

Since this conference is concentrating on Appalachia, I'm going to only be speaking about what we learn from/about newspapers in the East Tennessee, with perhaps a few mentions of Middle TN.

When the four of us were deciding what to include in this series of talks, I struggled between talking about the NEWSPAPERS themselves and the NEWS covered in the papers. After going back and forth on both options, I chose to talk about the newspapers and NOT the information in them. Those essays form the basis of this talk.

The earliest newspaper published in the United States that focused solely on emancipation of slavery was the EMANCIPATOR which was published not too far from here in Jonesborough. It was very short lived. The paper began in April 1820 and ceased publication in October of that same year due to the illness of the publisher, Elihu Embree. It was later republished in its entirety by B. H. Murphy in 1932 in Nashville. <http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=432>¹.

But the root of an anti-slavery sentiment were planted and remained in this corner of an Southern State. In 1865, the William B. Scott, a free black and his family moved from North Carolina to Nashville where Scott, Sr. was one of the delegates to the Colored Men's Convention, which lobbied for the freedman's right to vote as one of their issues. During his time in Nashville, Scott and his son established the state's first African American newspaper, the *Colored Tennessean*. Within a year, Scott realized that most of the paper's support came from East Tennessee, so he moved the paper to Blount County, where in October 1867; he printed the first issue of the *Maryville Republican*. At the time, Maryville had no other newspapers, so although the *Republican* circulated amongst the county's few blacks, the majority of subscribers were white. The paper--a weekly--"advocated equal political, economic and educational opportunities for blacks, but rejected the pursuit of social equality with whites." In 1869, Scott was voted mayor of Maryville—which sort of conflicts with the "no social equality".

I imagine that if I asked you all to name the most hated Governor of Tennessee, you would all know: Parson William Gannaway Brownlow. But Governor Brownlow also had a profound effect on TN newspapers. The papers actually published by Brownlow included: [Brownlow's Knoxville Whig](#), [Brownlow's Weekly Whig](#), [Brownlow's Knoxville Whig and Rebel Ventilator](#), [Knoxville Tri-Weekly Whig and Rebel Ventilator](#), and [Brownlow's Knoxville Whig and Brownlow's Knoxville Whig and Independent Journal and Tri-weekly Whig](#) Parson William Gannaway Brownlow established the *Tennessee Whig* in Elizabethton, Tennessee, in 1839. He was simultaneously both pro-slavery and pro-Union. One of his newspaper's slogans sums up both his journalism and his life, "Independent in all things—Neutral in nothing." Brownlow was exiled to the North during the Civil War, was a long time enemy of Andrew Johnson, hated the Irish (even though he was a grandchild of Irish immigrants.)

Founded in 1855, *Brownlow's Knoxville Whig* expressed its owner's held views on the inferiority of blacks and his unalterable opposition to secession. In 1861, Brownlow's criticism of the Confederacy led the government to shut down the *Brownlow's Weekly Whig* for two years. On December 6 of that year, Brownlow was arrested on a charge of high treason against the Confederacy. Brownlow spent much of 1862 touring the North, giving pro-Union lectures. When he returned to Knoxville in the fall of 1863, the federal government provided him with a press, some type, \$1,500, and a government printing contract. On November 11, 1863, the first issue of the weekly *Brownlow's Knoxville Whig, and Rebel Ventilator* rolled off the press.

A strong support of the Union remained in the area. During the Civil War, Union supporters blew up a bridge in upper East TN in order to facilitate attacks on the Southerners. Almost immediately afterward, the perpetrators were publically hung (some in front of their wives and children.) Drawings of the executions can be found in the Herald and Tribune (Jonesborough) on November 1, 1876 as examples of Yankee “atrocities” during the War.

When Brownlow became governor in 1865, he turned over the editorship of the *Whig* to his son, John Bell Brownlow. In 1869, the paper was sold, and Thomas H. Pearne became editor. It was renamed the *Weekly Knoxville Whig*, but after only one edition the owners changed the name again to the *Knoxville Weekly Whig*. After serving as governor and US Senator from TN, Brownlow returned to Knoxville in 1875 and joined William Rule’s weekly *Knoxville Whig and Chronicle* as editor-in-chief. William Gannaway Brownlow died on April 29, 1877.

XII. Brownlow’s influence on Tennessee newspapers was larger than just the ones he edited. The weekly *Loudon Free Press* was established in October 1852 by John W. O’Brien and his brother, Samuel. John also served as editor. Prior to their move to Loudon, John was in partnership with William G. Brownlow at *Brownlow’s Knoxville Whig and Independent Journal* and the semimonthly, *Sons of Temperance*. The brothers were part of the O’Brien family from Carter County, East Tennessee *were cousins to Brownlow’s wife, Eliza*. The Brownlow/O’Brien partnership came to an end after Brownlow sent John O’Brien to Washington to collect payment for a government printing contract and pay off debts owed by the firm. When Brownlow realized that O’Brien had not paid the debts but kept the money himself, the partnership ceased, and O’Brien moved to Loudon to start his own paper. **The first issue of the *Loudon Free Press* carried an announcement, dated September 11, 1852: “The undersigned [Brownlow and O’Brien], have mutually agreed to dissolve their Partnership, heretofore existing in the Printing Business at Knoxville.” The announcement also confirmed that Brownlow would now be “the sole proprietor and owner of the Knoxville Whig Office, and all that belongs thereto – he pays all the debts of said office, and claims due the office, are coming to him.”**

