

Rutherford's First Newspaper Was Published 100 Years Ago

First Issue of North Carolina Spectator and Western Advertiser Printed February 19, 1830—Brief Sketch of a Century of Newspaper History.

By CLARENCE GRIFFIN.

(Note:—The information contained in the following article has been gathered from a large number of sources, and through many interviews with individuals, over a period of several years. A list of these references would occupy a great amount of space, and for practical purposes are omitted here.)

One hundred years ago next week the first newspaper published in Rutherford county came from the press. This was the North Carolina Spectator and Western Advertiser, which was published at Rutherfordton and dated Friday, February 19, 1830. This newspaper was one of sixteen being published in the state at that time, and was published farther west than any other newspaper.

N. C. Spectator and Western Advertiser.

This paper was five columns, 4 pages, 13x20 inches. The make-up of this paper, in contents, was almost uniform each week, as follows: first page, first column, and if necessary second column; advertising, agriculture; second page: news from Congress and state legislature or political matter; third page, editorial and few local notes, general intelligence comprising notes from other states and from state papers, and one or more columns of advertising. Fourth page: poetry, literature and occasionally a few ads. Practically all advertising, of whatever nature, was single column, in form of readers. Few illustrations were used. Occasionally a "runaway negro" or "Taken Up Negro" ad carried a cut of a negro with a stick and satchel.

Some of the ads in the first few months issues were those of Martin Beam, of the Rutherfordton Hat Factory; Maurice McCarthy & Co., Boot and Shoe Manufactory.

The first column of the first page of each issue carried the following masthead: "Published every Friday morning by Roswell Elmer, Jr. Terms of subscription \$2.50 per annum, if paid in advance; or \$3.00 if paid within the year;—but if delayed after the close of the year, 25 cents will be added. No paper will be discontinued until all arrearages are paid, or at the discretion of the publisher. Advertisements inserted on the usual terms. All persons advertising will please note the number of times they wish to have them inserted or they will be continued and taxed accordingly."

As no other paper was published in Western North Carolina, the Spectator carried legal advertisements and court notices from Rutherford, Macon, Buncombe, McDowell and

Lincoln counties, and frequently from other counties.

Roswell Elmer, Jr.

The editor, Roswell Elmer, Jr., was a northern man of Whig principles. Little is known of him, other than he was well educated, a man of talent and ability, and well qualified for the work at hand. His paper was well edited and compared favorably with the best in the state. Elmer edited and published the Spectator about six years. On March 21, 1835, he carried an advertisement under the masthead in which he pictured, in glowing terms, the fine field and the bright outlook of the Spectator, and advised that he would like to sell, or lease the plant to some printer, as he was about to relinquish the work for another pursuit. In the same advertisement he gave an inventory of the shop's equipment. From this inventory may be gathered the fact that the shop was one of the best equipped in North Carolina.

Carolina Gazette.

Shortly afterwards Gray Bunyan either purchased or leased the shop and began the publication of the Carolina Gazette. Little is known about the editor of this paper.

In the year 1836 there were only 22 other papers in North Carolina, and the number increased to a total of only 31 by 1840. One authority says "In a period when approximately 30 per cent of the adult white population of North Carolina was illiterate and the state was characterized by a considerable degree of economic lethargy, social stagnation and political apathy, too much must not be expected of journalists within the state. While North Carolina had several forceful newspapers between 1835 and 1861, most of the papers were under the editorship of men of mediocre ability who divided their attention between the inconsistencies of the 'opposition press' and the inconsiderateness of delinquent subscribers who made the calling of journalism a perilous economic undertaking."

The only copy of the North Carolina Gazette examined by the writer was the issue of the first week in October, 1836. This issue did not compare favorably with its predecessor, The Spectator. The principal item of news in that issue was in reference to the formation of Cleveland county and is as follows:

Formation of Cleveland.

