴²"Notoriety for St. Marys," St. Marys Journal, August 16, 1901, p. 1.

⁴³Ibid., August 23, 1901, p. 12.

In September the city authorities ordered Al Hayslip to remove his slot machine from a saloon, which he did. The Journal suggested that the mayor and council keep an eye on the slot machine that had been running all summer in the Power's saloon with the knowledge of the mayor and council. The Journal urged that the city treat everyone equally.⁴⁴

On September 23, 1901, Welsh, while making an arrest, was shot by Ed Williams, and the Journal toned down its criticisms of him for a while. The reports show that Welsh had arrested Williams and was taking him to the city jail when the prisoner pulled a gun, turned and fired, the bullet striking Welsh in the abdomen.⁴⁵ Welsh was taken to DeDonder's drugstore and examined by Doctors Gundry and Miller who found an operation necessary. He was taken to Stormont Hospital in Topeka for the operation and he recovered.⁴⁶

What caused the shooting is not clear. The Journal suggested that a dispute had taken place, but when the Westmoreland Recorder suggested that Williams claimed Welsh was intimate with his wife, the Journal denied that Welsh stooped that low, and called the report "pure invention." It urged the Onaga and Westmoreland papers not to condemn all of St. Marys because they believed the marshal violated

⁴⁴Ibid., September 6, 1901, p. 1.

⁴⁵"Marshal Welsh Shot," St. Marys Eagle, September 26, 1901, p. 1.

⁴⁶"Badly Wounded," St. Marys Journal, October 4, 1901, p. 12.

the law at the Onaga logrolling. No one defended Welsh except the mayor, the council, and "that unbiased, broad minded-savant, Editor Moriarty."⁴⁷

Two years later Welsh's alleged conduct while in the hospital drew derisive comments from the Journal for the coarse and obscene language that he supposedly used, and for which he was rebuked by the hospital administrator.⁴⁸

The marshal's continued association with slot machines kept the Journal from giving him too much rest. In November 1901 the Journal reported that Welsh had sold his slot machine to Dave Whitney of Wamego.⁴⁹ In January the Journal charged that Welsh drove all the other gambling devices from St. Marys and installed his own.⁵⁰

During the Wamego city elections of 1902 Welsh served as something of an issue. On March 20 the Kansas Agriculturist noted that Welsh was visiting from St. Marys.⁵¹ A day later in its electioneering, the Wamego Times noted that times were bad and change was needed when an unidentified marshal from an adjoining town was allowed to operate a set of slot machines in the city of Wamego.⁵² The Journal picked

⁴⁷Ibid.; "Don't Point the Finger of Scorn At Us," Ibid., p. 2.

⁴⁸Ibid., January 16, 1903, p. 1.

⁴⁹Ibid., November 29, 1901, p. 1.

⁵⁰Ibid., January 31, 1902, p. 12.

⁵¹Kansas Agriculturist, March 20, 1902, p. 5.

⁵²"The City Election," Wamego Times, March 21, 1902, p. 1.

up the two items, tied them together, and noted that it was an interesting way to advertise St. Marys.⁵³

Welsh's past association with B. H. Tracy added fuel to the fire, and the Journal used it against Welsh and Ryan. On several occasions the Journal noted that one whiff of Tracy's record was all President Roosevelt could stand. No man with such a record would receive an appointment from the President.

In this respect, at least, the honorable mayor of St. Marys differs from the president. Tom Ryan's marshal was the "agent" of B. H. Tracy in blackmailing and extorting "bloodmoney" from the saloonkeepers.⁵⁴

In 1902, with the Eagle receiving some of the city printing, M. M. Lee became the defender of the Ryan administration and of George Welsh.

The Eagle indicated that the Journal was vituperative because it had lost out on the city printing.⁵⁵ That comment led the Journal to lash out at those who defended criminals. The Eagle complained when the knockers ruined Pottawatomie County's chance of having a local man United States district attorney, and Lee expressed sympathy for the lawbreaker and cursed those who refused to endorse the boodler. In St.

⁵³"Can't You Guess," St. Marys Journal, March 28, 1902, p. 1.

⁵⁴Ibid., May 23, 1902, p. 12.

⁵⁵"Hard Up and Sore," St. Marys Eagle, June 12, 1902, p. 1.

Marys, Lee and cohorts accused people of abusing officials because they opposed the appointment of Welsh whose record was infamous. The Journal wondered why Lee defended the mayor's abuse of power and thought it strange that Lee denounced those who wanted honest officials.⁵⁶

However, Welsh's self-destructive efforts continued. According to the Journal, Welsh arrested a young man and without taking him before the police judge, took \$6.50 from the prisoner and turned him loose. The marshal did not say anything about it until Councilman Moss, for whom the man worked, went to Councilman John Erbacher about the "gally" practice of the marshal. When they visited the mayor, Ryan "asked" the marshal to give the money back and all was forgiven.⁵⁷

In March 1903 the Journal noted that the state House of Representatives had passed a Senate bill making the maintenance of slot machines a felony, and all were to be destroyed. "We wonder if this new law will have a tendency to stop the slot machine business in St. Marys by some of our city officials?"⁵⁸ A week later the Journal commented that if the new slot machine law was observed, it would be possible for the fire company to get the fire engine out of

⁵⁶"Is This Right?" St. Marys Journal, June 27, 1902, p. 1.

⁵⁷Ibid., August 22, 1902, p. 12.

⁵⁸"Slot Machines Must Go," Ibid., March 13, 1903, p. 1.

city hall without having to move the marshal's slot machine out of the way.⁵⁹

Since 1896 the Journal had been sniping away at George Welsh and finally, over seven years later, the feud drew to an explosive climax.

On the evening of April 28, 1903, the city council voted to continue the city printing arrangement with the Eagle and Star. The Journal had the only bid before the council, but it was denied.

According to the Journal, upon leaving the city hall with City Clerk Maurice Murphy, John Graham remarked in an ordinary tone of voice that the action of the council was "damn hyprocrisy." Overhearing the statement, Welsh immediately arrested John Graham. As he was being led away to jail, John asked George to notify one of his brothers so that he might bring the police judge who would allow John bail. The marshal replied "I won't tell nobody nothing." The marshal then closed the outer doors of the jail to prevent anyone passing city hall from hearing John's calls. Approximately one hour later, Night Marshal McGovern, accompanied by Tom Cooper, came into city hall for a lantern. Cooper carried word to Graham's brother, who in turn notified Judge Hayden. The judge came down to city hall and accepted bail for appearance in court the next morning, with businessman A. F. Armstrong vouching for Graham. At first the editor

⁵⁹Ibid., March 20, 1903, p. 12.

offered a cash bond of \$25 which was refused by the marshal who had returned and "insisted upon usurping the powers of the police judge." Welsh wanted to keep John in jail for the night, but when told that was unlawful, he remarked: "We don't go by the law here: we go by rules!" The marshal, however, was prevailed upon to accept a bond, but insisted it be "gilt-edged."⁶⁰

The following morning John Graham was charged with disturbing the peace of George Welsh by using profane language. John pleaded not guilty and the case was set for May 6. After his plea, John went to town to get a new bond that would satisfy the marshal, and got D. J. Lane to vouch for his appearance.⁶¹

On our return to the city hall, accompanied by Mr. Lane, and as we approached the police judge, without warning, without a word, and without the slightest provocation we were assaulted by Tom Ryan's marshal, who struck us twice in the face and kicked us in the stomach, all the while cursing and making vile threats. At that time we were a prisoner in his custody. This assault has been characterized by every decent man as outrageous, but it was mild compared to what had been done while we were absent. In that interval Welsh had commenced haranguing James Graham, and then assaulted him, knocking him down, brutally kicking him in the face and body while prostrate, and while lying there hitting him with a heavy chair. One of these blows probably fractured Graham's arm, one of the blows was so heavy that the chair was broken to pieces. This infamous assault on a man nearly 60 years old, and kicking him and beating him with a destructive instrument while down on the floor, seems to meet with the approval of Tom Ryan and his council.⁶²

⁶⁰"Tom Ryan's Marshal Makes Two Brutal Assaults," Ibid., May 1, 1903, p. 1.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

The Journal went on to castigate the mayor and council for its actions in allowing Welsh to continue holding office. They did not suspend Welsh nor did they investigate the matter. "And his retention there [in office] after committing these deeds shows the entire absence of manhood in Tom Ryan."⁶³

The other papers in the community saw it a little differently. According to the Eagle, after John Graham's court hearing a controversy arose in city hall between James Graham and Welsh with a fight occurring and Welsh getting the best of it. The Eagle added that John Graham was struck by Welsh as John was coming into city hall.⁶⁴

The Journal replied that the so-called "fist fight" occurred while James Graham was standing with his hands in his pockets, and he was on the floor when he was kicked in the face and pounded with a heavy chair. According to John Graham, "Lee is a paid apologist, and in our hearing heavily defended Tom Ryan's marshal after these assaults had been made."⁶⁵

The Star did not bother to mention the incident until more than two weeks had elapsed, and did not find it that important. The Star noted that Welsh had become tired "of

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴"Rolling Some," St. Marys Eagle, April 30, 1903, p. 1.

⁶⁵St. Marys Journal, May 8, 1903, p. 1.

the free newspaper advertising the Grahams were giving him." With no paper to respond to the "slurs" on his name, he laid aside his star and gun and dealt out a little punishment of his own "in the Grahams' hides in large chunks." Moriarty said it was nothing an editor should not expect when he deals in vitriol. The Star found Welsh justified in his assaults on the Grahams.⁶⁶

The Journal reported that one St. Marys drugstore was "setting them up" for the marshal for knocking down "an old man" and beating him soundly. "Thus does the 'better element' rejoice for the 'good name of St. Marys.'"⁶⁷

The fracas started a series of law suits and counter-suits between the two forces that kept the county courts busy the rest of the summer. The profusion of cases led the Onaga Republican to report that "St. Marys will again furnish the big end of the criminal business for the September term of the District court."⁶⁸

Most of the county newspapers took an unsympathetic view of George Welsh. According to the Westmoreland Recorder, since the Journal office was broken into, the Journal had blamed Welsh for the break-in and continually berated him.

⁶⁶St. Marys Star, May 14, 1903, p. 4.

⁶⁷St. Marys Journal, May 1, 1903, p. 1.

⁶⁸"A St. Marys Row," Onaga Republican, May 7, 1903, p. 3.

Welsh "is an ex-saloonkeeper of St. Marys and outside of that city, at least, has a very unsavory reputation."⁶⁹

The charge of disturbing the peace which started the whole affair was brought to trial on May 6 in Police Judge Hayden's court at nine o'clock. At the appointed hour the complaining witness George Welsh and City Attorney Murphy were absent. The two never appeared and, after a suitable delay, the case was dismissed.⁷⁰ The Journal commented:

Tom Ryan's marshal had no more right to make that arrest than he has to arrest any man for his opinions. It was such a glaring fraud that no one had the face to come into court and ask for a conviction.⁷¹

On the second of May, a peace warrant requiring Welsh to give \$500 bond to insure that he would keep the peace, was made by John Graham against Welsh, charging that Welsh had threatened Graham with bodily harm, and was granted by J. W. Fulton in the justice of the peace court of Rock Creek Township until the September term of court. At the district court term the warrant was dismissed.⁷² On the fourth of May, Welsh turned around and made the similar charge against James Graham. The peace warrant was granted and James was forced to turn over \$500 to insure that he kept the peace the

⁶⁹"Graham-Welsh Troubles," Westmoreland Recorder, May 7, 1903, p. 1.

⁷⁰"Fell On Its Own Weight," St. Marys Journal, May 8, 1903, p. 1.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²In Pottawatomie County District Court, The State of Kansas v. George C. Welsh, no. 806.

rest of the summer. His case was also dismissed in September, but St. Marys was quiet for the rest of the summer.⁷³

On May 16, John Graham charged Welsh with assault, and the case was tried in Judge Fulton's justice of the peace court on May 18. Welsh pleaded not guilty and after a trial was found guilty of assault and ordered to pay a fine of \$10.00 and costs of \$13.10. Welsh appealed the decision to the district court, and on September 2 the decision was affirmed and Welsh had to pay costs of \$55.30.⁷⁴

St. Marys' great chair case occurred when James Graham "stole" a chair from city hall or, as Graham claimed, took the chair for use as evidence in the case because it was the one used to beat him. A search warrant was issued and the chair was found on the Journal's premises. The defendant pleaded not guilty and the case was heard May 19 in Judge McFadden's justice of the peace court, with the county attorney representing the state. The state presented all the witnesses and Graham was found guilty and fined two dollars and assessed costs of \$7.60. Graham appealed to the district court, and that court dismissed the conviction.⁷⁵

⁷³In Pottawatomie County District Court, The State of Kansas v. James Graham, no. 816.

⁷⁴In Pottawatomie County District Court, The State of Kansas v. George Welsh, no. 817.

⁷⁵In Pottawatomie County District Court, The State of Kansas v. James Graham, no. 814; St. Marys Star, May 21, 1903, p. 5.

What the court record does not show is that Judge McFadden acted on his own in finding the defendant guilty. County Attorney R. S. Hick, and J. D. Coddling, attorneys for the state, urged that the defendant be discharged as the state had not made a case, but McFadden fined Graham anyway.⁷⁶ That led the Westmoreland Signal to comment:

"Prejudice works wonders, at times, and this proved one of the times."⁷⁷

While waiting for the major court battle in September, the Journal continued to roast the marshal and his mayor.

Preceding the council meeting on June 9, John Graham filed a complaint with the mayor concerning the assault of the marshal on him, and referred the mayor to section 170 of the state law regarding the removal of police officers in third class cities for committing violations in office. Graham pointed out that the mayor is required to lay the complaint before the council at the first meeting. Ryan failed to notify the council of any complaint given him. The mayor swore to obey the law, but he failed to do so in the case.⁷⁸

Not until June 23 did the mayor lay before the council John Graham's complaint. The mayor instructed the council

⁷⁶Westmoreland Recorder, May 21, 1903, p. 4.

⁷⁷Westmoreland Signal, May 22, 1903, p. 8.

⁷⁸"Fails to Do His Duty," St. Marys Journal, June 12, 1903.

"that it was their duty to carefully and honestly inquire into the truth of said complaint."⁷⁹ On July 28 Welsh finally resigned and the council considered it unnecessary to report on the Graham complaint.⁸⁰

The Journal's view of the resignation was that for seven weeks Ryan and the council evaded action on the editor's charges. The Journal thought the council action disgusted the people of St. Marys.

People who believed in fair play were amazed at such conduct by oath-bound officials. Public sentiment grew stronger and stronger, and the apologists for such evident unfairness became fewer and fewerThe sneaking course of the council allowing the marshal to resign and refusing to investigate the charges which had been before them for weeks was then resorted to.⁸¹

The Journal indicated the district court probably would investigate.⁸² It did not.

One week later the Star noted that Welsh was again on duty and it believed that four-fifths of the community desired that he do so. Welsh had the support of all except those who could not control him or were afraid of him. Welsh did his duty and kept order in St. Marys. The Star also noted that the clever manner in which Welsh outwitted the Grahams by resigning as marshal "was the talk of the town last week."⁸³

⁷⁹Meeting of the City Council, Tuesday, June 23, 1903.

⁸⁰"Council Proceedings," St. Marys Eagle, July 30, 1903, p. 1.

⁸¹"Got Too Hot For Him," St. Marys Journal, July 31, 1903, p. 1.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³St. Marys Star, August 6, 1903, p. 4.

The marshal was continuing to be himself and gave the Journal more fuel for the fire. On August 14 the Journal ran a story titled, "Another Sample of Good Government." The article thoroughly blasted the mayor and then charged Welsh with forgery.

On the night that Welsh supposedly resigned, a bill for \$6.65 made out in the handwriting of George Welsh, with the signature of one Ben Cook allegedly forged to it, was presented by Welsh to the council, with Welsh's okay, and paid by the council. Ben Cook, according to John Graham, never presented the bill, never received any of the money, and never heard of it until he saw mention of it in the city papers. An affidavit signed by Ben Cook was presented in the Journal attesting to the forgery. Ben Cook was employed by Welsh for \$22.50 a month and had done some work for the city as ordered by Welsh, which took three-quarters of a day. The Journal called it a sample of good government in which the taxpayers were paying dearly.⁸⁴

When a warrant was issued for Welsh's arrest on the forgery charge, the marshal did not take his arrest placidly. When Constable Tom Cochran arrested Welsh in Erickson's blacksmith shop, Welsh dutifully went to city hall with the constable and went to a desk, snatched a pistol, pointed it at Cochran, and ordered him to "hike."⁸⁵ Welsh then jumped

⁸⁴"Another Sample of Good Government," St. Marys Journal, August 14, 1903, p. 1.

⁸⁵"Welsh Arrested For Forgery," Ibid., August 21, 1903, p. 12.

into his buggy and rode to Anderson's Hardware Store, followed by Mr. Ryan

Who no doubt listened to his marshal tell how "cleverly" he had again played the part of an outlaw by resisting arrest on a charge of forgery. As Welsh jumped into his buggy at city hall he remarked that he "would kill somebody if they monkeyed with him."⁸⁶

No independent evidence exists to show that the arrest actually occurred in that manner. None of the other papers mentioned it, but since they were defending the marshal, they might have been too embarrassed to discuss it. Had it not occurred, one would have expected the other two papers to point out the falsity of the statement.

After all the space devoted to the forgery, the case was dismissed at the request of the complaining witness in the absence of acting County Attorney Mitchner at 6:30 A.M. in Justice Hayden's home. The Journal thought that 6:30 was an odd time to be conducting court business, particularly when the case was not scheduled until 3:30 that afternoon.⁸⁷ One would have to agree, but it seems to be on a par with what went on that summer in St. Marys.