Jonesborough Herald and Tribune:

The weekly *Jonesborough Herald and Tribune* was first published in August 1869 by two prominent local physicians, Christopher Wheeler and Mathew S. Mahoney. The publishers advocated the principles of the National Republican party and declared that the purpose of their newspaper was to promote the “moral and intellectual improvement” of its readers. Wheeler and Mahoney published the paper jointly until 1873, when Mahoney became sole publisher, and remained so until 1876.

According to Goodspeed’s *History of Washington County* (1887), the *Herald and Tribune* had “one of the best equipped newspaper offices in Tennessee, and the editorial library [was] without an equal.” It had “a cylinder press, several fine job presses, and [was] equally complete in other respects.

In October 1876, the newspaper was purchased by Walter P. Brownlow, who had previously worked for his uncle William G. Brownlow’s newspaper, the *Knoxville Whig and*

Chronicle. W.P. Brownlow published the *Herald and Tribune* for seven years, before transferring ownership to a joint stock company in 1883. The *Herald and Tribune* later supported Brownlow in his (successful) candidacy for U.S. Congress. Frank L. Fornshell became publisher in 1896 and remained with the paper for the next seven years.

This newspaper is still printed, and can also be accessed online.

Knoxville Daily Chronicle, Knoxville Weekly Chronicle and Knoxville Whig and Chronicle

William Rule began in journalism in 1860 as a “printer’s devil” on [Brownlow’s Knoxville Whig](#). After the Civil war “Captain” Rule joined the editorial staff at the revived [Brownlow’s Knoxville Whig](#), leaving in 1869 after Brownlow became a United States Senator and the paper switched political allegiance to support the Democratic Party. On April 6, 1870, Rule and his associate, Henry C. Tarwater, inaugurated the *Knoxville Weekly Chronicle*. A daily edition --the *Knoxville Daily Chronicle* --followed a month later. **The paper** was published from the pre-war offices of *Brownlow’s Knoxville Whig* on Gay Street. In 1875 Ricks **sold his share in the paper to Brownlow** as he returned to Knoxville after his senatorial term in Washington. Even in failing health and physically unable to write, Brownlow held the title of editor-in-chief. The name of the weekly edition was changed to the [Knoxville Whig and Chronicle](#), acknowledging Brownlow’s continuing prominence.

(During these early days of the *Knoxville Daily Chronicle*, Rule gave a start to an 11 yr old boy. At age 12 he became an office boy and then went on to learn the printing trade as a “printer’s devil.” Under Rule’s guidance, Adolph Ochs became a reporter in his late teens and later purchased the [Chattanooga Times](#) and in 1896, the *New York Times*.)

After Brownlow’s death in 1877, his share of the *Chronicle* was sold to long-time employee Rudolph A. Brown, with Rule continuing as editor until November 1882. Earlier that year, Rule had denounced the editors of the rival [Knoxville Daily Tribune](#) as “cowardly puppies.” *Tribune* editor James W. Wallace challenged Rule in the street and demanded a retraction; Rule responded by breaking his cane over Wallace’s head. Wallace drew his pistol and fired, but the shots missed.

In late 1882, the *Knoxville Daily Chronicle* was sold to a stock company, and Henry R. Gibson was named editor. An attorney and politician, Gibson had founded the [redacted] in 1879. Upon purchasing the *Knoxville Chronicle*, he merged the two papers to create the [redacted]. In 1886, after several changes of editor, the paper went into receivership and was sold at a public sale in Nashville to one of its creditors. Shortly thereafter the *Republican Chronicle* was sold again to William Rule and Samuel Marfield who were then publishers of the [redacted]. The two papers merged, but “Chronicle” was dropped from the title. William Rule continued to serve as editor until his death in 1928, aged 89. He was described by *Time* magazine as “the oldest active editor in the U.S.”

Loudon Free Press

The weekly *Loudon Free Press* was established in October 1852 by John W. O'Brien and his brother, Samuel. John also served as editor. The paper's inaugural editorial stated, "So far as we shall conform to a model, we shall aspire to the elevated stand occupied by the *National Intelligencer*, a true representative of what the American Press should be." The editorial also asserted the paper's political position: "Our politics have always been, and will continue to be Whig."