"A numerous assemblage of the citizens of the lower part of Rutherford county and the upper part of Lincoln county convened at the dwelling house of Teator Beam on Thursday, September 22nd, for the purpose of consulting together upon the expediency of petitioning to the next General Assembly for redress of their grievances so long endured by reason of the extent of territory composing the two counties and the consequent remoteness from their respective court houses, whereupon the meeting was organized by appointing George Cabiness, Esq., chairman and William Roberts secretary. On the motion of Dr. W. J. T. Miller, a committee of six from each county was appointed to take the subject into consideration, to wit: John Niell, James S. Oates, John Roberts, Robert Falls, Joshua Beam and William Graham on the part of Lincoln county, Samuel Bailey, Yancey Reisendine, Thomas Roberts, Isaac I. Irvine, George Cabiness and William Covington for the county of Rutherford, who reported that the secretary prepare a petition to be presented to the citizens of said counties for their signatures and that the same be laid before the ensuing General Assembly praying that a new county be established, beginning on the South Carolina line at a point so that a line due north will strike the mouth of second Broad River, thence a direct line to Burke line so as to pass near the cross roads at John Smith's and thence by Seretzie's, thence with the Burke line to the Lincoln line,

thence to the South Carolina line running near Thomas Black's, Isaac White's, William Cloteese's on Crowder Creek, thence with the South Carolina line to the beginning. Which reports being unanimously concurred in, the proceedings were ordered to be published in the "Carolina Gazette" and the "Lincoln Transcript" for the space of thirty days."

"GEORGE CABINESS, Chairman
"William Roberts, Secretary."
Oct. 6, 1836."

The make-up of this paper was characteristic of all other state weeklies prior to the War Between the States. Local news items were a small factor in their pages. Agriculture, foreign news, art, poetry, and clippings from other newspapers composed the major portion of the reading matter.

Western Star of Liberty.

The Carolina Gazette was published until 1840. Thomas W. Young took charge of the plant about April, 1840, by purchase and changed the name to "The Western Star of Liberty". Mr. Young said in his prospectus in the issue of May 19, 1840:

"The undersigned having assumed the entire control of the Western Star of Liberty, (Formerly known by the title of Carolina Gazette,) deems it necessary in issuing a prospectus to the public to state the rules and principles by which he shall be governed and guided, in as short and precise manner as possible.

"With respect to those in power we are perfectly aware that they are those who cannot, or will not administer the Government agreeable to the general welfare of the country. For an illustration of this look at the manner in which our government has been administered for the past ten years. Once we were a happy people, enjoying all the comforts and privileges which a free and independent people could boast of. But now fraud and corruption stalks in open day light spreading a deadly blight over the virtue and interest of our people. Our pecuniary resources and agricultural interests deranged, and "crippled in the most tender point."

"We shall be governed by the principles taught by our forefathers, as we are perfectly convinced of the truth of Republicanism as understood by the founders of our government "practised by Washington and Madison" with a heart and hand ever ready, we will exert our influence to its farthest, unlimited extent, to prevent the union of the purse and sword, to preserve the integrity of the laws and the rights of the states. To diminish the patronage of the Executive, which now has become so powerful and disastrous, as to bear irresistible upon the freedom of the press and of the elective franchise. Also for a strict accountability of public officers, and a diminution of the extravagant and unprofitable expenditures of the Government. Consequently we are bitterly opposed to the re-election of the present incumbent.

"We will give our friendly support to the cause of agriculture, which has been so much overlooked by the public journals of the day. We will also give a prominent place to the cause of Literature, and our best efforts to the prosperity of Christianity.

"We expect shortly to issue our journal in a new form and dress as soon as we can procure a new supply of type. The terms of The Star will be as here mentioned.

THOMAS W. YOUNG,
Editor and proprietor.

Terms of Publication.

"The Western Star of Liberty will be published every Tuesday at Two Dollars and Fifty Cents, in advance, or Three Dollars if payment is delayed till the expiration of three months.

"No paper will be discontinued until all arrearages are paid, unless at the discretion of the editor.

"Subscriptions received for one year, and failure to notify the editor to discontinue at the end of the year will be considered as new engagements.

"Persons by furnishing four new subscribers to The Star will be entitled to a paper gratis for one year. "Terms of Advertising—Advertise-

ments will be conspicuously and correctly inserted, at \$1.00 per square for the first insertion and 25 cents for each continuance. Court orders and Judicial advertisements will be charged 25 per cent higher. Persons who desire to engage by the year will be accommodated by a reasonable deduction from the above charges for transient custom.

"All communications MUST be postpaid."

The author has had the privilege of examining one copy of this paper, that of May 19, 1840. Three of its four pages are filled with political news and advertisements of candidates for public offices. "The Western Star of Liberty" was a Whig newspaper, and the second page is devoted entirely to the campaign of William Henry Harrison for president of the United States. The political sentiment is very bitter. An editorial on "The voice of the people"—the Injured People," another on the Virginia elections which state "that the bonds of party power have been burst asunder and Virginia stands forth in all her original democratic purities."

