



George Roulston
1767 - 1804

GEORGE RALSTONE
FIRST NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER IN TENNESSEE
FIRST POSTMASTER IN TENNESSEE

Contributed by:
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Upper Cumberland Researcher
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Information derived from Dr. J. W. Bowen's Account of the People of Smith County from the first Organization of the County.

George Raulstone came to Rogersville in Hawkins Co., TN and established, what is believed to be the first Newspaper in the State of Tennessee, under the patronage of **Gov. William Blount**. Blount was Governor of the Territory South of the Ohio River. The intentions were to locate the Newspaper at the seat of the territorial government, which at that time was Knoxville. Due to the dangerous proximity of the Indians at that time Blount was afraid to go to Knoxville and therefore stopped at Rogersville, for a time at least. Besides Knoxville at that time was not legally established as a town. In September 1794 the legislative Council and the general assembly of the territory, in its first session, established the town of Knoxville. The printing office had probably been moved to Knoxville in the early part of that year.

The first members of the Knoxville Gazette, and the first newspaper published in the territory of the State of Tennessee was published November 5th, 1791 at Rogersville. It was called the Knoxville Gazette because it had been intended to locate at that place. As soon as it was safe to do so the office was moved to Knoxville.

The first session of the territorial legislature of the territory of the United States South of the Ohio River, composed of a legislative Council commissioned by the President, and a House of Representatives elected by the people of the countries not in Knoxville on the 25th day of August, 1794. **George Roulstone** was elected Clerk of the Legislative Council, and as his was the only printing office in the territory, the necessary inference is that he did or had done whatever printing was required. Before leaving Rogersville he had established routes and hired carriers to deliver his paper and other intelligence in advance of the establishment of post offices in the Territory by the United States Government. And, when the Post Office Department did establish post offices in the Territory he was the first to be appointed Post Master. So, that he was not only the pioneer printer and publisher of a newspaper in the State of Tennessee, but the first Post Master also.

George Roulstone died 10 August 1804. The Knoxville Gazette dated 15 August 1804 contained the announcement of his death, with the assurance that its publication would not be suspended, but would be continued by his executors for the benefit of his widow and heirs. **Mrs. Roulstone** was elected to succeed her husband as Public Printer. Mrs. Raulstone ran a boarding house as a means of supporting herself and her children.

Colonel William Moore, a soldier of the Revolutionary War, was in the Legislature as a Representative from Sumner County in the year George Raulstone died. It is believed he boarded at her house. He was reelected a member of the session 1805-1806, and probably boarded with her again.

In the process of time, probably during the session of the Legislature last mentioned, she and Colonel Moore intermarried. By his marriage with her, by the then existing laws, he became possessed in his own right of whatever interest she had in the Knoxville Gazette newspaper and office, as well as her. Whether he became guardian of her minor children or not is not known to the writer. The publication of the paper was continued at Knoxville, however, **till 1807, when he sold it and the office to a man named Lyon**, who brought them to Carthage, and changing the name from Knoxville Gazette to Carthage Gazette, in 1807 commenced the publication of a newspaper of that name, and that was the first newspaper published in Carthage, Tennessee.

In 1809 **Colonel Moore** and his family moved from Knoxville and came to Carthage. In the meantime Lyon had failed to pay anything for the printing office, and Moore by some publication of the Carthage Gazette for several years, when **his step-son James W. (or G.)** continued to publish it till about 1829. **James Roulstone** sold it to **John W. Ford**, who had learned the printer's trade in the office at Carthage, and he took it first to Sparta and from thence to McMinnville, where he published a paper for many years.

Raulsten, John II

b. ca. 1684, Boston, Suffolk, MA

d. ca. 1744, KY

s/o John I & Mary (Mercy) Raulsten

md ca. 1715, **Dorothy Nicholson** - b. ca. 1687 - d. ca. 1721

...**William Raulsten** - b. ca. 1708 - d. ca. 1767 - **md** 1741,

Botetort Co., VA, **Eleanor ?**

...Mercy Roulston - b. ca. 1710 - d. ca. 1711

...John Roulston - b. ca. 1712 - d. ca. 1775 -
md Ruth Everden - b. ca. 1717 - d. ca. 1758

...John Roulston - b. ca. 1740 - d. ca. 1803

...Thomas Roulston -

...George Roulston - b. ca. 1744 - d. ca. 1781 - md Mary Stevens

...**George Roulston** - b. ca. 1767 - d. 10 August 1804 - md Elizabeth Gilliam

Their children were: James G. Roulston & Elizabeth (Roulston) Beckwith George Roulston, publisher of the Knoxville Gazette, the first newspaper West of the Alleghenies, and also Knoxville's first Postmaster, Tennessee's first public printer, one of the first trustees of Blount College (University of Tennessee), clerk of the Southeast Territory and clerk of the first General Assembly of Tennessee. He codified, compiled and printed the Laws of the State of Tennessee in 1802. This book is generally referred to as "Roulston's Laws" and is considered the first book published in the state. Source: The Raulston Family by J. Leonard Raulston - 1970.

...Mary Roulston

*See Chapter: 4 - <http://www.ajlambert.com>

Source: Smith County Historical and Genealogical Society: Quarterly Newsletter, Vol. 5, No. 4, Fall 1992.

Pgs. 145-147: Some Accounts of the People of Smith from the First Organization of the County by Dr. J. W. Bowen: Chapter XI.