On the second of May, Welsh had been charged with feloniously assaulting James Graham with intent to kill, and finally on September 3 the case came to trial in district court.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷St. Marys Journal, August 28, 1903, p. 12.

⁸⁸In Pottawatomie County District Court, The State of Kansas v. George C. Welsh, no. 807.

James Graham testified that he was addressing the police court when the marshal interfered. Graham appealed to the court, but Welsh persisted, and addressed insulting remarks to Graham, who responded in kind. Thereupon Welsh assaulted Graham, knocked him down, kicked and stamped him on the face and body, striking twice at his head "with a heavy chair," but the blows were deflected by Graham's arm which was broken. Graham refused to retract his statement, and after he had dragged himself up on a bench, he was further assaulted "by the burly marshal, to whose attacks he made no resistance whatever." The jury took one ballot to find Welsh guilty.⁸⁹

Welsh's bond allowed him freedom until the last day of the court. On September 18, the last day of the court, Welsh failed to appear in court. His bond was forfeited, and a bench warrant was issued for his arrest.⁹⁰

The Journal noted:

A mayor disposed to do half right could have prevented all the trouble in St. Marys. This paper has been vindicated in every action that has been tried.⁹¹

The other local newspapers noted only that Welsh had been found guilty, indicated the penalty, and nothing else.⁹²

⁸⁹"Ryan's Marshal Convicted," St. Marys Journal, September 11, 1903, p. 1.

⁹⁰In Pottawatomie County District Court . . . no. 807.

⁹¹"Ryan's Marshal Convicted," p. 1.

⁹²St. Marys Star, September 9, 1903, p. 8; St. Marys Eagle, September 9, 1903, p. 4.

The Wamego Times, an old foe of Welsh's defense attorney B. H. Tracy, blasted Ryan for keeping Welsh on the city payroll in face of the charges against him and scolded M. M. Lee for suggesting that many of the St. Marys citizens would gladly pay Welsh's fine for the assault and intimating "that he hoped the city marshal would do it again." The Times noted that Graham was a small man about 60, and his assailant was a burly six-footer of 40. It noted that the history of the feud went back to a day when Welsh was Tracy's agent in an extortion racket.⁹³ In closing the Times stated with satisfaction:

Two successive republican presidents have declared Boodler Tracy to be unfit for public office, and now, with Tracy defending him, a jury of "twelve good men and true" has said by their verdict that the Boodler's "agent" belongs in the penitentiary.⁹⁴

The Westmoreland Recorder noted that Welsh evidently had forfeited his bond since he had not been seen since he left Westmoreland two days after he was found guilty. The Recorder noted that Welsh had never forfeited a bond before

though he has been under arrest about 500 times and served much time in jail and paid many fines, he has never had the penitentiary staring him in the face. . . While an alias warrant will be issued for his arrest, so far as Pottawatomie county is concerned it will be a good thing if he does not return. He has caused expense and trouble enough for this county.⁹⁵

⁹³"Tracy's 'Agent' Convicted of Felony," Wamego Times, September 11, 1903, p. 1.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵"George Welsh Forfeits His Bond," Westmoreland Recorder, September 17, 1903, p. 1.

Welsh did have one sympathizer in the county. The Onaga Herald expressed the opinion that the problems in St. Marys were the culmination of the Grahams persistently hounding Welsh and the mayor until everyone wondered why the Grahams had not been killed. Welsh was not an angel, but the Herald regarded him better than those who had hounded him for years.⁹⁶

Thus ended the era of George Welsh. It took the Journal seven years, but it defeated Welsh, and demonstrated the power of the press.

Due to the intimate relationship between the Welsh affair and the Ryan administration it would be of little use formulating conclusions until the Ryan administration has been examined.

⁹⁶Onaga Herald, September 17, 1903, p. 1.

Chapter 5

THE JOURNAL AND T. J. RYAN

The election of 1902 brought T. J. Ryan to the mayor's office, an individual the Grahams had battled for many years.

T. J. Ryan was born October 4, 1862, and at age 21 moved to St. Marys with his parents. On September 20, 1887, he married Maggie Moriarty. During the 1880's he taught at various country schools in the area. In the early 1890's Ryan moved to Westmoreland, Kansas, and served as county clerk, winning election on the Populist ticket. Following his career as county clerk, Ryan returned to St. Marys and entered the real estate and insurance business. He rejoined the Democratic party and served as precinct committeeman for many years. Ryan was mayor from 1902 to 1907, postmaster from 1915 to 1923, served on the board of education, and in the 1930's served as a receiver in which he acted for banks that failed. Mr. Ryan died in September 1945.¹

The Grahams' dislike of Ryan went at least as far back as 1893 when Ryan was the Populist county clerk. In that election the Star, then under the control of Clint Graham and Perry Jackson, accused Ryan and another individual of

¹"Peaceful End for T. J. Ryan," St. Marys Star, September 20, 1945, p. 1.

conspiring with certain Democrats to have their names placed on the Democratic ticket, forcing the Democratic nominees to withdraw. The Star said the Democratic party was being sold out.²

Other than a few scattered comments the Grahams left Ryan alone until 1902 when Mayor Johnson and the council declared they would not run for a third term. They placed into circulation a petition for a slate of candidates for mayor and council headed by T. J. Ryan.³

On March 21 the campaign started its usual escalation with a charge by the Journal that Welsh had "flashed" a roll of money at one of the saloons and offered to bet that Ryan would be elected, and that Welsh would be marshal until he was ready to resign.⁴

On March 22 the Citizens Caucus met and declared itself opposed to "ring-rule." It nominated Edward Keating for mayor and John Graham made his only direct appearance in politics by running for councilman.⁵

The Star viewed the "Citizens Caucus" as the "Graham Caucus," and made several derisive comments about it. According to the Star, the caucus was composed of those who

²"Did Kemper Get That \$100," St. Marys Star, November 2, 1893, p. 1.

³St. Marys Star, March 13, 1902, p. 4.

⁴St. Marys Journal, March 21, 1902, p. 4.

⁵"Citizens Caucus," Ibid., March 28, 1902, p. 1.

opposed progress and were active in opposing the park proposition.⁶ It claimed that those for progress refused to run on the Graham ticket, and urged the voters to show that they favored business-like administration and good government. The Star charged there would be a contest between James Graham, James McGovern, and Welcome Johnson for the marshalship. The Star also said it was in receipt of a communication from Nels Ross, one of those nominated by the "Graham Caucus," stating that he refused to be a candidate. Concluding, the Star made its campaign slogan: "In St. Marys the Issue is Progress versus Anti-Progress."⁷

The Journal responded quickly. The Journal claimed that a notice given to the Star by Ross was not published because the statement was too favorable to the other side. James Graham denied he was a candidate for marshal, claiming he was "aiming at bigger game," but he did not say what game. James McGovern also denied he was a candidate for marshal. The Journal noted that the Keating ticket was nominated openly and with no chicanery. "How was his opponent's ticket nominated?" In endorsing Ed Keating the Journal called him

⁶The park proposition was a bond issue for the establishment of a city park. It was one of those issues which the Journal opposed, but the community favored. The Journal denied being opposed to the park. Rather it opposed the cost and method of financing it. The Star and Eagle favored the park. The present city park is the result of that election.

⁷St. Marys Star, March 27, 1902, p. 1.

a "nervy, honest, poor man who had the manhood to stand up for the right."⁸ Concerning the opposition the Journal stated:

Isn't it strange that certain people in St. Marys can't talk to their fellow citizens at election time unless they are accused of trying to run the town. Did you ever stop to think why August Erbacher, Tom Byrnes, John Erbacher, and a few of their friends take such an interest in trying to make the people believe that they should be allowed to run the town? Watch these gentlemen who are trying to RUIN the city and dictate who shall be the people's officials.⁹

The Eagle on March 27 urged the voters to exercise restraint and not get so "wrought up" that they could not be good losers. Editor Lee said he did not care who won, but would let which ever faction won have the city printing and would not fight over it with the two other papers.¹⁰ A week later the Eagle was singing a different tune. Lee reported that one fact stood out: "the saloon element are lined up behind the Keating ticket and are generally talking and working for it." The Eagle stood in favor of control of the saloons and urged the fines the saloonkeepers paid be left at the current levels. Editor Lee said that Ryan favored those controls.¹¹

In its columns on April 3, the Star came out with a lengthy piece on the opposition forces headed by the Journal.

⁸St. Marys Journal, March 28, 1902, p. 12.

⁹Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁰St. Marys Eagle, March 27, 1902, p. 4.

¹¹"A Plain Proposition," Ibid., April 3, 1902, p. 1.

The Star questioned the complaints over a \$600 hardware bill that was only \$300, and over a \$1,000 lumber bill for the past year, which was only \$600 for the preceding two years. Moriarty charged that if the Keating ticket was elected, the Grahams would dominate city government, and the family would occupy all the positions of importance in that government.

The Star denied that there was any chicanery in the Ryan nomination. The ticket was talked about for weeks and the petition was signed by almost half of the eligible voters, while the Keating ticket was nominated at a caucus of which no notice was given "other than an unauthorized one published in a paper like the Journal," and was attended by only 25 voters. The chicanery was that of the Keating ticket, or so the Star claimed. The Star also noted that all the candidates on the Keating ticket opposed the park proposition and were confidants of the Journal.¹²

One day later the Journal published a "Statement of Facts." It was an itemization of money spent by the council since January 22, 1901. The Journal charged that over \$6,000 had been squandered, and that most of the money had gone to a selected few. Of the \$6,000, a "selected" few businessmen received \$3,207.92, while the "ordinary" businessmen collected a mere \$104.00. The Journal's statement made a fool of John Graham, and gives us one indication why the Journal failed--poor bookkeeping.

¹²"A Few Questions," St. Marys Star, April 3, 1902, p. 1.

Graham's list of a select few included a hardware store, a general store, an elevator company, Moriarty of the Star, a lumber company, one R. D. Beseau, George Welsh, and a few others. George Welsh, who was paid for his services to the city, would not qualify as a businessman. The Erbacher Company supplied the city oil for heat and light; a hardware store and lumber company supplied such frivolous items as furniture and lumber. Those ordinary businessmen included druggists, clothing stores, grocery stores and other establishments that normally would not supply the city with required supplies.¹³ In its own description of what it believed to be select and ordinary businessmen the Journal effectively destroyed its own argument, for the City of St. Marys had no legitimate need for the services of grocers and druggists.

The Journal, despite its assertions as to the absolute truth of its statement, made several mistakes in its bookkeeping. The Journal indicated that W. H. True and D. M. Hoover received from the city \$22.25 and \$29.25 respectively. A check of the council records show that they were paid at least \$40.00 more than the Journal calculated. The Journal reported that R. D. Beseau received \$482.00, but failed to mention the large amounts paid to Antone Heim (a Journal backer) over several years for the laying of sidewalks.¹⁴

¹³"A Statement of Facts," St. Marys Journal, April 4, 1902, p. 1.

¹⁴Ibid.; City Council Records 1894-1908.

As this represents one of the best tests of the credibility of the Journal, this test makes one wonder about the accuracy of its many other statements. The Journal perhaps could prove that every expenditure it accounted for had actually occurred, but it excluded much that it should not have.

The Journal harked back to the days of J. F. Buell and his administrations, recounting progress under Buell's guidance. Graham then cited all the improvements made during Buell's administration.¹⁵

In the same issue of the Journal, an article entitled "Should Public Officials Obey The Law?" charged Mayor Johnson and the council with overpaying the city marshal, failing to require the marshal to enforce the law, and failing to publish the detailed statement of receipts, expenditures, and indebtedness required by law. It demanded that city officials obey the law.¹⁶

The Journal further charged that the mayor and council spent almost \$475 of city money to lay down sidewalks on the Union Pacific Railroad property. Editor John Graham charged that the railroad company should have paid for the improvements, but the council failed to take proper legal actions, and the city was forced to pay the bill.¹⁷

¹⁵"Lawful Progress," Ibid.

¹⁶"Should Public Officials Obey The Law?" Ibid.,
p. 2.

¹⁷"Taxpayers Pay the Freight," Ibid., p. 12.

The Journal charged that the Star misrepresented the position of a Keating man to the public. According to Graham, Ross sent a statement to the Star explaining his withdrawal from the ticket, but Moriarty refused to publish it. In endorsing Ed Keating, the Journal said Keating would not "appoint a gambler, thief, or life long violator of the law to the marshalship, that's one thing. Can as much be said of his opponent, Mr. Ryan?"¹⁸

In this election as in past elections, crime and corruption carried the day. The entire Ryan ticket was elected by comfortable majorities, and brother-in-law Moriarty gloated. The Star saw the election as a rebuke to the opponents of progress and the "business administration of the city's affairs." The opposition arrayed itself against the best interest of the city and used every subterfuge possible to achieve its goals. Moriarty called the Journal charges "the cheapest rot ever put in print."¹⁹

John Graham was ridiculed for receiving the fewest votes cast, and the Grahams were scored for having been beaten twice (the park proposition) in five weeks.²⁰ The Eagle urged the voters to "Drop your little personal differences. Relegate the agitators and malcontents to the rear."²¹

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹"The 'Boodlers' Vindicated," St. Marys Star, April 10, 1902, p. 1.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹"All Together Now," St. Marys Eagle, April 10, 1902, p. 1.

The "agitators and malcontents" declined to be relegated to the rear and the following day the Journal gave its views of the election. Ryan supporters made a house to house canvas and were thoroughly organized. Keating did not ask a single man to vote for him and did not spend any money. The Journal said it backed Keating because he stood for the legal expenditure of public money and did not believe a life-long violator of the law should be allowed to hold public office. Graham called Ryan and his council capable individuals, but reminded them of their oath to enforce all laws.²² The Journal said every statement it had made during the campaign was true and it would not retract any of its statements.²³

The post-election fireworks were not over yet. On April 18 the Journal responded to the April 10 comments in the Star. Graham charged Moriarty with attempting to out-do the "notorious Sunday Sun" in heaping scurrilous remarks on one-half the people of the city because they did not approve of the council's actions. The Journal declared its stories to be true and stated that the Star

has an aversion for the truth that is becoming chronic; and since the facts in the case nauseate him, he prefers blackguardism and personal vituperation, and studiously ignores the known and oft-repeated violations to the law by his friends.²⁴

²²"Tom Ryan Elected Mayor," St. Marys Journal, April 11, 1902, p. 1.

²³Ibid., p. 11.

²⁴"Anything To Obscure The Facts Is Its Motto," Ibid., April 18, 1902, p. 1.

Graham went on to rehash the charges he had made during the campaign with the appropriate amount of demagogery included.

The Journal's commentary caused the Star to note that "The Grahams thrashed a pile of straw last week and we have not learned whether they are through with the harvest yet or not."²⁵ The Journal was not through, but the statements were largely a repetition of previous charges.

The Journal's campaign charges quickly turned to the Ryan administration's conduct in office. The Journal's vindictiveness in 1902 and 1903 rested on two counts, the reappointment of George Welsh as marshal, and the dispute over city printing.

From the arrival of Moriarty as the Star's editor and owner, city printing was an issue which the newspapers fought over. In 1898, the Star offered to do it free of charge and was granted the request in return for being named the official city paper.²⁶ In 1899, with the Grahams in control of city government, the Star once again offered to do the city printing free of charge, but this time the Journal, after a long fight, got the city printing, and the council passed an ordinance fixing the rates at 35¢ per square inch for the first insertion and 25¢ thereafter.²⁷ In 1900, with Mayor Johnson and his crowd in control, the Star was given the city

²⁵St. Marys Star, April 24, 1902, p. 4.

²⁶Council Meeting (City Records), May 12, 1898.

²⁷"City Printing," St. Marys Star, April 20, 1899, p. 1; "Council Meeting," St. Marys Eagle, August 10, 1899, p. 1; The General Statutes of Kansas, 1901 Chapter 39,

printing at the rates fixed by the Graham council the preceding year. The Journal condemned the Star for its hypocrisy in offering to do city printing for free one year and taking city monies the next.²⁸

With the Ryan forces in office, the council passed an ordinance raising the legal rates from 35¢ to 65¢ per square, provided that publication of council proceedings were official matter, and worded the ordinance to allow the Star and Eagle to share in the city printing.²⁹

Following the council's actions, Lee became a staunch defender of Mayor Ryan, his council, and his marshal. Lee's switch from non-support to support for T. J. Ryan may have had dishonorable motives. The timing of the move does little to remove the cloud over the city printing decision of 1902. It was obvious that the council was not going to subsidize the Journal's operations.

The Journal made its feeling known on June 6. It called the action of the council unique to St. Marys, not

Section 3055 states: "For publishing any legal notice, or any order, citation, summons, or any other proceeding or advertisement required by law to be published in any newspaper, at a rate not exceeding one dollar per square of two hundred and fifty ems for the first insertion, and fifty cents per square of two hundred and twenty-five ems for each subsequent insertion." Two hundred and fifty square ems is approximately one square inch. Therefore, the Journal was doing the printing for 35¢ for the first and 25¢ for second insertion or 35% of what they could have charged. Cents and percents are used interchangeably here, but they mean the same thing, representing a portion of a dollar.

²⁸"Horse of Another Color," St. Marys Journal, April 13, 1900, p. 1.

²⁹"Council Proceedings," Ibid., May 23, 1902, p. 12.

done in any other city or town in the country. The council almost doubled the city printing rate from the preceding year. If each paper were paid the 65% rate it would add up to 130% and would, thereby, be a violation of the law. The additional cost of printing council minutes as official matter would double the cost again. If the papers were paid the full rate, the costs would have been eight times that of the preceding year. John Graham denied he was upset because he was not in on the arrangement, but noted that when the Journal was official paper, the Eagle offered to do the city printing for 1% of the legal rates, and the Star offered to do it for free. The idea of paying two papers was an "extortion and outrage."³⁰

A week later both the Star and Eagle responded. Moriarty accused Graham of "clever manipulation" in trying to make the readers believe the city paid 30% more than the legal rate. The actual rate was 35% less than allowed by law. For 65% of the legal printing rate the people got the official matter of the city printed in both St. Marys papers. The Star made it clear that it was not going to allow the Journal to make the people believe the city was robbing them. Moriarty suggested the people subscribe to the Star and get the official council proceedings and then one would know the report was not "colored to the taste of any reader."³¹

³⁰Ibid., June 12, 1902, p. 1.

