

ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS

WEST END MACHINE WORKS

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HIGH POINT, N. C.

Newspaper Ads A Century Ago

By ROBERT H. BARTHOLOMEW

Chapel Hill.—Many of the present-day newspaper readers get as much pleasure from reading the advertisements as they do from the news or sports sections of the papers. If today's readers had a chance to read the advertisements that ran in the North Carolina newspapers of a century ago, they would find them not only amusing but highly educational.

Newspaper advertising not only shows what people want to buy and sell but it gives a clear picture of the general economic and social conditions of the period.

A survey made of several North Carolina papers, dated 1849, shows that the advertising profession has made great progress from a technical standpoint and that the advertisers of today have also changed their products and services as well as the method of offering them to the public.

No Full-Page Spreads

The first thing that one notices about the advertising of a century ago is that there are no full-page spreads. Most ads are confined to a column and are from two to three inches deep. A two-column ad 10 inches deep was rarely ever found, but a few patent medicine firms did use this much space.

Practically all advertisements were set in the same size type with which the news matter was printed. They generally had a heading with regular news-size type. Photographs were not used but an occasional drawing of a product might be shown.

Many of the ads were for products and services that have become obsolete for years. Some of the papers carried advertising for lotteries, the first prize being \$40,000. Tickets for this lottery sold for \$10.

There were also reward notices for fugitive slaves. Such rewards ranged from \$5 to \$100, depending on the value of the slave.

Steamship Lines

A century ago, steamship lines were operating on the Cape Fear river between Fayetteville and Wilmington. Passage for one way was advertised for \$3 and freight rates also were quoted. There was also a steamship line that was advertising out of Wilmington for passengers for a "direct trip to California."

Several advertisers listed carriages and other types of horse-drawn vehicles. One firm offered a new type shower bath that would wash the body but would not wet the head of the bather. An ice company offered to ship ice from Wilmington to customers along the Cape Fear and pointed out that it would be "carefully packed and promptly forwarded."

Officers of the law also ran ads a century ago. One North Carolina sheriff advertised for an escaped counterfeiter who had been manufacturing North Carolina bank bills. When the counterfeiter es-

aped, he also stole his counterfeit bills back from the sheriff.

Front Page Advertising

Many of the papers carried advertising on the front page which is a custom that is followed today in some parts of the world. The front page of many of the papers were usually divided between advertising matter and news matter.

Good businessmen of a century ago acted just as they do today. When a great crowd of visitors was expected to be in town, they ran ads for the benefit of the visitors. One merchant in Raleigh was looking forward to the meeting of the Legislature and ran the following advertisement:

"Should the gentlemen of the approaching Legislature want any good old Liquors, we will be pleased to furnish them. Jugs, Decanters, and Tumblers also loaned."

Patent medicine advertising took more space in the papers than any other product. Prices on such medicines ranged from 10 cents to \$3 per bottle. These products were supposed to cure anything from an ingrown toenail to the most serious diseases known to the medical profession. Nearly all of them were guaranteed to give satisfaction. One such guarantee ran as follows:

"I will guarantee my medicine to relieve pain in two or three hours and will cure in two or three days. At all druggists, 25 cents a vial."

Prices Were Low
The present high cost of living would make the merchant of a cen-

tury ago look like a fairy god-mother. Flour sold for two cents per pound, lard for seven cents a pound. Twenty-five cents would buy two pounds of bacon, and a dollar would buy 200 pounds of white potatoes. Molasses was 25 cents a gallon, and salt pork went begging at five cents a pound.

The whiskey dealer of a century ago was as active in advertising as he is today. Corn whiskey was advertised at 25 cents a gallon, apple brandy for 35 cents a gallon and peach brandy for 40 cents.

Educational institutes of 1849 also saw the benefits to be had from advertising. Among the many that used the columns of the North Carolina papers was the Catawba Institute. The ads informed the public that the school charged a dollar a month for tuition for students studying the three R's, and up to \$2.40 a month for those studying Greek and Latin. Parents of prospective students were further assured that "Boarding can be had in respectable families including room rent, candles, washing, and fuel from \$5 to \$6 per month."

The State of North Carolina has made much progress in all fields in the last 100 years. It is easy for any newspaper reader to see that the gentlemen of the press who handle advertising have not been left behind.—Charlotte Observer.

"The difference between a prejudice and a conviction is that you can explain a conviction without getting mad."

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THOMASVILLE, N. C.

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Kivett Electric Co.

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING

Telephone 325

Asheboro, N. C.

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The Concord Telephone Co.

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CHINA GROVE
MAIN OFFICE: CONCORD, N. C.

The Albemarle Telephone Co.

EXCHANGES AT

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MAIN OFFICE: ALBEMARLE, N. C.

Anniversary Greetings

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