There was but one court in Smith County till after the year 1806, which was the Court, or old English Court of Common Pleas and Quarter Sessions, modified so as to be adapted to our Republican form of government. It had civil Jurisdiction in all questions where the amount involved was over \$20.00, and criminal jurisdiction in all cases of petty larceny, and of all misdemeanors. There was another court in the State which was really a district court, which was denominated the Superior Court of Law and Equity. The State was divided into districts, and this court was held at one place in each of these, until 1806. All the territory West of the Cumberland Mountains constituted one district, - the District of Mero, and the Superior Court of Law and Equity for the district was held in Nashville. The Legislature in September of that year passé an act dividing Mero District, making two additional ones. One of these was composed of the counties of Smith, Jackson and Wilson, and it was denominated Winchester District in honor of General James Winchester of Sumner County. The act provided that the Superior Court of Law and Equity for Winchester District should be held in Carthage, beginning the first Mondays in October and April of each year. Besides having jurisdiction in all civil matters both in law and equity, this court had jurisdiction in all criminal cases except indictments or presentments for assault, battery or imprisonment, were required to be commenced in the County Court. In all cases the plaintiff or defendant had the right to appeal from the County Court elected by the Legislature, and held the office during good behavior, as all judges in

Tennessee did, until the amended constitution of 1834 went into effect. This arrangement of course remained till the year 1809. In November of that year a law was enacted, "To take effect after the first day of January, 1810" abolishing the Superior Court of Law and Equity, and establishing two other courts, a Circuit Court with original jurisdiction over all matter in law and equity, "also exclusive jurisdiction over all criminal causes", thus largely curtailing the jurisdiction of the County Court; and a Supreme Court of Errors and Appeals. The State was divided into five circuits of which the counties of Smith, Warren, Franklin, Sumner, White and Jackson composed the third.

The act provided the Circuit Court should hold two terms annually in each county. The fourth Mondays in March and September were fixed for their beginning in Smith County. The Supreme Court was required to hold one term annually at five different places in the State, and Carthage was one of the places, the Court to commence third Monday in June.

The taking of criminal jurisdiction from the county courts was strongly opposed by the Justice of the Peace and friends all over the state. Human nature in men was then, like it had been, like it is now, unwilling to yield power. There was such an opposition to that provision of the law exhibited that the next Legislature repealed it, and restored criminal jurisdiction to the county courts, and they retained it as long as it continued under its then existing form.

The holding of a court of so much importance as the Supreme Court was, especially in those days when there was such a vast amount of land litigation, in addition to the other courts common to all the counties, at Carthage, caused it to be a point where many of the ablest lawyers of the state often met. The local bar for the same reason was a strong one. This state of things made this period, which lasted fifteen years or twenty, the most prosperous in the history of the town.

The year 1807 is noted in the annals of Carthage as the date of the establishment of the first printing office and the publications of the first newspaper in the place. That printing office was a historic one, on account of its intimate connection with the early history of Tennessee. It was first located at Rogersville, in Hawkins County, brought there by **George Roulstone** under the patronage of William Blount, Governor of the territory of the United States South of the Ohio River. The intention was to locate it at the seat of the territorial government, but when Governor Blount decided to go to Knoxville, he feared to go there on account of the dangerous proximity of the Indians to that place, and therefore stopped at Rogersville for a time at least. Besides, Knoxville was not yet legally established as a town according to the practice of that day. Really this was not done till the legislative council and general assembly of the territory at its first session, in September, 1794 moved to that effect. The printing office however, had probably been moved from Rogersville to Knoxville in the early part of that year.

The first number of the Knoxville Gazette, and the first newspaper published in the territory which is now the State of Tennessee, was published the fifth day of November, 1791, at Rogersville. It was called the Knoxville Gazette, because, as has been stated, it was intended to locate it at that place, which intention was consummated as soon as it was safe to do so.

The first session of the territorial legislature of the territory of the United States South of the Ohio River, composed of a Legislative Council commissioned by the President, and a House of Representatives elected by the people of the counties, met in Knoxville on the 25th day of August, 1794. **George Roulstone** was elected Clerk of the Legislative Council, and as his was the only printing office in the territory, the necessary inference is that he did or had done whatever printing was required. Before leaving Rogersville, he had established routes and hired carriers to deliver his paper and other intelligence in advance of the establishment of post offices in the Territory by the United States Government. And, when the Post Office Department did establish post offices in the Territory, he was the first to be appointed Post Master. So, that he was not only the pioneer printer and publisher of a newspaper in the State of Tennessee, but the first Post Master also.

After going there about the date mentioned above, **Mr. Roulstone** continued to reside at Knoxville and publish the Knoxville Gazette there until his death which occurred 10th day of August, 1804, eight years after the territory of the United States South of the Ohio River had become the State of Tennessee. At the

time of his death he was a public printer. How long he occupied this position is unknown to the writer. It is probable, however, that he was the first public printer the State ever had.

Following the death of her husband in 1804, **Elizabeth Roulstone** was appointed by the State Legislature to succeed her husband as State Printer, thus becoming the first woman to hold public office in Tennessee. Through her state printing work, she met **William Moore, a disabled Revolutionary War veteran**, who was Smith County's Legislative Representative.

Elizabeth Roulstone Moore turned the paper over to her son, **James G. Roulstone** when he came of age. In 1824, **Robert C. Carruther's** became a partner with young Roulstone, changing the name of the paper to the **Tennessee Republican**. About 1828, Roulstone and Carruthers sold the papers to a **Mr. Ford**, who moved the paper from Smith County, which left the County without a newspaper. For a number of years, legal notices were published by Nashville newspapers.

