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# John C. Hartman --- Builder

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## John C. Hartman—Builder

John C. Hartman, who had been reared in the printshop and the newsroom, became editor and publisher of the *Waterloo Courier* after his father's death in 1895. He soon sought other assistance in managing the financial operations of the paper, and for a time Edwin Mesick and T. P. Myers were connected with management of the newspaper. Ultimately Hartman succeeded in finding the strong financial guidance he desired in the person of Arthur W. Peterson who had previously been associated with the *Indianapolis News* and the *Minneapolis Tribune*. In May of 1908 Peterson purchased a minority interest in the paper and became secretary and general-manager.

On January 18, 1909, the *Courier* observed its fiftieth anniversary, and the special edition of that date is a gold mine of information about the *Courier* and the early history of Waterloo. The size of this edition and the man-hours of work it entailed indicates that the newspaper was growing into a more prosperous publication. It had a staff of sixty persons (including newsboys) in that year.

In this period the opposition to the employment of women was broken down. The *Courier* had written editorially in 1890 that, while "responsible

young women might teach school or become librarians, there is no telling what sort might come to work in an office." But in 1906, Miss Margaret Van Metre, daughter of Isaiah, joined the staff as the first woman reporter, and soon became the paper's first society editor. On September 22, 1912, she married E. L. Corton whose services as reporter and city editor of the *Courier* covered a span of over forty years. In 1907 another precedent was broken when Mrs. Martha Taylor became the first advertising saleswoman and office assistant. She remained with the paper for more than forty years and lived to observe the paper's centennial in 1959.

The most famous name among *Courier* staff members is that of Sinclair Lewis whose Waterloo career lasted for only a few months in 1909. Colleagues remembered him as a shy, gangling, red-haired youth who often voiced his dreams of going off to the South Sea islands to write a novel. J. C. Hartman, however, was unimpressed with Lewis' knowledge of Iowa politics, and the two came to a mutually agreeable parting of the ways.

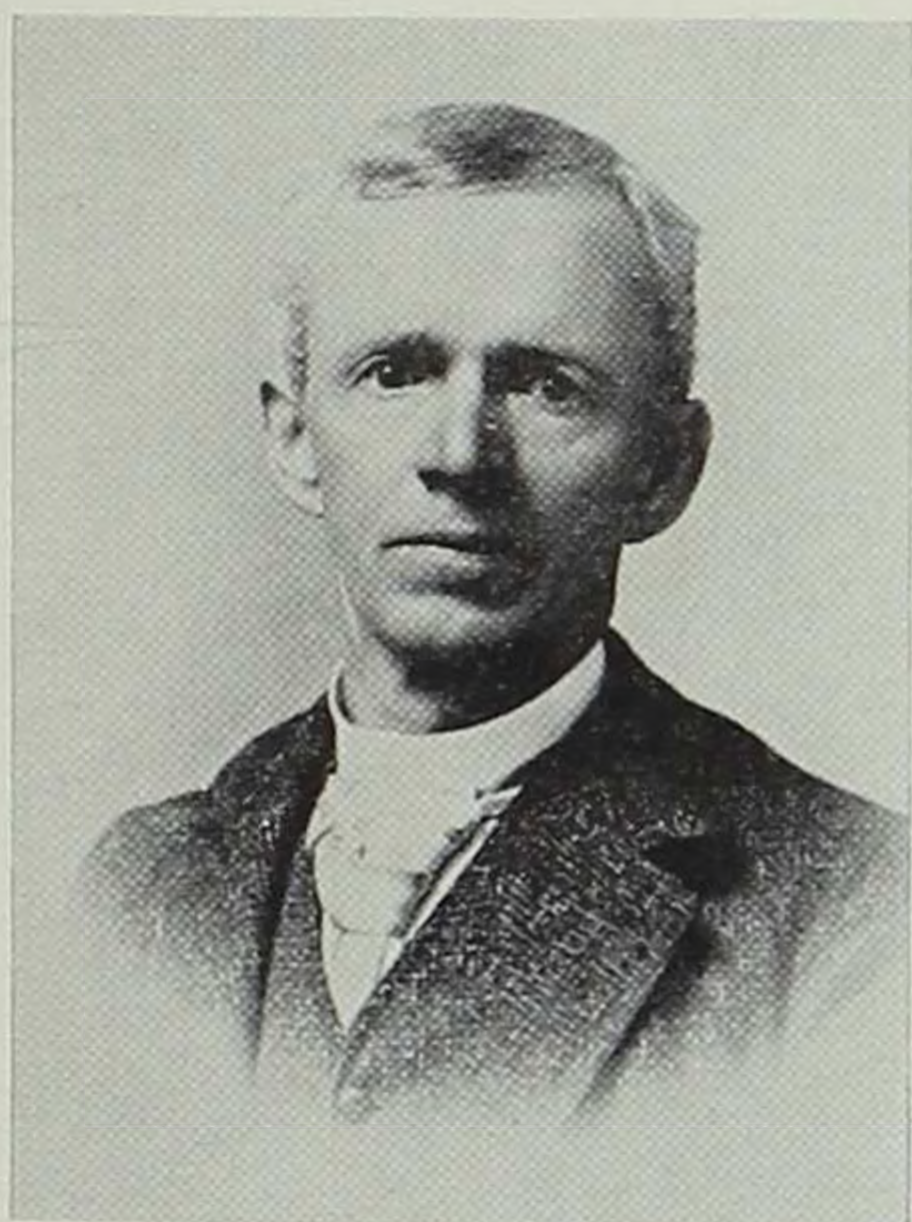
Meanwhile, Waterloo was undergoing rapid industrial growth. The Rath Packing Company moved from Dubuque to Waterloo in 1891 and began a slow growth which was eventually to make it one of the largest hog-slaughtering plants in the world. The city in the ensuing growth period became a center for such products as cream

separators, mill work, and gasoline engines. The population doubled in the single decade between 1900 and 1910 — from 12,580 to 26,693.

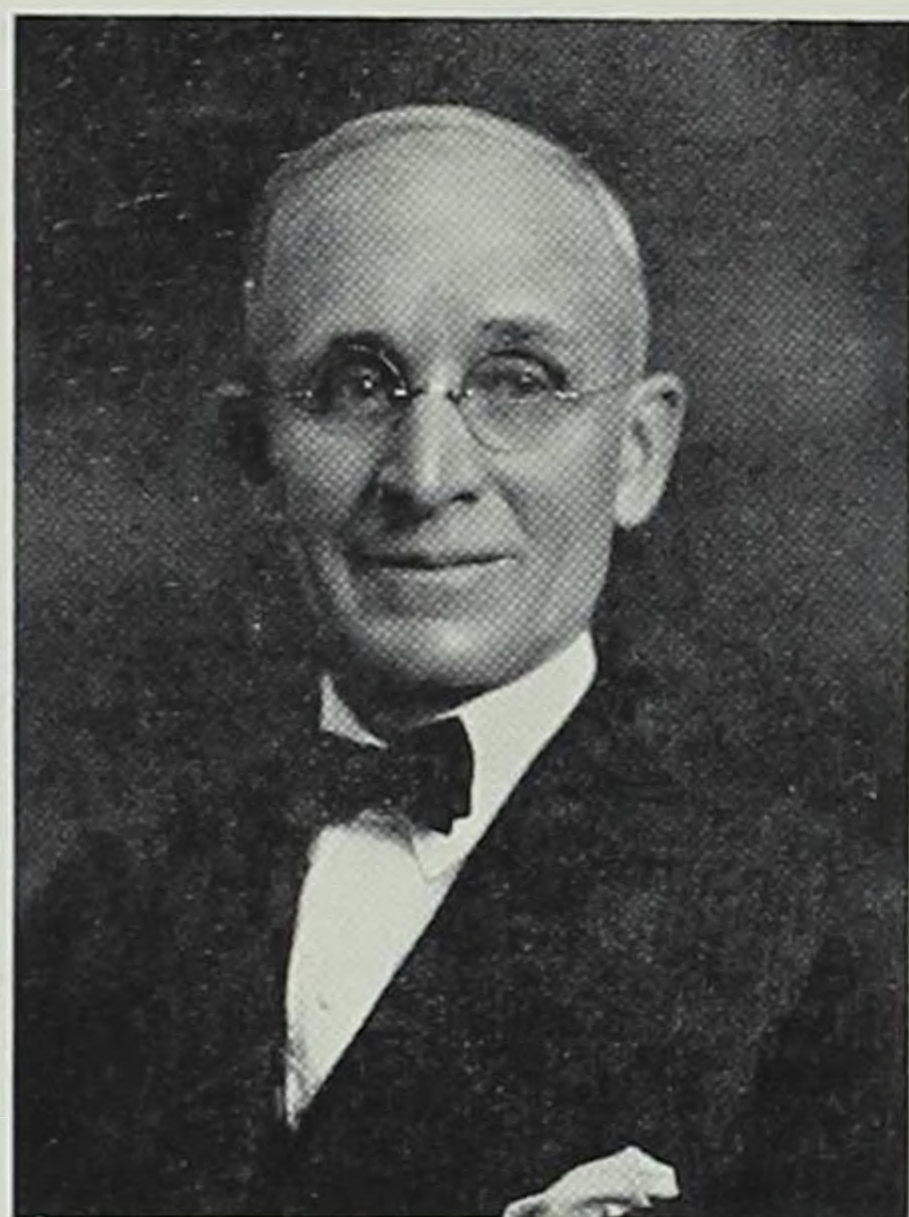
The second decade saw the *Courier* circulation grow to the point where improved printing facilities were necessary. The first linotype had been installed in 1897 after J. C. Hartman had carefully compared the cost with that of hand-set type provided by two women compositors, Hattie Quest and Katie Coombs. Now, however, another linotype was needed, and a 16-page perfecting press was purchased and was to be used until 1926. This was the first *Courier* press to print from a continuous roll of paper rather than on separate sheets laboriously fed into the press by hand.