³¹St. Marys Star, June 12, 1902, p. 4.

Lee said much the same thing as Moriarty. He added that the rate was 65¢ for the first insertion and 32¢ for the second. There was no excuse for any paper to say that each was receiving 65¢, and that the taxpayers were being "outraged." Lee said the council was robbing no one and John Graham knew it, "but he's sore."³²

The Journal, not content to let things lie, returned fire the following week. Lee's attack rankled the Journal the most. Graham noted that the Eagle was anxious to serve its masters and earn "its mess of printing pottage." Lee examined the Journal in such a way as to obscure the meaning and misrepresent the Journal. Lee could not deny that the price of city printing had been doubled and the total cost to the city had increased four times. The Journal said it did not know how the printing was to be divided and therefore assumed that each would receive 65%. "In view of official misconduct the past two years, however, such a thing would not have seemed unusual." Graham repeated the charge that the city printing was an "extortion and an outrage."³³

Lee's response was that John Graham was upset because the Eagle defended a city government that did not make the Journal the official paper. The two papers were doing the printing 35% below the rate allowed to one paper. Graham was

³²"Hard Up and Sore," St. Marys Eagle, June 12, 1902, p. 1.

³³"About City Printing," St. Marys Journal, June 20, 1902, p. 1.

mad because "Old Reliable and the Old Man" would not discuss with the Journal something that worried no one but Graham. Lee claimed the council had the official proceedings published to put a stop to the misrepresentation of the acts of the council as had been the Journal's custom in years past.

As their vermiform appendage has been removed by the present city council and the prominent business men there is hope that the outfit may soon recover from their appendicitus, but their fits and mulligrubs are evidently hereditary and incurable.³⁴

The Journal responded that the city was paying four times what it ought to, the rate was doubled to give the Eagle part of the printing, there was no need for two city papers, and the law did not require the minutes of the council meeting be published. The Journal considered it a "steal pure and simple."³⁵

A week later, with the same facts, Graham, in referring to the Eagle, stated:

The Thirty-Cent Apologist, who is the beneficiary of this outrage, can snort, villify and misrepresent us and our family in an effort to distract attention and earn his mess of pottage, but He Cannot Controvert These Facts.³⁶

The Journal had not forgotten Welsh, and Lee was roasted from that direction also. Lee was asked on several occasions if his office had been broken into would he want the individual responsible serving as marshal? Lee never did

³⁴"Must Excuse Us," St. Marys Eagle, July 10, 1902, p. 8.

³⁵St. Marys Journal, July 18, 1902, p. 12.

³⁶Ibid., July 25, 1902, p. 1.

answer that question. Whenever there was an assault or theft, or Welsh engaged in an infamous deed, Ryan and Lee were made victims of their statements.

On July 4, 1901, the Journal made one of its most serious statements concerning the mayor and council.

A man who will appoint a thief and life long violator of law to office is no better than the man he appoints. No more can be said of the councilmen who vote to confirm such an individual.³⁷

The Eagle strongly denounced the Journal saying that the charge was a "broad and sweeping accusation against the integrity of honorable men." Editor Lee then recited the name of the mayor and each of the councilmen with the phrase "NO BETTER THAN A THIEF" below each name. Lee asked what the people thought of such remarks because the mayor and council would not bend to their will, made appointments which the law required they make, and refused to appoint the Journal the official paper. Lee noted the names of the leading business men did not appear in their advertising, nor would any councilmen of the previous administration or Ryan administration give them any business.³⁸

Graham, in his columns, noted the break-in of the Journal office, recited all the facts of the case, and pointed out that Ryan and Lee knew these facts, yet Welsh was appointed marshal. Two presidents refused to appoint Welsh's

³⁷Ibid., July 4, 1902, p. 12.

³⁸"A Broad Accusation," St. Marys Eagle, July 10, 1902, p. 1.

boss (Tracy) because of his "boodling," but Ryan appointed the scoundrel. Lee would not endorse the appointment of someone who had broken into his office, but he endorsed the appointment of Welsh.

To appoint a thief and life-long law violator, or confirm him, or defend him, is to acknowledge he is your ideal. If you don't want to be classed with a thief, blackmailer, and libertine, don't protect, nourish or defend him.³⁹

In September the Journal charged that Ryan and Moriarty deserted the Democratic party in the past county election in order to get Republican support for Ryan's candidacy for mayor. In further payment to the Republicans, Ryan made the Eagle one of the official papers of St. Marys. These charges in the Journal grew out of a Westmoreland Recorder statement that St. Marys Republicans had been responsible for the election of Ryan.⁴⁰

In October Graham roasted the mayor and council for allowing the saloons to run on Sunday night, and wondered why the saloon keepers had not been arrested. Ryan, "as a pillar of the church," should not have allowed such actions to take place.⁴¹

In December, the Journal again condemned the council for illegally voting the people's money in the "city printing steal," but as Ryan and company had debts to pay off, it was

³⁹"Still Off the Track and Dodging the Well-known Facts," St. Marys Journal, July 18, 1902, p. 1.

⁴⁰Ibid., September 12, 1902, p. 1; Westmoreland Recorder, August 7, 1902, p. 1.

⁴¹St. Marys Journal, October 31, 1902, p. 1.

continuing. The city was about to lose its \$3,600 a year income from the saloons (the new county attorney was a Prohibitionist), and the council would have showed good judgment in saving money by stopping the "city printing steal." The Journal charged the council was illegally voting the people's money away.⁴²

When the saloons closed and the city lost its \$3,600 a year income from the saloonkeepers, the Journal suggested the city terminate the "city printing steal" for which the mayor was responsible. Graham called the "extortion" an "outrage" upon the taxpayers and "a deliberate violation of the spirit and letter of the law by men who solemnly swore to enforce and obey the law."⁴³

A week later the Journal reported that the mayor had ordered J. L. Vilven to have Welsh remove his slot machine from Vilven's lunchroom. Welsh told Vilven to leave it there. Welsh maintained that it was not a slot machine, though Ryan disagreed, and Welsh proposed to leave it there whether or not the mayor liked it. According to Graham, the same machine was allowed to run unmolested in one of the saloons until it was closed. "Isn't this kind of muddle a splendid advertisement for St. Marys and her boasted forms of good government?"⁴⁴

⁴²"And Still It Continues," Ibid., December 5, 1902, p. 1.

⁴³Ibid., January 16, 1903, p. 1.

⁴⁴"Is it a Slot Machine?" Ibid., January 23, 1903, p. 1.

A week later the Journal speculated that with the mayor and council fees merely two and one dollars respectively, they were drawing a percentage of the net earnings of the marshal's slot machine. But in the same issue, the Journal reported that Welsh had been "coaxed" into removing his slot machine to the city hall where it was sitting unused. Graham claimed St. Marys was the only town in the United States to allow its marshal to violate the slot machine law.⁴⁵

In February 1903 Graham noted that St. Marys, with a vote of less than 310, had to pay two papers for city printing while other cities like Kansas City and Topeka had only one official paper.⁴⁶

That same month Lee chided John Graham for his complaints about the city printing and used a biblical name, Esau, to satirize John for living off his brother, "bowled" around with the girls in "rubber-tired rigs," kept himself well shaved and groomed, occasionally drank too much with the older "boys," and on occasion publicly insulted his father. Lee did manage to mention that Graham misrepresented the actions of the council in the Journal's columns.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Ibid., January 30, 1903, p. 2; "At Last, But for How Long," Ibid., p. 1.

⁴⁶Ibid., February 6, 1903, p. 2.

⁴⁷"Esau, or India Rubber Saint, Which?" St. Marys Eagle, February 26, 1903, p. 1.

The Journal was flattered that it required two newspapers to give an item as much prominence as it did. Graham reiterated his claim that the council had no right to pay one paper let alone two to publish the minutes of the city council proceedings. Graham challenged the Eagle or anyone to show where in one instance he had misrepresented the council meetings.⁴⁸

With the Journal reporting the sins of the Ryan administration, one would have thought the opposition would be significant in the city election of 1903; it was not. T. J. Ryan and his council were re-elected without opposition. Moriarty stated that four years earlier the lawless element had ruled the town. The situation improved under Johnson and was better since Ryan took over. Everyone but the Journal and a few of its friends liked the Ryan administration. The Ryan administration represented the law-abiding element of the city, and if the people wanted a forward looking administration, they were urged to vote for the Ryan ticket.⁴⁹

On April 2 the Star noted with joy that after two attempts by James Graham to create some opposition to the Ryan ticket, the opposition had "failed and failed utterly."⁵⁰

⁴⁸"It's Your Move, Esau," St. Marys Journal, March 6, 1903, p. 4.

⁴⁹St. Marys Star, March 26, 1903, p. 1.

⁵⁰"Open to Everybody," Ibid., April 2, 1903, p. 4.

The Journal said little in this election but did admit that several of the gentlemen who were nominated for city offices at a caucus on the preceding Thursday night declined to make the race, and it was decided not to file the nominating papers with the city clerk.⁵¹ After the election the Journal commented only that it was the quietest election in years with one ticket in the field and "George Welsh and Tommy Ryan representing the 'better element' in St. Marys."⁵²

The election did not quiet the Journal for long. On April 10, responding to some reported Star criticism of those who had circulated a petition calling for a Democratic city caucus, the Journal noted that the group had a right to its opinions. Graham criticized the Star for its support of those who were nominated in "some back room."

The Journal said it did not care who ran the city as long as they were honest. The Journal claimed that the previous year it said if the councilmen were honest it would support them, took credit for stopping the illegal practices of taking public money and spending it to macadamize the property of a few, and stopped the council's illegal payment of \$15 a month to the marshal for "special services."

Graham claimed that the mayor had election debts to pay off and did so by violating the law. Ryan raised the

⁵¹St. Marys Journal, April 3, 1903, p. 1.

⁵²"The City Election," Ibid., April 10, 1903, p. 12.

price paid for city printing from 35¢ to 65¢, commissioned two official papers, and paid the papers for printing the reports of the council meetings.

The mayor's other illegal act was the appointment of a man as marshal who had violated the laws of St. Marys and Onaga, had been the agent of the corrupt county attorney, B. H. Tracy, and was responsible for the destruction of the Journal, or knew was responsible for the destruction, and refused as an officer of the law to disclose their identity.⁵³

In the same issue Graham charged Moriarty with prevarication and misrepresentation when the facts did not agree with his assumptions. The Journal pointed out that it opposed the illegal expenditure of public money to pay for the printing of council proceedings. However, Graham wanted the council to publish the full statement of city expenditures required by law four times a year. He repeated his continuing charge of corruption, and reminded Moriarty of the time when the Journal had the city printing and the Star offered to do it for nothing. "If the Star was willing to work for nothing then, why does it demand pay now." The Journal believed in fair pay, but the payment of two papers on all city matters was graft.⁵⁴

On April 14, John Graham made a bid to do the city printing for 35% of the legal rate. The bid was duly read

⁵³"The Law Is the Rightful Ruler," Ibid., p. 1.

⁵⁴"At His Same Old Tricks," Ibid., p. 2.

and filed. The Journal offered to print all city matter at 35% and would publish the clerks report of the council meetings free of charge. But the mayor and council did not appreciate the Journal's sense of public duty and designated the Star and Eagle as the official papers at the 65% rate.⁵⁵

Alongside the columns describing Welsh's attack on James Graham, the Journal printed a story entitled "Printing Gouge Continued." In it John Graham claimed that the Journal bid was the only one submitted, but the council refused to consider the bid. It charged the people were paying twice the fair rate, and raked the mayor and council for their actions.⁵⁶

Following the council meeting which decided the issue, John Graham made his comments within earshot of Marshal Welsh, was arrested, and brought the entire affair to an explosive point.

During the summer of 1903 the Journal continually roasted all those who had anything to do with the city printing or George Welsh. Every week the Journal's columns were full of denunciations of the city administration and its defenders. The statement that typified the Journal's abuse appeared in most of its issues from July 31 to September 11 when Welsh was convicted. Entitled "Fact!" it stated:

⁵⁵City Council Meeting, April 14, 1903; St. Marys Eagle, April 16, 1903, p. 8; "The City Printing Matter," St. Marys Journal, April 24, 1903, p. 1; "Council Proceedings," Ibid., May 1, 1903, p. 1.

⁵⁶Ibid.

The city revenue of the last two years, preceding January 10, 1903, was \$12,000. Every dollar of it has been spent and a good amount of it has been squandered; besides, the city debt was increased to double what it was two years ago. Still the taxpayers are being gouged to pay two official city papers, at fancy prices--an extortion without a parallel in the United States. And a bid to do the work for one-half, and print the council reports free of charge, was not even considered. Fact!⁵⁷

The attitude of the two other papers is typified by Moriarty's response to the article by his version of the "Facts."

Here ye! Here Ye! Whilst we disclose some 'facts' for behold there has arisen from among the sons of men a prophet, one who divines the mysteries of the past, unfolds treachery of today's connivance, and discloses the morbid motives destined to foul tomorrow's fuedal [sic] ogre. Now list!

Despite all the belly-aching of the Grahams the fact remains that they could not rally a corporal's guard to their standard last spring when they were trying to get up a ticket in opposition to the city's business administration [.] [T]he 'fact' stands boldly forth that after two unsuccessful attempts to get up an opposition ticket they had to slink to their den and continue their mud-slinging single handed and alone while the present mayor and councilmen, unanimously chosen by their fellow citizens to administer the affairs of the city along the lines which have been followed for the past three years have never condescended to even notice their whinning [,] but have continued to labor for the best interests of St. Marys and its citizens regardless of the likes and dislikes of these disturbers and are upheld in their policy by every honest law abiding citizen of our prosperous little city. FACTS! FACTS! facts! b-r-r-z-z-wow!⁵⁸

When the mayor and council allowed Welsh to resign, then re-appointing him as a special officer, the Journal

⁵⁷"Fact!" St. Marys Journal, July 31 to September 11, 1903, almost every week, p. 1.

⁵⁸"FACTS," St. Marys Star, August 20, 1903, p. 1.

commented that the individual who shielded Welsh was in its estimation "ten times more detestable than a murderer or a horse thief." Such activities were being practiced by those who pretended "to represent the good element" of the city and who wrapped the "cloak of religion" about themselves.⁵⁹

When the forgery charge was made against Welsh, the Journal was given additional fuel with which to berate his defenders. According to the Journal, when Welsh assaulted James Graham, neither Ryan nor the council did anything to punish him. They and the opposition newspapers gloated about it. When the charge concerning Welsh's conduct in office was filed with Ryan, the council did nothing and Ryan was alleged to be a partner in the scheme which allowed Welsh to resign rather than face investigation. When Welsh forged Ben Cook's name to a bill and presented it to the council, the "Ryan-Lee-Moriarty" combination endorsed the action. In the Journal's view, corruption was rampant in city hall.⁶⁰

On September 11, the Journal noted that it did not want St. Marys to be the place where law and justice were a total mockery, and where the principal violators of the law were the officers of the law. It commented that had they done

⁵⁹St. Marys Journal, July 31, 1903, p. 12.

⁶⁰"Another Sample of Good Government," Ibid., August 14, 1903, p. 1.

their duty fairly and honestly, there would not have been any trouble.⁶¹

Commenting on the Welsh assault, the Journal noted that the evidence was

so one-sided, and outrageous [by] lawlessness, that the people wondered what kind of a mayor St. Marys has to condone such work and keep an officer, and what kind of creatures those editors are who boast of such dirty work.⁶²

On that note the week-in and week-out criticism of the mayor came to an end. When Welsh was convicted, the Journal achieved vindication for its actions. In examining these two chapters there are two issues which require our attention: the city printing assignments and George Welsh.

During the year the Journal was the official paper, it was paid \$71.10 for city printing. In that same period, August 15, 1899, to April 10, 1900, the Eagle received \$12.80 and the Star \$15.40. In the period April 10, 1900, to April 9, 1901, the Star, as the official paper, was paid \$68.85. The following year it was paid \$71.40. When the Star and Eagle became the publishing agents of the city (May 27, 1902, to April 28, 1903), the Star was paid \$109.92, while the Eagle received \$46.25 for a total of \$156.17. This figure was double that of preceding years, but since much of the increase was by one newspaper, the Journal would have had no legitimate grounds for complaint. The following year

⁶¹Ibid., September 11, 1903, p. 1.

⁶²"Westmoreland Notes," Ibid., p. 11.

the Star received \$54.00 and the Eagle \$42.65, for a total of \$96.65.⁶³

The statement that the city was spending four times the amount necessary was a fabrication on the part of the Journal. The Star and Eagle received approximately \$150 for work that might have been done for \$75 or \$100. The burden on the city budget would not be heavy, but noticeable. It was not an illegal expenditure of city money.

Whether the use of city printing to punish the Journal or reward the Eagle was done by the Ryan faction, the conclusion must lean heavily on conjecture and inference. One does, however, have the strong impression that the Ryan faction used the city printing as a means of punishing the Journal.

The Journal's charges of graft all seem to revolve around the money paid in city printing. The money, as shown, was not an extortionate amount, and the people re-elected Ryan with full knowledge of his actions, so it seems the people of St. Marys were not complaining about any supposed graft. The problem for the Journal was that the alleged graft was known to, and tolerated by, the people of St. Marys.

Our next concern is George Welsh. We can substantially conclude that Welsh was behind the break-in of the Journal office in 1896, if he was not an actual participant

⁶³City Council Records, August 15, 1899, to April 28, 1904.

in the act. Welsh had the motive and the temperament to commit such a deed. The only other person receiving that much abuse at that time was Dr. Miller, but it is doubtful that Miller would have stooped to that level, no matter what his opinion of the Grahams.