*the above segment of information is from the research of Chris Baxter and Smith County historians, F. C. Key and Ervin Smith, Smith County History, pp. 27-28.

Source: Smith County Historical and Genealogical Society: Quarterly Newsletter, Vol. 5, No. 2, Springs 1993.

Pgs. 52 – 54: SMITH COUNTY HISTORY: Some Accounts of the People of Smith from the First Organization of the County by Dr. J. W. Bowen: Chapter XII.

A number of the Knoxville Gazette dated August 15th, 1804 lies before the writer. It contains the announcement of the death of its late proprietor, with the assurance that its publication won't be suspended on that account, but will be continued by his executors of the benefit of the widow and heirs.

The paper itself, browned with age as it is, is not only a curiosity as a relic of the olden time, and small beginnings of what is now a great growing commonwealth, but is valuable as an evidence of the progress of this wonderful nineteenth century. It is just fifteen inches long and four columns wide, and its price was three dollars per annum, subscribers paying postage, which was from fifty cents to eighty cents more, according to the distance they lived from the office of publication. What a contrast between that little sheet and the large 8-page weeklies now furnished at \$1.00 per annum postage free.

One of the well-remembered residents of Carthage, including the period from 1809 to 1835, was Colonel William Moore a soldier of the War of Independence, lame from a wound received in one knee in that contest. He was in the Legislature as a Representative from Sumner County in the year **George Roulstone died, and the writer thinks he boarded at his house**. He was re-elected a member of the session of 1805-6, and as **Mrs. Roulstone** continued to take boarders with her again. In the meantime she had been elected to succeed her husband as public printer.

In the process of time, probably during the session of the Legislature last mentioned, she and Col. William Moore intermarried. By his marriage with her, by the then existing laws, he became possessed in his own right of whatever interest she had in the Knoxville Gazette newspaper and office, as well as her. Whether he became guardian to her minor children or not is not known to the writer. The publication of the paper was continued at Knoxville, however, till 1807, when he sold it and the office to a man named James Lyon, who brought them to Carthage, and changing the name from Knoxville Gazette to Carthage Gazette, in that year commenced the publication of a newspaper of that name, and that was the first newspaper published in Carthage, and such its brief history before coming here. Thus, the old town settled in the wilderness, where the echo of the Indians' war whoop had just ceased to reverberate; a quarter of a century before there was a foot of railroad in the world, had a newspaper in the second year of its existence.

In 1809 Col. Moore and his family moved from Knoxville and came to Carthage. In the meantime Lyon had failed to pay anything for the printing office, and Moore, by some arrangement with him satisfactory, it

is supposed, to all parties, took it back. He continued the publication of the Carthage Gazette for several years, when his stepson **James W. Roulstone**, who in the meantime had attained his majority, came into possession of it and continued to publish it till about 1829. **J. W. Roulstone** sold it to John W. Ford, who had learned the printer's trade in the office at Carthage, and he took it first to Sparta and from there to McMinnville, where he published a paper for many years. Ford was a brother of C. C. Ford of Snow Creek.

Col. Moore built the house burned in the great fire a few years ago, that stood next to Mrs. McDonald's, and kept hotel there for a number of years. Mrs. Moore had a daughter born a few months after the death of her first husband and was therefore the posthumous daughter of **George Roulstone**. Her mother and step-father having died, she married James Beckwith a friend in the house occupied by them while living, keeping a popular hotel for a number of years. Mr. Beckwith came from New England and is remembered by a few of the oldest citizens of Carthage as having a wool roll manufactory there. About 1834 he moved to the Cumberland Mountain but finally settled in DeKalb County three miles West of Smithville where his widow still lives, past the age of fourscore years. He having been dead a quarter of a century or more. The fame of Mrs. Beckwith as the keeper of an old fashioned country inn, the superiority of her accommodations, and the excellency of her table, were subjects of universal commendation by all who knew her. Before the days of railroads, when people traveled by private conveyance, and mostly on horseback. Beckwith's was the goal everyone tried to reach by continuing his journey either in the night or stopping when the sun was high.

Mrs. Beckwith, in her prime, was a woman far above the ordinary, in her natural endowments and acquired intelligence. Always in a hotel from her earliest infancy, she knew almost everybody and their history, and was familiar with current as well as past events in the annuals of Tennessee. And, even, now, though her physical strength is broken by weight of years, and her sight is dimmed by age, she retains her intellectual vigor, and even her memory is wonderful for an octogenarian. For many a long years she has been a humble devout follower of the divine Jesus. A son of hers is present Chairman of the County Court of Smith County.*

This long, and maybe tiresome account of the first newspaper published in Carthage, leads to the reflection that for a town of its population and amount of business, it has a very creditable newspaper history. There have been but few short intervals since its first settlement when it was without a newspaper.

*Iraenus Beckwith

Now, when the population is not half what it was fifty years ago, and its business not one fourth, it has two newspapers, both bright and newsy, and especially deserving of patronage and commendation, because of the high moral tone they maintain. When the writer was in Carthage the first time, in 1833, a man named Sawyer lived there, and was publishing a paper called the "Farmers Advocate". After remaining a few years he sold out to a man named Spooner, and went away, it is not remembered where. Spooner remained a short time and he went, perhaps, where the "woodbine twineth". It was but a short while after till J. G. Fraizer was publishing a newspaper in Carthage. His was a political paper and intensely Whig. He remained in Carthage several years, during which time he was elected and served a term in the Legislature. He married the daughter of Jere Jamison, who was for a number of years a merchant in Carthage. He was Clerk of the supreme Court some years since the war, and now was Clerk of the Supreme Court some years since the war, and now resides on a farm in Wilson County. Frazier was succeeded by John Bransford, a newspaper publisher in Carthage, and he continued to within a short time of the beginning of the late war.

