FOUNDATION AND PROGRESS OF THE MIAMI COUNTY SENTINEL.

The Peru Forester was commenced July 22, 1838, by Sam. Pike and Abijah W. Baker, and this paper was succeeded by *The Peru Gazette*—James B. Scott and Augustus Banks, publishers.

On the 16th of April, 1842, the paper commenced to run, one-half its matter devoted to the interest of the Democratic party, and the other half to the interests of the Whig party—the name of the paper having been changed to *The Peru Gazette and Democrat*—J. B. & J. H. Scott, publishers. This double-barreled or McFingal's-gun arrangement did not appear satisfactory to either party, and the experiment died in October of the same year it was undertaken.

The Cockscrow followed. It was short chiefly devoted to humor—the ostensible editors running the paper under the *nom de plume* of "Nehemiah," "Hezekiah," and "Obadiah"—the real parties being David Douglas, James B. Scott and John A. Graham. *The Cockscrow* ran a few months, when "Nehemiah" (David Douglas) emerged from the timber and assumed proprietorship. He battled with adverse gales about six months and then tossed *The Cockscrow*

——"To the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale."

The Peru Observer followed, and the first issue here date June 8, 1844—James B. Scott, editor and proprietor. Mr. Scott was not altogether successful. There were few laborers and the harvest was not plentiful. He shook the dust from his feet, and departed for Delphi, where, twenty-seven years ago, he bought material and established *The Journal*, which paper he yet controls, and has planted it on solid foundations. But his *Peru Observer* was suspended June 28, 1845. Scott, however, remained here until after Graham established the *Sentinel*, and was associated with the latter for a time. Sam Pike's old press would not rest, and the *Peru Herald*, a Democratic newspaper, succeeded the *Observer*, John H. Scott being at the helm, and the first number of the *Herald* made its advent November 28, 1846. Died from starvation May 30, 1848.

Now, after after all these multifarious changes and mishaps—the press and types being nominally owned by James B. Scott, and covered by Sheriff's liens, and idle—Hon. J. A. Graham, one day, upon the street, met Mr. Scott, and, on the spur of the moment, offered to buy of him the old Sam Pike press, relieve the liens that rested upon the materials, pay him a balance, and revive the newspaper business at Peru. A few minutes of street conversation decided the matter, and Mr. Graham, through the mechanical aid afforded him by Mr. Scott, had brushed the cobwebs and dust from the cases, cleaned up and oiled the hand press, and on the 26th of June, 1848, Mr. Graham issued the first number of the *Miami County Sentinel*.

The Sentinel and all its predecessors, be it remembered, had, up to the time Mr. Graham bought the material, been printed on the same press and type used by Sam. Pike and Abijah W. Baker, when they established *The Peru Forester*.

In June, 1850, Mr. Graham bought an entirely new office, with the exception of a press, which yet did good work. In looking over his files, from this date forward, one cannot but admire the mechanical taste exhibited in the general appearance and "make up" of the *Miami County Sentinel*, as a thing of typographical beauty. There is no journal in the State of Indiana, to-day, that, in this respect, will compare with *The Sentinel* at that time; and as any State or National fair, it would, to-day, take the premium over any newspaper ever published in this country, except the old *New Yorker*, Horace Greeley's first paper. Indeed, all the old newspapers above mentioned, from *The Forester* to *The Sentinel*, were better executed, mechanically, than any newspaper of this day. During Mr. Graham's editorial life, he established a daily, but the experiment was not successful. It was the first undertaken, and several subsequent efforts have been made, but all have failed. Mr. Graham published the paper until August 16, 1861. He was not, unfortunately, a practical printer. He learned how to fold the papers, and to "roll the forms," and "play the devil" generally about the office, but regarding the details of the business he was ignorant. He understood quite well, however, when work suited him, and he dictated all the details. But in those days good printers were scarce—in truth, they are not abundant, even now—and discovering that Graham had they are not abundant, even now—and discovering that Graham had not passed through a regular apprenticeship, they sought to take advantage of him, and undertook to "boss" the whole business themselves, and so, one evening, his patience utterly exhausted, he announced to his reasons and astonished printers, that the last number of the *Miami County Sentinel* under his administration had been published, and he settled their accounts and closed the office as abruptly as he had opened it.