The evidence brought out in 1901 would seem enough to have convicted Tracy and Welsh of bribery and extortion. One wonders why James Graham waited so long to make an affidavit if he was bent on law and order.

Welsh's appointment as city marshal was a poor decision. Prior to the charges of bribery and extortion, and the breaking and entering of the Journal office, Welsh had been convicted many times of liquor violations. In St. Marys, liquor violations were not considered serious. Considering that fact, and the fact the charges against Welsh on the break-in had never been proven, Mayor Johnson may have had some excuse for hiring Welsh.

With the breaking of the B. H. Tracy affair, however, the justification for keeping Welsh on as marshal became lame. The city council should have at least investigated the allegations against Welsh.

When T. J. Ryan became mayor he should have dismissed Welsh out of hand. However, with Welsh as an issue, Ryan and his entire council was elected, giving some reason to believe that the appointment of Welsh had public backing.

With the assault on James Graham, the reasons for keeping Welsh on as marshal were totally unjustified. The

mayor and council exercised exceedingly poor judgement in their handling of the Welsh affair. Keeping him on simply justified the Journal's excessive charges.

Before passing too harsh of a judgement we should note that the records show that in Pottawatomie county in 1901, Onaga had a marshal on the job who had been sentenced to three years in the state penitentiary for killing a man, but was out on bond pending a hearing in the state supreme court.⁶⁴ As related in chapter one, James Graham was elected county sheriff barely five years after being pardoned for committing basically the same offense as George Welsh.⁶⁵ That indicates two things; one, that Welsh was not in bad company, and, two, the basic difference between the two men. When Graham was convicted back in 1874, he stayed, served time, and was vindicated; Welsh, when he was convicted, fled.

⁶⁴Westmoreland Signal, July 19, 1901, p. 8.

⁶⁵See chapter one, James Graham's biography.

Chapter 6

CITY ELECTIONS: 1905 AND 1907

1905

With the corruption of the Ryan administration so fully exposed in 1903, one would have thought that the people were ready for a change in 1905. But it was not to be.

Early in March of that year the Journal began its electioneering. According to the Journal, the people often asked the extent of the city indebtedness. The law required the city treasurer to make a detailed statement every three months of receipts, expenditures, and indebtedness of the city. Such a statement had not been made in four years. Graham claimed the taxpayers were not able to see where their money was being spent. He insisted the people were waiting for a detailed statement, but it was never published.¹

Whenever the Journal was without charges to make, it dug up the fact that the council had failed to circulate a detailed statement of city expenses. Had the Journal had substantive charges, it would appear the Grahams would have filed formal charges against the city council in a court of law. They never did.

¹"Why Isn't it Published," St. Marys Journal, March 3, 1905, p. 1.

On March 16 the Star reported that a petition was circulated nominating the Ryan administration for re-election. They had not wanted to run, but the public endorsement of their policies made no other course possible. Miller said their work had silenced the habitual complainers.²

A week later the complainers were active with a petition nominating a ticket for mayor and council headed by John Aylward and the old reliables, Antone Heim and Robert Scheloski, among those nominated for councilmen. The Journal called it a splendid ticket representing the best St. Marys had to offer.³

The Journal did not attempt to make George Welsh an issue; rather, it attempted to make taxes the issue. The Journal claimed taxes had been raised to ten mills, and three mills more had been authorized for the city park. All the money taken from the saloons had been "squandered." John Graham claimed that had the money been properly handled, the city would have been completely out of debt. All the money had been spent, and the city had issued \$6,000 worth of scrip on which the interest amounted to \$350 per year. The taxpayers were being soaked to the limit. Graham suggested that if the voters wanted high taxes to continue, they should vote

²"Old Mayor and Council Renamed," St. Marys Star, March 16, 1905, p. 1. In 1905 the Star was owned by Willis Miller, who took over during the later part of 1903.

³"A Good Ticket," St. Marys Journal, March 24, 1905, p. 1.

for the Ryan crowd, but if they wanted good government, they should vote for the Aylward ticket.⁴

Raising the city printing issue, the Journal said that with the city \$6,000 in debt, the council continued to pay two city papers at the 65% rate. It offered to do the printing for 35% and not charge for the printing of the city clerk's report of the council meetings. In the Journal's view these printing charges were the reason for the \$6,000 debt.⁵

Regarding charges that the Grahams were behind the Aylward ticket, the Journal denied that James Graham had filed a petition nominating a city ticket, but one John J. Hanson had filed the petition. Graham denied that anyone was disgusted upon learning he was being nominated. Graham accused Miller of going around town and trying to get men on the Aylward ticket to withdraw, "but his 'influence' didn't cut any ice."⁶

The Star in a question-answer format attacked the Aylward ticket and defended itself from the charges leveled by the Journal. Miller denied a Journal accusation that the entire community would have to pay for a \$7,000 waterworks proposition which the legislature had allowed for the business

⁴"Taxation," Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 2.

⁶"Same Old Tactics," Ibid., p. 8.

section of St. Marys.⁷ Miller read the law authorizing the \$7,000, and attempted to paint the opponents of the Ryan administration as opposing all forms of public improvements.

Miller denied that city printing was the cause of the city debt. Miller said his bill for legal printing was \$2.10 or about 50¢ per month for the first four months of 1905, and the Eagle's was even less. Miller's total bill for the printing of the sidewalk ordinances was \$3.25 per month. He claimed the city got its printing cheaper than any other city in Pottawatomie county.⁸

The facts do seem to support the Star--somewhat. The council records show the Star was paid \$60.00 in 1905 for city printing, or an average of \$5.00 per month. The Eagle collected \$42.90 for an average of around \$3.50 per month. In 1904 the Star collected \$52.69, or approximately \$4.40 per month, and the Eagle collected \$43.25, around \$3.60 a month.⁹ The city would have saved at least \$43.00 and possibly as much as \$50.00 in 1904 had it taken the Journal's proposal. The

⁷In early March of 1905, a bill passed the Kansas Legislature meant to allow property holders of the downtown section, upon petition of a majority of the taxpayers of the district, to issue scrip for the construction of a waterworks plant for fire protection. The Journal maintained the bill was unconstitutional and would tax all of the taxpayers for the benefit of a few. ("The Waterworks Bill," St. Marys Journal, March 10, 1905, p. 1.) The Journal's foes did not agree, but after much rhetoric this proposal fell by the way-side and in 1908 the people approved a waterworks and power plant that all three newspapers endorsed.

⁸"Voters Question Box," St. Marys Star, March 30, 1905, pp. 1, 2, 4.

⁹City Council Records, 1904 and 1905.

figures show that city printing was not reason that the city was \$6,000 in debt, but they also show that Miller was collecting more than the \$3.75 a month he claimed to be collecting.

Miller denied that some of the paving had been done illegally. He said all the macadamizing done by the city was legal, and the city records showed it.

Miller compared the city taxes with Wamego's and found St. Marys' taxes were one-fifth lower. The city debt was not \$6,000; the general debt was \$1,529.34. The scrip for the sidewalks and improvement funds were levied on the property holder and were of no concern to the individual taxpayer. The park debt was created by the people in a special election, and the Ryan administration was not responsible for the debt. (Probably the Journal and Star were both correct. In figuring the city debt the Journal included sidewalk and improvement debts, while the Star excluded them from its calculations. Improvement projects were created by the city authority but held against the property owner, while the city or community as a whole was responsible for the general debt.)

Regarding the saloon revenue, Miller noted that the city received the revenue for only part of a year three years previously, and no revenue had been collected from the saloons during Ryan's second term. The Star denied the city money had been squandered. It suggested if the money was being squandered, the city officers should have been prosecuted. Miller called the charges "worthless and unfounded."

The opponents of the waterworks and other improvements were described as those men on the ticket headed by John Aylward. The Star claimed the supporters of the Ryan ticket paid 93% of the city taxes while the Aylward supporters paid only 7% of the taxes.

Responding to charges against him of lying, Miller denied the charges, and accused John Graham of being malicious. According to the Star, James Graham was standing beside John Hanson when the ticket was filed in final form. Miller speculated that the Journal did not want the public to know that Graham had anything to do with the ticket. He charged that the Grahams were behind the Aylward ticket from its inception.

One of the candidates did indicate to Miller disgust with the Graham attempt to keep him from quitting the ticket. Henry Heynen attempted to withdraw, asked Miller how, and would have done so if it had not given offense to an unidentified friend.¹⁰

A day later, the Journal presented its side of the story. According to Graham the tax levy had been more than doubled under the Ryan administration, the city debt had increased from a few hundred dollars to \$6,000, and the "enormous" saloon revenue had been squandered.

He called the \$7,000 waterworks proposition an attempt by a few to force the many to pay dearly. The Journal suggested the voters be given a chance to vote on the

¹⁰"Voter's Question Box," St. Marys Star, March 30, 1905, p. 1, 2, 4.

waterworks and not have it pushed on them by a few individuals working in secret. The Journal charged the city of St. Marys was the only town in the United States with two official papers, and the only reason was to pay off a political debt.

The Journal pointed with pleasure to the past Aylward administration. When Aylward took office the city debt was \$1,600, but when he left office the debt was \$400. His administration made many city improvements without increasing the city debt and raising taxes.

Graham also charged that the city did not put money into the pockets of the laboring men, but into the pockets of a chosen few. Recalling past election charges, the Journal reminded the public of its "proof" that over \$3,000 had gone to half a dozen men. The laborer was urged to stop the extravagance and waste of public funds.¹¹

The Journal pointed out that it was unlawful for the city treasurer to speculate on city scrip, and the law required the city treasurer to make a detailed quarterly report to the people, but it was not being done. Finally, Graham urged the time-honored custom of having a force of men cleaning the streets prior to the election be stopped. It made the laborers feel the city council was doing them a great favor and urging them to vote for whomever was in power. The Journal felt that all men should be allowed to work, not just those supporting the marshal's ticket.¹²

¹¹St. Marys Journal, March 31, 1905, p. 1.

¹²Ibid., p. 8.

The result of the election was another victory for Journal foes. Mayor Ryan won by 20 votes in the "face of the hardest fight ever put up by the opposition."¹³ Two members of the Aylward ticket, Frank Dunn and Henry Heynen, the man who tried to get off the ticket, were selected along with three members of the Ryan ticket. Thirteen votes separated the top vote-getter for councilman from the bottom man.

The Journal claimed the supporters of Ryan made a personal plea for their man and Ryan made a two-week canvass, whereas Aylward did not canvass or ask anyone for support on election day.¹⁴

1907

The Journal made its last appearance in a city election in 1907, and as usual came out on the short end.

In 1907 T. J. Ryan declared he would not run, and started a petition for the nomination of N. S. Clothier for mayor. The petition was signed, claimed the Star, by all those who favored the Ryan ticket or those who favored the progressive movement of the city.¹⁵

The Journal urged the people to choose a mayor and council who were free from the dictation of any group of men. St. Marys had been run by those who squandered city money, and

¹³St. Marys Star, April 6, 1905, p. 1.

¹⁴"City Election," St. Marys Journal, April 7, 1905, p. 1.

¹⁵"Progressive Ticket Nominated," St. Marys Star, March 7, 1907, p. 1.

personal disputes among the citizenry had been damaging to the community.¹⁶

According to Graham, two businessmen had been working for two weeks trying to get someone to run for mayor.

But there isn't any surprise at their activity along this line as the two firms they represent have drawn hundreds of dollars from the city treasurer the past few years.¹⁷

Graham noted the individuals were aware of a good thing and wished to continue their activities while the city continued to fall further into debt, and all the city had to show for it was "that little \$900 Beauty and a ten-cent squirt gun" (fire-engine).¹⁸

Continuing its criticism, the Journal noted that in the official report signed by the city clerk a bill from the Star Lumber Company for \$135.68 was laid on the table because the marshal, who bought the goods, was not sure where all the materials had gone and he could not explain to the satisfaction of some members of the council why the prices of the commodities had varied so much. But at the February 26 meeting, the representative of the company appeared and indicated the bill was right, and he could not change the bill. One of those present said the bill was laid over again and the members of the council did not vote for allowance, but the city clerk officially published the bill as having been allowed.¹⁹

¹⁶"Nominate Men Who Will Be Fair," St. Marys Journal, March 8, 1907, p. 1.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹"Was the Lumber Bill Allowed?" Ibid., March 15, 1907, p. 1.

On March 21 the Star reported that a ticket was being put together, headed by Joseph Cunneen for mayor. The ticket was put up by J. A. Steinmeyer, Graham, and others. The Star felt they had no issue, for the treasurer's report would show the city was practically out of debt, and the people would hear some of their candidates apologizing for permitting their names to be used. Miller declared the Clothier ticket was not "put up to whip a 'gang' or satisfy vengeance but for the purpose of making St. Marys the BEST town in Kansas of its size."²⁰

In its electioneering, the Star indicated that the Clothier ticket had 122 signers, including three members of the Cunneen ticket, while the Cunneen ticket had but 35 signers. Miller reminded the voters of the conditions in the city ten years ago when the

city government was the shame of many of the visitors who came here from afar. View the struggle then caused in the effort to wrest the city from the hands of men, several of whom had not the force of character to govern themselves, much less anyone else. See how the reputation of our best people was maligned because they dared assail the old crowd.²¹

The Star went on to note how the progressives were attacked by the old crowd who sought to divide the community, and fought the city park. The Star urged the voters to consider men on the two tickets and the manner "in which they conduct their own business."²²

²⁰St. Marys Star, March 21, 1907, p. 1.

²¹"The City Election," Ibid., March 28, 1907, p. 1.

²²Ibid.

In its columns the Journal made much of a \$4.50 overpayment by the city. According to Graham, when the minutes of the previous meeting were read, a halt was called when the clerk read that the \$135.00 bill of the Star Lumber Company had been allowed. Ryan defended the payment and stated that he thought the understanding was that the bill was allowed with the condition that should any overcharges be found, a reduction would be made. Graham asked the leading question: "Who ever heard of a bill being allowed by the council until it was properly made out?" If the council did not pass the bill, "Then who did allow it?" The Journal noted the lumber company returned \$4.50 and wondered why, if the bill was correct, was the \$4.50 returned? The Journal concluded "Probably this is one of the many reasons why the city is still several thousand dollars in debt."²³

The Journal published a statement by candidates Joseph Cunneen, M. A. Schuler, and Ed Fennell that they had signed the Clothier petition before they knew any other ticket was to be placed in the field. They declared: "We are heartily in favor of the ticket upon which we are running, regardless of what the Star may publish."²⁴

Graham noted the petition nominating Dr. Clothier was circulated for two weeks by James McGovern, the marshal. It was offered to everyone in town and only 122 signed it and

²³"The Star Refunds \$4.50," St. Marys Journal, March 29, 1907, p. 1.

²⁴"To the Voters," Ibid., p. 12.

several of those indicated they would not vote for that ticket. The Cunneen ticket, on the other hand, was circulated for only an hour and no attempt was made to get a large number of signers, as there was not time to do so. The Journal said it had nothing personal against Dr. Clothier, but the city had not been run as it should have been by the backers of Clothier, and reported that three men had to beg the doctor several times before he consented to run.²⁵

As in past elections, the Journal harked back to the days when Aylward was mayor and ran the city on a seven-mill levy. Aylward also decreased the city debt and made numerous improvements. "The city has been going in debt ever since and they tell you that we have progressed."²⁶

Again the forces of evil and corruption carried the day, according to the Journal. The entire Clothier ticket was elected by large majorities in light voting.²⁷ The Journal's attempts in influencing city elections ended.

The Journal was partially successful in three years of its existence in dominating city government. The year the city spent under the control of James Graham soured the citizens for the remainder of the Journal's existence. Regarded as "knockers," the Grahams were seldom successful in influencing city politics, despite the repeated charges of corruption.

²⁵"Those Petitions," Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷"The City Election," St. Marys Eagle, April 7, 1907, p. 1.

Despite the validity of some of the charges against Ryan, the Journal was never able to remove him from office. The charges of extravagance, corruption, and personal failing were consistently exaggerated, and the Journal's persistent efforts to carry the city elections failed. The unmistakable conclusion is that the people of St. Marys simply did not want the Journal's brand of leadership. While the Journal continually charged, and counter-charged, its calls went largely unheeded by the voters who consistently voted in Journal foes.

Chapter 7

THE GRAHAMS AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY BATTLE IN 1904

As if the Grahams had not done enough for St. Marys, in 1904 they did their best to ruin the Democratic party of Pottawatomie county. In this election the Grahams were driven from the Democratic party and ironically took many who did not like them with them into the Republican party.

The split in 1904 had been building for several years. The Journal and the Star had always battled over who was the most loyal Democratic paper, and both repeatedly accused each other of bolting the party. The papers fought long and hard for control of the Democratic party in St. Marys. For years James Graham was a force to be reckoned with in the Democratic party in the county. But being the individual he was, he made as many enemies as friends.

One of the first indications of trouble in the 1900's occurred in February 1900 when the Eagle reported that Moriarty was upset because a Mr. Kelly, who was organizing a new organization of young Democrats in Kansas, did not visit him while he was in town. Instead, Kelly visited old Democratic stalwarts, James Graham and P. H. McHale.¹

¹St. Marys Eagle, February 1, 1900, p. 4.