In the history of Carthage one's attention is arrested by the large number of hotels in proportion to its population for the first period of twenty-five or thirty years of that history. Two facts explain this. The holding of so many courts which brought numerous suitors, witnesses and attorneys was one of them. The other was the immense size geographically of the county. Many lived so far from the county seat that it required nearly a day's journey to reach it, thus compelling them to stay all night. Hotel bills were small, as the supplies for them were cheap. The woods abounded with game. Bears, deer, and other game were plentiful and easy to be obtained. The price of beef and pork were merely nominal. Grass in the summer and cane in the winter kept the cattle fat all the year round, as did the virgin soil producing it in abundance,

it was cheap. Hotel or tavern keepers could afford low prices for board. The fact is, at first, tavern or hotel prices were fixed by the court. Almost the first thing that was done by the first court of Smith County, after organizing, was to arrange a tariff for tavern charges. Here are some of them: Breakfast, dinner, super 25 cents, night's lodging 6 ¼, good whiskey or brandy, 12 ½ cents half pint, gallon of oats 12 ½, corn the same, bundle of fodder 2 cents. These are specimens of how the first settlers did some things.

*Mast refers to nuts such as beechnuts and acorns which fell from the trees onto the forest floor and were eaten by the hogs.

Source: Appendix

A CENTENNIAL DREAM

By Dr. R. L. C. White

(Nashville American, March 7, 1897)

Dropped Stitches in Tennessee History

By John Allison

Little Known Facts In the Earliest History of Tennessee

INTERPRETATION OF THE "DREAM"

(Nashville American, May 16, 1897.)

pp.137 – 150

Having spent an afternoon in wandering about the Centennial grounds, I had devoted the evening to Haywood Ramsey and other chronicles of early Tennessee History.

These two circumstances combined were doubtless the cause of a singular dream which I had that night. I thought that I stood in the Auditorium, and saw congregated within its walls many of the famous men and women of the past whose names are closely interwoven with the history of our state. They seemed to constitute a convention of some kind; and , although the assemblage had not yet been called to order, the chair had already been taken, very appropriately, by the illustrious patriot whom Andrew Jackson styled "the Father of Tennessee: (1), while the publisher of the first newspaper issued in the state (2) acted as secretary, assisted by the first "campaign paper" established west of the Alleghanies (4), and the editor of the first abolition paper issued in the south (5).

1. James Robertson.
2. **George Roulstone.**
3. James Gattys McGregor Ramsey.
4. Allen Anderson Hall.
5. Elihu Embree.

Source: Tennessee Newspaper Hall of Fame <http://www.cci.utk.edu/~jem/TNHF/Roulstone.html>

George Roulstone came to east Tennessee from his native Boston when he was 24 by way of North Carolina, where he had published two newspapers without much success.

Packing his printing press on horseback, he crossed the Smokies into the Tennessee valley and headed for Knoxville, the territorial capital. Indian trouble forced him to stop at Rogersville, where he printed the first issue of the *Knoxville Gazette* November 5, 1791. Eleven months later he moved to Knoxville, where he began publication of the *Gazette* October 6, 1792.

With no competition, a growing population, and aid from **Governor William Blount**, the *Gazette* prospered. It had subscribers within a 50-mile radius.

Some received it by a "modern" horseback circulation system **Roulstone** started in 1796.

Roulstone published other short-lived newspapers in Knoxville, but his successful role as publisher of the *Gazette* led to his prominence in city, territorial, and finally state affairs.

He was Knoxville's first postmaster, Tennessee's first public printer, one of the first trustees of Blount College, clerk of the Council of Territorial Legislature (later Tennessee), clerk of the Senate of the first General Assembly in Tennessee, and **compiler and printer of the "Laws of the State of Tennessee," generally referred to as "Roulstone's Laws" and considered to be the first book published in Tennessee.**

Roulstone died in 1804; he was only 36 years old.

Eighteenth-Century American Newspapers in the Library of Congress

TENNESSEE

KNOXVILLE

704. The Knoxville gazette. bi-w., Nov. 5, 1791-Aug. 1, 1796.

Note: This paper was first printed at Rogersville, a town about fifty miles from Knoxville; removed to Knoxville with the issue of Oct. 6, 1792, Knoxville having been laid out the preceding year. This was the first newspaper published in Tennessee. The last issue located is that of Aug. 1, 1796. Continued by the *Knoxville gazette, and weekly advertiser*, the first issue located of the new title being that of Nov. 7, 1796, no. 2.

Publisher: Nov. 5, 1791, George Roulstone and Robert Ferguson.
May 4, 1793, George Roulstone & co.
Feb. 27, 1795, George Roulstone.

L.C. file contains:

1793	June 1, 15 (mutilated).	Box 29, Fol. 30
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Eighteenth-Century American Newspapers in the Library of Congress

NORTH CAROLINA

FAYETTEVILLE

496. The North-Carolina chronicle, or, Fayetteville gazette. w., Jan. 1790-Mar. 7, 1791.

Note: Continuation of the *Fayetteville gazette*. Paged continuously. Ceased publication with the issue of Mar. 7, 1791.

Publisher: Jan. 1790, John Sibley and Caleb D. Howard.
Sept. 13, 1790, George Roulstone for John Sibley & co.
Oct. 11, 1790, Howard & Roulstone for John Sibley & co.

