

So we can choose to pause for a moment and celebrate the 150th anniversary of a beginning, or to mourn the 140th anniversary of the end of the first newspaper to be published here. Since then, there have been many beginnings, and also many endings, in the media of Manitoba.

The Nor'Wester was followed by many other publications, but none more important than the *Manitoba Free Press*, started by William F. Luxton as a weekly in 1872; it became a daily newspaper in 1874. Near the end of 1889, the *Free Press* absorbed its remaining competitor, a newspaper called the *Sun*, and there was a brief period in early 1890 when the *Free Press* was Winnipeg's only daily newspaper.

But Robert Lorne Richardson, a former city editor of the *Sun*, launched *The Winnipeg Tribune* on January 28, 1890.

In buying out his competitors, Luxton of the *Free Press* had set in motion the events that led to the formation of the *Winnipeg Tribune*. He also unwittingly set in motion events that would lead to his own departure from the *Free Press*.



In order to pay for its ambitions, the *Free Press* accepted financial support in 1888 and 1889 from two prominent Canadians, Sir Donald Smith and William Cornelius Van Horne. Smith is perhaps best known as the person in the centre of one of the most famous photographs in Canadian history – the driving of the last spike that marked the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in November 1885. Van Horne was president of the CPR at the time of the loan to the *Free Press*.

Luxton was not prepared to bend to the editorial dictates of Smith and Van Horne, but he was also not able to raise the funds to buy out their interests in the paper. He was forced out in 1893.

After Luxton left the *Free Press*, he joined forces with a number of Manitoba Conservatives to start a new daily newspaper in 1894, called the *Nor'Wester*. The daily *Nor'Wester* became the *Winnipeg Telegram* in 1898, although Luxton left the paper in that same year.

In the 1896 federal election, the *Tribune's* Richardson was elected to the House of Commons as a Liberal representing Lisgar, Manitoba. Later in 1896, in a by-election, Clifford Sifton, a former Manitoba cabinet minister, was elected as a Liberal to represent Brandon in the House of Commons, and was appointed Minister of the Interior in the Laurier Government.

Sifton and Richardson quickly became bitter enemies and rivals in a struggle for control of the Liberal party in Manitoba and the North-West. By the middle of 1897, Sifton had decided that Richardson's *Tribune* could not be relied upon for the kind of political support he felt was necessary, so he entered into negotiations to purchase the *Free Press* from Smith and Van Horne.

The year 1907 marked a turning point in the history of the media in Manitoba. On May 20, 1907, William F. Luxton died, at the age of 62. His passing can be seen as marking the end of the first era of the media in Manitoba.

But 1907 was also an important beginning in the history of Canadian media. In 1907, the Canadian Pacific Railway Telegraph Company had a monopoly in the distribution of the Associated Press wire service in Canada. In July 1907, the railway telegraph company sent a note from its office at McDermot and Main to its three Winnipeg daily newspaper clients. The note told them they would no longer receive the full New York AP feed every day [from Eastern Canada]; instead, the telegraph company would decide what to send the papers from St. Paul, Minnesota. And, by the way, the telegraph company also told the three newspapers that, on August 1, their charges for receiving the AP service would increase substantially.

Now remember, these newspapers had personal and political rivalries that went far beyond normal commercial competition. And remember also that the *Free Press* was the strongest paper – in theory, it could have paid the increased amount, and hoped that the extra expense would have weakened its competitors.

But something very different happened. Shortly after receiving the note from the CPR telegraph company, four people met – Richardson of the *Tribune*, Nichols of the *Telegram*, and Macklin and Dafoe of the *Free Press*. They decided that the telegraph company had overstepped the boundaries between content and carriage, and they set to work to create an alternative.



Free Press

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1907.

EIGHTEEN PAGES.

No. 80.

SHAREHOLDERS OF NOVA SCOTIA MAKE CLAIM

Want to Rank as First Claim Creditors in York County Loan Distribution.

