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## (1) BIRDIES; (2) MEDITATION

*Hours of Chasing No. 1 vs. Moments of  
No. 2 as Builders of Good Circulation*

By EDGAR WHITE  
Macon (Mo.) Republican

SOME one has observed that ten minutes employed in serious meditation are better than many hours spent in jumping about for an elusive bird. For out of meditation comes the Idea!

When the Democrats of Missouri received an acceptance from a nominee for President of the United States to visit Bunceton and speak there, the chiefs in every large city newspaper office in the state laid plans to cover the event in harmony with its importance. The Democratic nominee for governor, lived on a farm near Bunceton, and he decided to have an old-fashioned barbecue on his estate in honor of the distinguished visitor.

"Good!" cried the big editors in St. Louis and Kansas City. "We'll play that up fine."

In truth it looked like a daily newspaper story exclusively. The best staff men would be sent to report it. With that old-fashioned barbecue, a candidate for president and for governor, to say nothing of a host of smaller fry—congressmen, state senators and the like—it looked like one whale of a story—not for the "little country weeklies."

BUNCETON, (Mo.) had a population of 860 at the last census. A quiet young fellow, Mack F. Denman by name, published the *Eagle* there. And Mack got to studying how he would make the eagles fly his way on the big day. He couldn't scoop the big city papers on the story. They'd have everything printed from the opening gun until the last crack from the retreating

line before the *Eagle* went to press. There was nothing for the weekly to do, it seemed, but to stand on the sideline while the big procession went by. But the man who published a paper in a town of 860 and had over 3,000 circulation at \$2 a year in town and surrounding country looked at it from a different angle.



MACK F. DENMAN  
Editor, Bunceton (Mo.) Eagle;  
Weekly, 3,000-\$2 Circulation in  
a Town of 860

"The first thing that occurred to me was that as far as I was concerned it would have to be a *circulation* proposition," Mack told the editors and publishers at a Northeast Missouri press convention at Kirksville, "and I began to figure on the possibilities. While there would be people from all over the state, the great bulk of those attending would be from our own county of Cooper and adjoining counties. That meant, most of the people there would be interested in the local news the *Eagle* printed, and particularly to its frequent references to the candidate for governor, who was a Bunceton man.

"Then I considered that all the visitors would have money in their pockets. What would be the most likely amount to hit them for? The paper is \$2 a year. Three months for 50 cents would, I judged, be about the size coin the people would part with without much haggling. The three months would carry them through the campaign and during that time it would be up to me to make the *Eagle* so interesting they would stay with us.

A PICKED staff of 40 bright young men and women was employed to circulate among the big crowd. Each one was armed with a bundle of sample copies, containing some features of the big meeting and pictures of the celebrities taking part. The line of talk for the solicitors was simple:

"The *Eagle* will keep in touch with (candidate for governor) all through the campaign—only 50 cents."

"The *Eagle* had a tent at a prominent place on the grounds. The pleasant young women were in charge. They handed out sample copies, recorded subscriptions and answered questions concerning the barbecue. They also took care of bags, traveling cases and so on without charge.

"One woman left her baby there for an hour, and when she came it was handed back to her smiling. Our motto that day was to make everybody happy.