Those interested in the "cause of agriculture" were obliged to search for information on this subject on the last page where but two articles were found, one on "The Bee Moth" and an elaborate "Agricultural Analysis."

Three long poems under the heading of "Literature" shows that this subject fared a little better than did agriculture. All in all local news was conspicuous by its complete absence from this paper. Not a single local adorned its four pages of five columns each.

Appearing in the advertisements in this issue of the Western Star of Liberty are a number of names yet familiar in Rutherford county, or who took a large part in the active affairs of the county. Among them was William Wilkins, who was clerk of court and carried a legal ad. John H. Wilkins, W. B. Rutherford and R. G. Twitty carried a small ad. A card signed "Many Voters" endorsed John G. Bynum for the Senate and Dr. W. J. T. Miller, Wm. E. Mills and Col. Thomas Jefferson for the house of commons in the approaching election. While others announced that they were authorized to place the name of J. H. Alley, Jr., as candidate for sheriff of the county.

The Republican.

It is not known how long the Western Star of Liberty survived—possibly about three years. The next paper published in the county was "The Republican," which came on the scene about 1843 or 1844. It was edited by James M. Webb, a grandfather of Hon. J. L. Webb, at present a superior court judge in this state.

Mr. Webb was clerk of the superior court of Rutherford county from 1833 to 1849.

The Republican was superseded by "The Mountain Banner," which had a long and tumultuous history. The first issue was probably published June 22nd, 1848. Thomas A. Hayden was the publisher and was assisted by Frank I. Wilson. Mr. Hayden was a native of Florida and was about 42 years of age when he began editing the Mountain Banner.

Mountain Banner.

The prospectus of the Mountain Banner, dated June 22nd, 1848 states that "no pains will be spared to give general satisfaction by presenting such a variety of news that everyone may be able to find something to suit his own peculiar taste". It will be the aim of the editors to render this journal a welcome visitor not only to the politician, the merchant and farmer, but to all professions; and above all to the family fireside. Besides the current news of the day its columns will embrace tales, sketches, essays, poetry, wit, humor, etc. Mindful of the old adage that "persuasion is better than force" its political matter will be calm and dispassionate, aiming rather to inculcate its doctrines by reason and truth than by violence and ultra-partisan rage. Terms two dollars per year, in advance, or if paid within three months; two dollars and fifty cents within six months and three dollars at the end of the year."

In an issue dated December 20, 1848 an advertisement of the Rutherfordton Male academy was carried. Mr. F. I. Wilson was principal of this academy and Dr. John McEntyre was president of the board of trustees. Wiley and Carrier announced the opening of a carriage factory; R. G. Twitty advertised a track of land for sale on the Hickory Nut Road, also ten shares of stock in the Hickory Nut Turn and ten like-

ly negroes. The editor states that he will receive in payment for subscriptions: "Wood, corn, fodder, shucks, corn cobs, horses, donkeys, calves, sheep, coons, 'possums, hogs, geese, turkeys, chickens, eggs, butter, green hides, cotton, cotton seed, gold silver, bank bills, or any kind of produce."

This paper carried some political news, but local items were a scarcity.

Frank I. Wilson.

In 1852 Mr. Hayden sold the paper to Frank I. Wilson, his associate. Mr. Wilson was a native of Caswell county and a lawyer by profession. He later moved the paper to Salisbury and published the "Republican Banner." (At a still later period it was removed to Rutherfordton and published again under the name of "The Mountain Banner," for three or four years until it was burned.) In 1854 Wilson was employed by W. W. Holden as associate editor of the Raleigh Standard. He was a man of attractive personality, good business ability, and well educated. He remained with the Standard five years.

During this same period there was apparently another newspaper being published in Rutherfordton. Mr. H. L. Carpenter has in his possession receipts for The North Carolina Star. One is signed by Thomas J. Lemay for the North Carolina Star from February 1, 1851 to July 1, 1853, issued on August 28, 1854. Another receipt, issued same date, for William C. Doull, is for the Star from July 1, 1853 to July 1, 1854. This shows that Doull evidently took over control of the Star from Lemay on or about July 1, 1853. How long this paper was published after 1854 is unknown.

The Western Eagle.

