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ADDRESS,

ON THE HISTORY OF JOURNALISM IN NORTH CAROLINA,

Delivered Before the Press Association, at Winston, on the 21st Day of June, 1881,

BY W. W. HOLDEN.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, and Gentlemen of the North Carolina Press Association:

I learned, with equal surprise and gratification, that I had been chosen to deliver this address; surprise, because I have not the honor to belong to your body, and have been for nearly ten years out of the editorial harness; gratification, that so distinguished an honor should have been conferred on me. In this case certainly, "the office has sought the man, and not the man the office."

I have approached the duty of preparing this paper with hesitation and anxiety, since the task of writing the history of journalism in North Carolina is one which no man can adequately perform; and since also I have to follow the distinguished editors, yourself, (Mr. Battle,) in 1878; Mr. Cameron, in 1879, and Col. R. B. Creecy, in 1880, who were the selected speakers for those occasions.

We learn from Martin's history of North Carolina that printing was introduced into this State in 1749, by James Davis, from Virginia, who set up a press in Newbern. His paper was a small weekly, and was called the North Carolina *Gazette*. His paper continued six years. On the 27th of May, 1768, its publication was resumed, and continued until the revolutionary war.

The second press was by Andrew Stewart, Printer to the King, at Wilmington, in 1763, called the Cape Fear *Gazette* and Wilmington *Advertiser*. This paper ceased in 1767. In 1767 Stewart's paper was succeded by Adam Boyd's *Mercury*, which ceased during the revolutionary war.

The first revisal made in this State of the laws was printed by James Davis, Newbern, State Printer, in 1752. From the color of the leather with which it was bound, it was called the "yellow jacket."

In 1776 newspapers were printed at Newbern, Wilmington, Halifax, Edenton and Hillsborough. Had copies of these papers, says Wheeler, been preserved in the State archives, the history of that period would have been much better known than it is. In 1812 papers were printed at Raleigh, Newbern, Wilmington, Edenton, Tarborough, Murfreesborough, Fayetteville and Warrenton, but there was no paper west of Raleigh. Gov. Swain, writing in the University *Magazine*, February, 1861, says:

"We possess copies in a pretty good state of preservation of all the acts of the General Assembly, passed and printed during the revolution. The pamphlet containing the laws of October session, 1779, consists of 34 pages, 16 small folio, the remainder in quarto. The continued scarcity of paper in 1781 compelled the public printer to adopt a similar arrangement. Even writing paper was not always at the command of men in high official station."

He adds that he had thought that the earliest paper mill established in the State was by Gotlieb Shober, at Salem, in 1789, but he offers proof that there was a paper mill at Hillsboro, in 1778.

There were four printing offices in operation during the revolutionary war, one at Newbern, another at Halifax, a third attached to the army of Cornwallis, and a fourth in the army of Gen. Greene.

I have in my possession a bound file of the North Carolina *Chronicle* or Fayetteville *Gazette*, printed in 1790. It is a very small weekly, six by seven inches. It was printed by George Roulstone, for John Sibley & Co., at Franklin's Head, in Greene street, Fayetteville, at "three hard dollars per annum." Like all the papers of that period, and indeed of the early part of the present century, this paper contained little editorial, but is made up of foreign and domestic news, advertisements, legislative and congressional proceedings, and the like.

Probably two of the most remarkable and useful men who ever lived in this State were Francis Xavier Martin, a native of France, and Joseph Gales, Sen., a native of England.

Mr. Martin was born in France in 1764, and died in New Orleans in 1846. He settled in Newbern in 1786, and for a while taught the French langnage. He learned printing, established a newspaper, and published school books, almanacs and translations of French works. In 1789 he was admitted to the bar, of which he soon became a leading member. He prepared and published treaties on the duties of sheriffs and other officers, made a digest of the laws of the State, and reported the decisions of the Conference Courts, all the while pursuing his avocation as a printer.

He was appointed by Mr. Madison a Judge of the Federal Court for Mississippi Territory, was transferred thence to the Federal bench in New Orleans, and afterwards served thirty-two years on the Supreme Court bench of Louisiana. By engrafting certain principles of the common law upon the system of civil law, then in use in that State, and by his rare knowledge of the law generally, he acquired the title of Father of the Jurisprudence of Louisiana. He received the degree of Doctor of Laws from Harvard college and Nashville University. He was worth one million dollars at his death. His labors in North Carolina as printer, editor, collator, reporter, essayist, and the variety of books and pamphlets which he published, cannot be overestimated in their importance and value.