The year 1914 marked two important events for the *Courier*. The purchase of the *Iowa State Reporter* was announced on March 10, 1914. The consolidation may have been consummated the previous year. An item of \$54,000 in an old 1913 ledger book is followed by the notation: "R. & printing equipment."

Also in 1914 the *Courier* became a charter member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation. Before that date, dishonest publishers sometimes made exaggerated circulation claims in order to attract advertising. But the ABC, a successor to earlier organizations with the same purpose, audited all circulation claims and thus protected both the honest publishers and the advertiser. Under the first



WILLIAM H. HARTMAN



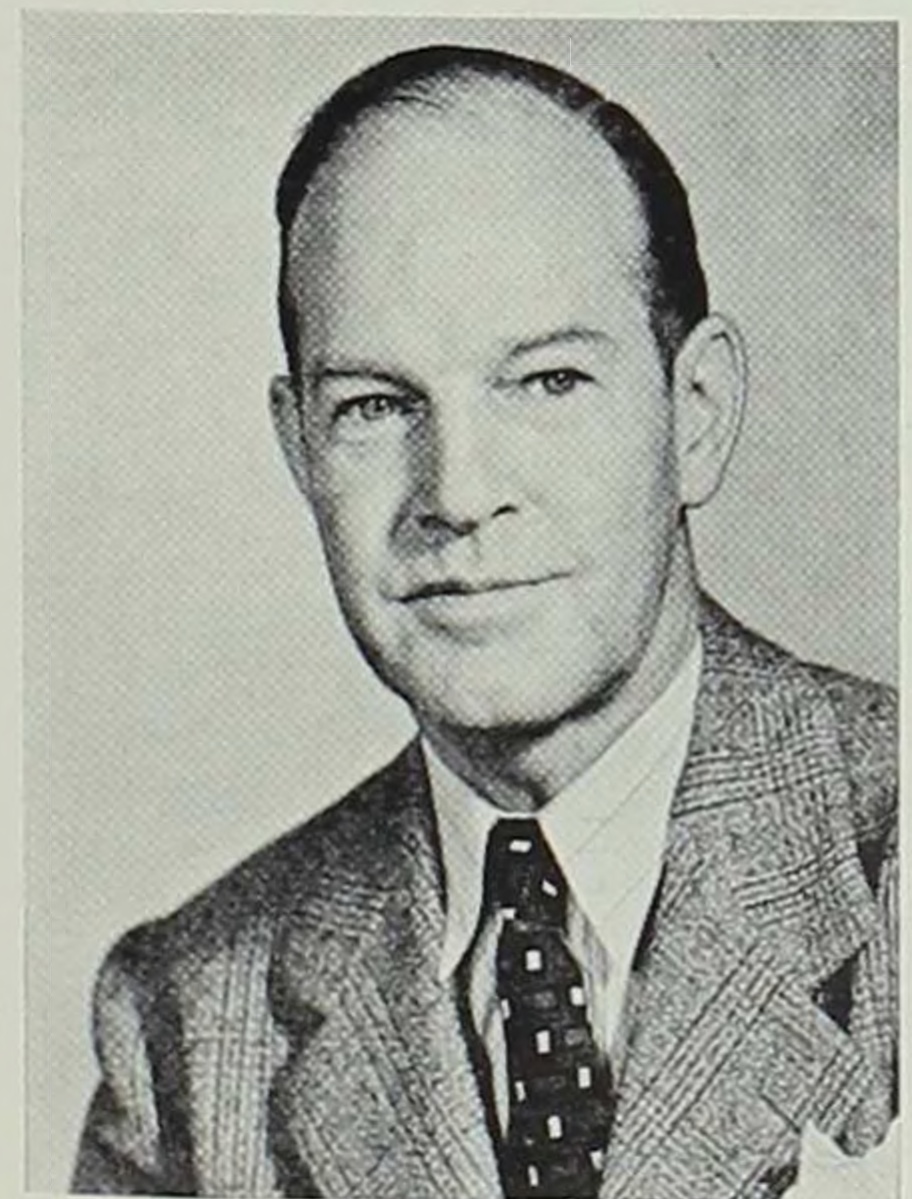
JOHN C. HARTMAN



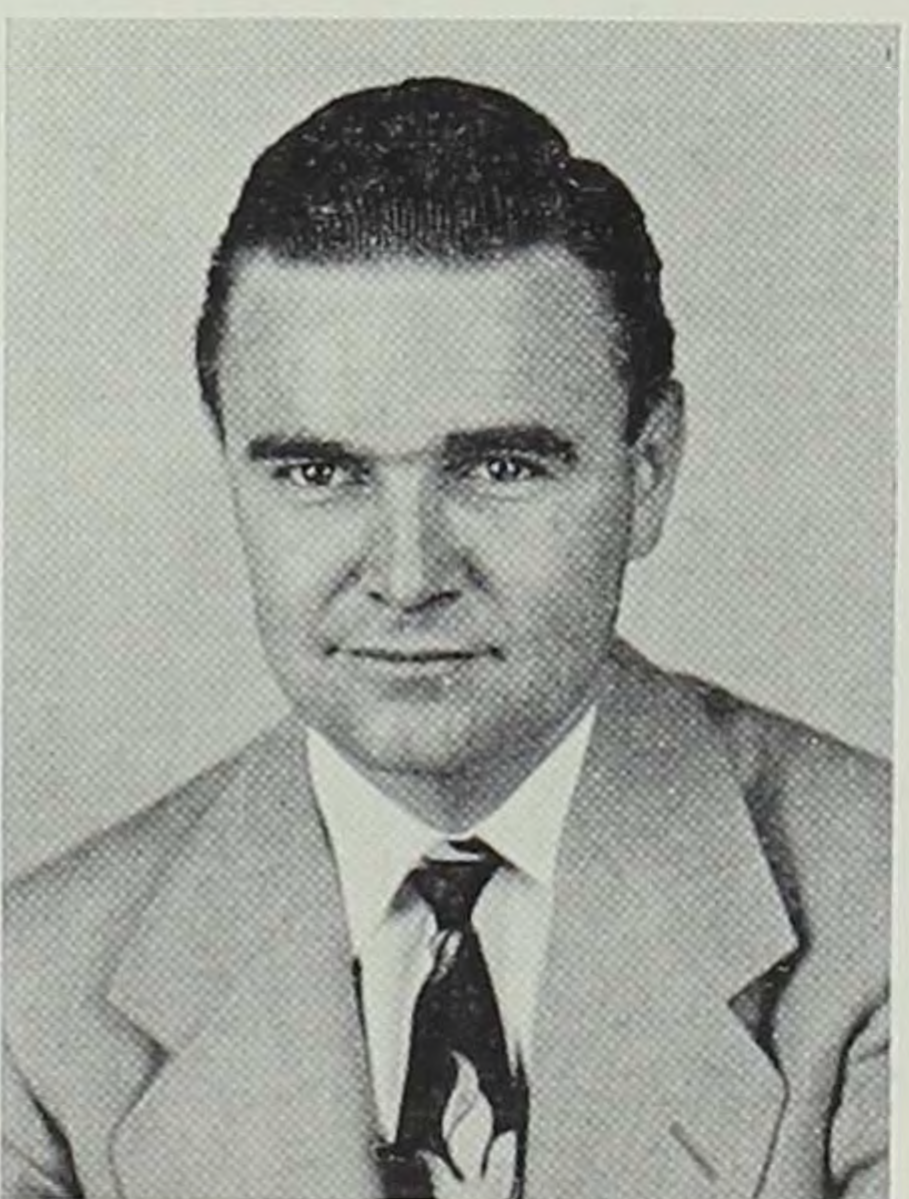
KARL C. VON LACKUM



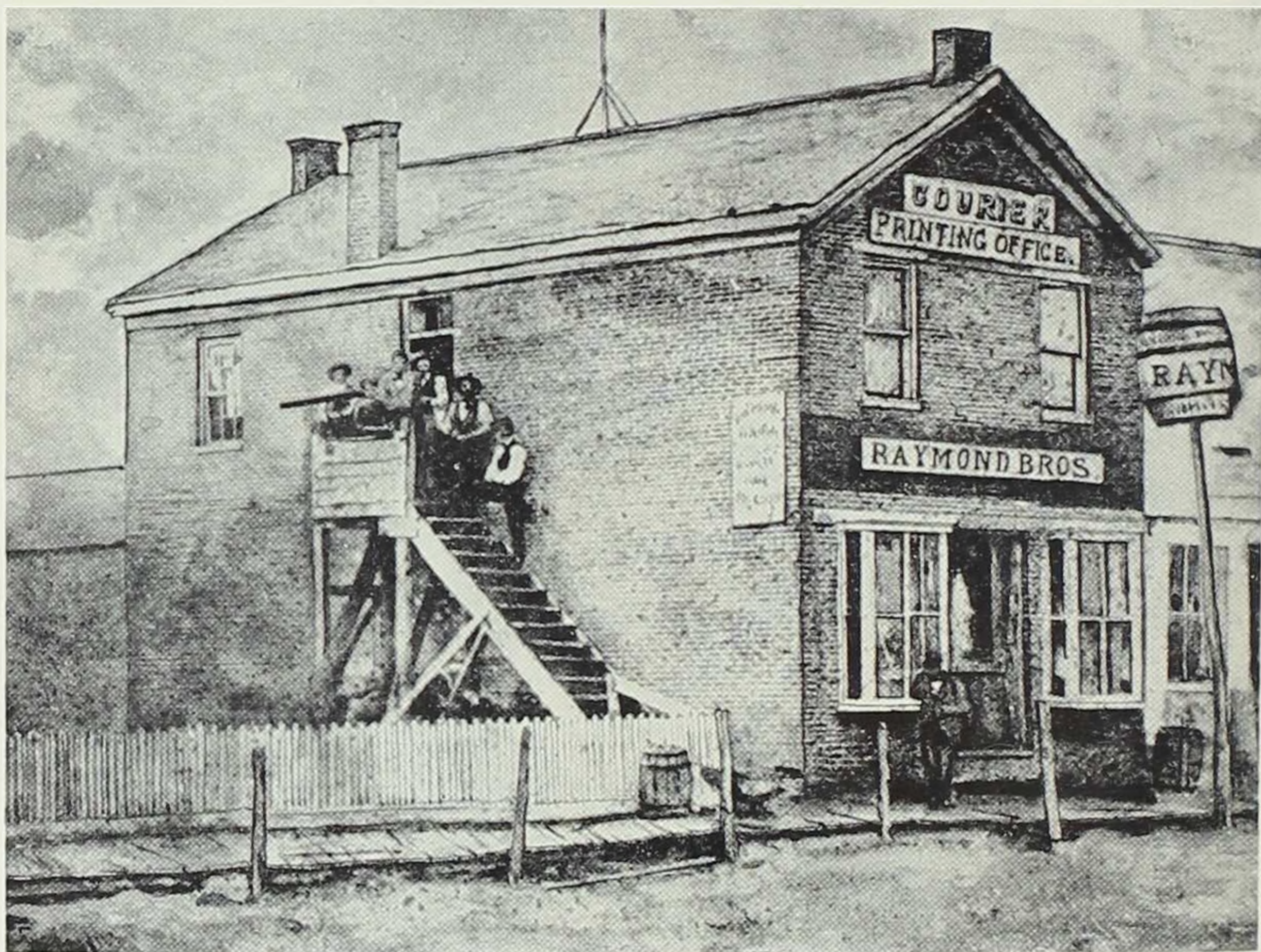