In 1855 C. H. Chapin, a Northern school master and L. P. Erwin established the "Western Eagle." As the war came on Mr. Chapin sold his interest to Mr. Erwin and left Rutherfordton. Mr. Erwin in turn sold the paper to A. J. Gilkey. This paper was published by him until about 1858 and discontinued. About the same date the "Inquirer" was established with R. W. Logan publisher and L. P. Erwin editor.

The Enquirer.

A receipt in possession of the writer reads as follows: "Mr. Wm. L. Griffin, to L. P. Erwin, Dr. for The Rutherford Enquirer, Vol 3, No. 1 to Vol. 3, No. 29, \$1.25, Received Payment, L. P. Erwin, Prop. Aug. 4, 1860."

According to the receipt the Rutherford Enquirer must have been established about January 1858. This paper was discontinued sometime during 1860. Mr. Erwin was associated with Col. C. T. N. Davis in raising a company of volunteers in Rutherfordton for service in The War Between the States. He was made lieutenant of this company, which was afterwards designated as Company G., 16th Regiment. He left Rutherford with this company in June 1861, and it is presumed that after his going away the paper was suspended. Mr. Erwin was promoted to Captain in 1862 and in 1864 was made major of the Junior Reserves.

The War Period.

During the war period, 1860 to 1866 no papers were published in Rutherfordton except a few copies of "The Mountain Banner" which was revived by Thomas Hayden. Also a few copies of the Rutherford Press printed in 1861, editor unknown.

New Policies.

Following the War Between the States a change was seen in practically all of the newspapers in the state, in their makeup, change of policy and improvement of the code of ethics.

In the early days the weekly newspaper had more influence among its readers than the metropolitan daily had at a much later date. Its columns were eagerly scanned by an interested constituency and its statements usually went unchallenged. Without quick mail facilities or telephones the newspapers of the first half of the nineteenth century were an unpretentious institution, but comparatively of immense power. An examination of the political relations existing between the newspapers before the War Between the States reveals some cordiality and much acrimonious controversy. The papers copied material from one another freely, commended their brethren of the type for good services rendered the party, and welcomed new papers into the field. Still, the relations between the Democratic papers were not always congenial. The controversies between Whig and Democratic papers were continuous.

(Continued Next Week.)



**NEW
delight in
Cheese flavor**

Still another Kraft-Phenix triumph! New digestible, health qualities and delicious new flavor added to cheese.

In Velveeta all the valuable properties of rich milk are retained. Milk sugar, calcium and minerals. Good for everyone, including the children.

Velveeta spreads, slices, or melts and toasts instantly. Try a half pound package today.

**KRAFT
Velveeta**
The Delicious New Cheese Food



**SAME PRESCRIPTION
HE WROTE IN 1892**

When Dr. Caldwell started to practice medicine, back in 1875, the needs for a laxative were not as great as today. People lived normal lives, ate plain, wholesome food, and got plenty of fresh air. But even that early there were drastic physics and purges for the relief of constipation which Dr. Caldwell did not believe were good for human beings.

The prescription for constipation that he used early in his practice, and which he put in drug stores in 1892 under the name of Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin, is a liquid vegetable remedy, intended for women, children and elderly people, and they need just such a mild, safe bowel stimulant.

This prescription has proven its worth and is now the largest selling liquid laxative. It has won the confidence of people who needed it to get relief from headaches, biliousness, flatulence, indigestion, loss of appetite and sleep, bad breath, dyspepsia, colds, fevers. At your druggist, or write "Syrup Pepsin," Dept. BB, Monticello, Illinois, for free trial bottle.



**New Warmth in
BLANKETS**

Wool blankets soil easily. The delicate fibers that catch the dust quickly mat together. The fabric when it loses its freshness, loses much of its warmth. We wash your blankets in pure soft water, dry them in currents of warm air, and return them to you soft and fluffy with one hundred per cent of their warming power restored. You know how heavy they are to do at home. The Laundry does them best.

**Rutherford County
Laundry**
Forest City, N. C.



THERE is nothing that has ever taken the place of Bayer Aspirin as an antidote for pain. Safe, or physicians wouldn't use it, and endorse its use by others. Sure, or several million users would have turned to something else. But get real Bayer Aspirin (at any drugstore) with Bayer on the box, and the word genuine printed in red.



Aspirin is the trade mark of Bayer Manufacture of Monaceticacidester of Salicylicacid