

# The history of Augusta newspapers

## Augusta Historical Society and Museum

From the start, local newspapers were an active voice in the lives and politics of every frontier town. Across the plains, newspapers were started as soon as townsites could be plotted and populated. It took little more than an enterprising editor and a simple hand operated press to churn out the weekly tabloid which advertised the community, recorded its history, and promoted its interests. By 1889 there were 733 weekly papers in operation across Kansas. At first, the community newspapers often were simply a mouthpiece for town promoters and local speculators. The early issues were filled with notices advertising vacant lots or new businesses, along with articles extolling the virtues of the growing community. But once the town's development was well under way, the paper invariably focused on political crusades of the day. Usually, the editors were highly opinionated and partisan and used their papers as pulpits to espouse their own views and interests.

The first newspaper printed in Augusta was The Augusta Crescent. It was established in September of 1870, by A. A. Putnam and L. J. Perry. The subscription price was set at \$2 a year, because the paper on which the newspaper was printed cost the editors approximately .07 a pound. The Augusta Crescent was bought from Mr. Putnam and Mr. Perry by J. B. Davis. Mr. Davis then proceeded in changing the name to The

Republican.

The Crescent and later renamed The Republican, began printing in February from the basement of the Brown Bank located in the Opera Block at 119 E. 5th. It is reported the printing press and type used was previously owned by old John Brown of Osawatimie. In an attack on Brown, his printing plant was raided and the entire press and type were taken, first to Paola, then to Florence and finally to Augusta.

J. B. Davis was succeeded as editor by W. A. Albin. In 1874, Mr. Albin discontinued publication. He based his decision on the following statements: "Patronage we have received will not justify us in risking a continuance. Since self-preservation is the first law of nature, we will endeavor to locate where we can do best." However, Mr. Albin was slated to return to the newspaper business a few years later.

The end of The Republican did not end the publications of newspapers in Augusta. On July 4, 1874, Charles H. and J. A. Kurtz issued a newspaper entitled the Southern Kansas Gazette to take its place. This partnership continued until 1879. After that date, C. H. Kurtz became the sole owner.

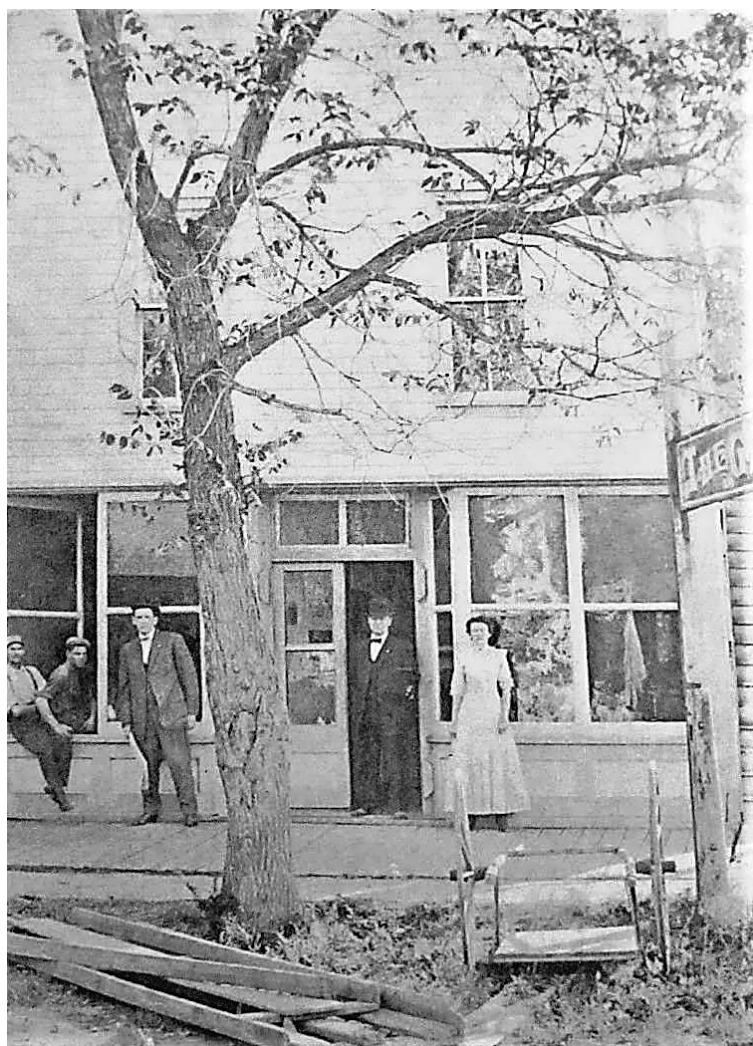
Mr. Kurtz, editor of the Southern Kansas Gazette, never missing an opportunity to extol the Augusta area's virtues, wrote, "From a dozen to twenty 'Prairie Schooners' pass through our city daily. Many of the people locate in this county. If any of the dissatisfied denizens