JOHN P. VON LACKUM II



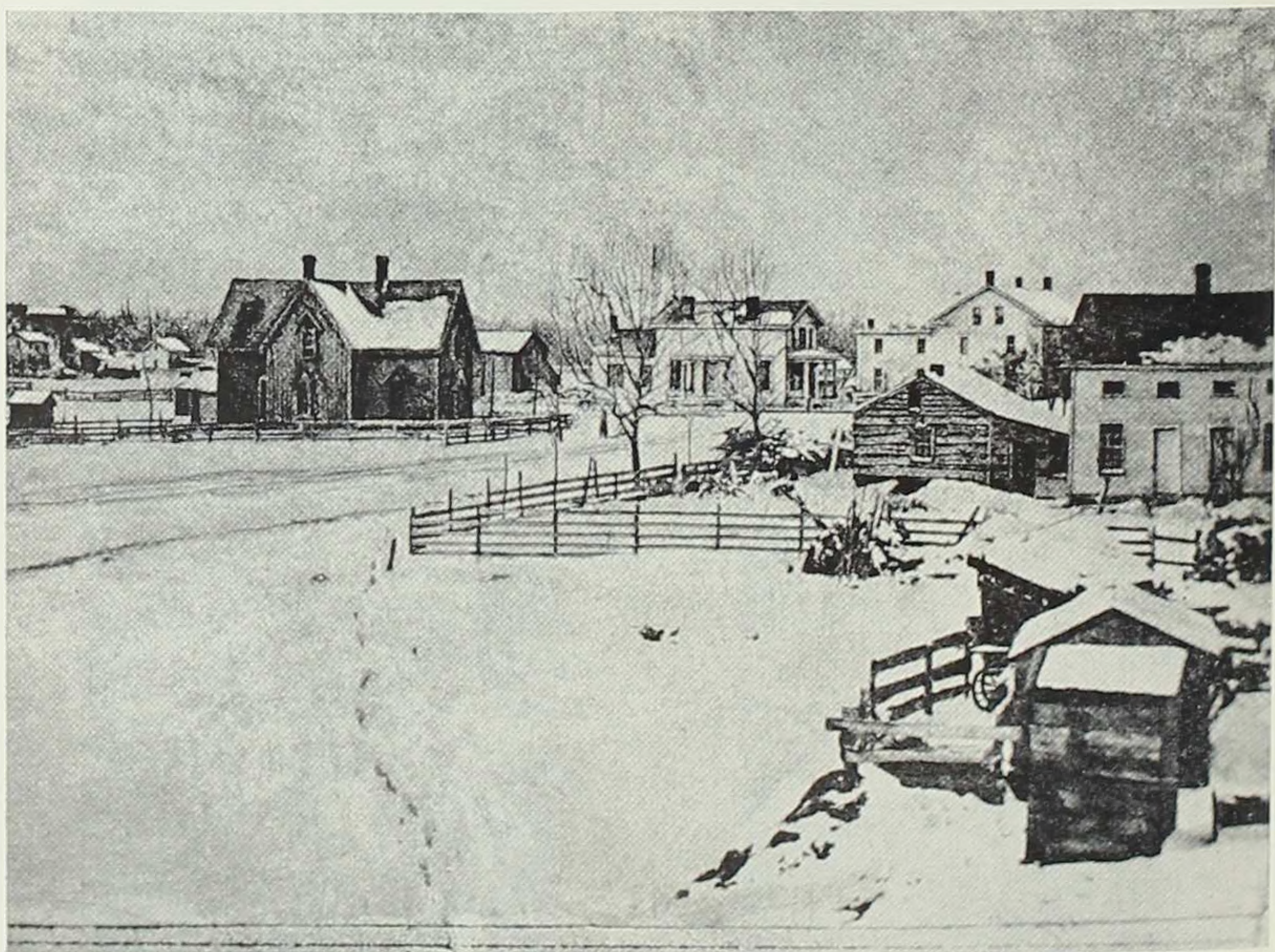
JACKSON MCCOY



ROBERT J. MCCOY



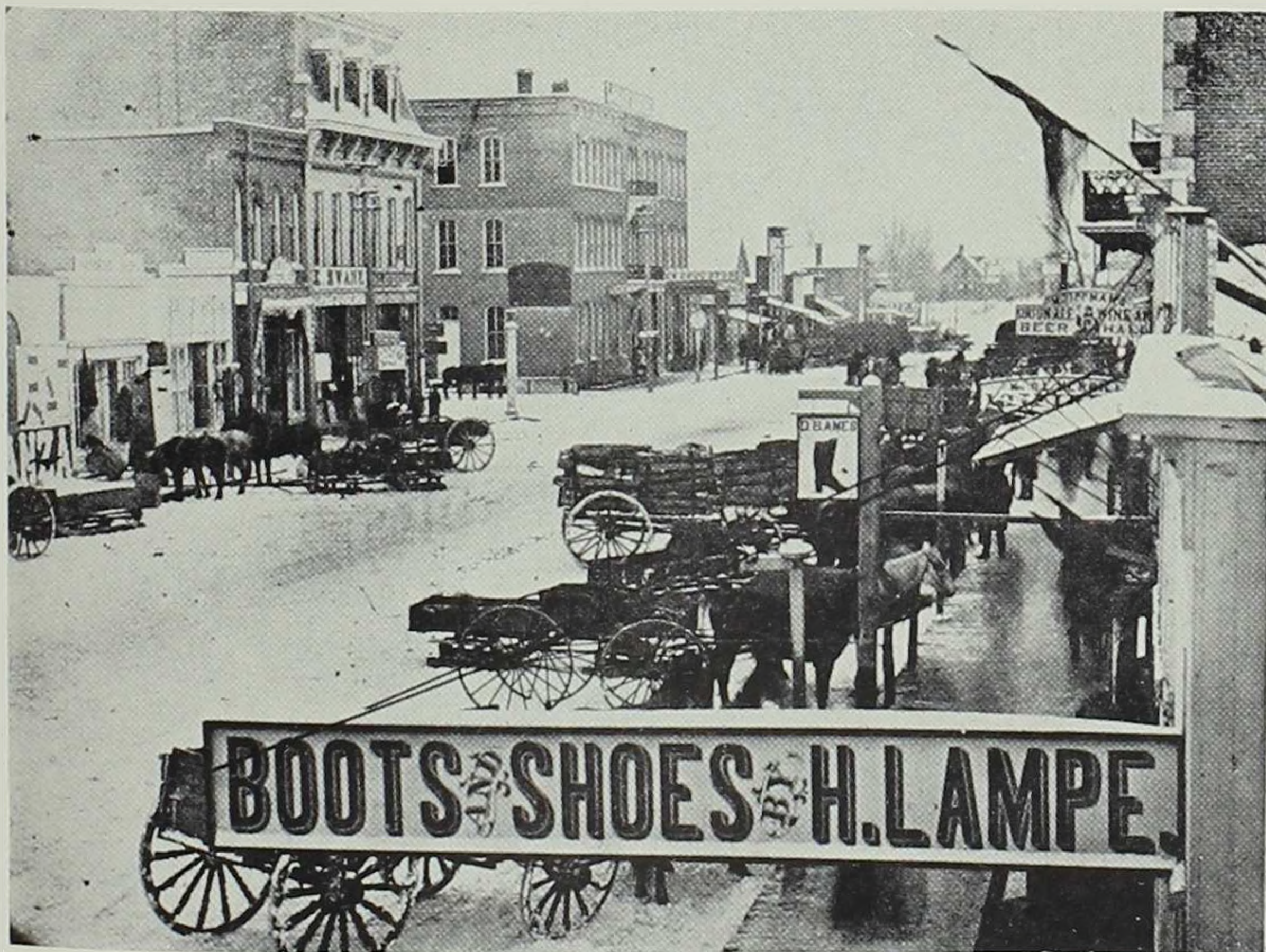
Raymond Bros. Store & Courier Office  
522 Commercial Street, 1860



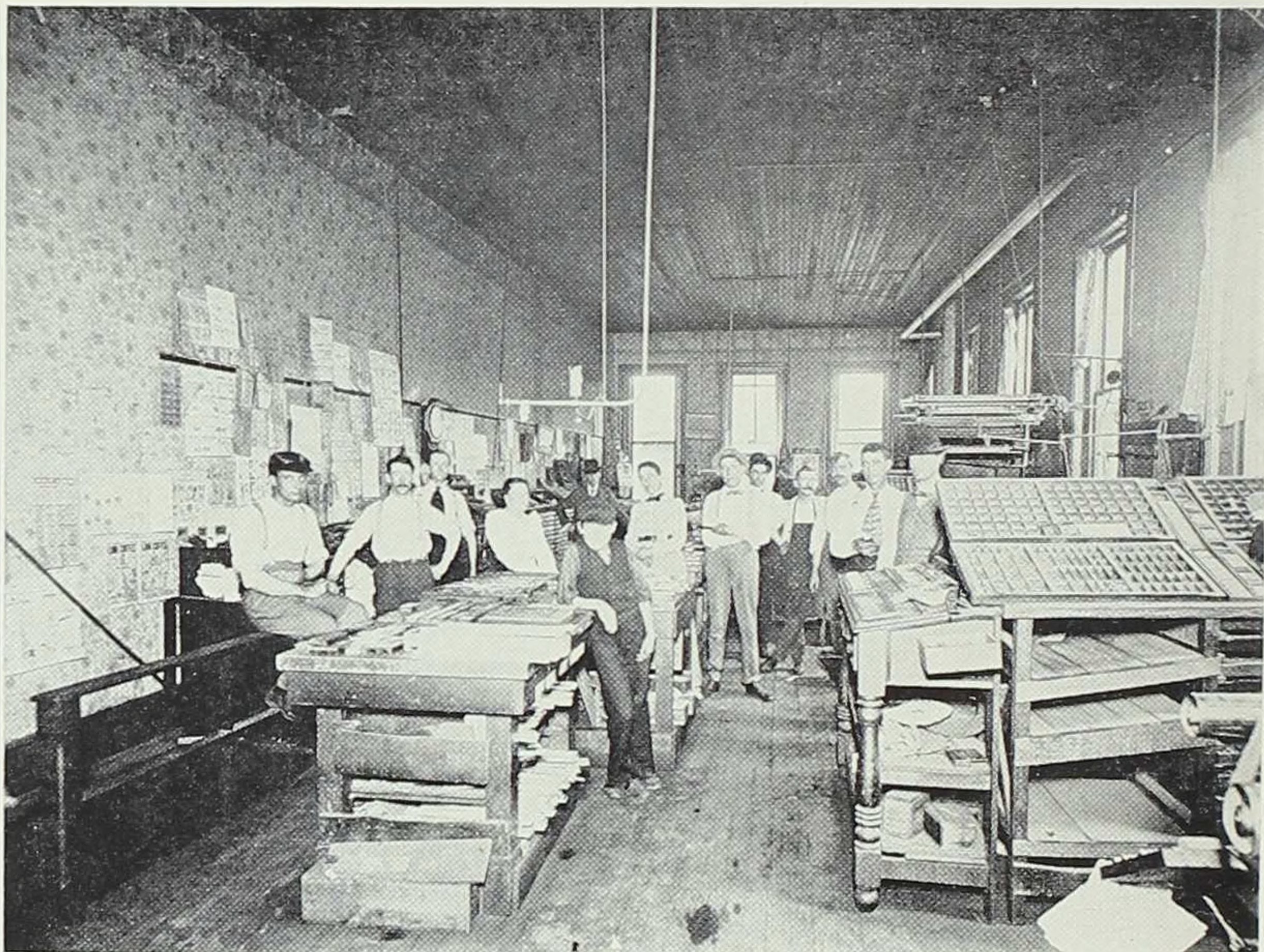
Intersection of Commercial Street & Park Ave., January, 1866. Post office now occupies corner where fence and log cabin are shown. Courier Building covers vacant area in foreground. (1928)