Size Varies: Jan.-Sept. 6, 1790, folio; Sept. 13, 1790-Mar. 7, 1791, quattro

L.C. file contains:

1790.	Sept. 13-Dec. 27.	1 v. photostat. V. 994
1790.	Jan. 3-Mar. 7.	1 v. photostat. V. 995

MICROFORMS		
1790-1791.	Feb. 1-Mar. 7.	(microfilm) #1930 ESR, NC Na-Reel 1

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**Trade Demonstration: Colonial Print Shop
Reservations required.**

Meet George Roulstone, an 18th century printer who set up the first print shop in Tennessee. Using the museum's reproduction of an 18th century hand printing press, this first-person interpretation takes students through the printing process and discusses how early settlers received news.

PUBLISHING

The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture

<http://160.36.208.47/FMPro?-db=tnencyc&-format=t detail.htm&-lay=web&entryid=P056&-find=>

In 1875 Mark Twain published "Journalism in Tennessee," a delightful sketch about his experiences as associate editor of a newspaper called the *Morning Glory and Johnson County War-Whoop*. He had come south, he said, to improve his health, but soon found dodging bullets, bricks, and the foul language of competitors and readers to be more than he had bargained for. "Tennessean [sic] journalism is too stirring for me," Twain concluded in announcing his intention to leave the state as quickly as possible.

Twain's fictional piece is an entertaining read, but the true story of publishing in Tennessee offers a better one. It is a story of diversity, one filled with memorable characters, many of whom rose to courageous heights in facing the hardships and challenges of their time. It is a story of commitment, one of important contributions to our society. It is a story that continues in our own day.

In 1791 George Roulstone and Robert Ferguson arrived in Rogersville in upper East Tennessee. The event is commemorated with a plaque behind the Hawkins County Courthouse. Bringing a printing press, type, and paper in a wagon, the experienced newspapermen came across the Appalachian Mountains from North Carolina to what was then the Southwest Territory at the invitation of Governor William Blount. Although they set up operation in a log cabin in Rogersville, the paper they founded and first issued on November 5, 1791, was called the *Knoxville Gazette*, since the move to Knoxville was already anticipated. In October 1792, as soon as the new town was laid out, the presses were moved by flatboat down the Holston River. It may well have been that the *Gazette* became the first newspaper in the United States named for a town not yet in existence at the time of the newspaper's founding.

Clearly, the *Gazette* served as spokesman for the Blount administration, and the governor richly rewarded Roulstone with political appointments. (Ferguson withdrew in 1793.) Roulstone became the first printer for the Territory, and later, for the State of Tennessee. He is remembered both for his contributions in wording the Tennessee state constitutional provision guaranteeing a free press and as the state's first book publisher.

When Roulstone died in 1804 at the age of thirty-six, his widow, Elizabeth, took over the *Gazette*, thereby laying claim to being the state's first woman newspaper editor and publisher. When she later married

William Moore, they moved to Carthage, in Smith County, and published that town's first newspaper, the *Carthage Gazette*.

Pressmen's Home, another monument to the importance of publishing in Tennessee, and the only community anywhere totally devoted to the printing craft, is located about a dozen miles from Rogersville. In ruins today and nearly forgotten after its abandonment in 1967, Pressmen's Home was headquarters for the 125,000-member International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union of North America for fifty-six years. George L. Berry of Rogersville headed the union from 1907 until his death in 1948. The location of the Pressmen's Home in the remote mountains of East Tennessee was due entirely to Berry's efforts. In its present decay, it is hard to envision Pressmen's Home in its glory years: 2,700 acres, a lavishly equipped four-story technical school (the largest of its kind in the world) in which 3,148 pressmen were trained in letterpress and newer offset printing, a sanatorium that for over forty-one years served more than 900 craftsmen suffering from tuberculosis, a luxury hotel that was open to the public, a chapel, living accommodations, union offices, recreational facilities, and its own post office.

Upper East Tennessee can make other historic publishing claims. Beginning as early as 1819, three of the nation's leading abolitionist journals, including the first, were published there, two in Jonesborough and the third in Greeneville. Elihu Embree, a Quaker and leading figure in the Tennessee Manumission Society, published the two antislavery journals in Jonesborough, beginning with a weekly called the *Manumission Intelligencer*, which first appeared in March 1819. Embree replaced the newspaper after one year with a monthly, the *Emancipator*, which he published until his death in December 1820. Shortly thereafter, in 1821, the Reverend Benjamin Lundy was encouraged by the Tennessee Manumission Society to bring his journal, the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, from Ohio to Greeneville, where he published it until moving to Baltimore in 1824.

Across the country today, journals published by and for Native Americans are commonplace, but perhaps few persons realize that the first of these newspapers had strong ties to East Tennessee. In reference to the *Cherokee Phoenix*, one scholar has pointed out that "Cherokee journalism . . . was the first journalism in the Chattanooga area." (1) The *Phoenix* appeared as a weekly in February 1828, not long after the abolition journals.

Although the *Phoenix* was published at New Echota, the Cherokee capital in North Georgia, it owed its existence to the work of Sequoyah, a Tennessean. Born in 1776 at the village of Tuskegee, near Fort Loudoun on the Little Tennessee River, Sequoyah invented the eighty-six-character Cherokee syllabary and taught his people to read. Working with Sequoyah, Dr. Samuel A. Worcester of Brainerd Mission near Ross's Landing (Chattanooga) developed the idea for a newspaper in the Cherokee language. Worcester then traveled to Boston to acquire a press and fonts of type in the Cherokee characters. Early issues were printed partly in English and partly in Cherokee, lending support to the argument that it was the nation's first bilingual newspaper.