of the Eastern States wish good paying farms, here is where they can be found." Charles served on the City Council and was the Mayor of Augusta in 1880, serving 3 terms in that capacity. In addition, he was appointed Postmaster in 1881.

The Southern Kansas Gazette published an 8 column 4-page newspaper every week, selling it for \$1-\$1.50 per year, provided insight into the merchants and businesses of 1880. The newspaper had a circulation of 675 papers. Augusta was booming and businesses were placing advertisements in the newspapers. Augusta boasted a bank, 2 attorneys, 4 blacksmith shops, a broom factory, builders, contractors, and carpenters. We had mills and grocers, drug stores, clothing stores, hardware stores and hotels.

In 1879 Mr. Albin repented and returned to establish the newspaper. The Republican was next owned and edited by Will Cady, and became known as the Augusta Journal in 1892. It was published in a building which was located on the southwest corner of 6th and State Streets. Mr. Cady had 2-3 employees and the newspaper consisted of local and farm news. Mr. Cady was one of Augusta's pioneer school teachers. He was the superintendent of the Lincoln School which was located where the current Middle School is located. Mr. Cady lived on Broadway until 1940 when he died in a home fire.

The Augusta Gazette was the next newspaper to come into existence. It was published



The Augusta Gazette building in October 1910.

by Timothy Sexton and O. J. Bradfield. The next editor to take over was Bern Hagler. Chester and Bertha Shore, brother and sister, purchased the newspaper in 1945. Chester joined the military during WWII and Bertha continued to work for the newspaper until 1963.

In 1963 Daniel Zerbe purchased "The Augusta Gazette" and on February 1, 1974 it

celebrated its 81st birthday. At that time, the newspaper employed 17 people.

*Author's note: This is a compilation of information from our archives as well as a research paper written by Deb Hizey, between 1973-79, while a student of Miss Jeanette McDaniel, Augusta High School Methods of Research English class.*

## Reflection

Fr. John P. Lanzrath, Pastor St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church

Thirty years ago, I had the great privilege of living and studying in Rome, Italy at the Gregorian University. One of the blessings of the two years that I lived there was being asked to serve as a spiritual director for young women who were discerning a religious calling to join the Missionaries of Charity, the religious community founded by Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Four different times, I met and visited with this incredible woman of faith. Mother Teresa often said that there were two types of hunger in the world: physical hunger and spiritual hunger.

She said that physical hunger can be lessened when you give a hungry person food to eat. But spiritual hunger is a much more deeply seated type of hunger. Mother Teresa said that the greatest symptom of spiritual hunger in the world in which we live today is loneliness. Ask yourself this question, "When I am lonely, what do I do to ease the pain of the loneliness?" For some people, when they are lonely, they drink alcohol; others choose food; some people gamble; others go shopping and buy things

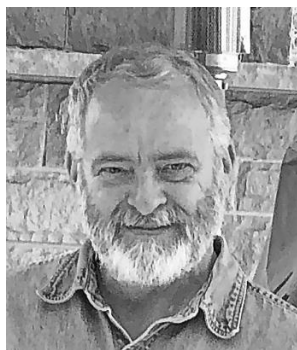
that they really don't need; some people search internet chat rooms; others play video games or spend time searching social media sites; some search adult websites. What do you do when you are lonely?