In April the Star charged that the Grahams had perpetrated a piece of political chicanery. According to Moriarty, the announcement for the Democratic party to meet was not made until the day before the primary, when it was buried in one of the back pages of the Journal. Most of the Democrats did not know of the primary, nor was the meeting held in city hall, but in the office of attorney B. C. Mitchner. The Star claimed the Grahams attempted to steal the primary, but their scheme failed. Moriarty claimed that a ticket favorable to the Grahams had been printed and was ready "to steal the primary," but a few good Democrats, unwilling to put up with such activities, got together, selected candidates, and carried the election 74 to 26. The Star assured its readers that the Journal would call no more caucuses, and no such practices would occur while Moriarty was the township committeeman.²

A week later the Journal responded to the accusations in the Star. Graham denied the accusation leveled by the Star at it, and charged the Star with lying when it said the Grahams tried to put up a ticket in the spring election. To the contrary, the Journal claimed the Grahams opposed the putting up of a ticket at the primary, and offered one A. J. Beakey to vouch for the accuracy of its story.

Graham claimed that not until one hour before the election was it known there would be a contest in the primary.

²"A Contemptible Trick," St. Marys Star, April 19, 1900, p. 4.

An opposition ticket was then hastily put up by Beakey and James Graham, but it was too late as Moriarty, Tom Byrnes, and John Erbacher had given their ticket to nearly every voter at the primary. The trio had been engaged in their work for about three weeks. The Journal denied it attempted to run the primary.³

In the same issue the Journal blasted the new chairman of the Democratic committee. Chairman Moriarty signaled his presence by attempting to run men out of the Democratic party who had served the party during their entire lifetime, e.g., James Graham. It charged Moriarty with striving to defeat the Democratic party.⁴

Evidently the Star knew enough about the primary to find time to select a ticket, and enough people knew of the election to bring the Star forces out in greater numbers than the Journal could muster.

The summer selection of delegates to the county convention produced its share of problems. Following the July primary the Star noted that the Mitchner delegation received 87 votes while the uninstructed delegation received 89 votes. The Mitchner followers (Graham faction) had organized the caucus and refused to sign the credentials of the successful

³"The Truth Isn't in Them," St. Marys Journal, April 27, 1900, p. 1.

⁴"A New Chairman and a New Way to Organize and Lead a Party to Victory," Ibid.

ticket. Moriarty said the matter would be decided at the county convention.⁵

The following day the Journal noted that it was pleased with the outcome of the primary. The Journal hoped there would be peace in St. Marys, denied it was trying to kill the Democratic party, and admonished those who were trying to disrupt the party with their personal disputes. It bore no animosity toward anyone and hoped to work for the party, but because a certain gentleman carried the German vote in his "vest picket and by his whistle can summon them to battle their fellow democrats and neighbors is no sign that he is king of all the people."⁶

The Journal also denied that two judges had refused to sign the credentials of the "uninstructed" delegation which it claimed won the primary. It said the only one who refused to sign the credentials was Moriarty. Graham stated his earnest hope that Moriarty would occasionally tell the truth.⁷

The Eagle's report was that after two hours of "rustling" by both sides, the vote was counted giving 88 votes for the Mitchner faction and 89 for the Meehan (uninstructed) delegation. Two of the judges held that two of Meehan's voters illegally voted and gave the election to the Mitchner

⁵"Democratic Primary," St. Marys Star, July 19, 1900, p. 1.

⁶"Democratic Primary," St. Marys Journal, July 20, 1900, p. 1.

⁷"A False Statement," Ibid.

delegation by a margin of one vote. The Eagle also indicated the county convention would decide the matter.⁸

After the primary battles the Journal and Star largely refrained from in-party feuding.

In 1901 the Journal only occasionally commented on whether or not all the Democrats were loyal, but waited until after the election to berate Moriarty. The problem for Moriarty was that in that election a local man, J. C. Johnson, became the district county commissioner. Unfortunately for Moriarty, Johnson was a rare Republican who managed to carry Democratic St. Marys.

According to the Journal, Johnson's election would be hard for County Chairman Moriarty to explain to his Democratic brethern. It noted the affair was regretted by all the good Democrats and should be a "lesson to them in putting incompetent men in responsible positions."⁹

The following week Moriarty claimed the commissioner race was not one of Republican versus Democrat, but one of St. Marys versus Wamego. St. Marys had not had the commission post for some time and the home folks were resolved to get the position for a St. Marian, regardless of his political affiliation. Moriarty claimed he worked hard for the Democratic

⁸"Our Turn to Laugh," St. Marys Eagle, July 19, 1900, p. 1.

⁹"The Election," St. Marys Journal, November 8, 1901, p. 12.

candidate and did his best to elect him.¹⁰ (Moriarty's explanation was probably the most accurate.)

The Journal saw things a little differently. When the nominations for county commissioner took place at the convention, Moriarty said St. Marys passed, but James Graham announced St. Marys had a qualified person for the spot and promoted John Erbacher for the nomination, or so the Journal claimed. While Graham worked hard for Erbacher, Moriarty did nothing. With the selection of a Democratic nominee, Moriarty did nothing to help him until the eve of the election.

Moriarty also committed the grievous sin of not endorsing the township ticket wholeheartedly when he noted that the Independent candidates were all life-long Democrats. It was Moriarty's duty to organize and conduct the campaign in the township, but he did nothing.¹¹

Responding, Moriarty noted that his explanation had not suited the Grahams, but added that he made no effort to please the Graham's on this particular occasion, nor have we ever considered their pleasure or displeasure, when expressing our sentiments. We have not done so in the past nor will we in the future.¹²

As a Christmas present, the Journal, on December 20, 1901, gave Moriarty a full page of free advertising. According

¹⁰"An Explanation," St. Marys Star, November 14, 1901, p. 1.

¹¹"His Record Versus His 'Explanation'," St. Marys Journal, November 22, 1901, p. 1.

¹²St. Marys Star, November 28, 1901, p. 4.

to the Journal, it was Moriarty's view that he could sell out the Democratic party and no one had any right to criticise him or censure him. The Journal claimed that it had supported the Democratic party without variance during its entire career. Moriarty, as county chairman, failed to see that the party was properly organized, nor did he work for the interests of the party. When Moriarty's candidate for township trustee failed to win the primary, he was insulted and refused to abide by the will of the party, supporting instead the bolters who ran on an Independent ticket. In order to defeat the township ticket, Moriarty disregarded the interests of the party and the Democratic nominee for county commissioner. Moriarty failed to say anything against the bolters who had been turned down in the caucus. Completing its litany, the Journal charged misconduct on the part of the Star editor in encouraging the bolters, and warned that such a person would never do anything in advancing the party principles.¹³

The political chicanery of the Grahams in 1900 was repeated by Moriarty in 1902. According to the Journal, the chairman of the Democratic central committee issued an announcement for the county convention township primaries. But he made the announcement only in his paper and snubbed other county papers by not sending them a copy of the announcement. Graham noted Moriarty had a habit of knifing the party

¹³"Some Facts About Mr. Moriarty," St. Marys Journal, December 20, 1901, p. 1.

in the back and there were rumors that he was through with the party.¹⁴

Despite the short notice, the Graham-supported candidates carried the township primary, and in the eyes of the Journal the voters declared themselves against Moriarty's scheming.¹⁵

But the only thing the Journal said of the county delegate convention was that the delegates had selected Del Kemper, who had sold out the Democratic party at various times, as chairman of the county central committee.¹⁶ While stopping the scheming at home the Grahams failed to stop it at the county convention.

However, the Westmoreland Recorder did note that the Journal had not endorsed the Democratic county ticket. It said James Graham had ambitions about being the nominee for state representative, but the convention thought otherwise and offered the nomination to a man who did not want it. Hill called Graham a good man to have as a party worker, but, "According to W. J. Moriarty, Graham has outlived his usefulness and is a disgruntled democrat." Hill noted the same idea was commonly held many years ago, but the ex-sheriff rose up and took a lieutenant colonel's position. Recognizing the

¹⁴"What Do You Think of This, Fellow Democrats?" Ibid., May 2, 1902, p. 12.

¹⁵"Democratic Primaries," Ibid., May 9, 1902, p. 1.

¹⁶"Democrats Meet," Ibid., August 8, 1902, p. 12.

power of James Graham within the Democratic party the Recorder stated:

Now it is hardly supposable that Graham's enemies will make a general out of him by fighting him; but with all his faults, he is several degrees removed from anybody's fool and it is probable that his party will be giving him taffy before election time rolls around.¹⁷

Two weeks later the Recorder reported that James Graham had denied that he was a candidate for state representative, and Graham maintained he could have gotten the nomination had he tried for it.¹⁸ With the story by the Recorder we have definite evidence that the Grahams were becoming fed up with the Democratic party and Moriarty was doing his best to push the Grahams out of the party.

Thus we have the flavor of the situation that had arisen prior to the 1904 election. In a small town many factors besides the chain of events mentioned may have contributed to the split, but the evidence is strong that there was a restive spirit in the Democratic party and the simmering divisiveness needed only the proper spark.

The year 1904 did not start out like it would be a bad year for the Democrats. To the contrary, it looked like the Republicans were going to do the intra-party fighting. On March 17 the Eagle reported that the Democratic primary was a very quiet one with harmony prevailing. Lee said to his fellow Republicans:

¹⁷Westmoreland Recorder, August 28, 1902, p. 8.

¹⁸Ibid., September 11, 1902, p. 8.

It is time for the republicans of this township to wake up. With such harmony in the ranks of democracy, St. Marys township will go democratic unless something is done and done P.D.Q.¹⁹

The Republicans managed to unify St. Marys Democrats with the Republican refusal to re-nominate J. C. Johnson for county commissioner. Both the Star and Journal were appalled at the treatment given Johnson at the Republican county convention.²⁰

In June the Star indicated that an Independent movement of disgruntled Republicans might be forming, and urged them to join the Democrats in the selection of county officials in which there were no political positions taken.²¹

Miller was half-right. There would be an Independent movement in the county but it would be made up of disgruntled Democrats. Whereas the Republicans feuded early and reunited later, the Democrats of St. Marys were united early and feuded later.

On August 19 the Journal expressed the hope that the Democrats of St. Marys would agree on a ticket of delegates to the county convention without a fight, and urged the backbiting be stopped.²² The backbiting did not stop and a week later the

¹⁹"Harmony, Harmony, Harmony," St. Marys Eagle, March 17, 1904, p. 2.

²⁰"Did They Do Right?" St. Marys Star, May 27, 1904, p. 2; "A Good Man Turned Down," St. Marys Journal, June 3, 1904, p. 1.

²¹"An Independent Ticket," St. Marys Star, June 24, 1904, p. 1.

²²St. Marys Journal, August 19, 1904, p. 2.

Journal reported that it had heard that a Democratic caucus was to be held at city hall on September third to elect delegates to the county convention. The Journal said it got word of the caucus from men on the streets because the Democratic committeeman, Maurice Murphy, was "too small a man to give a notice for the caucus to the Journal for publication." The Journal also charged that "spitework" used in the selection of delegates was a poor thing to do and the people suffered from such actions.²³

On the first of September the Star spoke out with force against the Grahams and the role they were attempting to play in the local Democratic caucus. To start it off Miller urged the voters to be men, if they ignored their duty, or bartered away their vote, corruption would result. Miller stated:

It often occurs that a politician whose record is a complete narrative of civil and moral blemishes captures a caucus for no other reason than the thrifty and successful citizens fail to attend the primaries. It often occurs that votes are literally purchased for a drink of whiskey or a promise of political lucre.²⁴

On the same page the Star reported that James Graham was a candidate for county commissioner against James Cunneen. Miller felt that, in itself, ought to be sufficient enough for the voters to vote so that no set of thirty or forty individuals could control the sense of the township. Miller then

²³Ibid., August 26, 1904, p. 8.

²⁴"Voters, Be Men!" St. Marys Star, September 1, 1904, p. 1.

gave Cunneen a strong endorsement, while strongly attacking James Graham's candidacy.

The Star also reported that someone offered a German Democrat four gallons of whiskey to distribute among his nationality in order to secure their votes for commissioner, but was informed he would not be bought. Miller further charged that the Journal was attempting to draw several candidates for trustee before the public and attempted to have the voters believe that they were for Graham.²⁵ The entire political slant of the Star that day was an extended attack on the Grahams and the candidacy of James Graham. It appears that Miller and his friends were attempting to destroy James Graham politically.

The following day the Journal did its electioneering. John Graham indicated that the Journal did not believe it showed good sense for a man who aspired to be a party nominee for county office to fall into the hands of a small clique of "soreheads" and obey their whims, and should not make it a point to offend portions of his party.²⁶

More serious was the Journal charge that several men in the community were attempting to force religion into politics in St. Marys and Belvue. Graham condemned the movement noting that it would work the other way in other parts of the county, and condemned the actions as unAmerican. It quoted

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶St. Marys Journal, September 2, 1904, p. 1.

President Roosevelt's comment, "A nomination obtained in fraud binds no one."²⁷

Responding to Miller's endorsement of Cunneen, the Journal stated:

Mr. Voter! When you go to vote tomorrow, measure the ability of James Graham and James Cunneen for the duties to be performed by a county commissioner. A personal attack on a man by an anarchist is not a manly reason for voting against him.²⁸

The primary was as acrimonious as Miller's assaults on James Graham. Lee reported that the Democrats of St. Marys held their annual "picnic" Saturday with the principal attraction being a "ball-game" between the two factions. James Graham claimed his backers would have won had the "K Cee" not interfered. Miller, Moriarty, and Murphy claimed to have won on clean politics. The Eagle extended an invitation to all the dissatisfied to vote Republican.²⁹

The same day the Star called the primary "one of the most interesting primaries held in this city for some years." The race between James Graham and James Cunneen became spirited when the name of Frank Challis was attached to the Graham ticket in opposition to Maurice Murphy, the local

²⁷"Dragging Religion Into Politics," Ibid.

²⁸"Think, Before You Vote," Ibid., p. 8. Frank Miller denied his father was an anarchist, socialist, or anything of the sorts. According to Mr. Miller, the charges may have arisen out of the fact that his father was president of the Webster Society when he attended college (KSAC, Manhattan). He indicated the group was thought to have had a number of young socialists in it. Interview with Frank Miller, March 11, 1974.

²⁹"A Democratic Picnic," St. Marys Eagle, September 8, 1904, p. 1.

candidate for county attorney. However, the Star was pleased to report that the Murphy-Cunneen delegation won by a safe majority.³⁰

The Journal saw the primary somewhat differently than the Star. According to the Journal, the election was corrupt and was stolen. Committeeman Murphy came under the most intense criticism. The Journal charged Murphy made himself boss, declaring motions carried or lost according to his interests, and refused to allow a division of the house when his rulings were questioned.

The selection of judges ignited the first battle at the primary. According to the Journal, Antone Heim was selected by a vote of 45 to 41 over Martin Lee, and because Heim was a Graham man, James Graham moved that the other candidate for commissioner be allowed to select one judge. Cunneen thereupon selected Martin Lee as his representative. However, Murphy did not do what the Grahams expected of him, but appointed himself the third judge rather than allow the caucus to appoint the third man. In the Journal's eyes the reason soon became clear:

Men who have been republicans, but who belong to the same religious organization that Murphy does, offered their votes, and when challenged, Murphy and Lee merely sneered at the challenges and allowed these votes to be counted.³¹

³⁰"Democratic Primary," St. Marys Star, September 8, 1904, p. 1.

³¹"The Graft Worked," St. Marys Journal, September 9, 1904, p. 1.

Murphy forces allowed Republicans to vote, alcohol flowed the night before the primary, and a "lot of strikers" from Emmett and Belvue were brought in to vote. With all that, the Murphy forces could muster a majority of only twelve. John Graham warned that it would take far more than twelve votes to elect a county attorney and concluded: "A man may steal a nomination, but it isn't so easy to steal an election."³²

Six days later the Star responded to the charges leveled at the primary. Miller called the Journal's accounts "one of the most abominable travesties on true newspaper work we have ever read in our life." The Journal misrepresented the facts to sustain their own contentions. Miller disputed the impeachment of Maurice Murphy's fairness and honesty. Murphy was said to have been pleasant, agreeable, and a gentleman during the entire proceeding. He acted as judge because it was required by law, not because of a plot.

Miller categorically denied that any secret religious organization was used to defeat James Graham. The Knights of Columbus had nothing to do with James Graham's defeat, but the leaders of the Knights, the Masons, and others all worked to defeat Graham. Because some of the Murphy-Cunneen supporters were Catholics, the religious argument was raised. (St. Marys was predominately Catholic.) Miller charged the Grahams with working the anti-religious sympathies of the people in the years past, and noted "Whoever has opposed their unworthy

³²Ibid.

purposes has had their private sentiments and their good family name slandered and abused."

The most interesting charge, and the one that provoked the most intense response, was Miller's comment that the people did not wish to turn the city over to the

Graham aggregation who [had] charge of this township and had run it in debt seven or eight thousand dollars, who, when in power in this city gave shameful show of official drunkenness, permitting Topeka jointists to flood the town with booze on Woodman day and leaving a question [m]ark in the minds of the people as to what became of the revenue.³³

Miller concluded the article by saying that the day was past when James Graham could gain "any political point" by working a "religious racket" in St. Marys or Pottawatomie county.³⁴

Miller made additional denials that the Knights were in politics, and Moriarty got into the act saying, among other things, that the Democratic party made a house cleaning that it should have made years ago.³⁵

Miller's comments roused the anger of the Journal and James Graham who responded with a full page devoted to the Star and its supporters. Most of the response was supplied by the pen of James Graham, who in a lengthy letter replied to the

³³"The Squeal Analyzed," St. Marys Star, September 15, 1904, p. 1.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵"K. C's Not in Politics," Ibid., p. 2. "A Check to Rule or Ruin' Policy," Ibid.

personal attack upon myself and the people of the community who have dared to befriend me and endure persecution for principle sake from the miserable set of backbiting, vituperative microbes who pose in St. Marys as the "hollier than thou" set of men, who for the past ten years have kept up an incesasing warfare upon me by lying, backbiting and defamation for no earthly reason that I as a citizen saw fit to criticize their style and the acts of the outlaw who was their tool in carrying on the public business.³⁶

Graham took responsibility for opposing outlawry and debauchery in St. Marys by men who had been supporters of the Star, and the sins of George Welsh were dragged out and given as an indication of the type of people who supported the Star.