Toronto, Oct. 4.—(Special) The Nova Scotia shareholders of the ill-fated York County Loan and Savings company be placed in the "creditors" class and receive a big preference in the distribution of the assets? This was the question placed officially before George Kappelle, the court's appointed referee at noon yesterday by C. A. Masten, counsel for the ill-fated among the York County shareholders. His contention, generally speaking, was to the effect that the directors of the York County had no legal right to sell shares in Nova Scotia without the sanction of the Nova Scotia legislature. Because the shares were sold to people of that province, he says, they are entitled to rank as first claim creditors.

As the Nova Scotia shareholders number four or five thousand, and hold half a million in shares, or "claims," as they desire to call them, if they were set in on the ground floor as creditors, the shareholders in Ontario and the other provinces would suffer considerably, and their money receive a much larger discount. Consequently, Mr. Masten's application will be fought vigorously by W. M. Denzels, K.C., representing the other shareholders, and Alex. McGregor, for the National Trust Co., holders of the assets. If the referee decides in favor of the Nova Scotians, which is thought unlikely, there will probably be an appeal at Osgoode Hall.

TRIED TO PUT ITS COLLAR ON THE WINNIPEG NEWSPAPERS

Interesting and Instructive Correspondence Between the Superintendent of C.P.R. Telegraphs and Winnipeg Newspapers.

C. P. R. Gives the Newspapers the Option of Submitting to Its Conditions or Being Deprived of Press Rates on Their Messages—The Newspapers Decline to Recognize That the C. P. R. Has Any Rights Beyond Those of a Common Carrier—A Proposal to Submit Matter to the Railway Commission Declined—C. P. R. Carries Out Its Threat and Deprives Newspapers of Press Rates.

The Free Press publishes herewith press messages, running into hun-

"That the Manitoba Free Press has been granted exceptionally low rates on special matter, on condition that despatches are for publication in the Manitoba Free Press only at the point addressed."
Will you please oblige me with your authority for this statement. Yours truly,
(Sgd.) JOHN W. DARVOE.

C.P.R. LAYS DOWN THE LAW.

Winnipeg, Sept. 25, 1907.
J. W. Darvoe, Esq.,
Editor, Manitoba Free Press,
Winnipeg.

Dear Sir:—
Your letter of 25th in reply to mine of same date is received. You do not say which part of the statement quoted in your letter you dispute, but I presume the latter, as there can be no

The first name they had for that alternative was Western Associated Press, but as the alternative spread to other newspapers across Canada, it adopted the name we know it by today – Canadian Press.

Let's move forward now, to 1920, when we find that Manitoba had over 100 newspapers, of all types, including dailies, weeklies, and many ethnic newspapers serving immigrant communities.

In January 1920, the three daily newspapers in Winnipeg were unable to publish for six days because of a shortage of newsprint. The student newspaper at the University of Manitoba, *The Manitoban*, had sufficient newsprint, and published as a daily for four of those days. Since *The Manitoban* did not have access to news services, it monitored radio broadcasts from the U.S. and used them as a source for non-local news. The editor of *The Manitoban* was a young man named Graham Spry, whose interest in radio would later have a profound influence on the development of this new medium in Canada.

Here is the front page of the first issue of *The Manitoban*, as a daily, Monday, January 19, 1920. You will notice, to the left, under the main headline, a smaller headline that reads "Wireless News of the World Over", "wireless" being a common name for radio in those days. You will also notice the main headline, which refers to someone named Russell, whose appeal had just been denied. The

"Russell" is, of course, R.B. Russell, one of the leaders of the Winnipeg General Strike in May and June 1919.

THE MANITOBAN

Published Daily by the Students' Union of the University of Manitoba and the Veteran Press Ltd.

No. 3A

MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 1920

PRICE FIVE CENTS

RUSSELL CONVICTION STANDS

WIRELESS NEWS OF THE WORLD OVER

Fail To "Shoot" Woodrow

Secret Service Men Intervene. (By the Manitoban Wireless.) Washington, Jan. 18.—Two local photographers seeking to emulate the feat of the Dutch photographers who snapped the ex-Kaiser at his exile in Amerongen by "shooting" President Wilson, were foiled by secret service men and taken to the local police court. It appears that the president was being wheeled around in a chair while recuperating from his breakdown. Two photographers had hidden themselves in a load of hay and were preparing to snap the president as he was wheeled past. The secret service had got wind of their intention and surrounded the load of hay, captured the would-be photographers and escorted them to the jail.