As a priest, I meet many people who suffer from loneliness and isolation. Loneliness is not restricted to a specific age group. In Sacred Scripture, we read in the Book of Genesis, "It is not good for the man to be alone." (Genesis 2:18). God created us and He knows that we are created to live in community and that we thrive on companionship and connection with others. Our God lives in a relationship of Three Divine Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This relationship of the life of God is rooted in love and this is what Jesus teaches us as the two great commandments – to love God with our heart, soul and mind and to love our neighbor as we love our very self. Eating food satiates physical hunger. What satiates spiritual hunger? Relationships with others.

Do you know someone who is lonely? Maybe it is a relative, neighbor or co-worker. Perhaps it is you. Know that God loves you and waits for you to come to Him.

## IS GOD DEAD?

# Evolution's Morality



Ty B. Kerley

On more than one occasion, I have made the passing comment that "the Darwinist has no answer to . . ." this or that phenomenon. For instance, we have said that the Darwinist has no answer for the irreducible complexity of particular biological systems in nature. Recall that an irreducibly complex system could not have come into existence through the slow step-by-step process of evolution because the system is not functional until all the components are in place.

More recently, we have said that Darwinists seem to have no answer to how humans "evolved" self-consciousness from simple atoms found in the human brain. But these are rather general statements to provide evidence that "the Darwinist has no answer for . . ." We could say the same when it comes to morality and the universal moral obligations pending upon all human beings. The same statement could be recycled: The Darwinist has no answer for how morality evolved in human beings. However, the statement demands a better answer than that because the Darwinist does put forward an answer to the morality question that deserves consideration.

Darwinists and evolutionary theorists in general suggest that man can know what is "good" and can be "good" without grounding it in God. Reproductive success, it is claimed, depends upon more than one individual dominating another for survival, but "group selection" requires individuals to work together for the good of the entire group. Throughout millions of years of human evolution, moral norms have been selected for the good of the group, they say. The poet Alfred Lord Tennyson, however, coined the phrase that nature is "red in tooth and claw," meaning that the nature of nature is at its core self-serving and singularly focused upon survival. Writer Doug Groothuis points out that one need not look very far to see the fallen and brokenness in humanity that cannot help but continually kill one another, be it through "war, racism, slavery, female subordination, planned famine (Stalin), genocide, and lots more nastiness and cruelty." Not only nature but mankind itself is "red in tooth and claw." It would seem that nature, including human nature, is a poor candidate as the source of a universal moral standard. In short, people are not objectively good enough to set their own moral standards. Groothuis writes, "Nature cannot yield a moral standard because nature is nothing more than 'the collection of physical things and processes' and has no 'normative properties' regarding vice, virtue, and moral obligation.

Atheist Richard Dawkins is direct and honest in his

assessment: "In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you will not find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. Dawkins, a Darwinist, freely admits that evolution has no answer to where universal moral obligations come from. And yet, a universal moral standard does exist. In truth, the evolutionists have a three-fold problem. First, nature displays a vast array of biologically derived possibilities, making no ultimate standard for deciding what behaviors and values ought to be preserved and handed down. In historical evolutionary processes, who got to decide what was a moral good? What moral traits are worth keeping? According to whom?"

Second, if nature sets moral standards, then moral standards would be contingent upon the culture or the environment. Darwin himself recognized this writing: "If . . . men were reared under precisely the same conditions as bee-hives, there can hardly be a doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their daughters: and no one would think of interfering." But once again, moral obligations are standard across cultures and environments because they are based upon a universal moral standard: there are absolute truths that are true for all people in all places in all times. Third, evolutionists suggest that moral obligations are evolutionary

by-products that reside as "instincts" within human beings. But this cannot be true either because, as Groothuis writes, "if we make moral decisions based upon instinct, we are left with an unreliable faculty of moral judgments, since our instincts are in conflict." This takes us back to Tennyson and nature (and mankind), "red in tooth and claw." Christians understand this state of the world to be Fallen in that things are not as they ought to be, nor as they were in the original perfection of Paradise. Since the Fall of nature and mankind, no element or aspect of creation (or man himself) can bear the burden of producing moral standards to which man is instinctively and universally bound. Therefore, it seems to me that the common moral obligations pending upon all human beings have a Higher source, a Divine source. Perhaps the same source who created everything that exists. Perhaps the same source that has written the moral law on each man's heart. Join us again next week as we look with "Expectancy" to the return to the original perfection. Until then, step outside on a clear night and look up; is God dead?

*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*  
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