Miller was described as a socialist following the orders of his masters who had a mortgage on the Star and its policies. Miller lied when he stated the Graham backers "ranted and raged" because a few of the supporters of Murphy-Cunneen were Catholics. James Graham denied this noting that he was a Catholic; although admitting he was not a good one Graham claimed to have defended Catholicism long before Miller was born. He accused Miller of being a recent convert "from socialism and anarchy" to Catholicism in order to further his "backbiting and slander" in politics. He accused Miller of lying when he stated that the Democratic business, professional, and laboring men of the city, irrespective of religion, did not want to turn St. Marys over to the Graham faction.

Regarding the charge that he allowed official drunkenness in permitting a Topeka "jointist" to flood the town with

³⁶James Graham, "Facts Not Forgotten," St. Marys Journal, September 23, 1904, p. 1.

alcohol on the Modern Woodman Day of 1899, Graham gave a detailed answer. James claimed he succeeded where others had failed in bringing William Jennings Bryan to St. Marys to speak. A committee of businessmen who backed the Star tried to make a deal with the Topeka saloonkeeper giving him a monopoly on all beer sold on Woodman Day in return for a certain amount of money. The Topeka supplier and committee could not agree on the price, and it was at that point Graham said he agreed to go and see what he could do to bring about an agreement. After much effort he made an agreement to "prorate" for the city if the Topeka man promised to give \$125 to the Woodmen. The city was to have received a revenue if a carload of beer was sold. Strangely, the saloonkeeper failed to sell half-a-car load so the city received no revenue, and the saloonkeeper failed to meet even expenses. The agreement was carried out faithfully by all concerned. Graham did state:

If any other money was paid in the deal it was used for the purpose for which it was intended, and as it was not the public money it isn't anybody's business who received it or to whom it was paid.³⁷

Graham denied he ever used public money or private money for his own purposes, and pointed out that he had spent most of his life in the county and all knew his faults, but it was the Star who said vicious things about him. He said that during his newspaper career he never "threw the first stone," and after long service to the party if it was he who caused

³⁷Ibid.

so much trouble at the Democratic caucuses, he would "avoid such trouble in the future."³⁸

Thus James Graham apparently ended his association with the Democratic party. The letter was one of invective against the Star for its accusations. Except for explaining his actions at the Modern Woodman Day of 1899, the letter was slim on substance and heavy on abuse.

In other columns the Journal maintained that religion was used in politics. Miller was one of those who worked the "racket" and the Journal said it could prove it by the good Catholics it talked to regarding the matter.³⁹ The Journal did not offer any proof.

The Journal claimed that at the primary Murphy refused to allow a division, refused to allow the caucus to name its own judge, and when John Graham objected repeatedly to Republicans voting, his objections were criticized by Murphy and Miller, with only two exceptions. The two whose votes were not taken acknowledged to Antone Heim and John Graham that they were Republicans. One who voted openly admitted being a Republican, and all the while the editor of the Star did nothing but insist that John Graham, acting as one of the clerks, had no right to challenge voters. The Journal maintained that its charges were accurate.⁴⁰

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹"Religion Was Used in Politics," Ibid.

⁴⁰"The Truth Hurts," Ibid.

Miller's response was that he wrote the article to correct the "false rumor which was sent over this county by Mr. Graham." Graham had gone to Westmoreland and offered as the explanation for his defeat that the Knights of Columbus has been used against him. Miller pointed out that Graham failed to offer any proof of his charges, but abused the city by saying it was misgoverned. In Miller's eyes the city had been in good hands since Ryan took over. Regarding the Modern Woodman allegation, Miller stated:

Mr. Graham must remember that although he did make the "deal" and although, as he says in his letter that "as it was not public money it isn't anybody's business who received it or to whom it was paid," he must remember that at the same time he was the "acting mayor" of this city whose ordinances as well as the laws of this state made it then, as it does today, a violation of the law to sell intoxicating liquors in St. Marys. Then think of an acting mayor going to Topeka making an agreement with jointists there to protect them in violation of the prohibitory law on Woodman Day in St. Marys and receive some money providing a car of beer is sold.⁴¹

Miller claimed the abuse of him by the Journal placed him in with the better class of people, and he thanked the Journal for insuring his future in St. Marys. According to Miller, the proclamation by men like James Graham of their "Catholicity kept us and other converts whom we could name from the Catholic Church for many years."⁴²

The rumors which Miller alleged Graham had spread over the county appear to be those which appeared in the

⁴¹"Analyzed Again," St. Marys Star, September 29, 1904, p. 1.

⁴²Ibid.

Westmoreland Recorder. It noted that the Murphy-Cunneen forces united and were able to defeat the Graham forces who used the popular W. F. Challis to counteract the opposing forces. Graham charged the Knights of Columbus were responsible for his defeat and they voted Republicans against him. Most significantly the Recorder stated:

He [James Graham] has served notice on his opponents that he will get even with them on election day. The democratic warhorses of St. Marys who represented the democrats in the conventions said they hoped that Graham would leave the Democratic party for good.⁴³

In calling on the Recorder office, James Graham told it that his group would have won a fair election, but that non-residents, "refugees from justice," and other assorted sinners voted against him.⁴⁴ James Graham made sure everyone knew he had been cheated.

While the Grahams were not at the county convention, their disruptive influence must have been there. With the diehard Populists creating problems, the county convention was as acrimonious a gathering as the primary fight in St. Marys. While the Populists were dying in Pottawatomie County, they were still in a position to help or hurt the Democratic party. (The election of 1904 destroyed the Populists in Pottawatomie County.)

The Recorder reported that the Democratic and People's party met with each wanting to put up all the candidates, and

⁴³Westmoreland Recorder, September 8, 1904, p. 4.

⁴⁴Ibid.

ended with the Democrats trying to swallow the Populists and make them into good Democrats. In the end the Democrats proposed that the Populists come into the Democratic convention and allow the Democratic chairman and secretary to remain as the organs of a mass convention. The Democrats were willing to concede every office except county treasurer. According to the Recorder, the Populists were so incensed that they unanimously voted down the proposition and adjourned, after appointing a central committee, without making any nominations. The Democrats made their nominations, and one of those so honored was Maurice Murphy who got his coveted nomination for county attorney.⁴⁵

Indicating where it stood, the Journal said of the Democratic convention:

The socialist, anarchists and pothouse politicians who were so anxious to run the democratic party in Pottawatomie county have run the party into the political mire so deeply in this county that it will do well if it ever recovers from the shock. The assassints [sic] of the democratic party will bathe many times before the blood from victims is washed from their "pious" hands. The ghoust [sic] of the⁴⁶ deceased party ought to haunt them while they live.

This view was reaffirmed in a letter to the Eagle from G. M. Seaton:

By a few Democrats of this county especially St. Marys township [sic]. The essence of Democracy has been knocked out of the voters of this county, they will not sanction the action of the County Convention.

⁴⁵"No Fusion Effected," Westmoreland Recorder, September 8, 1904, p. 1.

⁴⁶"Democratic County Convention," St. Marys Journal, September 9, 1904, p. 1.

The conservative Democrats and Populists of this county are sorry to see this state of affairs and they will refute this kind of work on the 8th day of November, 1904.⁴⁷

The convention was so divisive that the Democrats were unable to hold nominees on the ticket. On September 23 the Journal joyfully reported that the candidates for state representative, county clerk, county surveyor, and clerk of the district court had all withdrawn from the "so-called democratic" ticket, and the Journal expected more withdrawals. One of the nominees was said to have considered the nomination an insult, and "it is said that every withdrawal causes the Star to throw a fit."⁴⁸

With the Democratic candidates dropping out, a fourth-party movement was beginning to organize. According to the critical newspapers, the group was composed of disappointed office seekers from the other three parties, and few of the county newspapers said anything good about the movement.

The Recorder said the call was broad enough to take in all the "soreheads." The object was seen as an effort on the part of the Populists to get together again and see what they could do, as the call was signed mainly by Populists and Fusion Democrats. The plan was to nominate some Republicans who were upset at being defeated in the Republican convention.⁴⁹

⁴⁷G. M. Seaton, "Pottawatomie County Democrats Knocked Out for 1904," St. Marys Eagle, September 8, 1904, p. 1.

⁴⁸St. Marys Journal, September 23, 1904, p. 7.

⁴⁹Westmoreland Recorder, September 15, 1904, p. 4.

The Star called the convention "A Sorehead's Fiasco," indicating defeated office seekers from the three parties had organized to form a "consolation Society."⁵⁰ The Journal was rather quiet about the whole affair.

Despite the attention given it, the mass convention drew a mere seventy voters, mostly from the Westmoreland area. Hill said the convention was composed of Populists and Fusion Democrats, with only four Republicans in attendance. The candidates were selected by informal ballots.⁵¹

It was later that the real motives of the mass convention were learned. With the Democrats unable to hold nominees on the ticket, a deal was worked out between the Democratic party and the Independent movement on October 18. It was agreed for those positions which had two nominees one would withdraw, while the other positions would be filled with those that were left on the tickets.

The Democratic central committee and the Independent managers agreed that the Democratic nominees for county attorney, Maurice Murphy, and probate judge would withdraw while the Independent candidate for county treasurer was withdrawn. Interestingly, the Independent candidate for county attorney was W. F. Challis whom the Journal had backed over Murphy.⁵²

⁵⁰"A Sorehead's Fiasco," St. Marys Star, September 29, 1904, p. 1.

⁵¹"Mass Convention," Westmoreland Recorder, September 29, 1904, p. 1.

⁵²"A Fusion Deal," Westmoreland Recorder, October 20, 1904, p. 4.

Of Maurice Murphy who had done so much to get the Democratic nomination for county attorney, the Recorder stated:

Probably no man in the county said more bitter things about the independent movement than Maurice Murphy of St. Marys. He said some things about the mass convention that are not fit to print but stated the Recorder could quote him as saying them if it wished to do so. Just what induced him to withdraw for county attorney is not generally known.⁵³

Unable to reconcile itself to the Fusion deal that had been worked out, the Star indicated that although the Democratic county ticket had no nominees for some offices, the Democratic voter could still vote a straight party ticket and "feel that he is putting Simon-pure Democracy on its feet," not "aiding any fad, ism, or gang of political self-seekers."⁵⁴

On election day 1904 St. Marys went with Theodore Roosevelt by three votes, and of the state and county tickets, the Democrats elected only three candidates in the city.⁵⁵ The event provided the Journal an opportunity to remind Committeeman Moriarty that under his guidance St. Marys, a Democratic town, went Republican for the first time. The Journal said it was only a matter of time before the city would be "a

⁵³"The New Fusion Deal," Ibid., p. 1.

⁵⁴"Democratic Ticket," St. Marys Star, October 27, 1904, p. 1.

⁵⁵"A Surprise," St. Marys Eagle, November 10, 1904, p. 4.

republican precinct."⁵⁶ It has been 70 years and that has not yet happened.

The Star probably gave the more accurate portrayal of the election when it responded to comments that St. Marys was safely Republican. Miller noted that the city was as Democratic as ever, but when "such men as Hobbs, Francis, and Hick" had no better opposition than that put up by the Independents, it was Republican. He noted the people were Democratic, but not to the extent of "ignoring personal qualifications of candidates."⁵⁷

At the county level James Graham got his revenge. The county Democratic party was deeply hurt by the split. James Graham left the Democratic party, or was driven out by his foes. Whatever the source, it was a very costly decision, and demonstrated the Grahams' capacity for creating conflict.

Ironically the 1904 fracas caused several of the protagonists to move into the Republican party. Of the four key combatants in St. Marys, the Grahams, Moriarty, Miller, and Murphy, all but Murphy eventually became Republicans. Moriarty and the Grahams made the switch in 1906, and Miller made the switch after the Journal died.

⁵⁶St. Marys Journal, November 11, 1904, p. 7; "Wamego is Not so Many," Ibid., November 18, 1904, p. 1.

⁵⁷St. Marys Star, November 10, 1904, p. 4.

Chapter 8

THE NEWSPAPER WAR OF 1908

The year 1908 saw the Journal wage its last war, giving St. Marys its last glimpse of contentious journalism. The 1908 newspaper war had its antecedents in 1906 when the Journal joined the Republican party and solidly endorsed all the Republican candidates. By 1908 the Journal and Eagle had managed to join different factions of the party, and with that occurrence, trouble soon followed. The battle which started out as a political dispute between Editor Lee and John Graham developed into a personal battle.

In their thirteen years of mutual existence, the Journal and Eagle had often traded blows over such things as the Ryan administration, George Welsh, city elections, and other issues. But the battles were not continuous. In fact, for a few months in the later part of 1906 and early 1907, Clarence Graham, John's brother, did editorial work for the Eagle, and in 1907 while Lee was sick, the Star and Journal helped get the Eagle published.¹

There is reason to believe that the latest fall-out between the two occurred prior to appearing in print, but the first evidence of trouble appeared in print on December 13,

¹St. Marys Eagle, January 31, 1907, p. 6; Ibid., September 12, 1907, p. 8.

1907, when the Journal reported that a scheme had been hatched by a few Republicans in Wamego, Belvue, and St. Marys, in hopes of carrying the south and east string of townships so they could control the actions of the delegates at the county convention. The Journal expressed its displeasure with people organizing to dictate the nomination of the party.²

A week later Lee thanked the vast majority of the businessmen for writing recommendations for his re-appointment to a second term as postmaster.³ In the Eagle's columns Lee said he had done something he had never done before in asking people to endorse him for public office. He said he had received letters of endorsement from all but three of the professional men in St. Marys, and the letters showed "that the good people of St. Marys do not believe some of the stories one or two people have circulated about us."⁴

A day later the Journal reported some of the subscribers were not getting their papers on time, and one man had stopped the paper because he was not getting it regularly. The subscriber reportedly complained that he did not get his paper for three or four weeks at a time, then had three or four come at once. John Graham explained that the Journal

²"Will It Be Repeated?" St. Marys Journal, December 12, 1907, p. 2.

³Lee served as Postmaster from February 1904 to December 1910.

⁴"Just a Word Personal," St. Marys Eagle, December 19, 1907, p. 1.

had mailed the papers and it was not the source of the problem. Graham claimed there had been many such complaints, told subscribers to notify the Journal if they failed to receive their paper, and promised he would investigate and find out what was causing the problem. In addition it noted that a patron brought a letter to the office which showed that it was postmarked October 24, but was not delivered until 30 days after its receipt.⁵

For additional spice the Journal noted that President Roosevelt had requested the Postmaster General give his personal attention to the selection of men for appointment as postmasters throughout the country. To the Journal this meant that federal office holders were not to engage in campaign work for any candidate. Federal office holders were to restrict their activities and act in accordance with the spirit of the civil service laws.⁶

Lee did not take the Journal's advice, and on January 16 the Star reported that Lee had taken a ride west on Tuesday. Miller could not see what Lee was doing out of town, "since he ain't in politics anymore."⁷ Miller substantiated a Journal statement a day later that

A great deal of political hot air is being pumped from a source that is said to be out of politics.

⁵"The Probable Cause," St. Marys Journal, December 20, 1907, p. 1.

⁶"Meyer to Name the Postmaster," Ibid., p. 2.

⁷St. Marys Star, January 16, 1908, p. 3.

But a two-faced man is liable to do anything for his masters.⁸

A month later the Journal first raised the question of Lee's devotion to alcohol. Responding to some comments made about someone (probably James Graham) close to the Journal, Graham noted "we haven't seen anyone as drunk as he was during his office hours last Friday. Uncle Sam ought to know how drunk some of his officials get every now and then."⁹

A week later the charges escalated. The Journal reported that on February 17 a secret political meeting was held in a back room over Armstrong's drugstore to fix up a slate, make arrangements for the Republican primary of February 24, and force local Republicans to do the groups bidding.

On Wednesday night a second meeting took place in Anderson's hardware store in which five named individuals, including Lee, met and made out a list of Republican voters who were to be asked to vote for the delegation selected by the five. Graham said the group did not desire compromise but wished to promote a fight. In order to insure that only the proper people voted, city marshal James McGovern had been ordered not to turn over the election materials to election officials until the day of the primary. The Journal

⁸St. Marys Journal, January 17, 1908, p. 12.

⁹Ibid., February 14, 1908, p. 2.

called it only a part of the "oily politics" that the element was working and asking local Republicans to endorse.¹⁰

In the same issue Graham called to the attention of Congressman Miller and the Post Office Department the fact that Postmaster Lee and his assistant, H. F. Heisler, were taking an active role in politics. Graham said he thought the civil service rules prohibited them from engaging in active politics. He wondered if Lee and Heisler were "privileged characters who can ride over the government law with impunity?"¹¹

The Republican primary was held and selected delegates to the county convention. The ticket composed of F. F. Anderson, A. F. Armstrong, Nels Ross, and F. J. Perry, defeated a ticket headed by Committeeman J. A. Steinmeyer, called the "Square Deal Republicans," by an average of 157 votes to 57.

According to Lee, Steinmeyer's "Square Deal" ticket was composed of men who had been placed on it without their sanction or consent, and who supported the other ticket. The election was seen as a rebuke to the men who ran the ticket and "their dictatorial methods." Committeeman Steinmeyer was a backer of George E. Tucker, and wanted to go to the Chicago convention as a delegate. Lee stated:

¹⁰"The Night Session," Ibid., February 21, 1908, p. 1.

¹¹"They Are in Politics," Ibid.