In February 1829 the paper was renamed the *Cherokee Phoenix and Indians' Advocate*; regular publication continued into 1832, when Georgia authorities, upset with the journal's increasing militancy, seized it. Issues appeared irregularly for a few months thereafter; however, a plan to move the press to Red Clay in Tennessee did not materialize, ending the country's first Native American newspaper.

Not long after that, in 1838, Ferdinand Parham established Chattanooga's first newspaper, the *Hamilton County Gazette*. Parham, who had earlier published a sheet in Maryville, retitled the paper the *Chattanooga Gazette* when the city was named.

In 1816 Frederick Heiskell and Hugh Brown founded the *Knoxville Register*, which remained in circulation for forty-seven years and became East Tennessee's dominant newspaper prior to the Civil War. The paper, and Heiskell, attained statewide importance and political power. Brown left the paper in 1829 and Heiskell in 1837, but it continued to exert an influence until shut down by occupying Federal troops during the Civil War.

East Tennessee could claim no monopoly in the early newspaper business, though. Middle Tennessee's first journal, the short-lived *Rights of Man, Or, The Nashville Intelligencer*, appeared in February 1799, followed a year later by Benjamin J. Bradford's Nashville-published *Tennessee Gazette*. (The Bradford family name appears frequently in newspaper history in Tennessee and Kentucky.)

After Nashville, the next mid-state community with a newspaper was Carthage, with William Moore's *Gazette* in August 1808. At least twenty papers sprang to life in nine other mid-state towns before 1820 as population burgeoned.

In West Tennessee, meanwhile, publishing saw an early beginning as well. Historians usually credit the *Pioneer*, established in Jackson in 1822, as being the first journal in the region. The more successful *Jackson Whig* was established in 1848; it merged with the *Jackson Sun* in 1877.

Publishing in Memphis began in January 1827 with the Bluff City's first journal, the *Memphis Advocate*, which lasted until 1835. Several other papers saw life in Memphis before Henry Van Pelt arrived in 1841 and established the *Weekly Appeal*, the forerunner of today's long-standing *Memphis Commercial Appeal*.

As might be anticipated, the Civil War resulted in several publishing developments of note in Tennessee. One of the more interesting episodes involved the *Appeal*, by then a daily under the leadership of Benjamin Franklin Dill and John McClanahan. Determined to avoid closure by occupying Federal troops, Dill loaded a press and type on

a flatcar and fled to Mississippi, later moving to Georgia and Alabama. The paper continued to publish all the while, earning the sobriquet "*Moving Appeal*" in the process. Finally, Federal troops captured the paper near Columbus, Georgia, having chased it through ten towns and four states. For more than a year, the *Appeal* was issued in Atlanta, where it was joined by two other Tennessee newspapers, the *Knoxville Register* and the *Chattanooga Daily Rebel*. Later the *Appeal* resumed publication in Memphis.

The *Vidette* (Sentinel), still published in the Middle Tennessee town of Hartsville, traces its lineage to Confederate General John Hunt Morgan, who issued a paper by that name for his troops stationed there in August 1862. Civil War journalism in East Tennessee gained national recognition in the form of the *Knoxville Whig* published by William Brownlow. The leading "Union Screamer" (pro-Union southern newspaper), the *Whig* gained a wide following in the North because of its stance. After a speaking tour of northern cities, Brownlow renamed his paper *Brownlow's Whig and Rebel Ventilator*, a clear indication of where he stood. He went on to become the controversial governor of Tennessee during Reconstruction before serving as a U.S. senator.

An important milestone in Tennessee publishing, the advent of newspapers owned by and published for African American citizens, occurred as the Civil War ended. In April 1865 William Scott, an African American from East Tennessee, began publication in Nashville of the *Colored Tennessean*, which is generally acknowledged to be the first black newspaper in the state. Two years later, Scott moved the paper to Maryville, where it underwent several name changes and became the "county newspaper," serving black and white readers alike. In 1872 the *Memphis Weekly Planet* became West Tennessee's first black newspaper. Later important African American papers in Tennessee included the *Nashville Globe* (1906-60), the *East Tennessee News* in Knoxville (1906-48), the *Chattanooga Defender* (1917-37), and two journals in Memphis, the conservative *Memphis World* (1931-72) and John Sengstacke's fiery *Tri-State Defender*, which appeared in 1951 and played a significant role in the Civil Rights movement. In 1906 W. E. B. Du Bois briefly tried his hand at journalism in Tennessee, publishing the *Memphis Moon*, which, he said, was "a precursor of *The Crisis*," the influential publication of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) he would later edit. (2)

No discussion of African American publishing in Tennessee would be complete without recognizing Ida B. Wells-Barnett, whose journalistic career began in 1889 with the *Memphis Free Speech*. After three years of reporting the poor race relations of the city for the *Free Speech*, Wells moved to New York and later Chicago and gained national and international acclaim as a crusader against lynching. Her keen interest in the subject was triggered by an 1892 incident in Memphis in which a mob lynched three black grocers. Wells's coverage of the incident led to a two-month boycott of white businesses by the city's African American population. After Edward Ward Carmack, editor of the *Memphis Commercial*, demanded retaliation against "the black wench," the offices of the *Free Speech* were demolished. Nonetheless, Wells had used the paper to launch a career that earned her a reputation as perhaps "the most influential black female journalist in this nation's history." (3)

Carmack is also well known in the annals of Tennessee publishing, editing several leading papers in Memphis and Nashville and serving in both the U.S. House and Senate before becoming editor of the *Nashville Tennessean* in August 1908. An outspoken prohibitionist, Carmack was shot to death on the streets of Nashville in November 1908 by Robin Cooper, son of Duncan Cooper, an associate of Carmack's bitter rival, Governor Malcolm Patterson. The incident calls to mind Mark Twain's fictional account of Tennessee's journalistic violence, but with a real life tragic result.