Drifting Ship Asks Aid

U.S. John Adams Loses Rudder in

Private Property Cannot Be Overthrown

Socialist Programme Impracticable—Presidential Nominee Speaks To New York Lawyers

(By the Manitoban Wireless.) "The institution of private property can never be permanently or even long overthrown by socialist programmes," said Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University. He is a presidential candidate for the Republican nomination and was speaking before the New York Bar Association.

Franciscan Mother Dies

(Manitoban Wireless Despatch.) WILMINGTON, DEL.—Mother Mary Stanislaus, Mother General of the Franciscan Sisters in the United States, died suddenly on the 18th

Called Back Home



LORD JELlicoe.

(Manitoban Wireless Despatch.) RIO JANIERO.—Owing to the menacing situation in Russia, and to the departure of Admiral Jellicoe from the

APPEAL QUASHED ON ALL COUNTS

Jury's Decision Upheld

The Court of Appeal this morning at 11 o'clock quashed the appeal of Robert Cassidy, K.C., for a new trial for R. B. Russell. The judges, Fullerton, Cameron, Perdue, Haggart and Dennistoun brought in a unanimous verdict. The fourteen objections submitted as grounds for a new trial were all ruled out.

Russell was not present at the trial. Robert Cassidy and E. J. McMurray appeared in his defence. Both took the decision calmly. Mr. Cassidy, after hearing the verdict, asked for permission to bring the case before the Supreme Court, but since the Court of Appeal was totally unanimous, this was disallowed. Mr. Cassidy then intimated that he would appeal to the Privy Council.

ELMWOOD PROTESTS UPHELD

ALL Russian Protesters

MOSCOW.—The arrest of Admiral Kolchak at Irkutsk has been confirmed. He has given up control of the all-Russian government in

A number of trials of the general strike leaders were going on in Winnipeg at that time, and one of them had important implications for the freedom of the press in Canada. Two of the strike leaders had been charged with seditious libel. The first of those libel trials to proceed was against Fred Dixon, a member of the Manitoba Legislature, and it started on January 20, 1920. Dixon chose to defend himself, to defend the proposition that a citizen had the right to criticize the government. The jury's verdict was delivered on February 16, 1920 – not guilty. Dixon walked out of that courtroom, walked across Broadway, and resumed his seat in the Manitoba Legislature.

As a result of the Dixon verdict, the Crown decided not to proceed with the seditious libel case against the other person that had also been charged – J.S. Woodsworth. Woodsworth was subsequently elected to Parliament, became the first leader of the CCF, and the rest of that story is, as they say, truly history.

In 1835, when he won acquittal against charges of criminal libel, Joseph Howe famously stated, "Leave an unshackled press as a legacy to your children." There

is a line that runs from Howe in Nova Scotia to Dixon in Winnipeg to our current Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

And that was just in the first two months of 1920. In June 1920, the Southam company purchased the *Winnipeg Tribune*. In October, Southam also purchased the *Winnipeg Telegram*, and merged it into the *Tribune*, leaving Winnipeg with two daily newspapers.

About a year later, Winnipeg became the location of one of the more interesting chapters in the history of Canadian newspapers. It started with a letter from Wilson Southam to Sir Clifford Sifton. Southam had entered into a series of arrangements to minimize the competition with its rival in Ottawa, and now was seeking to do the same thing in Winnipeg.

On October 25, 1921, Southam wrote to Sifton to suggest that the two publishers form an arrangement in Winnipeg similar to the arrangement that Southam had made with its competitor in Ottawa:

I would think the first step in such a task would be to furnish each other with full and complete information in regard to all the departments and details of our respective businesses.

From reviewing the correspondence, it appears that some form of arrangement was developed between the two companies for their Winnipeg newspapers, and that it may have continued (at least to some degree) until the early 1960s.