Mr. Martin was a favorite with Mr. Gaston and the leading families of Newbern, and was universally esteemed. It was related of him that while he kept bachelor's hall in his small house and printing office, he gave a party, to which he invited all his friends. And they came, filling his house, his office, his dining room, the up stairs, the front yard, the back yard, until overwhelmed with their kindness, he went to Mr. Gaston, rubbing his hands together as was his wont, and exclaimed, "Mr. Gaston, yat ab[illegible] Mr. Gaston dey all come!" Mr. Gaston believed the little big-hearted man whom all the people loved, by requesting the family living opposite to him to open their palatial mansion to his guests. The request was graciously complied with, and Xavier's party was a happy one, and for a long time the talk of the town.

Joseph Gales, Sen., was originally a printer and a bookseller at Sheffield, England, where he founded and published the Sheffield *Register*. He was born in 1760, and died in Raleigh August 24, 1841. As the editor of the *Register* he warmly espoused the cause of liberty. The principles of the French revolution were convulsing Europe, and Mr. Gales, probably with more zeal than prudence, was so outspoken in his support of these principles that he was in danger of arrest and imprisonment by the British government. Whereupon, in 1794, he left England with his family and came to the United States in 1795, having spent some months on his way, at Hamburg, Germany. After residing four years in Philadelphia, during which he carried on the printing business, he was induced by Mr. Macon and other friends to transfer his establishment to Raleigh, where, on the 22nd of October, 1799, he established the Raleigh *Register*.

I have in my possession the first volume of this paper, running two years from the first number inclusive. I also have a copy of the *Sheffield Iris*, formerly the *Register*, with the motto from Cowper, adopted by both papers:

"Ours are the plans of fair delightful peace,
Unwarped by party rage, to live like brothers."

Mr. Gales was succeeded in Sheffield by James Montgomery, the poet, who had been reared in his family, and this copy of the *Iris* bears his imprint.

The influence of the Raleigh *Register* in the hands of Joseph Gales, and under the conduct of his son, Weston R. Gales, and of his grandson, Seaton Gales, was potent in shaping the politics and character of our State. The *Register* was always on the side of law, order and good morals. Like the *Intelligencer*, at Washington, established by his eldest son, Joseph Gales, Jr., and conducted for so many years by Gales & Seaton, the latter one of the sons-in-law of Joseph Gales, Senior, the *Register* did not teem with editorials, especially while in the hands of the Senior Gales. The seniors among us will recollect that the *Intelligencer* spoke to the country not oftener than once a week, but when it did speak, in support of or in defence of its principles, it was with such fullness, discrimination and power, that the whole country was moved and impressed.

Edward J. Hale, Sen., Esq., who was reared as a printer in the *Register* office, and was a member many years of Mr. Gales' family, in a recent letter to me says:

"The feeling in regard to editorials in that day was well expressed by that eminent lawyer, Peter Browne, who complimented me for good sense, half a score of years later, in giving the news and eschewing editorials."

I am sure I will be pardoned for making further extracts from Mr. Hale's letter. He says:

"Mr. Gales was a man of untiring industry. Besides editing the *Register*, he kept all his accounts, made out bills, gave receipts and conducted a book store. He was also a director in a bank, secretary of nearly every benevolent society in the city, member of one of the State boards, &c. His accomplishment as a short hand writer was of great advantage to him in all these occupations. * * * He was never idle. When not occupied by company, of which there was a great deal at his house, attracted by his own reputation for sound sense, and by the hospitality of his brilliant wife and accomplished daughters, his evenings were devoted to writing and reading. He was a man of few words. His wife, on the contrary, was a great conversationalist. * * * When I entered the *Register* office in 1812, Mr. Seaton, who had married Mr. Gales's second daughter, was associated with him as editor. Mr. Gales, Senior, being the whole or part owner of the *Intelligencer*, at Washington, edited by Joseph Gales, Jr., transferred to Mr. Seaton a half interest in that paper, and he removed to Washington in 1812. The whole world knows how eminent the *Intelligencer* became under the conduct of Gales and Seaton."