View of business section of Commercial Street in 1866



East Fourth Street looking north from Water Street, 1876

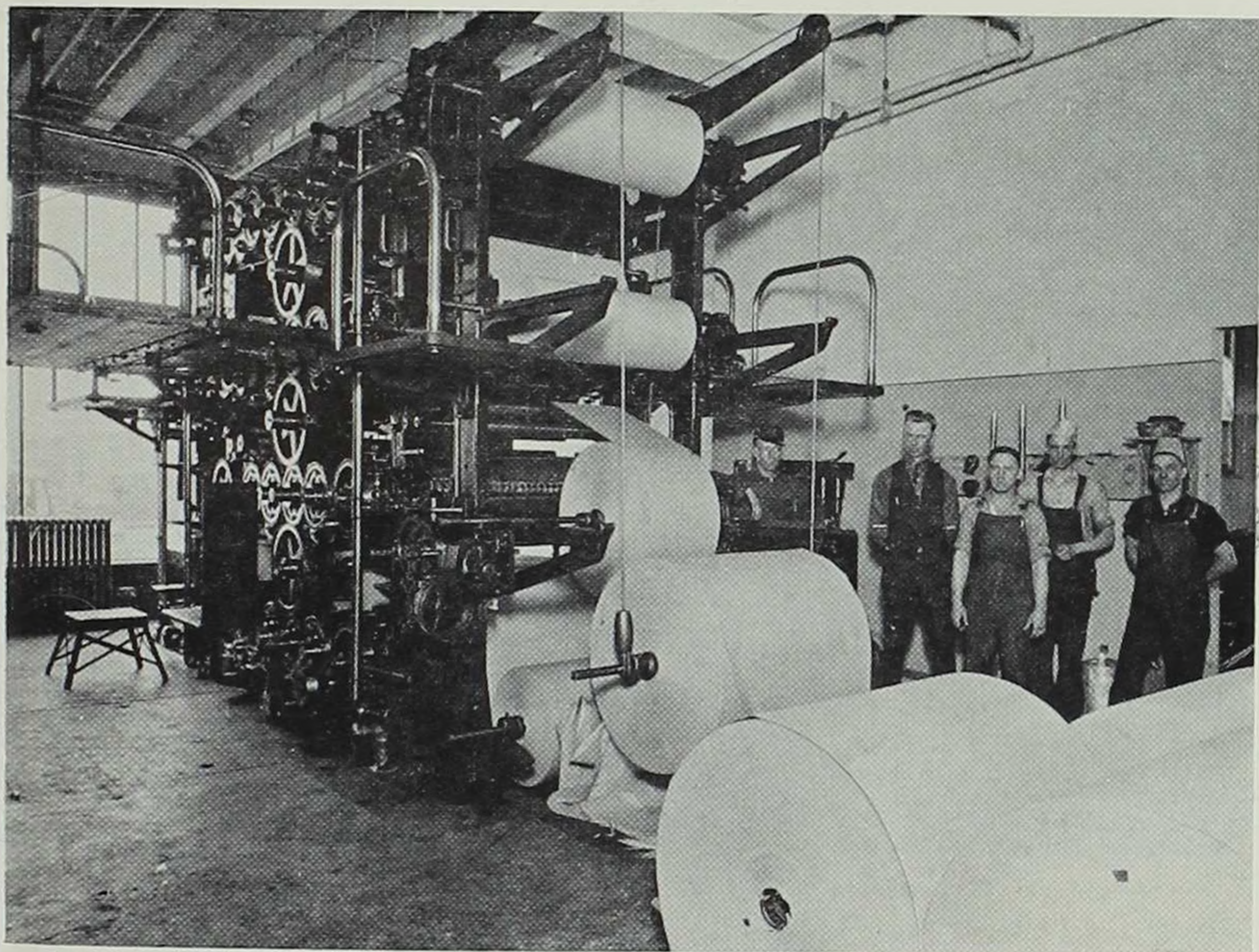


Interior of *Courier* offices on Bridge Street between Cedar & Commercial (1889-1903)