The *Tennessean* (renamed in 1972) has employed many famous staff members over the years including Grantland Rice, often called the greatest sportswriter of all time, David Halberstam, Bill Kovach, Jim Squires, Tom Wicker, Wallace Westfelt, Fred Graham, John Seigenthaler, and Albert Gore Jr., who went on to become a U.S. senator and vice-president of the United States. The *Tennessean's* long-standing rival, the *Nashville Banner*, was for years associated with the Stahlman family after Edward B. Stahlman acquired it in 1881. Tennessee native Ralph McGill worked at the *Banner* briefly before leaving in 1929 to join the *Atlanta Constitution* where, over forty years, he would play a leading role in the Civil Rights movement.

Edward J. Meeman founded the *Knoxville News* in 1921. For ten years, he edited it and its successor, the *News-Sentinel*, championing the establishment of the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. In 1931 he moved to Memphis, where he edited the *Press-Scimitar* and waged an ongoing editorial crusade against political boss Edward H. Crump.

Another Tennessean with a distinguished publishing record was Adolph S. Ochs, who bought the nearly bankrupt *Chattanooga Times* in 1878. The twenty-year-old Ochs turned the newspaper into a success. In 1896 he went to New York City, where he bought the venerable, but financially strapped *New York Times* at auction for \$75,000. Ochs ignored the sensationalism of contemporary publishers like William Randolph Hearst at the *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer at the *New York World*. Applying the same conservative formula he had used in Chattanooga, Ochs revived the *New York Times* and established the high standards the paper still maintains.

Today in Tennessee, as across the nation, the era of personal journalism has largely been supplanted by corporate journalism and absentee owners. Gannett, the largest of all the chains, owns numerous newspapers across the state.

Book publishing plays a significant role in Tennessee today, as it has from earliest times. As with newspapers, George Roulstone is credited with having published the first book, a 320-page tome titled *Laws of the State of Tennessee*, which he set up, printed, bound, and issued in September 1803. In the preface, Roulstone addressed

the nature of the challenge, noting, "The present undertaking has been very laborious." Over the years, Nashville would become the center of book publishing in Tennessee. In 1809 Thomas G. Bradford published the first important book there, *A Revisal of All the Public Acts of the State of North Carolina and of the State of Tennessee*.

Nashville's reputation as a center for publishing religious materials began in the 1830s and received a major boost in 1854 when the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, established the forerunner of the United Methodist Publishing House, which now produces some 120 new books and tapes annually in addition to hundreds of church school curriculum items. Shortly afterward, by 1855, J. R. Graves established the Southwestern Publishing House. *The Tennessee Baptist* was its most popular publication, but the company had no relation to the later Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), which traces its origins to 1891. Today, the SBC's Sunday School Board claims to be the world's largest publisher of religious materials. It produces 180 monthly and quarterly products and 400 to 500 undated products annually.

The two operations are not Nashville's only religious publishers. The National Baptist Publishing Board, established in 1896 by Richard Boyd, claims to be the country's oldest African-American-owned publishing business and produces 15 million books and periodicals annually. Thomas Nelson Publishers, the world's largest Bible publisher, has called Nashville home since 1972, publishing seven translations of the Bible in addition to other religious books and music. It recently acquired control of Rutledge Hill Press, which began operations in Nashville in 1982. Vanderbilt University and the University of Tennessee operate academic publishing centers. Elsewhere in Tennessee, the former Kingsport Press, now Quebecor, has perhaps the largest book publishing operation. Founded in 1922 by John B. Dennis and the J. J. Little & Ives Company of New York, the firm initially produced inexpensive ten-cent classics (7,777,000 in the first year of operation) and trained Kingsport area farmers as printers. In 1969, it merged with Arcata National Corporation; by the mid-1980s more than 3,200 employees were producing 300,000 books a day for customers that included Time-Life and the National Geographic Society. Quebecor World, a Montreal-based publishing giant, acquired the company in the 1990s and still manages various Tennessee publishing and printing facilities.

Publishing in Tennessee is, indeed, a far cry from Mark Twain's early description. One wonders what he would think if he were to return for a visit on the eve of the twenty-first century.

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(1) Edwin B. Brinkley, "History of the *Chattanooga Times*, 1869-1949" (M.A. thesis., University of Missouri, 1950), 34.

(2) Karen F. Brown, "The Black Press of Tennessee: 1865-1980" (Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, 1982), 112.

(3) Ibid., 69.

Suggested Reading(s): Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Early Printing in Tennessee, With a Bibliography of the Issues of the Tennessee Press 1793-1830* (1933); Jack Mooney, ed., *A History of Tennessee Newspapers* (1996); Joseph H. Sears, *Tennessee Printers 1791-1945: A Review of Printing History from Roulstone's First Press to Printers of the Present* (undated); John Tebbell, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States, Volume I, The Creation of an Industry 1630-1865* (1972).