Monday's primary proved conclusively that the time has passed in this township when one or two men can get together and put up a ticket in their own interests and cram it down the throats of the old time Republicans.¹²

The Journal called the Republican primary the "biggest farce ever pulled off in this township." Among other things, at least 100 Democrats were said to have voted; men who had not lived in the township 10 days voted; men who had voted in the Democratic primary two weeks earlier voted; a man who resided in Wamego voted; and the log haulers were given two dollars each and car fare to vote in the city for "the machine." It charged the election board was friendly to the group that won, whiskey was important in the victory, and there were 215 votes cast in the Republican primary while the party averaged 165 votes in 1906.¹³

The Star backed the Journal's accusations to some degree in reporting that the Republican primary was the largest one ever held in the community.

Both factions allege the use of Democratic votes, in fact treat the matter lightly. The Democrats who voted took it as a joke. Conservative estimates say fifty of them voted.¹⁴

Refusing to take its medicine quietly, the Journal again called to the attention of the Postmaster General the

¹²"Monday's Primary," St. Marys Eagle, February 27, 1908, p. 1.

¹³"A Free Grab," St. Marys Journal, February 28, 1908, p. 1.

¹⁴"The Republican Primary," St. Marys Star, February 27, 1908, p. 1.

fact that Lee and his assistant were on the streets prior to the election working for their candidates, something they were not entitled to do as civil service employees. Congressman Miller had refused to take action, and the department was urged to. Graham suggested that the government was not the place to pay off the political debts of Congressman Miller.¹⁵

In a lengthy letter to the Topeka Capital, Graham made many of the same charges. He denied emphatically that the Republican primary represented a victory for those who favored J. M. Miller over George Tucker for Congress. According to Graham, the group that was successful was selected by the "old machine crowd" that, with its Democratic friends, dominated St. Marys. John repeated most of the charges that had been made in the Journal and concluded his letter saying that he had lived in St. Marys more than 20 years, but had "never witnessed such a disgraceful affair as the Monday free pitch in" (primary), and said many Republicans of 40 years agreed with him.¹⁶

In Lee's view the letter gave a bad impression of St. Marys Republicans who were clean, decent, and law-abiding. In his view all the illicit happenings came from the "dictators roost" (offices of the Journal and J. A. Steinmeyer), not from the group that won. Whiskey and money were also

¹⁵"Still in Politics," St. Marys Journal, February 28, 1908, p. 1.

¹⁶John Graham, "Congressional Fight Was Not An Issue," Topeka Capital, February 28, 1908, p. 3.

used by those who lost. The primary was conducted fairly and the judges were Republicans, while the "howlers" were Democrats of years past. The winning ticket was circulated among the voters before the election, but not the losers ticket, and at least two men put on by the losers were put there without their knowledge.

Lee stated that if dirty politics was used, it was Steinmeyer's "square dealers" who engaged in the acts. Beaten badly they accused decent Republicans of treating them dishonestly. Lee charged they said the same thing for years, and the people no longer believed them. As proof of the "respectability" of support given the two tickets, Lee asked the "dictator" to name one prominent businessman, except the billiard parlor owner, who supported his ticket.¹⁷

Graham countered that Lee tried to apologize for its "unAmerican" conduct of the primaries. He charged that over 100 Democrats voted in the primary, named sixty Republicans who, he said, did not vote, and twenty-one Republicans who were unable to vote because they had died or moved away. Democrats had informed him that they were approached "by the Eagle's gang" and asked to be Republicans for one day, and those who held jobs were told that it would be in their best interest to vote. However, the Journal did not list the Democrats who voted, or those who had been instructed to vote.

¹⁷"Dirty Politics," St. Marys Eagle, March 5, 1908, p. 1.

Dredging up past sins, Graham said the Eagle was "the paid apologist" of Ryan's administration, "the dirtiest, rottenest administration that disgraced a civilized community." Lee defended the administration after the district court (the Welsh case) had shown them to be crooks, and pointed out that in court the facts were shown, "not the idle vaporings of an alcoholic brain count." In Graham's eyes it was the same "gang" that was responsible for the primary, and they used every device conceivable to achieve their goals.¹⁸

Lee's response was a couple of one-line comments:

No one here expects the mouthpiece to tell the truth about anyone it can't sand-bag or the dictator can't boss.

Some of the things in the EAGLE may be the product of an alcoholic brain but thank the Lord it isn't the product of a brainless interrogation point.¹⁹

On the post office front, the Star reported that a post office inspector had been in the city on March 11 investigating M. M. Lee. The inspector visited every business and interviewed the merchants to get a correct version of some charges that had been made against Lee.²⁰ On March 27 the Journal reported that Lee had been re-appointed postmaster.²¹

¹⁸"About That Primary," St. Marys Journal, March 13, 1908, p. 1.

¹⁹St. Marys Eagle, March 19, 1908, p. 4.

²⁰St. Marys Star, March 12, 1908, p. 3.

²¹St. Marys Journal, March 27, 1908, p. 1.

The following week Lee expressed his gratification at being re-appointed, "coming as it does after a dirty fight and thorough investigation." Lee said he could have bowed to the "dictators" who had informed Lee of the things he had to do or a fight would ensue. He appreciated the business support and said the affair emphasized the fact that St. Marys was not ready for "Czar rule."²² The Journal responded: "A dirty(?) fight sometimes has a tendency to keep a man sober."²³

Unwilling to let anything drop, the Journal asked Lee who the "dictators" were? The people were entitled to know who they were. Graham also claimed that if the truth were told of the "dirty fight," Lee would not have appeared to be such a persecuted individual. Graham warned Lee that he had opened the chapter on the charges and he was willing to publish proof of the charges. It was urged that they let the public decide Lee's capabilities, and let them determine whether or not Congressman Miller always recommended and fought for the appointment of good, honest men to federal positions.²⁴

²²"Reappointed," St. Marys Eagle, April 2, 1908, p. 1.

²³St. Marys Journal, April 10, 1908, p. 8. A check with the Post Office Department provided no enlightenment concerning the charges made against Lee. Letter from General Services Administration, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri, December 5, 1973.

²⁴"Those Dictators," Ibid., April 10, 1908, p. 1.

It was on June 19 that the battle began in earnest. On that day the Journal published an article regarding Lee's abilities as postmaster. The article said a lady subscriber to the paper complained to the Journal that she had not received the Journal for two weeks, and that the lady was not alone in complaining about the handling of the mails.

The Journal went on to relate the story of a letter meant for one James Gannon. It said the letter was mailed on May 26 from Washington, D.C., and was received in St. Marys on May 28. The letter was then "juggled" in the post office for eight days until June 5 when it was placed in the Journal's mailbox. Not wanting Gannon to think it had held his mail, the Journal placed the date it had received the letter on the envelope. The Journal claimed the letter had been typewritten, and there was no reason why the letter should have been placed in the Journal mailbox. According to Graham:

We presume this is a fair sample of accuracy in which the mail is handled at St. Marys, therefore we hope the Journal subscribers will not get mad at us if they do not receive more than five or six copies of the paper during the year.²⁵

Graham charged that the post office inspector held a "snide" investigation, and called that investigation "a dream," which was "on par with the promptness with which the Gannon letter was delivered."²⁶

²⁵Ibid., June 19, 1908, p. 1.

²⁶Ibid.

Lee responded a week later with "'Printer's B.' By Old '76." "Old '76" was the pseudonym that Lee and/or someone close to him used to respond to John Graham during the summer. The Eagle printed the Journal story and then blasted John Graham. According to "Old '76," the story "appeared in an alleged newspaper of this city which has persistently hammered the postmaster, as well as all others they could not bleed for years." The author stated that "the raven haired paragon of purity" and his "Mastah" (Steinmeyer) told Congressman Miller that Lee had done a good job and they were for him, but before stating it publicly they demanded that Assistant Postmaster Heisler be fired and John Graham be appointed to replace him for a \$75 a month salary, as Steinmeyer considered Heisler an enemy. "Old '76" suggested that Graham tell the people that the investigation "was started by a letter[,] a portion at least of which we are ready to characterize a rank lie," and it was Graham and Steinmeyer who demanded an investigation by an investigator from another district.

Regarding the Gannon letter, "Old '76" said the "letter spoken of is now in the hands of persons where it can be seen and the postmarks will show it was properly treated." The author noted that it was strange that the only ones who had problems receiving the mail were the Journal followers.²⁷

²⁷"'Printer's B.' By Old '76," St. Marys Eagle, June 25, 1908, p. 2.

The Journal was accused of hounding those who would not contribute to its support and the Eagle listed the names of A. B. Pool, S. B. Warren, T. J. Ryan, the Erbacher brothers, the Andersons, Hercule Pessemier, Dr. Miller, D. J. Lane, and others. They were hounded because they refused to "bow the knee to Paragon and his 'Mastah'".

The Eagle then suggested that no one wished to go to "the family bible and look up the date of births, deaths[,] and marriages," but warned it could be done. No one wished to remind all of the "old creamery and the school hill steps," but the Eagle warned it could be done. In its eyes the issue resolved itself to this: "Those who won't be held up will be slandered by the 'Sunday Sun,' as long as wifey's money holds out."²⁸ John was described as casting aside his father for social life and prestige because "the father tips too often the cup that turns men's heads." Concluding, "Old '76" stated:

The world branded, as an outcast and ingrate, Judas Iscariot, because he forsook and denied his Christ for a few pieces of the baser metal. Paragon forsook his father for social prestige and a sup at the cup of personal pleasure. What Paragon should be branded we leave to your personal judgement.²⁹

²⁸In 1904 John Graham married Ada Moss. Her family controlled the First National Bank of St. Marys. At the time of his death, John A. Moss, Ada's father, left an estate valued at \$35,000. His will specified that Ada receive \$5,000 in bank stock. By early 20th century standards the Moss family was wealthy. In Probate Court, Pottawatomie County, Kansas. Estate of John A. Moss. June 22, 1905.

²⁹Ibid.

A week later "Old '76" made additional comments about John Graham and Dr. J. A. Steinmeyer, pointing out that James Graham enjoyed the alcohol supplied him by the local druggists and son John should have been more appreciative of their kindness.³⁰

It was not until July 3 that John Graham was able to respond to the Eagle's charges. He stated there was not one word in his article that could be construed as personal, and it "was a fair and truthful statement of official misconduct and negligence." Graham charged that the Eagle did not answer the charges against Lee, but engaged in a

string of scurrilous lies and insinuations about the editor of this paper, his family, his friends--about everything except the fact that the St. Marys postmaster had been negligent as charged in this paper.³¹

Graham indicated that the Eagle's only reference to the Gannon letter was that the letter was in the hands of persons where it could be seen that the letter had been properly handled. The Journal claimed that Lee asked Gannon for the letter, and afterwards when Gannon requested its return, Lee said he had sent it to Congressman Miller. When Gannon sought the envelope, Lee said he had lost it, and Graham pointed out if the letter was in any hands but Gannon's it was there improperly. The Journal speculated that Lee

³⁰Ibid., July 2, 1908, p. 2.

³¹"'Old '76'," St. Marys Journal, July 3, 1908, p. 2.

wanted to treat the letter so it would not show what the Journal charged to be true.

Graham denied categorically that he had ever attempted to blackmail anyone in St. Marys, and denied that he or Dr. Steinmeyer had ever favorably endorsed Lee, ever said Lee was a good postmaster, or had ever demanded the assistant postmaster's position in return for support of Lee. The Journal maintained the investigation was a farce and stood by the accuracy of its story.³²

Lee's response was to continue the personal attacks on the veracity of John Graham, and his supporters. Among the personal barbs "Old '76" noted that a paper's acceptance in a community could be gauged by the amount of advertising it received, and invited the citizenry to look over the papers in the city and see who had the least amount of advertising, suggesting the Journal had the least. "Old '76" also noted that "We would dislike exceedingly to have our own father state on the streets that we robbed him of several hundred dollars and a newspaper."³³

On July 10 the Journal recited a long list of cases where the postmaster had misplaced letters and papers. Among those was a businessman who frequently missed his Kansas City Journal; the sad case of a lady who had to make an additional mortgage payment because the post office missent

³²Ibid.

³³"Printer's B.' By Old '76," St. Marys Eagle, July 9, 1908, p. 2.

two letters that had notified her of her bill; a man who received mail general delivery received a letter plainly addressed to another man; and Peter Navarre, an employee of the Star office, who brought to the Journal mail that had been thrown into the Star mailbox. The Journal completed its examination by questioning Lee where the Gannon letter had been for eight days.³⁴

In another part of the paper, John Graham responded to his father's drinking problem by charging that anyone "who gets drunk while attempting to perform his official duties" was not in any position to criticize others. Specifically Graham stated: "We heard several people who did business at the post office Thursday last week say that in their opinion the St. Marys Postmaster was drunk."³⁵

On July 16 "Old '76" wrote a lengthy article attacking the new Republicans who had deserted the Democratic party when they did not get their way and were now upset because they could not get their way in the Republican party. Comparing the Grahams to Judas, the article said they sold out the Democratic party and attempted to bleed the Republican party into giving them whatever they wanted. From the Republicans they (Lew Graham, a brother of John Graham) received a position in the pension office and later moved to the Supreme Court Reporter's position, and for

³⁴"'Old '76'," St. Marys Journal, July 10, 1908, p. 1.

³⁵"Drunkenness," Ibid., p. 8.

James Graham there was an increase in his pension to \$40 a month from the federal government. But greedy John demanded the appointment as assistant postmaster at \$75 a month. When that demand was refused, "they deserted the friends who had helped them, who had made them what they were, and struck out for more game." The article left the clear impression that the Grahams had joined the Republican cause for personal gain, not out of any ideological conviction.

The Eagle responded to the Journal's comments on Lee's drinking:

The P. M. of St. Marys may or may not use stimulate as paragon states. He does not have to affirm or deny to Paragon and his "mastah." He isn't known as the town fool or the lazziest [sic] man in town however. Every cent he has earned and he has not charged his fellow man two prices for it either. He is raising a family and is not afraid they will have to state they have robbed him when he is old and worn out.³⁶

In the Journal's response, it continued to remind all of the Gannon letter incident, but did make some denials. Graham denied the charge that it had tried to bleed D. J. Lane, A. B. Pool, and the others. Every one of the men told the Journal they had never been bled, and they never authorized the Eagle to use their names. Regarding the charge that it tried to bleed the Erbacher Brothers, Dr. Miller, and T. J. Ryan, the Journal denied bleeding them. Graham denied ever doing business with them, but had not seen them personally to determine if they gave the Eagle permission to

³⁶"Printer's B.' By Old '76," St. Marys Eagle, July 16, 1908, p. 2.

use their names. The Journal did state: "We have never had a personal word with any of these men mentioned in this article, but have opposed some of them in politics."

Concerning the Gannon letter:

The Journal told the TRUTH about this letter and the Postmaster told a lie to cover up his negligence in handling the mail. This paper has intimated that the Postmaster was DRUNK on the afternoon of Thursday, July 2nd, and we can give the names of the parties who believed him to be DRUNK on that afternoon when the time comes. It can also site [sic] other times when people say he was DRUNK during the hours of his office. It can also site [sic] to the proper authority when it gets ready to do so, the fact that many people have good cause to complain of the poor mail service they get at St. Marys.³⁷

The Eagle's response was basically that of another series of one-liners that questioned John Graham's decency, his relationship with his father, his relatives, his service to "'Mastah'" Steinmeyer, and viewed John as a guardian of all morals without any code of ethics. The Eagle repeated the charge that John Graham had appealed to Congressman Miller for appointment as assistant postmaster, and when he did not get it, began his attacks on Lee. Lee admitted he was no saint, but was willing to have his record compared with John Graham's. Lee charged that John stole the newspaper from his father, took \$900 from his relatives, and raised a check from \$100 to \$350 on his "aged" father.

Yet Paragon's father stated openly on the streets that Paragon had committed these crimes against him. The

³⁷"'Old '76'," St. Marys Journal, July 17, 1908, p. 1.

smaller vices pale into insignificance by the side of such villainy as this.³⁸

A day later the Journal went on with its version of the truth. Most of the issue dealt with the fact that on July 2 Lee intimated that a committeeman had boasted he had gained people's votes by holding their notes, and gave the impression that the guilty committeeman was Dr. Steinmeyer. As a result of the story, Steinmeyer asked Lee to publish a letter responding to those remarks, but Lee declined to do so. The Journal published the letter for the Eagle and in it Steinmeyer asked Lee to publish the name of the committeeman who had done such a thing so an innocent man would not be suspect. The letter stated that if the statement was true, Lee would be man enough to publish the committeeman's name.³⁹ Lee was not.

Continuing his commentary, Graham noted that three issues had appeared since Lee made the comments and Lee refused to publish the letter. The reason, according to John Graham, was that the story was "another one of his contemptible lies, thrown out to deceive the people against a man who is his superior in every walk of life."⁴⁰ Graham went on to remind all of the Gannon letter, Lee's drinking proclivities, and a categorical denial that he had ever asked

³⁸"'Printer's B.' By Old '76," St. Marys Eagle, July 23, 1908, p. 2.

³⁹"A Cowardly Liar," sub-head under "'Old '76," St. Marys Journal, July 24, 1908, p. 5.

⁴⁰Ibid.

Congressman Miller for a recommendation to any position and, in particular, the assistant postmaster position. John called such statements "a willful lie."⁴¹

The Journal also noted the political change of a Republican voter in the February election. B. J. Arkenberg was asking for the Democratic nomination for township clerk, and Arkenberg was one of the "J. M. Miller Republicans" who voted in the primary when 125 Democrats voted for Miller's friends. The primary was held in February, and in June Arkenberg had a petition out asking for the Democratic nomination for township clerk. The Journal pointed out that Lee had made a great many comments on certain people trying to run the Republican party who had not been Republicans all their lives, "but he has probably been too drunk to note the rapid change of certain democrats in this township who voted at the recent primary to help out Congressman Miller's friends."⁴²

What is interesting about this comment, besides naming a Democrat who voted in the primary, is that Graham in effect repudiated his claim to the Topeka Capital that the primary was not one of Miller backers versus George Tucker supporters.