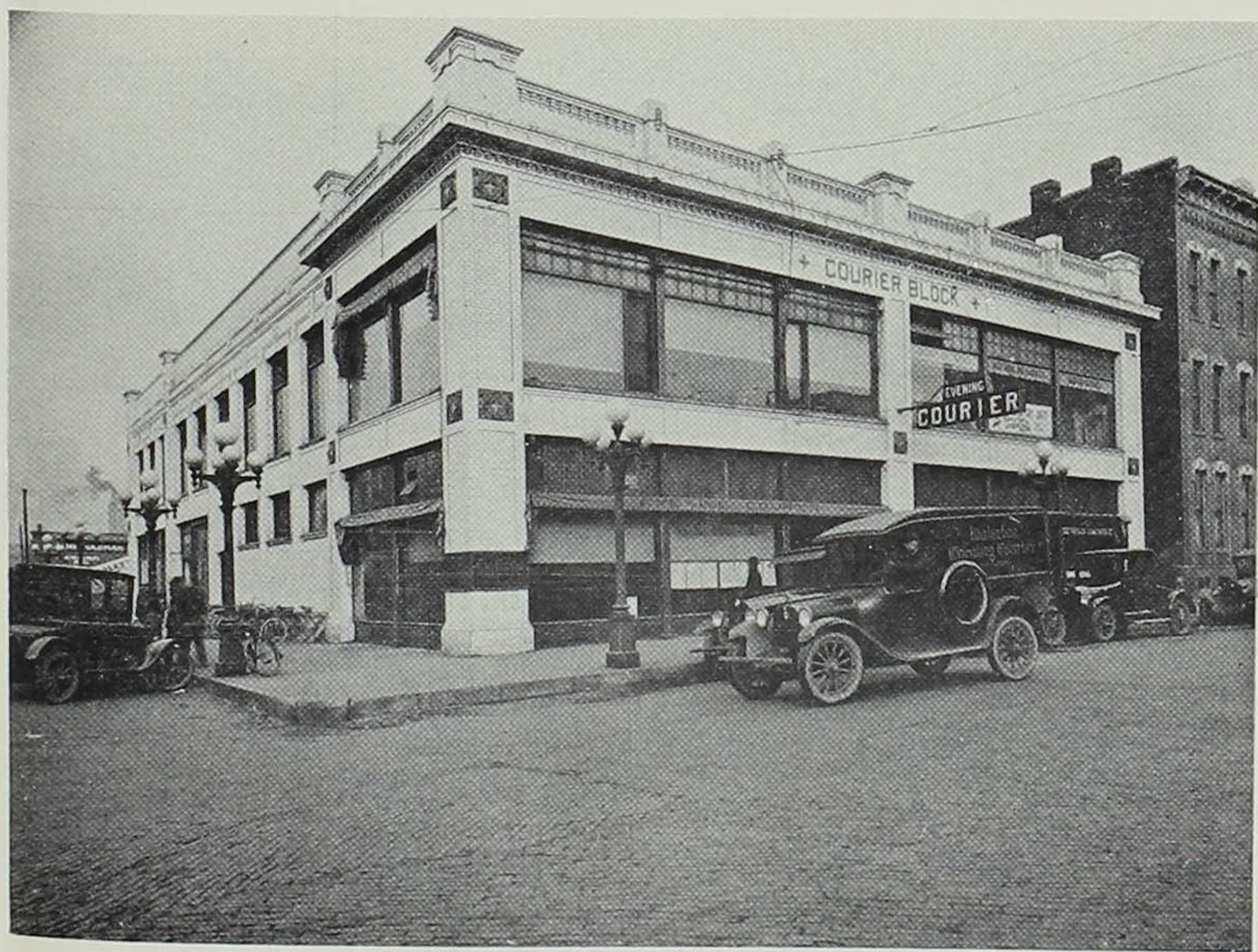


*Courier* Staff at old location (1889-1903) on Bridge Street between Cedar & Commercial