In 1924, there was a rumour that a Vancouver entrepreneur named Charles Campbell would attempt to undercut the two Winnipeg dailies by starting a one-cent daily newspaper in Winnipeg. (The Winnipeg dailies were charging five cents a copy at the time.) To deal with the potential competitor, representatives of the *Free Press* and *Tribune* met to plan a response, as reported by E.H. Macklin, the President and General Manager of the *Free Press*, to Sir Clifford Sifton, in a letter dated August 21, 1924:

A one-cent newspaper in Winnipeg would attract readers like a crowd to a prize fight and, like the crowd at a prize fight, they would consist of all sorts and conditions, the poor as well as the rich.

Macklin then went on to outline the planned strategy:

... the next step is to discover the date of the publication and anticipate the appearance of his paper by putting a one-cent paper on the streets under cover of a separate company and financed by the two Winnipeg newspapers.

We do not know if Campbell was informed of the Winnipeg plans to counter his possible entry into the market, but we do know that Campbell did not attempt to start a one-cent daily newspaper in Winnipeg.

But newspapers, while still the most important medium, were no longer the only game in town. By 1922, the *Free Press* and *Tribune* had each established radio stations. By 1923, however, the experiments were not going well. The business model was unclear, and they both foresaw a long period of losses. At the same time, Manitoba Government Telephones was interested in radio, in part because the provincially owned telephone system saw radio as a potential competitor.

March 9, 1923 – the Winnipeg dailies announce they are getting out of radio

MANTOBA FREE PRESS, WINNIPEG

CJCG Broadcasting Station of The Free Press is Signing Off—For Good

The last broadcast of the Free Press will be Saturday noon. Commencing next week, radio broadcasting in the city of Winnipeg will be the exclusive function of the Manitoba Government Telephones, which is now fully equipped for the work. First intimation that the Winnipeg newspapers were closing down their broadcasting stations was given by radio on Tuesday evening. The message broadcast in other parts of Canada and in the United States. We believe the Manitoba Government Telephones will be more merciful. They assure us that they will provide entertaining concerts and news bulletins much along the lines that the newspapers have provided. They will make their announcements in the newspapers, informing you in advance of their own broadcast.

TO PLAY AT FINAL TRIBUNE BROADCAST THIS EVENING




TONIGHT TO SEE LAST BROADCAST TRIBUNE RADIO

Highly Attractive Program of Vocal and Instrumental Numbers Arranged

The Tribune will broadcast its final radio concert from 8 to 10:15 p.m. tonight. The program will be a highly attractive one, and the Tribune's radio station will be closed after the broadcast. The program will be arranged by the Tribune's radio station manager, Mr. J. E. Lowry, and will feature a number of vocal and instrumental numbers. The program will be broadcast on the Tribune's radio station, which is now being vacated by the Tribune. The program will be broadcast on the Tribune's radio station, which is now being vacated by the Tribune.

GOVT TELEPHONES FOR ALL BROADCASTING

J. E. Lowry Announces Arrangements For Concerts

Manitoba government telephones will broadcast radio concerts at least three times a week according to a letter received by the Free Press from J. E. Lowry, commissioner, today. Concerts will start Tuesday.

RECORD ATTENDANCE AT LAST BUSINESS LECTURE

Knox Discusses Relations of Merchant and Sales People

"If Mr. Knox were to speak here another evening, we would be under the necessity of getting a larger auditorium," said T. A. Kennedy, president of the Winnipeg Sales' Manager's association in the course of a dinner to

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The two daily newspapers agreed to vacate the field, and the telephone system established a new radio station in Winnipeg, CKY. To make that happen, the governments of Manitoba and Canada negotiated a deal in 1923 under which the provincial telephone system would receive 50 per cent of the radio receiver licence fees collected in Manitoba, and would have what amounted to a veto over any other radio station licences in the province. (In 1928, Manitoba Government Telephones added a second radio station, CKX, in Brandon, while exercising its veto over attempts to establish other radio stations in the province.)

And here is an interesting historical footnote – in 1923, the federal government indicated its willingness to make similar licence fee sharing arrangements with stations in other provinces, but none of them took Ottawa up on the offer. One can only speculate on how broadcasting in Canada might have developed differently if other stations and/or other provincial governments would have acted on the federal government’s willingness to share some of its jurisdiction at that time.