After several weeks of demagogery, the Eagle made a substantive attack on John Graham. According to "Old '76":

⁴¹"The Gannon Letter," sub-head under "'Old '76,"
Ibid.

⁴²"A Lightning Political Change," Ibid., p. 1.

The annals of Kansas journalism contain no more disgraceful account of political ingratitude and filial depravity than the recent attacks of John J. Graham editor of the St. Marys Journal, upon Congressman Miller, and his treatment of his aged father.⁴³

"Old '76" went on to describe how son John ill-treated his father, James Graham. He recited the Colonel's excellent service to America in three wars, and it was on that basis that Congressman Miller, out of the goodness of his heart, was able to plead for a larger pension for James Graham. The Eagle described how, after his last service, James came back to a greedy son who eventually took away all of his father's possessions, and made the Colonel dependent on the \$40 a month that Miller had gotten him. In return, John Graham refused to support the congressman, but instead supported Tucker because Tucker stood for reform. "Old '76" suggested reform started in the home.

According to the Eagle, James Graham repudiated his sons' attacks on Miller, in a signed statement printed in the Eagle. (The statement that the Eagle put in quotation marks did not have the name attached to it.) The alleged statement considered the attacks on Miller uncalled for and ungrateful, but was "merely in line with what I have received in the past years." James allegedly said he was "beat" out of his paper (the Journal); \$900 which he had saved since the Spanish-American War was taken from him; John was trying

⁴³"Printer's B.' By Old '76," St. Marys Eagle, July 30, 1908, p. 2.

to take the money that he had received from the sale of his home; and concluded by saying "I now descend the pathway of life with an ingrate son kicking me down." The Eagle suggested that John Graham was in no position to judge the actions of others.⁴⁴

The following day the Journal finally responded specifically to the charge that Graham had demanded the position of assistant postmaster. In a signed statement John Graham said that during the later part of November, 1907, Lee approached him concerning the possibility of consolidating the Eagle and Journal. On Lee's suggestion they stepped into Dr. Steinmeyer's office next to the Journal office to let him hear the discussion. In the conversation Lee indicated that he had no desire to run a paper and simply wished four more years as postmaster. Lee indicated he was willing to consolidate the papers with Graham receiving a salary of \$75 per month of which \$50 would come from the paper, and Graham would be assistant postmaster for \$25 per month. John indicated that he was no candidate for public office and preferred to limit his activities to running a newspaper. Graham talked about organizing a printing company which he would manage for \$75 a month. Graham said he repeatedly told Lee he preferred a straight salary of \$75 a month to manage a paper than the \$25-\$50 proposition which he said Lee preferred. Graham claimed the matter

⁴⁴Ibid.

lingered for six weeks and when Graham asked Lee to sign a consolidation agreement, Lee refused. Steinmeyer issued a signed statement attesting that the conversation of which Graham wrote did take place in his office and in his presence.⁴⁵

In another signed statement Graham stated Lee's charges were "absurb" that he had demanded \$75 a month from Lee as assistant postmaster. Had he demanded a \$75 month salary, Graham claimed he would have taken more than half of the postmasters \$142 a month salary. John said he was not that "hoggish," and branded the Lee statements lies.

Graham dared Lee to print over his own signature that he (Graham) had ever raised a check on anyone, ever stole money from anyone, or ever stole a paper from anyone. The Gannon letter charges were repeated, and John noted that Lee had dropped his charge that John had attempted to bleed businessmen in the community.⁴⁶

On August 6, the Eagle dug up an old Journal statement that Peter Navarre, then a Star employee, had given to the Journal some of its mail that had been taken out of the Star mailbox. Navarre, in a signed statement, branded the charge a lie, claiming that the only time he had ever handled

⁴⁵"The \$75 Salary," St. Marys Journal, July 31, 1908, p. 1.

⁴⁶John J. Graham, Ibid.

Journal mail occurred when Graham's lady assistant dropped a letter on the floor and Navarre picked it up for her.⁴⁷

On August 14, Miss Daisy Page, in a signed statement, wrote in the Journal that on one occasion while she was waiting at the postoffice for the mail to be distributed, Mr. Navarre took a newspaper from the Star mailbox and gave it to her, indicating it belonged to the Journal. She denied ever dropping a letter belonging to the Journal which Navarre picked up and gave to her. She stood by the accuracy of the Journal statement. On August 7, the Journal had noted that Navarre had gone to work for the Eagle.⁴⁸

On August 7 Graham speculated that Lee had not written the story concerning John's ingratitude toward his father, but "a certain lawyer wrote the 'master piece.'" Of the individual Graham said he was a "dead beat," whose credit was no good, had misappropriated his clients money, and led a drunken immoral life in Topeka. Graham suggested he pay his pew rent, the \$150 grocery bill he owed, and attempt to re-establish his credit. Graham suggested the man was a "fit companion" for Lee and "his gang."

John Graham was particularly upset about a Lee statement that Lee had heard men say they would not believe John

⁴⁷"Printer's B.' By Old '76,/ Voluntary Statement of Peter Navarre," St. Marys Eagle, August 6, 1908, p. 8.

⁴⁸"Free Offering,/ Statement by Miss Daisy Page," St. Marys Journal, August 14, 1908, p. 1; Ibid., August 7, 1908, p. 8.

Graham on a stack of Bibles. John called it a lie and claimed Lee could not print the names of the men Lee claimed made the remark, and demanded Lee publish one instance in which he lied to the public. Graham reminded Lee that whenever his "gang" was taken to the district court, the Journal was shown to be the truthful party.⁴⁹

On August 13 "Old '76" rhetorically buried John Graham and Dr. Steinmeyer politically, with great pleasure. Besides questioning their character and honor, he repeated his charges about the \$75 a month assistant postmastership. Graham and Steinmeyer had demanded the position, and when they failed to get it, they "commenced their dirty attacks on Congressman Miller, the postmaster, and everyone else who dared to cross them in their schemes." The two had an outside inspector come in and examine the charges against Lee. The inspector, after spending two days taking affidavits, decided Lee should be re-appointed. Lee repeated the charges that Graham robbed his father of \$900 and attested to the fact with what he said was James Graham's signed statement. John was accused of violating the fourth, seventh, and eighth commandments.⁵⁰

In the six column broadside "Old '76" covered no new ground, failed to answer the charges made against him by

⁴⁹"'Old '76'," Ibid., August 7, 1908, p. 8.

⁵⁰"'Printer's B.' By Old '76," St. Marys Eagle, August 13, 1908, pp. 4-5.

Graham, and was pre-occupied with calling Graham and Steinmeyer in as many words, and the best prose possible, scoundrels.

While "Old '76" had completed his usefulness, the battle was not completely over yet. In an article titled "To M. M. LEE," Graham made some demands in signed letter. The first was

Your paper nor any other paper has NEVER printed over James Graham's signature that I robbed him of \$900, and I demand of you that you retract the statement you made herein referred to in your paper.⁵¹

Graham also demanded that Lee retract the statement that he tried to bleed D. J. Lane, S. B. Warren, A. B. Pool, Dr. Miller, Hercule Pessemier, T. J. Ryan, the Anderson Hardware Company, and the Erbacher brothers. Graham branded as a lie and demanded a retraction on the statement that John raised a check of his father from \$100 to \$350. John denied that he robbed his father of his paper and was trying to take away his home, and demanded that Lee retract the statement. John concluded by saying:

These charges are libelous if untrue, which they are, and if you have one speck of manhood in your decayed looking remains you will either in your next issue show your charges to be true or else admit that you have lied. I demand that you prove or retract the charges herein mentioned that you have recently made against me.⁵²

⁵¹John J. Graham, "To M. M. LEE," St. Marys Journal, August 21, 1908, p. 1.

⁵²Ibid.

Graham then went on to repeat all the charges that he had made previously against the postmaster.

Six days later Lee responded with an unequivocal demand of his own on John's demand for retractions. Titled "TO JOHN GRAHAM" it stated:

This paper has no retraction to make regarding what it has said concerning you. If you wish one we'll make it on one condition. You select six business men of St. Marys (barring one, J. A. Steinmeyer) and we will present them our files, show them the SIGNED STATEMENT made by your father and prove by reliable witnesses that we have told the truth and if they don't say so we'll retract in pica type! We will prove also, if you wish, that he has said worse things of you than we have printed. Knowing you both we believe him in preference to you, and we believe the consensus of opinion in town is the same as ours.⁵³

As far as can be determined John Graham never took Lee up on it.

On August 28 the Journal took the final shot of the newspaper war when it suggested that the readers ask one Thomas Coon of St. Clere township what J. M. Miller told him about the assistant postmaster affair of St. Marys at a reunion at Olsburg. Miller, it was claimed, did not tell Coon that John Graham had demanded the assistant postmaster-ship or a \$75-a-month salary. Graham suggested that the public ask Coon about the affair and then see who told the truth.⁵⁴

With that, the newspaper war of 1908 ended.

⁵³"To John Graham," St. Marys Eagle, August 27, 1908, p. 1.

⁵⁴St. Marys Journal, August 28, 1908, p. 1.

Who told the truth? Such a determination is difficult without actual documents. The Star is of no help, for it did not say anything about the war, and if one would read the Star for that period there would be no inkling that the newspaper war was raging. However, we can make some educated guesses. It is likely that both told part of the truth, but not all of it, and both found exaggeration a useful tool.

Lee never denied the accuracy of the Gannon letter story, and after a while never mentioned the matter which the Journal took pains to mention as often possible. Lee never denied the charges of his devotion to alcohol during office hours, and appears to have tacitly admitted it.

John Graham denied the charges point by point, but one has the impression he may have been fibbing a little. If the charges were libelous, John could have gone to the district court. But he never took advantage of that remedy for Lee's statements. Perhaps John's prior experience in the Miller suit taught him that half-truths are hard to prove as libelous. John's charges of Lee's drinking matched the unkind things Lee said of John's family and James Graham's drinking.

Lee's comments about the ingratitude of John toward his father appear to be part of the exaggerate-the-facts syndrome, for legal disputes among the Graham family were not uncommon. The disputes dealt with money matters, and in all cases the suits were dropped. In 1898 John Graham sued his

father in justice of the peace court for money which his father owed him and which he feared he would lose to the First National Bank. John had the suit dismissed. In 1903 James and son Douglas Graham fought over property valued at \$95 which the father claimed had been wrongfully taken by his son. James had the suit dismissed. In 1908 Miss May Graham, James's daughter, sued him in justice of the peace court, claiming he owed her \$350 for housekeeping services. Twice she instituted action, and twice she had the suits dismissed.⁵⁵

In addition to the justice of the peace court, in 1906 James Graham instituted a suit in district court against sons John and Douglas. The civil suit alleged that he sold them the Journal for \$300 which was to be collected out of the subscription lists. James alleged the two had failed to live up to their part of the agreement. The defendants denied the charges and the case was dismissed by James Graham.⁵⁶

⁵⁵In Justice of the Peace Court, St. Marys Kansas, John Graham v. James Graham, no. 65; James Graham v. Douglas Graham, no. 167; M. M. Graham v. James Graham, no. 146; It should be noted that the records of the justice of the peace court were haphazard and it is possible that not all the docket books were found. The ones at the St. Marys Historical Museum and at city hall were used and it is from these that the information was taken. I suspect that there are other docket books lying in someone's attic or they have been destroyed. Justice of the peace cases were kept in docket books which had numbered pages, and therefore the case number refers to the page number which that case could be found, when the records were kept correctly.

⁵⁶In Pottawatomie County District Court, James Graham v. John J. Graham and Douglas Graham, no. 4296.

As close as we can come to a legal dispute between James and John Graham in 1908 was a report in the Star that

An unpleasant encounter occurred in the office of B. C. Mitchner Monday, between himself and John Graham. The affair grew out of an altercation between the two in the matter of the suit between the younger Graham and his father, in which case Mitchner was the attorney for the father.⁵⁷

This is the only evidence thus far to indicate that John and his father were having legal differences. (It could account for the "dead beat" lawyer John Graham wrote of on August 7.)

These examples may have been the sources of Lee's charges that John took money and property from his father. They do not show that John stole from his father. They do indicate that the Grahams may have fought as much among themselves as they did with others.

With these facts in mind it is not hard to understand that James Graham may have signed such a statement as was alleged by Lee. In 1908 James was approaching death (1909) with a bad heart, an apparent problem of alcoholism, which, combined with the obvious dispute with his daughter, could have caused him to issue such a statement.

Regarding the charges that the Journal bled such individuals as Dr. Miller, Ryan, the Erbachers', and Anderson, the Journal did rake these individuals over the coals during its career, but it is doubtful that it ever engaged in

⁵⁷St. Marv's Star, July 9, 1908, p. 3.

extortion as it is traditionally defined. If Lee meant that the Journal attacked those who refused to go along with them, he had a good argument. However, the Journal seems never to have made any significant comments critical of S. B. Warren, A. B. Pool, D. J. Lane, or Hercule Pessemier. To the contrary, the Journal was friendly to Lane and seldom said anything about Pessemier, Pool, or Warren, much less anything critical. There were others who received more criticism than these gentlemen whom "Old '76" did not mention.

It appears the dispute was an outgrowth of a political fight in the St. Marys Republican party with Lee backing the incumbent, Miller, for Congress, and the Journal backing reformer George Tucker. While most of the papers backed Miller, there was one notable exception besides the Journal, William Allen White of the Emporia Gazette.⁵⁸ The dispute peaked about the time of the August primary and quickly died out. The Star reported that the rivalry between the two Republican groups brought out the Republicans in force, and some of the Republicans were said to have been disgusted enough to turn Democrat.⁵⁹

One other possible reason exists for the feud. If we can believe Graham's story about possible merger, the break-down of the negotiations roughly coincides with the

⁵⁸St. Marys Eagle, July 9, 1908, p. 4; Ibid., July 30, 1908, p. 4.

⁵⁹"A 'Square Deal' Landslide," St. Marys Star, August 6, 1908, p. 1.

start of the Journal's accusations. The view is re-inforced by the fact that F. A. Moss purchased the Journal and merged it with the Eagle owned by Lee on October 1, 1908.⁶⁰

What is evident is that the dispute started out as a factional dispute between branches of the local Republican party and turned into a mud-slinging campaign of personalities. All through the dispute the political nature was evident, and at least served as the excuse for the two to go at it. As with all Journal battles, personalities were not the source but the outcome of its conflicts.

⁶⁰"Consolidation Notice," Eagle-Journal, October 1, 1908, p. 2.

CONCLUSION

In all the conflicts described in this work and many others not described, the Journal was at the center of the battles. With all the battles the underlying theme remains the same: the Journal was a prime source of conflict in St. Marys between 1894 and 1908.

The Journal represented the personality of the Graham family. As shown here, all were fighters. James was involved in three wars, son Clint fought in the Philippine insurrection and the Boxer Rebellion, and the other prime character, John, did his fighting in the columns of the Journal.

If one were to examine the Star when James Graham controlled it, one sees the same pattern of behavior as shown in the Journal.¹ The Journal represented Graham journalism, and the nature of the Grahams--combativeness. To say the Grahams were unique is to ignore much of the heritage of early Kansas journalism. The Journal is a relic of the brand of journalism that existed in the state from the 1850's to the early 1900's. These early day editors were restive, they said what they thought in the strongest terms, and often paid the price for their opinions.²

¹James Graham ran the Star from about 1885 to 1889.

²A good article that discussed these early Kansas editors is "Pistol-Packin' Pencil Pushers," by Cecil Howe, Kansas Historical Quarterly, XIII (1944-45), pp. 115-138.

The Journal claimed that its assaults on Miller, Ryan, and others were political in nature. It is Harold Ryan's consistent view that politics was the primary source of the conflicts in which the Grahams were involved.³ Through his persistence that view became clearer as time progressed, and this work reflects his perspective. The Journal's feuds or battles were the product of political or factional differences in St. Marys that grew out of proportion and developed into personal vendettas (although the Welsh affair may be considered an exception). The disputes with Ryan, Miller, Lee, and with the Democratic party in 1904 show factional differences developing into personal vendettas against individuals or groups.

The Grahams were active in city, township, and county politics and did not take defeats lying down. They took political opposition to the extreme, and were willing to use any device necessary to achieve victory, and by using every device possible, generally lost.

The Ryans regarded the Grahams as "anti's." It is their view that James Graham could have been a great man had he not been an "anti." Indeed, one is hard pressed to find instances where the Journal stood out for something during its fourteen year career.

Perhaps James Graham could have been a great man had he not developed the reputation of being an "anti," but I

³Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Harold Ryan, December 20, 1973. Mr. Ryan is the son of T. J. Ryan.

suggest that it would have been out of personality for him or his sons to have been anything but "anti's." A man with the fighting spirit needs a battle, and when one is not readily available, one looks for it. Combativeness, conflict, and competition were the essential ingredients of the Grahams. These were what they lived for. When there was conflict they had to be in the middle and maximize it, and where there was no conflict, they had to create conflict. That was the essence of the Journal.

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State of Kansas v. G. C. Novis, no. 658.

State of Kansas v. George Novis and Bert White, nos. 667, 672.

State of Kansas v. J. W. A. Redhouse, no. 663.

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APPENDIX I

EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS OF NEWSPAPERS, 1894-1908

<u>St. Marys Eagle</u>	M. M. Lee	1895-1912
<u>St. Marys Journal</u>	Graham family	1894-1908
<u>St. Marys Star</u>	P. L. Jackson	1894-1897
	W. J. Moriarty	1897-1903
	Willis E. Miller	1903-1921

APPENDIX II

LIST OF MAYORS DURING THE JOURNAL ERA

<u>Mayor</u>	<u>Years</u>
J. F. Buell	-1895
Peter O'Connor	1895-1896
Aaron Urbansky	1896-1897
John Aylward	1897-1899
Aaron Urbansky	1899-1900
A. E. Johnson	1900-1902
T. J. Ryan	1902-1907
N. S. Clothier	1907-