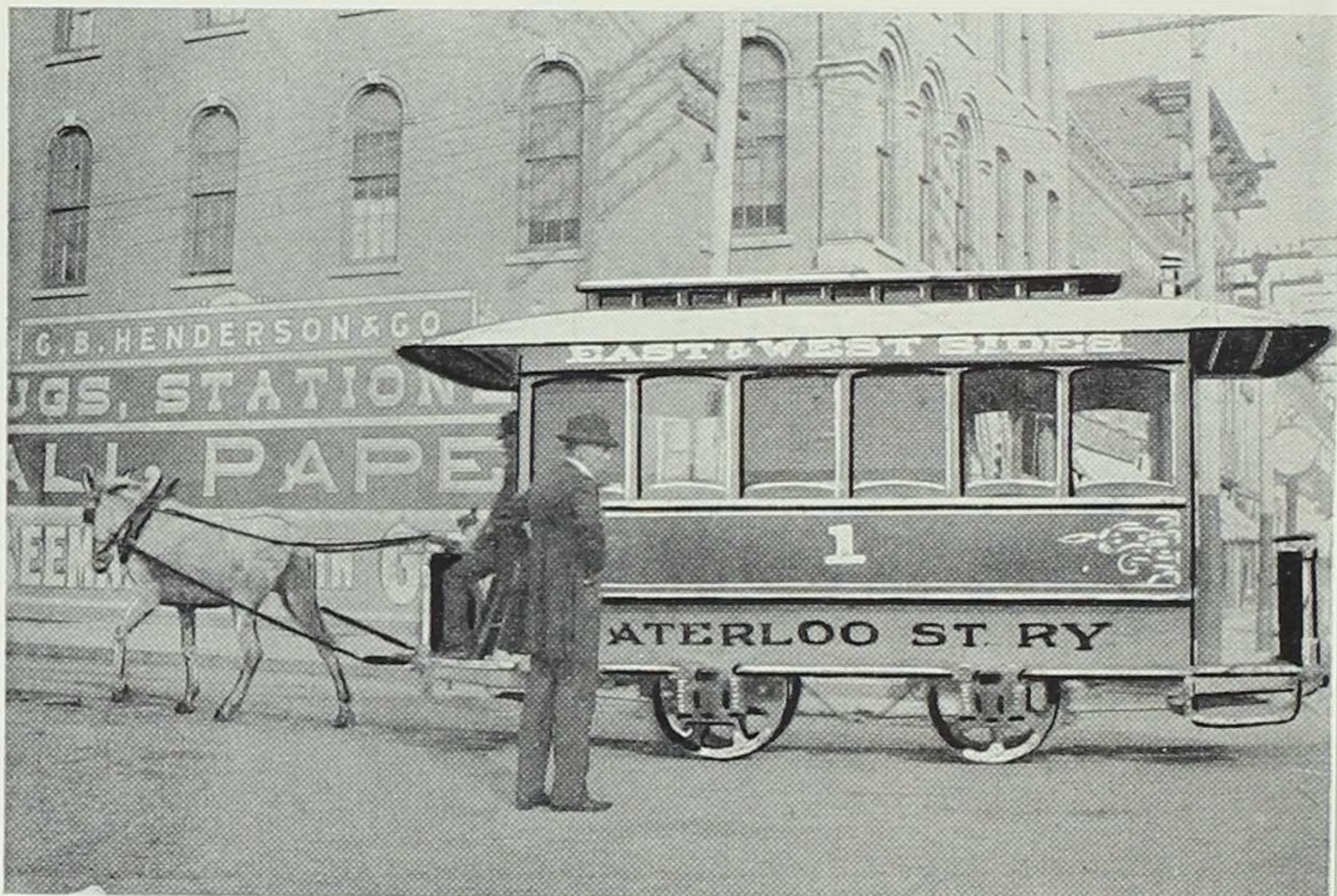




The Press Room in the 1920's



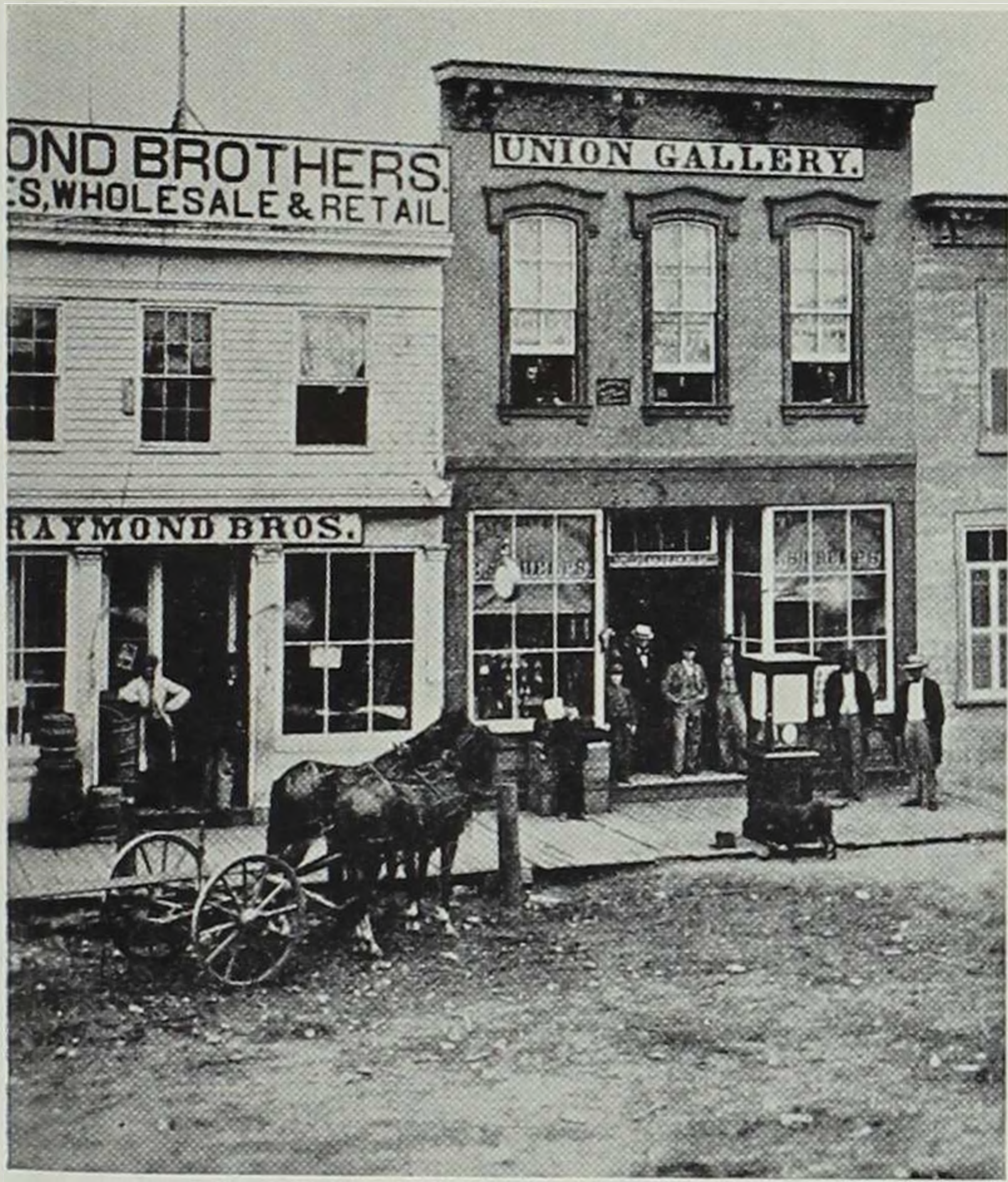
COURIER BLOCK During the 1920's



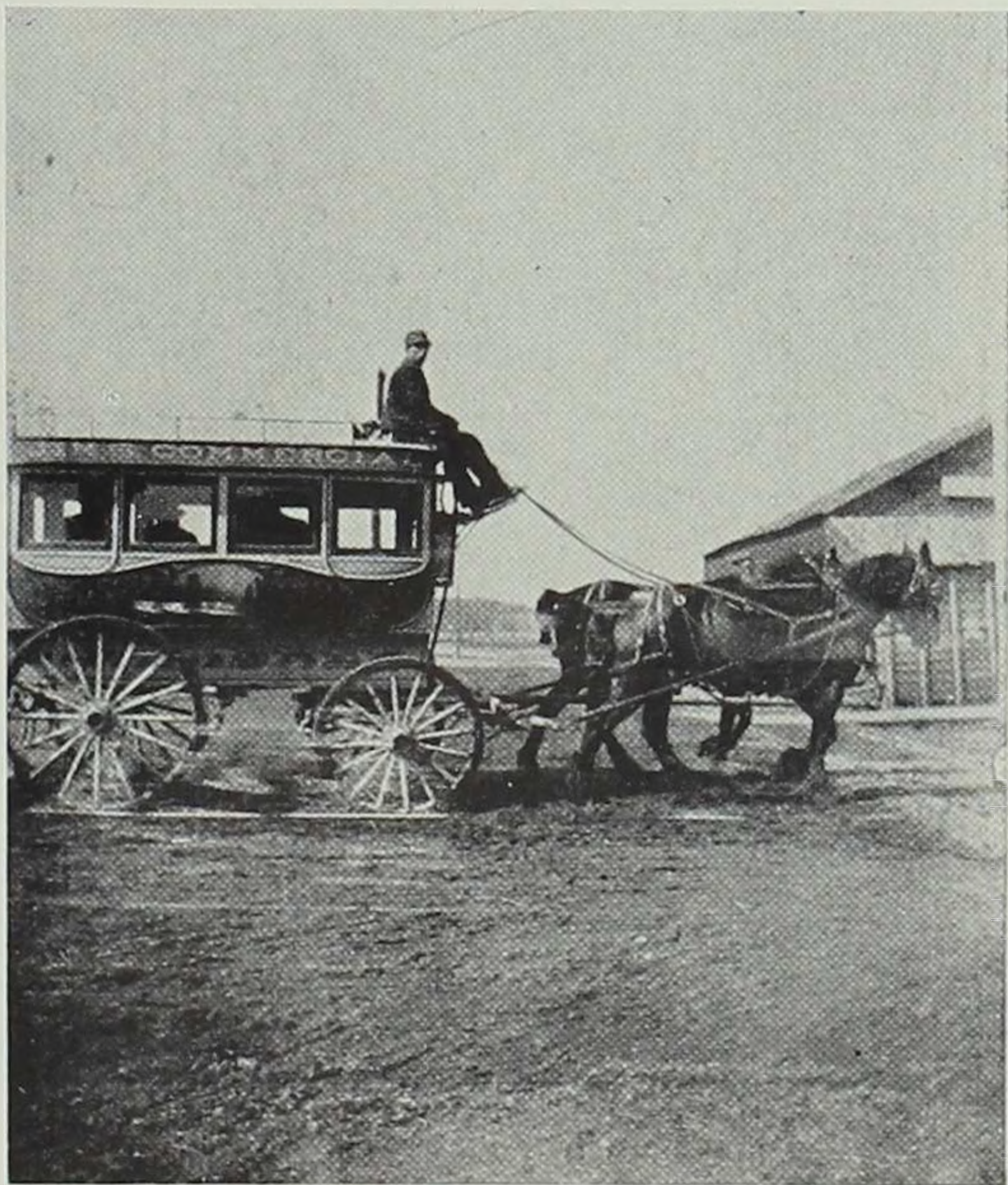
Last horsecar that passed over line in 1896



First Courier Truck — about 1920



Southwest corner Fourth & Commercial (1860's)



The Old Stage Line (1880's)

# Waterloo Daily Courier.

WEATHER INDICATOR  
Chicago, Ill., Dec. 1, — 2  
Clear for Iowa. Fair weather  
Tuesday, colder in the after-  
noon tonight, northwest at

TENTH YEAR.

WATERLOO, IOWA, MONDAY EVENING, JANUARY 1 1906

WHOLE NO.

## COLESBURG CAPTURED

English Make Brilliant Coup and Drive Boers From the Town.

Boer Spies Secretly Enlist in English Army.

## MARSHALL ATTEMPTS SUICIDE.

Ball Placed Just Above His Heart is Likely to Prove Fatal.

[Associated Press.]  
Iowa City, Jan. 1.—Capt. W. W. Marshall of Des Moines, attempted suicide here last night by shooting. A bullet entered his body just above his heart, and recovery is pronounced improbable. Worry over business matters is supposed to be the cause of his action. He leaves a wife and two daughters, prominent in Des Moines society. He is widely known throughout the

## NEW MEN TAKE HOLD

Changes Brought by New Year at the Court House.

New Year's day is not being observed as a holiday at the court house. The county officers were all at their posts early this morning, and at 9 o'clock the board of supervisors convened in regular session. The first work of the board was the approval of the bonds of the newly elected officers. Herbert H. Cropper elected to succeed F. M. Shoemaker, as county treas-

## NEW POSTAL RULINGS

Business Houses on New Secure Special Money Orders.

Blanks With Firm Name Printed on Them to be Furnished.

write: "It would be much advantageous to our design if, in the interval, you discovered with some of the most able workmen to make out the best and most facile way for a post which in process of time would be the king's best highway, as likewise passages and accommodation at rivers, fords or other necessary places."

**FIRST MAIL TRIP**  
The Historian says: "The postman started on his first trip New Year's day, 1673. His route was through Hartford, Stamford, New Haven, Hartford and Springfield, by roads, wide paths, Indian trails and marked trees."  
There was an admirable forerunner in Governor Lovelace's scheme. That indefatigable horse-man of his was an

## ANXIETY FELT HERE

Over Report of Capture of Signal Man in Philippines.

There have been numerous inquiries made today regarding a special dispatch from Manila which appeared in yesterday's papers. The dispatch says: "Six men of the signal corps were attacked at Talavera, east of Talar, by a force of 200 insurgents, and four of them were either killed or captured."

## WILL DIG UP THE BIG F

Cardiff Giant is to be Placed in Exhibition Again.

