

**OLD COWTOWN MUSUEM
BUSINESS DISTRICT
THE WICHITA CITY EAGLE**

1. The Wichita City Eagle Building in the Business District represents the office and printing business of Marshall M. Murdock, editor and owner of the Wichita City Eagle newspaper. The exhibit represents the role that editors like Murdock played, and the importance that newspapers had in the development of frontier cities like Wichita.
2. Marshall Murdock was recruited by city leaders to come to Wichita to establish a promotional, Republican newspaper. Murdock began publication of the Eagle April 12, 1872.
3. Murdock's reporting style and publishing philosophy exemplified a typical booster newspaper of the time period. Murdock was the premier publicist for the city, and was known nationally almost as much for his unswerving loyalty and promotion of Wichita as for his extravagant writing style.
4. The building exterior represents the first offices of the Wichita City Eagle.
5. The front rooms represent the type of office and reading room Murdock used.
6. The back room represents the early history of the Eagle's presses and printer's equipment used in the publication process.
Consult the "Manual for Interpretation and Demonstration of the Wichita City Eagle Exhibit," for more information on the history of Wichita's newspapers, the history and operation of the presses, and biographical information on Marshall M. Murdock.

The Wichita City Eagle building located in the Business District of Old Cowtown Museum, represents the office and printing business of Marshall M. Murdock, editor and owner of the Wichita City Eagle newspaper. The Wichita City Eagle represents the impact that Murdock had on the development of frontier towns.

The first newspapers in Wichita were the Wichita Vidette, which was published for short duration in 1870, and the Wichita Tribune which operated for six months in 1871. The Wichita City Eagle became the first substantial and ultimately successful paper to be published in Wichita, followed by the Wichita Beacon. Both the Eagle and Beacon began publication in 1872. The Eagle was a Republican backed newspaper, with its editor Murdock extolling the virtues of the city. The Beacon was biased towards the interests of Democrats and farmers. Throughout the 1870s, the Eagle and the Beacon enjoyed a lively rivalry which encouraged the success and increased circulation of both publications.

At the invitation of Wichita business leaders, Marshall Murdock moved to Wichita in 1872 to start a Republican newspaper. Before moving to Wichita, Murdock owned and operated the Weekly Osage Chronicle located in Burlingame, Kansas. Undoubtedly Murdock received a

subsidy or bonus from Wichita business leaders to bring a Republican newspaper to town, though he would vehemently deny this throughout his career. The most influential leaders believed the city needed a promotional, and Republican, newspaper. They knew, that a newspaper could be used as the ultimate public relations tool -- to promote business, settlement, recruitment of railroads, as well as the social and cultural aspects of the community. Murdock published the first issue of the Wichita City Eagle on April 12, 1872. Murdock was the premier publicist for the city, and was known nationally almost as much for his unswerving loyalty and promotion of Wichita as for his extravagant writing style. Marshall Murdock set a tone of optimism regarding Sedgwick County and Wichita. His articles emphasized the virtues of the city and minimized the problems to encourage settlement in the area. In his reporting, Murdock used the common editorial rhetoric of the time period, speaking in the future-tense, or what has been termed as "booster" language. Murdock, his paper and his writing style exemplified the typical western-editor-politician-town promoter newspaper.

Interpretation of the Exterior

The exterior of the Eagle Building represents the first offices of the newspaper. The first office, occupied

for only three months, was located in a small building at Third and Main. In August 1872, the newspaper moved its headquarters to a new building in the "Eagle Block" at the corner of Douglas and Main. A large wood carved and gilded eagle adorned the new building; the painted eagle on our exhibit represent this.

Interpretation of the Interior

The interior of the Eagle Building represents a typical newspaper office and printing establishment of the time period and in particular, the first building the Wichita City Eagle occupied. However, some of the presses postdate the first Eagle offices, though they are appropriate for our time period.

The Front Office Exhibits

Marshall Murdock's Office: This exhibit represents Marshall Murdock's office. It is not an exact replica, but resembles newspaper offices of the time period. Murdock received visitors in his office and reported these visits in his newspaper.

The Public Reading Room: In absence of a U.P.I. press service, Murdock and other editors of the time period exchanged publications with one another. The room is interpreted as a place set aside by Murdock for his readers. Reading rooms were an important component of early newspaper offices. The public reading room served as place for the exchange of information through the

newspapers that it offered and through the discussions between patrons who used the room. The curiosity cabinet in this room contains items such as those that readers brought to Murdock. Murdock encouraged his readers to bring in objects of interest in order to display them for public enjoyment.

The Presses

The Washington Press: The Washington Press is they type that Murdock first used to publish the Eagle. The type is inked by using ink balls or a hand roller. When the type is sufficiently inked, paper is placed on the type, the type is closed and the bed is moved under the press. The lever is pulled towards the printer which presses the paper onto the type. The bed is then moved out and opened. The sheet of paper is taken off the press, and the process begins again. The Washington Press could be operated by experienced printer at a maximum speed of one copy per minute.

The Cylinder Press: Murdock reported the purchase of new presses for the Eagle in 1873. One of the presses operated similar to the cylinder press displayed in the exhibit. The cylinder press is a self, or automatic inking press. The cylinder and the rollers turn in place, while the type and the ink move underneath the rollers and the cylinder. The press is propelled by turning the wheel that is

on the side of the press. The arrow painted on the wheel indicates the direction the wheel turns to print. The cylinder press allowed Murdock to significantly increase the printing time and number of issues he printed. In 1875 the Eagle reported the purchase of steam engines which allowed further advancement in printing time.

The Job Press: Murdock used this type of press to do job printing. Business cards, calling cards, letterhead, and small handbills were printed on such a press. It is a self, or automatic inking press. The ink rollers take the ink from the ink plate and spread it on the type. The press is propelled either by the wheel or the foot peddle. This is the press which is currently used for printing demonstrations.

Other Newspapers In Wichita

Vidette	Aug. 1870-Late 1872
Gazette	Portion of 1871
Wichita Tribune	Mar. – Nov. 1871
Wichita City Eagle	begin April 1872
Daily Beacon	Oct. 1872 -
Weekly Beacon	Dec. 1872 -
Daily Beacon	Cattle Drive 1873
Independent (6 mo.)	Spring – Fall 1871
Herald	Oct . 1877-Oct. 1879
Weekly Republican	Dec. 1879
Daily Republican	Dec. 1880