

This Year Marks The 190th Anniversary Of N. Carolina Press

James Davis, First State Printer, Opened Shop in New Bern in 1749; Remarkable Strides Made in the Last Three-quarters of a Century by Newspapers and Printing Presses

By GERTRUDE S. CARRAWAY

With the remarkable strides made by newspapers and printing presses in North Carolina in the last three quarters of a century, it is interesting to note that this year marks the 190th anniversary of the press in this state.

For, on June 24, 1749, James Davis went to New Bern from Virginia as the first printer in the province, through invitation and subsidy of the General Assembly. During the first week of July, 1751, he started the first newspaper in North Carolina. In the same year he printed the first book ever published in this province, Swann's "Revisal of the Laws of the Province."

Before the arrival of Davis, citizens of the colony read little. Cape Fear planters sometimes saw the South Carolina Gazette, and other North Carolinians often read the Virginia Gazette, still published at Williamsburg as the South's oldest paper.

After long consideration and discussion, the General Assembly in 1749 passed an act encouraging the establishment of a printing press. Davis accepted the bid to leave Virginia and come to North Carolina. New Bern was selected for his headquarters. It was then the capital of the three chief towns, New Bern, Wilmington, and Edenton, having about 500 or 600 inhabitants.

Upon establishment of his printing press at New Bern, Davis first printed money for the province and the journals of the Assembly meetings of 1749 and 1750. A second edition of his first book, Swann's Revisal of the Laws, came out in 1752, and because of its tannish leather binding was called "The Yellow Jacket."

Old Issue Found

The earliest issue of his first

weekly newspaper now extant is dated November 15, 1751, and is listed as No. 15 of the publication. This was discovered only a few years ago in the binding of an old book of county court minutes in Tyrrell county. Previously it had been believed that Davis' paper was first issued in later years.

On the first page of the old paper is this announcement:

"With the Freshest Advices, Foreign and Domestic. All persons may be supplied with this paper, at Four Shillings, Proclamation Money, per Quarter, by James Davis at the Printing Office at New Bern; where all Manner of Printing Work and Book-Binding is done reasonable. Advertisements of a modern length are inserted for Three Shillings in the first week, and for Two Shillings for every Week after."

Probably not having paid expenses during the 10 years, the paper was suspended in 1761. On June 1, 1764, it was revived by Davis under a longer name, "The North Carolina Magazine, or Universal Intelligencer." For an unknown time it appeared on a demisheet in quarto pages. Judge Francis Xavier Martin, later an editor and historian before becoming Attorney-General and Chief Justice in Louisiana, wrote of the "jejune and vapid papers, filled with long extracts from the works of theological writers or selections from the British magazines."

In 1768 Davis revived his Gazette for a decade, suspending it again when his son was drafted in the Continental army.

First Pamphlet

The first book or pamphlet known to have been compiled by a North Carolinian and printed in the colony was published on Davis' press in 1753—"Collections

Veteran



H. C. Graham, assistant treasurer and a member of the board of directors of the Chatham Manufacturing Company, who has been with the company for 26 years, starting in the shipping department. Mr. Graham is also in charge of general bookkeeping. He is among the oldest employees in point of service.

of Christian Experiences," by the Rev. Clement Hall.

Davis was appointed by Benjamin Franklin as postmaster at New Bern in 1775. The next October the Assembly authorized the first post, to be run every 11 days between Suffolk and Wilmington. For 100 pounds, six shillings and eight pence, proclamation money, Davis was engaged for this work.

For 32 years he served as public printer, though his career was by no means smooth. Only scant support came from his fellow citizens. Little news of local interest was printed in his sheets. In 1769 his house was destroyed by a severe storm, his printing office was demolished, his type was buried in sand, and all his money and papers were lost.

Charges of neglect of public duty were brought against him by Royal Governor Arthur Dobbs and others. Andrew Steuart, a Scot of Philadelphia, was brought to North Carolina and appointed by Dobbs as "His Majesty's Printer."

Davis Reappointed

A dispute arose, however, between the Governor and the As-

GRAHAM WITH CO. 26 YEARS

Assistant Secretary and Director Began Here in Shipping Department.

OWNS HIS HOME HERE

H. C. Graham, assistant secretary and in charge of the general bookkeeping department of the Chatham Manufacturing company, is another member of the mill personnel who has had many years of service with the company.