KNOXVILLE GAZETTE

The first newspaper in Tennessee was the *Knoxville Gazette*, printed initially at Rogersville, Hawkins County, on November 5, 1791. Its editor, printer, and publisher was George Roulstone (1767-1804), who stayed in Rogersville for eleven months before moving the newspaper permanently to Knoxville in the fall of 1792. Roulstone, a native of Boston and former North Carolina newspaper man, was Knoxville's first postmaster, one of the new city's first commissioners, the first public printer in Tennessee, and clerk to the Senate of the initial Tennessee General Assembly. This political patronage came courtesy of Territorial Governor William Blount, who had encouraged the paper from its beginning in order to have a way of distributing news about the territory. After Roulstone's death in 1804, control of the paper passed to his wife, Elizabeth Gilliam Roulstone, who continued publishing the newspaper for several years. The *Knoxville Gazette* ceased publication in 1818.

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Suggested Reading(s): Jack Mooney, *A History of Tennessee Newspapers* (1996).

See Also: HAWKINS COUNTY; KNOXVILLE; PUBLISHING

A Brief History of Newspaper Publishing in Tennessee

<http://www.lib.utk.edu/spcoll/newspaper/pubhist.htm>

The history of newspaper publishing in Tennessee is mainly a story of printers who established papers in the new territory. Of the early group, the following five stand out: George Roulstone, Benjamin Bradford, Frederick Heiskell, Elihu Embree, and William Brownlow.

George Roulstone was Tennessee's first printer. He was brought to Rogersville by the new governor of the Territory South of the Ohio, William Blount, who was sensitive to the fact that government could not exist without printing. Blount knew that the legislature could make laws at will, but these laws would have little impact until they were propagated among the residents. Thus Roulstone immediately became the state printer. As Knoxville, the intended seat of the new government, did not exist yet, he set up shop in the courthouse in Rogersville in upper east Tennessee. However, laws are seasonal, and because Roulstone could not exist on the revenues he derived from their printing, he began a newspaper, the Knoxville Gazette, on November 5, 1791. In October of the next year he moved his press to Knoxville, where he continued to publish the Gazette as well as other papers until his death in 1804. His wife, the former Elizabeth Gilliam, continued the shop under her own name, then carried on the business with her next husband, William Moore, until 1808, when they discontinued the Knoxville Gazette and moved to Carthage to begin the Carthage Gazette.



Tennessee's second printer was John McLaughlin, who began issuing the Rights of Man, Or, Nashville Intelligencer in Nashville in 1799, but he quickly passed from the stage. The third printer, however, was a man of some importance in the publishing history of Tennessee and the Old Southwest, or at least his father was. He was Benjamin Bradford, son of John Bradford, the first printer in Kentucky and the patriarch of a whole clan of printers. Benjamin started the Tennessee Gazette in Nashville in 1800, then the Clarion in 1808, and then the Nashville Examiner in 1812. J. and T.G. Bradford took over the Clarion in 1808, and Theodorick F. Bradford started the United States Herald in Clarksville in 1810.

Tennessee's first newspaper

The third printer of importance to appear was Frederick Heiskell, who with Hugh Brown started the Knoxville Register in 1816. He married Brown's sister and founded his own dynasty of printers (two of his grandsons published and edited the Arkansas Gazette in Little Rock). Heiskell continued the Register until 1837, when he sold his interest. Throughout most of this time he and Brown were printers for the state, and numerous well-known Tennessee imprints bear their names, John Heywood's The Civil and Political History of the State of Tennessee being one prominent example.

Elihu Embree was not the first printer in Jonesboro, only the most important. Embree, who was a Quaker, established what is probably the country's first anti-slavery paper in 1819, the Manumission Intelligencer, of which only one copy exists. This was followed, by the Emancipator in 1820, a complete run of which exists at the Tennessee State Library. (The Emancipator is more of a journal than a newspaper and is, therefore, not within the scope of this project.) It is common knowledge that East Tennessee was unionist during the Civil War, but few realize that the area's sympathies began so early.

By far the best known and most infamous anti-slavery editor and printer was William Gannaway Brownlow, whose gubernatorial likeness, known as the spitting portrait because of the post-war legislators' habit of anointing it with tobacco juice as they descended the stairs in the Capitol, was removed to the safer confines of the Tennessee State Museum in 1987. Brownlow was a man of strong opinions, and one never had to wonder which side of an issue he favored. He began the Tennessee Whig in Elizabethton in 1839, then moved it to Jonesboro in 1840 as simply the Whig. In 1851, he changed the name to Brownlow's Whig

and moved the paper to Knoxville, where it was published until 1861, when the Civil War made it both inconvenient and imprudent to remain in Tennessee any longer. At this time Brownlow moved his family north, then returned in 1863 to revive the Whig. From 1865 until 1869, he took a hiatus from publishing to become the state's Reconstruction governor.

Knoxville, Nashville, and Jonesboro were the important printing centers in the first two thirds of the 19th century. Newspaper printing moved across the state in a more or less westward migration as follows. It came to Columbia in 1810, Murfreesboro and Rogersville in 1814, Gallatin in 1815, McMinnville and Shelbyville in 1816, Sparta in 1818, Fayetteville and finally Memphis in 1827 (Parron and Pheobus' Advocate and Western District Intelligencer). Newspaper publishing in Memphis, however, soon came to be the purview of S. C. Toof, who saved the Memphis Appeal (later the Commercial Appeal) during the Civil War and went on to found still another dynasty of printers, some of whom are still printing in Atlanta today. Tennessee thus has a long and rich history of newspaper publishing, the issues of which must be preserved and made available for future generations.

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