

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

THE GOODHUE PRESS

In two articles published November 8 and November 17, 1919, in the *Daily Argus-Leader* of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the authenticity of the historic press which is preserved in the museum of the Minnesota Historical Society is attacked. In the second of these articles, Doane Robinson, secretary of the South Dakota Historical Society, is quoted as saying "that the authorities of the state of Minnesota have no claim to possession of the old Washington handpress which was used to print the first newspaper in three different states—Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota." Robinson alleges that the original Goodhue press used in the publication of the *Minnesota Pioneer* was purchased by Samuel J. Albright in 1858 and taken to Sioux Falls, where it was partially destroyed by the Indians in 1862. In support of his contention, he quotes a letter from Governor Albright, dated December 14, 1899, as follows:

The press was a Washington, of the Smith pattern, manufactured in Cincinnati, O., by Charles Mallett. It was purchased from the manufacturer in 1834 by John King. In the spring of 1836 he brought it to Dubuque, Ia., and the *Visitor*, the first paper in Iowa, was printed upon it. In 1842 General H. A. Wiltse bought it and removed it to Lancaster, Wis., where he established the *Grant County Herald*. There it was sold to J. M. Goodhue, who, in the spring of 1849, removed it to St. Paul, Minn., and established upon it the *Minnesota Pioneer*, the first newspaper in that state. In 1858 I bought it and brought it to Sioux Falls, where July 2, 1859, I established the *Dakota Democrat* and printed it upon it; the first paper in Dakota.

There seems to be no doubt that the old hand press which Albright bought in 1858 and took west published the first newspaper in South Dakota, and probably the remnants now pre-

served in the Masonic Museum at Sioux Falls—said to have been rescued from a rock pile some eight years after the Sioux Outbreak of 1862—belong to the Albright press. Unfortunately Governor Albright does not tell where he bought his press, but leads one to assume from his letter that he purchased it in St. Paul. Robinson explains that “Samuel J. Albright, squatter governor of Dakota who brought the press to Dakota and established the *Dakota Democrat* at Sioux Falls on July 2, 1859, settled in St. Paul in 1853 and soon after became associate editor of the *St. Paul Pioneer*; in 1856 he left the *Pioneer* and established the *St. Paul Press*, so that he was intimately acquainted with the affairs of both papers which subsequently were consolidated.”

The available evidence seems to indicate that the Goodhue press was not in St. Paul during the greater part of the time that Albright was there, and the weakness of the South Dakota claim to the possession of the remnants of this press lies in the failure to explain its whereabouts during the years 1854 to 1858. Shortly after Earle S. Goodrich purchased the *Pioneer* from Joseph R. Brown in March, 1854, he installed a power press and began the publication of the *Daily Pioneer*.¹ The Goodhue hand press was sold to Jeremiah Russell and taken to Sauk Rapids early in 1855. In May of that year Russell issued the first number of the *Sauk Rapids Frontiersman*, with the assistance of William H. Wood. In December, 1859, the press and equipment of the *Frontiersman* were sold to Wood, and in its place another paper, the *New Era*, appeared on January 12, 1860. The following year the Goodhue press was purchased by C. C. Andrews of St. Cloud who used it in the pub-

¹ The *Minnesota Pioneer*, March 16, 1854, p. 2, carries a statement signed by Joseph R. Brown, dated March 13, announcing the sale of the paper to Earle S. Goodrich and Company and also an announcement by the new proprietor that the *Daily Pioneer* was to begin on May 1 and was to be printed on a power press. The *Daily Pioneer* for December 16, 1854 announces that it was “Printed by Steam on Taylor’s Cylinder Printing Machine.”

lication of the *Minnesota Union*, the first number of which was issued June 14, 1861. Andrews joined the Third Minnesota Volunteer Infantry in October, and shortly afterward Spafford and Simonton took over the press for the *St. Cloud Union*. In 1868 it was again sold, this time to the publishers of the *Sauk Center Herald*, and it continued to be used in that region for some years. In 1897 the historic press was moved to Lindstrom, where it was used by the publishers of *Medborgaren (The Citizen)*, a Swedish newspaper, until August 1, 1899. Finally in 1905 the Pioneer Press Company of St. Paul purchased the old press and presented it to the Minnesota Historical Society.²

A letter to the writer, dated January 22, 1920, from Frank Moore, now of Oregon City, Oregon, who was for many years foreman of the press room of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, not only corroborates these conclusions, but furnishes what is probably the correct identification of the press now preserved at Sioux Falls. "Your version of the history of the Goodhue press," he writes, "is correct as far as I know. As I remember it the *Weekly Pioneer* was printed on the Goodhue Press until the *Daily Pioneer* was started sometime in 1854, I think, and was then discarded for a power press and sold to a Sauk Rapids party. When the *Pioneer* and *Democrat* consolidated two or three years later the hand press they used was discarded, and

² "The Presses of Half a Century," in *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, November 9, 1899, p. 39; Daniel S. B. Johnston, "Minnesota Journalism in the Territorial Period," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 10: 279 (part 1); "Newspapers of Minnesota during the Territorial Period," in *Minnesota Territorial Pioneers' Association, Proceedings and Addresses at the Second Annual Mid-Winter Reunion*, 1: 47 (St. Paul, 1899); partial files of the *Sauk Rapids Frontiersman*, 1856-1859, *New Era* (Sauk Rapids), January 26, 1860-November 29, 1860, *Minnesota Union* (St. Cloud), 1861, and *St. Cloud Union*, 1864, in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society; statements of Major Edwin Clark, former publisher of the *Falls Evening News* (St. Anthony), and of General C. C. Andrews; Warren Upham to Condé Hamlin, general manager of the Pioneer Press Company, September 12, 1905, in *Minnesota Historical Society, Letter Books*, B10.

that is the press I think Sam Albright took to Dakota with him. Albright was a compositor on the Pioneer and left St. Paul for Dakota shortly after I arrived there." If this statement is correct, then Albright took out to Dakota the press used by the *Minnesota Democrat* and not the one used by Goodhue on the *Minnesota Pioneer*. From the evidence presented it seems clear that the Goodhue press never left Minnesota but continued in active service down to 1899 and was still in good condition when it reached its resting place in the museum of the Minnesota Historical Society.

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