With Chatham 26 years, Mr. Graham first started in the shipping department, later being transferred to the bookkeeping department as assistant to Mason Lillard, who at that time was general bookkeeper. He later succeeded Mr. Lillard in this position.

When he began work with the company, Mr. Graham was with the Elkin plant, but in 1924 he was transferred to Winston-Salem. However, although working in that city, he has maintained his home here.

In addition to his other duties, Mr. Graham has been a member of the board of directors of the company for the past 18 or 20 years.

In point of service, he is numbered among the oldest employees, starting in at about the same time as did W. A. Neaves, now vice-president and general superintendent, and A. L. Butler, vice-president and secretary.

Prior to becoming connected with the Chatham company, Mr. Graham was with the accounting department of the Old Dominion Steamship Co., of New York.

The House denounced the action of the Governor, voted 100 pounds to Steuart for his trouble in coming unnecessarily to the section, and then reappointed Davis as public printer.

From 1778 to 1783, during the Revolutionary period, there was no newspaper in North Carolina. At different times, however, there are believed to have been four presses in operation in North Carolina during that era: one at New Bern, one in Halifax, another with the army of Lord

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WELCOME Chatham Employees!

We Take This Means of Telling You We're Glad to Have You Make This Community Your Home and Hope You May Find Only Happiness and Contentment!

TO OFFICIALS OF THE CHATHAM MANUFACTURING COMPANY WE EXTEND CONGRATULATIONS UPON THE COMPLETION OF THE NEW PLANT.

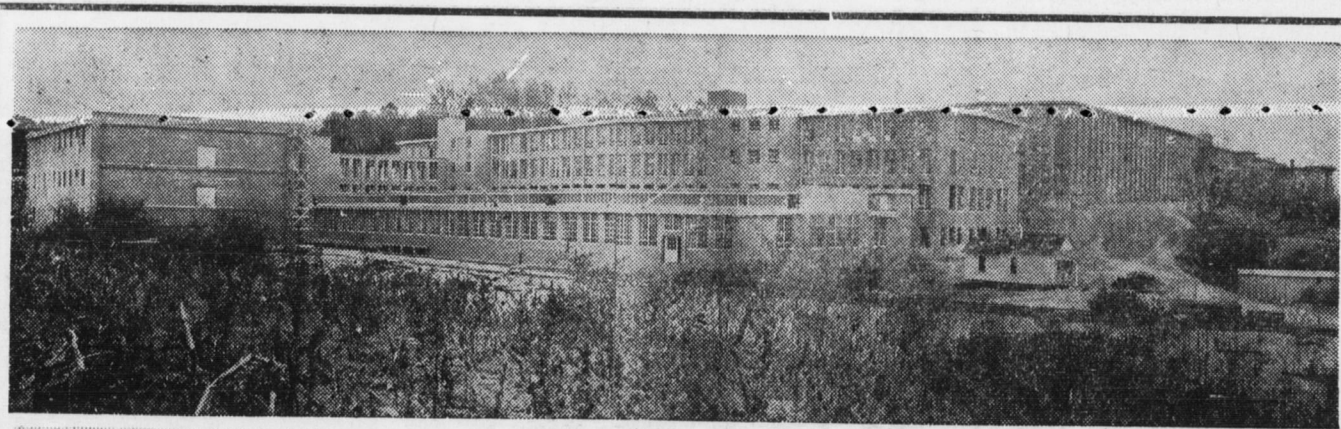
SEE US FOR EXPERT AUTO REPAIRING WASHING - POLISHING - GREASING

REECE & BAKER

EAST MAIN STREET NEAR NEW BRIDGE

Ed Reece

Harvey Baker



WE EXTEND
Congratulations
TO THE
CHATHAM
Manufacturing Co.

AS BUILDING CONTRACTORS, WE'RE PROUD OF THE PART WE'VE PLAYED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW ADDITION TO THE ELKIN PLANT!

The Chatham Manufacturing Company is to be congratulated upon the completion of its new finishing and shipping department.

This Company has continued to forge ahead through the years, and we feel proud that we have played a large part in the construction of the buildings that have been found necessary as progress demanded.

To the Chatham Manufacturing Company we express our hope that the years may bring good business and continued expansion. To its employees we express every good wish for happiness and prosperity.

FRANK L. BLUM COMPANY

BUILDING CONTRACTORS

WINSTON-SALEM, N. C.