While the business models may have been uncertain, public interest in radio was high. As has been the case with the Internet, teenagers were teaching the technology to adults. One of the teenagers in Winnipeg in the 1920s was a young man named Spencer Caldwell; at 19, he was managing the radio department in the new Hudson’s Bay store in downtown Winnipeg. He decided to enter broadcasting as a career. Many years later, in 1961, he was awarded the licence for CTV – Canada’s first private television network.

At the same Winnipeg high school Caldwell had attended, two years younger than Caldwell, there was another young man interested in radio – in fact, he had built his own crystal set at the age of 12. His name was Marshall McLuhan.

By the late 1920s, interest in radio had grown sufficiently that the federal government set up the Aird Royal Commission, which recommended a publicly owned system. To support the Aird Commission proposals, Graham Spry helped establish the Canadian Radio League, which lobbied successfully for the creation of a national public broadcaster in Canada. The Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC) was created in 1932 and was replaced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1936. And Spry, of course, is commonly considered to be the father of the CBC.

Canadian Press, the CBC, CTV, the way we might have governed broadcasting, and freedom of the press in Canada – all of those developments had important roots in this city.

In June 1942, *Fortune* magazine carried an article titled “The Greatest Man in Canada”. The article was about one of Canada’s greatest journalists, John Wesley Dafoe, the editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press* from 1901 to his passing in 1944. No discussion of the history of the media in Manitoba or Canada would be complete without a reference to Dafoe.

Dafoe first came to Winnipeg in 1886, at the age of 20, to work for Luxton at the *Free Press*. In fact, Dafoe was one of the original members of this Press Club. He moved to Montreal in 1892, and was attracted back to Winnipeg by Sifton in 1901 to be editor of the *Free Press*.

THE GREATEST MAN IN CANADA

An appreciation of John Wesley Dafoe, prairie editor,
who at last sees his country take up his lifelong battle

BY BRUCE HUTCHISON

Bruce Hutchison of the Vancouver Sun is Canada's foremost political writer. His importance was established in the U.S. this spring with the publication of his excellent book, The Unknown Country: Canada and her People. A familiar figure in Washington as in Ottawa, Hutchison knows the U.S. almost as well as his own country—in which he believes with a fervor worthy of a disciple of Editor Dafoe.

JANUARY 15, 1884, was little noted nor long remembered in the Parliament of Canada. Certainly no one observed the stranger present, the gangling, red-haired farm boy who had crawled up to the narrow shelf called the press gallery. But to young John Wesley Dafoe the gaslit pit of the House of Commons, the frock-coated figures, the sound and fury of debate were full of a deep magic.

There in the flesh was his hero, Sir John A. Macdonald, first Prime Minister of Canada and its chief founder, his battered old face still beaming confidently. There were other surviving founders of the new nation—Tupper, Tilley, Langevin—demigods all to the farm boy, brought up a Tory and an Orangeman in the Ontario backwoods. Yet there was something wrong. The blazing Liberal leader, Edward Blake, was demolishing the government, phrase by phrase. The demigods seemed to have feet of clay. At the end of the day Macdonald had no defense but a few lame witticisms, and the farm boy listened with a secret agony. That day, alone in the gallery, young Dafoe rejected his Tory ancestors' commitment

of the Old Testament. Canadian Prime Ministers and politicians have constantly consulted him, taken him with them to the Peace Conference, offered him offices that he always refused, offered him a knighthood ("Me a knight? Why, I tend my own furnace and shovel the snow off my porch!"), and trembled before his pen. Foreign visitors ask for an audience. He is in his own country the kind of power that Greeley, Dana, and Watterson were in theirs, the last survivor of personal journalism's great age.

For a long time he thought the age was closed, his work finished and a failure. Instead, the world's full cycle in the last year has made his forgotten struggle a part of the current day's news. Everything up to now turns out to be a preface to the last and yet unwritten chapter. He is mildly concerned lest he miss it, but the Dafoes usually live well into their eighties. After his years of loneliness he hopes at last to see the beginning of the thing for which he has fought since that day of disillusionment in 1884.

He has fought for free trade, competition, individual initiative.



Over more than four decades, it was the editorial voice of John W. Dafoe, in the *Free Press*, that helped put Winnipeg on the map. While the *Free Press* tended to favour what might be called a right-wing 19th Century liberalism on economic matters, it was in foreign policy that Dafoe's voice often spoke most forcefully.