History of the Famous Fort Dodge.

FIFTEENTH YEAR.

WATERLOO, IOWA, THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 19, 1906.

NO. 4

# THE CATASTROPHE GROWS IN HORROR

## Appalling Loss of Life and Property Are Reported from the Interior of California.

### The Terrible Destruction Wrought in San Francisco Cal

Courier Established 1854.  
Expanded Established 1906.

WATERLOO, IOWA, SATURDAY, MAY 21, 1927.

HOME EDITED

# LINDBERGH COMPLETES NEW YORK TO PARIS FLIGHT

In the Spotlight of TODAY'S News

**AN EPOCHAL FLIGHT**  
"Slim" Lindbergh, lanky lad from the midwest, was lucky again today. Spending railroad across the Atlantic, he came in sight of land this afternoon on his bold attempt at a nonstop flight from New York to Paris.  
As these lines were written he had not yet landed at Le Bourget, but the peril of the sea no longer confronted him. He was safe, if not on solid earth, at least above solid earth, and already the civil-

## DEMOCRATS FEEL COUNTRY'S PRESS UNFAIR TO PARTY

Handicapped in Efforts to Get Real Issues Before Voters.

"HONESTY IN GOVERNMENT" MAY BE GREAT SLOGAN

## Iowa Girl Marries Magnate



## NOW OR NEVER IS Y. W. C. A. FEELING AS GAP NARROWS

Building Fund Campaigners Feel This is the End: No Third Drive. \$20,000 STILL NEEDED TO RAISE DEBT LOAD

## Does His Stuff



## YANKEE FLIER CROSSES ATLANTIC IN 33 HOURS LANDS SAFELY AT PARIS

Enthusiastic Crowd at Le Bourget Welcomes Daring Flier at Finish of Unparalleled Progress of Lonely Flight Over

ESTABLISHED 1854

WATERLOO, IOWA, MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1941

EIGHTEEN PAGES

PRICE THREE

# U. S. DECLARES WAR ON JAPAN

## 3,000 CASUALTIES IN JAP ATTACKS ON HAWAII

### Battlefield Between U. S. and Japan Wins Invasion Road QUICK ACTION

ESTABLISHED 1854

★

WATERLOO, IOWA, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 1945

EIGHTEEN PAGES

PRICE THREE

# HAIL DAWN OF NEW PEACE ERA

## War Over, Ditched Jap Planes Attack

An attack on American forces by Japanese suicide planes 12 hours after Presi-

## Gas, Canned Goods Off Rationing

## SNYDER CALLS EMPLOYMENT

## Lifting Effective

## Peace—It's Wonderful!

## ARMIES HALT AS JAPANESE GIVE UP FIGHT

ABC audit, the *Courier's* circulation was established at 13,197.

Growth of the paper during and immediately following World War I made the acquisition of larger quarters imperative, and in 1923 the enterprise was moved to the present location at the corner of Commercial Street and Park Avenue. The Goss press, capable of printing 24,000 16-page papers an hour, had to be dismantled and moved to the new location over the week end.

On September 26, 1923, General Manager Peterson, who had guided the financial operations of the paper through this period of growth, died and was succeeded by his nephew, Jackson McCoy, who had served as his assistant for eleven years. A new period of expansion began under McCoy's direction. Increased emphasis on the classified advertising section resulted in the growth of that department. J. C. Hartman, in the newsroom, moved Wilton "Hap" Floberg from the city reporting staff into the position of the first sports editor, and that section was expanded. In 1926, a new Duplex Web-perfecting Unitype press capable of printing 37,250 papers an hour was installed. (Three units were installed in that year and a fourth in 1936.)

This was the period of the stiffest competition between the *Courier* and the *Morning Tribune*. The editorial staff under Hartman's direction fought for "exclusives" and "scoops" in the circu-

lation battles of that era. The *Courier* forged ahead in circulation within the city, but the *Tribune*, with the appearance of rural free delivery and the advantage of morning publication (permitting over-night delivery), gained dominance in the rural territory and smaller towns of the area. Evidence of the fluctuating financial fortunes of the period is the fact that the *Courier's* advertising lineage dropped from 6,316,366 in 1920 to 6,130,040 in 1925, climbing back to 6,402,592 in 1930.

The coming of the depression, however, greatly intensified the struggle, and it soon became apparent that, with the sudden drop in advertising revenue, both papers would not survive. Employees of the *Courier* voluntarily took a 10 per cent cut in salary, and over at the *Tribune*, General Manager Harry Shaw and Editor William Reed could not meet their payroll until the carrier boys reported in with their collections.

Finally, in the spring of 1931 the *Courier* purchased the *Waterloo Morning Tribune* for \$360,936. This final consolidation was in accord with the trend toward one-newspaper cities elsewhere in Iowa and in the nation. A single newspaper can provide complete coverage of a retail market for an advertiser much more efficiently and inexpensively than can two or more newspapers. The greater financial stability, moreover, makes the newspaper more independent in its editorial policy and enables it to provide better news coverage and more

expensive features. And, finally, with the appearance of radio (and later television), the newspaper could not be accused of having a monopoly of the news-disseminating function. Furthermore, with the elimination of intra-city newspaper rivalry, Iowa papers entered into a new period of inter-city competition, struggling for circulation in the "fighting territory" at the fringes of their market zones.

At the time of its sale to the *Courier*, the *Waterloo Morning Tribune* was operating a radio station with the call letters composed of the initial letters in the newspaper's name. But the *Courier* was unable at this time to purchase the radio station; and WMT was purchased by the Iowa Broadcasting Company, a subsidiary of the *Des Moines Register*. The station was moved to Cedar Rapids at this time; it was acquired by the present owners in 1944.

With the purchase of the *Tribune*, the *Courier* acquired an extensive rural circulation and began publication of a morning edition to satisfy the needs of these subscribers. Saturday afternoon publication was discontinued and the Sunday morning edition substituted. Publication of these morning editions was made possible by the fact that a morning Associated Press franchise had been acquired with the purchase of the *Tribune*.

The merger caused the circulation of the *Courier* to rise from 21,135 in 1930 to 33,766 in 1931.

But there was considerable duplication in the circulation lists of the two papers and the *Courier's* circulation dropped back to 29,521 in 1932 and then to 27,227 in 1933 as the depression forced many farmers and unemployed city workers to cancel their subscriptions. Yearly advertising lineage dropped from 6,402,592 in 1930 to 5,059,824 in 1935.

Another competitive struggle was added to complicate the economic problems of this period. The owners of the *Tribune* by the terms of the sale had agreed not to engage in the newspaper business in Waterloo for ten years. But a few years following the sale, Harry Shaw invested his share of the proceeds from sale of the *Tribune* and WMT in printing equipment to publish a daily newspaper in Cedar Falls. The Cedar Falls *Daily News*, first an afternoon paper, then a morning paper, and finally a weekly, was a fiercely-burning but brief star in the newspaper field, and it became defunct in 1937.

This competition, however, stimulated the *Courier* into naming its first full-time photographer, Bruce A. Palmer, and into installing its own one-man engraving equipment. When the Cedar Falls *News* ceased publication, the *Courier* acquired its photo-engraving plant and Arthur Roop became the first full-time photo-engraver. Previously the *Courier* engravings had been made at a commercial plant in Waterloo, but the Sunday edition,



with the need for Saturday night service, made the establishment of its own plant imperative.

John C. Hartman, who had earned the Iowa Press Association's "Master Editor" award, died after a lingering illness on January 3, 1941. He had seen the newspaper grow from a struggling frontier weekly to the dominant daily newspaper in more than a dozen counties in northeastern Iowa, with correspondents in nearly 100 communities and a circulation in some 35,000 homes. For many years he made a hobby of Indian lore and historical studies. His *History of Black Hawk County* remains a prime reference book on the early history of the Waterloo area. His widow, the former Miss Ida Hummel, survived and passed her ninety-eighth birthday in 1958.

DAVID DENTAN