The editors of the *Intelligencer* enjoyed the personal friendship, and were the social peers of such men as Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Webster, Clay, Jackson and Randolph. They reported alternately the debates in Congress, for which they received a salary of one thousand dollars per annum. Mr. Seaton reported a number of the speeches of Mr. Randolph, and Mr. Gales reported the great speech of Mr. Webster in reply to Mr. Hayne, on Foote's resolutions.

Time and space would fail me, should I attempt to sketch at length the lives of Weston R. Gales and Seaton Gales. They were graduates of our University, men of letters and learning, largely gifted with genius, orators and forcible and graceful writers. The dust of the grandfather, and his son and grandson sleeps in Raleigh cemetery; and the remembrance of their useful and spotless public lives, and of their numerous private virtues, is very dear to all our people.

It would require a volume to do justice to the character of Joseph Gales, Senior, and to the beneficent influences which have resulted from his life and labors. These influences still operate. His example lives and should be imitated by all our young men, especially by the younger members of our profession.

The Hillsborough *Recorder* was founded by Dennis Heartt, in 1820, and was conducted by him, assisted by one of his sons for a time, until 1869, when he disposed of it to Mr. Evans, of the *Chronicle*. It is now in the hands of a worthy successor, John D. Cameron, Esq., associated with Mr. Webb, and is known as the Durham *Recorder*. Dennis Heartt was born in Connecticut in 1783, and died at Hillsborough 13th May, 1870.

In Mr. Heartt's day the double pull Ramage press was used, with buckskin balls for inking the form. Printing was executed under many difficulties. Types were costly and were used from ten to fourteen years. The forms were sometimes underlaid with damp paper to bring out the impression. Mr. Heartt engraved the head of his paper, and with leaden cuts of various kinds illustrated his articles and advertisements. He made his own composing sticks of walnut wood, lined with brass. They were good sticks, and I remember to this day the sound made by the types as they were dropped by the left thumb into their places. The latest news from China was printed once in three months; and Northern news, brought to Hillsborough by the tri-weekly stage coach, was condensed and printed once a week. How slowly, in comparison with the present, did the world move at that day.

Mr. Heartt was a good scholar, and wrote well, but he seldom presented his readers with a column of editorial in any issue. He was a man of refined taste, and his selections were, therefore, excellent. His integrity in all respects was perfect. No consideration could have induced him to abandon or compromise his principles, or to do wrong knowingly. I was a member of his family as one of his apprentices for six or seven years, and I knew him thoroughly. There were many features in his character and conduct which I could not then understand, but in reviewing the past I have since seen him in a true light, and I declare in this presence that the best man in all respects whom I have ever known was my old master and teacher, Dennis Heartt.

His son and associate, Edwin A.

SEE FOURTH PAGE.

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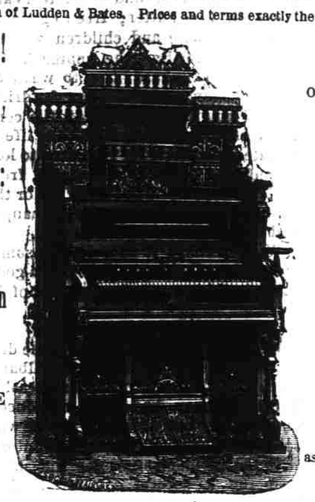

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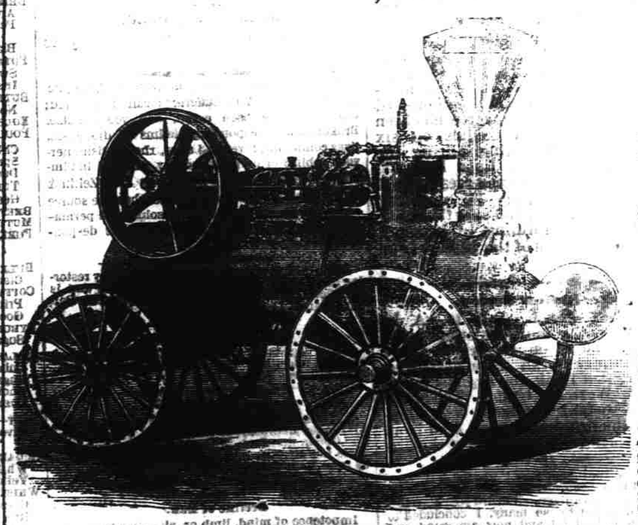

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