



St. Louis, Mo.

The *Missouri Democrat* was an anti-slavery newspaper that was fanatically opposed to any compromise over slavery. They advocated for using force to maintain law and order, and to prevent secession. The editors of the *Missouri Republican* accused the *Missouri Democrat* of inciting civil war by opposing compromise and supporting the use of force. The editor of the secessionist *State Journal* called it, “a monstrous cancer on the body politic.”¹ President Lincoln reportedly said its support “was worth more to the North than ten regiments of soldiers.”²



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The *Missouri Republican* blamed the Republican Party for the slavery crisis, pressed hard for the North to compromise with the South, and was against the federal government using military force to keep the seceding states in the Union.

Having previously supported the Whig Party, the *Missouri Republican* was considered “the mouth-piece of the rich and the merchant class.”³ As Missouri was a slave state, it is not surprising the *Missouri Republican* and its supporters were pro-slavery, or that it supported the extension of slavery. But it was also critical of South Carolina for seceding rather than seeking a solution under the Constitution, and felt that secession was not in the best interest of Missouri. During the presidential election of 1860, it supported the Northern Democratic candidate Stephen A. Douglas, as he supported “popular sovereignty,” which allowed settlers to choose for or against slavery during their statehood application process. It opposed the Southern Democratic candidate, who received less than 20% of Missouri’s votes.

The *Missouri Democrat* called the *Missouri Republican* a “conditional secessionist” newspaper, saying that it was only for the Union if it got its way. The secessionist editor of the *Missouri State Journal* described the *Missouri Republican* as follows.

*This was a respectable paper and of great influence, but malignant and venomous against the institutions of the state. It was always singing the song of the “Union,” a silly and senseless song, always in the mouths of [Northern] tyrants. Who is not for the Union as it once existed; but we are all for disunion if we can’t get our rights. The Missouri Republican was careful always to publish everything denunciatory of the South, but nothing in their favor.*⁴

Franklin A. Dick, who worked with the Union Safety Committee, served on General Lyon’s staff, and carried messages to Lincoln, wrote the following about The *Missouri Republican* in a letter to the historian Benson J. Lossing in 1865.

*The Missouri Republican daily denounced us as outlaws, incendiaries for continuing to make war on the state; which consisted in arming to protect ourselves against the aggressions of Gov. Jackson. You ought to paint this wicked newspaper which has done us private injury in the West in its true colors.*⁵

¹ See (FLP: Ser 1MD-Feb#34).

² Jim Allee Hart, *A History of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 1961), p. 1.

³ Thomas L. Snead, *The Fight for Missouri: from the Election of Lincoln to the Death of Lyon* (New York, Scribner’s Sons, 1886), p. 45.

⁴ See (FLP: Ser 1MD-Feb#34).

⁵ Editor’s personal files.



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The *Evening News* supported the moderate third-party Constitutional Union Party candidate, John Bell, of Tennessee, for president in 1860. That party was basically for the status quo and ignored the political sensitive questions of the day. Bell was less than one-percentage away from winning in Missouri.

The *Evening News* was closely watched by all sides of the political spectrum, as it was an evening newspaper that was often first to report news arriving overnight from the South and East, and it often provided a more detailed report of events that had transpired the previous day across Missouri. While it was a pro-slavery newspaper and initially supported compromise, when it became clear that the cotton state secessionists were only paying lip-service to compromise and that Missouri could actually be drawn into a civil war by them, it switched its support to the Unconditional Unionist Ticket of the *Missouri Democrat*. This switch can be seen in the quote below from a February 10, 1861 article in the *Missouri Republican*.

It is always with a sad heart that one discovers treachery and falsehood in a quarter where one expected to find good faith and cooperation in a good cause. Therefore it is with feelings of profound regret that we now witness the desertion of the Evening News into the ranks of the Black Republicans. See (FLP: Ser 1MR-Feb#46).

The following two newspapers were eventually shut down on the orders of Gen. Nathaniel Lyon for "continually giving aid and comfort to those who are in active rebellion against the authority of the government of the United States."



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The *St. Louis Bulletin* "earnestly and zealously advocated for the South."⁶ It openly supported the secessionist Minute Men,⁷ who were openly preparing for war, and flew a secessionist flag over their headquarters in St. Louis. Its editor eventually served in the Confederate Army. In 1864, he resigned his army commission and became a member of the Confederate Congress.



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The *State Journal's* editor, J. W. Tucker, was the editor of a South Carolina newspaper before moving to Missouri in 1859 and becoming the editor of the openly secessionist *State Journal*. His paper was shut down on July 12, 1861, on the order of General Lyon, as a seditious newspaper. Tucker was eventually charged with treason, but while his trial was in progress, he fled St. Louis and joined Gov. Jackson's secessionist forces in the field. Afterward he became one of the editors of Jackson's state guard newspaper, the *Argus*. The order that shut the *State Journal* down stated the following.

The *Missouri State Journal*, a newspaper printed and published in the city of St. Louis, has given and is continually giving, aid and comfort to those who are in active rebellion against the authority of the government of the United States. It has not only encouraged them by its persistent appeals to the people to take up arms against that authority, but by its constant and continual publication of intelligence known to be false, respecting the troops of the United States, it has indirectly incited disaffected citizens to the commission of overt acts of treason. See (FLP: Ser 2PS-Jul#49).

⁶ See (FLP: Ser 1MD-Jan#22.3).

⁷ For information on the Minute Men, see (FLP: Ser 1MD-Jan#21.1).