In September 1938, Prime Minister Chamberlain of England signed the Munich Agreement with Hitler, effectively giving Nazi Germany control over Czechoslovakia. Many Western media were hesitant to be too critical, since the memory of World War I was only 20 years old. In fact, the BBC deliberately downplayed the opposition to the Munich Agreement at the urging of the British Foreign Office.

Dafoe did not hesitate to be critical. The headline on the lead editorial in the *Free Press* on September 30, 1938, read: "What's the cheering for?" Dafoe took the Munich Agreement apart – and, as a result, there were many in the city that cancelled their subscriptions to the *Free Press* and accused Dafoe of being a warmonger.

By September 1939, events proved that Dafoe was correct. A measure of Dafoe's reputation as an editor can be found in the Dafoe correspondence in the archives

at the University of Manitoba. There is a letter to Dafoe there, dated May 31, 1940. Part of the letter reads:

“ ... I and a lot of people with whom I have seen eye to eye have been too soft, too willing to compromise ... I did not have sense enough to see that if I didn't get a real League of Nations, I could not afford the luxury of disarmament. ... ”

The letter is signed by Arthur Hays Sulzberger, the publisher of *The New York Times*.

On Friday, November 9, 1945, the *Winnipeg Tribune* and the *Winnipeg Free Press* both failed to publish – the result of a labour dispute with the International Typographical Union. The next day, Saturday, November 10th, *Free Press* and *Tribune* readers received a strange looking newspaper – a joint edition of the two newspapers. That joint publication would continue until the following February, and it had a number of consequences, some of which are being felt today.

The first “joint edition” of the *Free Press* and *Tribune*, November 10, 1945



The labour dispute and the joint publication provided impetus to those who wanted a different kind of newspaper in Winnipeg, and so, in 1946, the first steps were taken to create a daily newspaper to be published as a consumer co-

operative. Shares were sold door-to-door, with the promise that the new paper, to be called the *Citizen*, would be owned and controlled by its readers.

The *Winnipeg Citizen* actually began publication on March 1, 1948 – a morning newspaper in competition with the two afternoon dailies. The paper lasted 13 months and 13 days, until April 13, 1949, when it went out of business, a victim of being undercapitalized. It was the first time anywhere in the world that anyone had tried to start a daily newspaper as a consumer co-operative.

In the case of radio, the changes of the early 1930s had put an end to the provincial telephone system (MTS) veto power over competitors, and to the licence fee sharing, but MTS continued to operate CKY and CKX as commercial affiliates of the CBC.

In early 1946, the CCF government of Saskatchewan, under Tommy Douglas, entered into an agreement to purchase CHAB in Moose Jaw and applied to the Board of the CBC – which was then also the regulator – for permission to have the ownership of the licence transferred. Permission was denied, and the federal government changed the rules and announced a new policy in May 1946 that prohibited the granting of broadcast licences to provincial governments.

One of the consequences was that the Manitoba government was forced to sell its two radio stations. In 1948, CKY in Winnipeg was sold to the CBC and became CBW. (The CKY call letters were reactivated the next year for a new private station in Winnipeg.) The government's station in Brandon, CKX, was sold to an automobile dealer named John Boyd Craig.

And so we come to mid-century. The *Citizen* had come and gone, but the *Free Press* and *Tribune* were assumed to endure forever. The telephone system's radio experiment was over, but new radio stations were being licensed. And just around the corner was this new thing called television.

And television had both short term and long term impacts on many other media. There was an immediate negative impact on attendance at movie theatres. There was an impact on radio formats and on when people listened to the radio. There was an impact on mass circulation general magazines. And there was also a longer term impact on newspapers. As attention in the early evening shifted to television, fewer people had time to read the newspaper. That contributed to circulation declines and, of course, the switch of many Canadian dailies from afternoon to morning publication.

And then, after one last attempt to narrow the gap with the *Free Press* in the 1970s, the *Tribune* ceased publication in 1980. The *Tribune* had been born after the *Sun* disappeared in 1889. Now, after the *Tribune* closed in 1980, a new paper was started to take its place, called ... the *Sun*.

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