Judge Wilson B. Laughridge, an old friend of the present editor of this paper, became proprietor of the *Sentinel* after Mr. Graham retired, and afterward sold a half interest to Mr. J. C. Foley, retaining the other half himself. A year or so later, he sold a quarter interest to H. B. Jamieson, Esq., of Rochester, and Isaiah Conner, of the same place. One J. A. Miller then purchased the fourth interest of the Rochester parties, and ran a brief and uneventful career of six months, as a partner of J. A. Nancy, who had purchased the interest of J. C. Foley. Then the paper was conducted four months by W. S. Ewing and J. A. Nancy, lessees and proprietors, when the present owner took charge.

The Daily and Weekly Times, which had been started by T. J. McDowell & Son, in November, 1874, was consolidated with the *Sentinel*, under the name of *The Times-Sentinel*, by Nancy & McDowell, and ran this way about a year, when the firm dissolved, each party retaining his paper and its name, with this exception, that McDowell made a compound of the title, using the name of the *Sentinel* in connection with his *Times*.

The Miami County Sentinel was conducted by Ewing & Nancy as a Democratic paper until within a few weeks.

Recurring to several of those named in the foregoing, it may be proper here to state that, during the periods, especially when Mr. Graham and Mr. Laughridge had editorial management of this journal, *The Miami County Sentinel* was a power in the State, and exercised, probably, as potent an influence among its contemporaries and aided as much in moulding the public opinion of Indiana as the newspapers published at the State capital or elsewhere.

The first editors, Sam Pike and Abijah W. Baker, were "characters." They were both nomadic in their habits. Pike, especially in early life, had a sort of mania for hovering upon the confines of civilization. White people were coming in too rapidly. Miami County had gathered a white population of nearly 3,000—about one-half the resident number of souls in Peru to-day. This threatened increasing immigrational, around Mr. Pike, and he "pulled up," and sought a location in the (then) Territory of Iowa, where he established one or two papers, but, finally, having a surfeit of backwoods life, he returned to Kentucky, his native State, and was editor of papers at several points, and then crossed the river into Ohio and edited papers at Circleville, Pickaway County; Hillsboro and Lexington, Highland County; Piketon, Pike County, and other places, and again returned to Kentucky, where he passed several years in managing newspapers, and during the late civil war returned to Highland County, Ohio, and re-purchased his old journal, *The Hillsboro Gazette*. During the time he was publishing the *Gazette*, a patent right man, the patentee or owner of an invention that produced a good imitation of oil-cloth made of paper, came along, and Mr. Pike, tempted with the idea of a speedy fortune, bought the right for the State of Ohio, and sold out his paper, and engaged in disposing of this patent. His expectations were not realized, and he again returned to his old business, and established a Democratic newspaper at Akron, Summit County, where he died about ten years ago. Notwithstanding his migratory habits, which would have placed the nose of any other man upon the grindstone, he always managed, though most of his life poor, to pay his debts, and when he would return to any of his old stamping grounds, he would have troops of friends to greet and welcome him. It was said of him that he was once a Baptist clergyman, and that he would often put in his Sundays preaching, and give his attention to the newspaper week days.

Baker was a man of considerable ability, and well educated. He was a close student, studied medicine and attended lectures, and qualified himself for practice. He was pronounced, by medical men of distinction, as well qualified, but he disliked the practice, threw his diplomas aside, and filled out the number of his days either as a journeyman printer or editor of a newspaper.

Their brief experience in Peru was during the early lives of both Pike and Baker, and they left no sign here, except that the mechanical appearance of the old *Forester* was highly creditable—the establishment then being entirely new.

It may be proper, before this is considered, to note that, next to William S. Lingle, of the *Lafayette Courier*, the one who, to-day, assumes charge of the *Miami County Sentinel* is the oldest editor in *continuous service* of any in the Wabash Valley—having conducted the *Huntington Democrat* during an uninterrupted period of nineteen consecutive years, wanting three months. Next in order of seniority comes James B. Scott, of the Delphi *Journal*, and following him is our old and immediate cotemporary, Alex. W. DeLong, of the Huntington *Indiana Herald*. Then in order would follow our good neighbor, A. P. Perry, of the Wabash *Plain Dealer*.

We have thus given as accurate a history of the origin and vicissitudes of the *Miami County Sentinel* as was attainable, and the brief references made to other old journalists on the Wabash seemed proper in this connection.