The O'Brien brothers were experienced printers. Prior to their move to Loudon, John was in partnership with William G. Brownlow at *Brownlow's Knoxville Whig and Independent Journal* and the semimonthly, *Sons of Temperance*. The brothers were part of the O'Brien family from Carter County, East Tennessee (formerly owners of the area's iron works), and were cousins to Brownlow's wife, Eliza. The Brownlow/O'Brien partnership came to an end after Brownlow sent John O'Brien to Washington to collect payment for a government printing contract and pay off debts owed by the firm. When Brownlow realized that O'Brien had not paid the debts but kept the money himself, the partnership ceased, and O'Brien moved to Loudon to start his own paper. The first issue of the *Loudon Free Press* carried an announcement, dated September 11, 1852: "The undersigned [Brownlow and O'Brien], have mutually agreed to dissolve their Partnership, heretofore existing in the Printing Business at Knoxville." **The announcement also confirmed that Brownlow would now be "the sole proprietor and owner of the Knoxville Whig Office, and all that belongs thereto – he pays all the debts of said office, and claims due the office, are coming to him."**

The *Loudon Free Press* made its target audience the businessmen of East Tennessee. In addition to foreign and domestic news, the paper provided "full and impartial quotations of the produce markets of Loudon, Augusta, Savannah, Macon, Charleston, and Nashville, with occasional quotations from other important points."

The Chattanooga Daily Rebel, The Daily Chattanooga Rebel and Chattanooga Daily Rebel

Francis M. "Franc" Paul established the *Chattanooga Daily Rebel* in August 1862, after the town's two newspapers had merged, then suspended publication earlier that year. Paul was principal clerk of the Tennessee senate and had formerly been a printer for *Brownlow's Knoxville Whig*. Paul was the *Rebel's* sole publisher and editor during its first few months. Shortly thereafter he invited Henry Watterson to become editor of the *Rebel*. Watterson, writing as John Burley, often criticized General Braxton Bragg's military operations, prompting Bragg to threaten to ban the paper from his camps. In addition to his war reports, Roberts provided "a cheerful witty side" to every issue. His 'JOHN HAPPY' letters, 'Grapevine Telegraph' and bright, sparkling

paragraphs were eagerly sought and read by the boys at the front and by the old men, women and children in the rear.”.

On September 27, 1862, the *Rebel* ran an article championing the press’s vital role in wartime communications. The piece was entitled “The Importance of the Press in Time of War” and was signed, “PRINTER.” It strongly emphasized the importance of (the Confederate) press to both the government and the military, as well as citizens. “The importance of the Press in time of war to the spirit of the army is incalculable. It is, as one of our correspondents observes, ‘the only medium of organized public opinion—the only source of communication between the Government and the people, and which if silenced (as the Senate and House propose) would leave these wise bodies themselves practically as voiceless as the grave.’”

The *Rebel* was one of only a few Tennessee Confederate newspapers that remained in circulation throughout the war. In its attempt to stay ahead of the Union Army, the *Rebel* was forced to move from town to town and soon earned the nickname the “Rebel on Wheels.” Over the course of the war, the paper was published in Chattanooga; Marietta and Griffin, Georgia (as the *Daily Chattanooga Rebel*) in 1864-65; and, finally, Selma, Alabama, (once again as the *Chattanooga Daily Rebel*) in 1865. Watterson resigned as editor of the *Rebel* in the summer of 1863 and was replaced by Charles O. Faxon.

Federal troops eventually caught up with the *Rebel* in Selma, in early April 1865. The troops occupied the offices while the *Rebel’s* staff was held at the stockade. A few days later, as the troops left the town, they destroyed the *Rebel’s* presses and type, and the building was set alight. However, a small hand press survived the destruction and a few last copies of the *Rebel* were published before it permanently ceased on April 27, 1865

End of Brownlow connections

Southern Standard

In October 1879, Rufus P. Baker established the *Southern Standard* in McMinnville, Tennessee. The paper appeared each Saturday and had an annual subscription fee of \$1.00. Baker hired Dr. John R. Paine as editor, but the arrangement was short-lived, and after only a few months both men had left the paper. In early 1880, Professor Alfred Moore Burney, a retired president of the Cumberland Female College, became the *Standard’s* new owner and editor. Burney remained at the *Southern Standard* for only a few years. In January 1882, printing was suspended briefly after Burney announced that he was leaving the newspaper business. In February, Dr. James Brown Ritchey and Mr. William Carroll Womack purchased the paper, and Frank Spurlock became editor. The new owners chose to emphasize farming concerns, adopting a new motto, "Devoted to agriculture interests of Warren and adjoining counties." In September 1882, Radford M. Reams and Horace P. Newton purchased equal interest in the *Standard* with Dr. Ritchey and formed the Standard Publishing Company. Ritchey and Reams were co-editors until 1885 when Reams became the sole owner; he served as editor of the *Standard* for a total of 41 years.

Under Reams' editorship, the *Southern Standard* prominently spotlighted rural economic issues and farming techniques. The newspaper provided vital information about ongoing efforts to bring new technologies to the area, such as the expansion of telephone lines. For example, in April 1884, a front-page article informed readers that since telephone lines were being added in nearby counties, if McMinnville could find a dozen subscribers it too would also receive telephone service.

Despite its Democratic leanings, the *Southern Standard* was, for its time, relatively objective in its views. But political bias was not completely absent from its pages. During the 1884 presidential election, the newspaper published a scathing editorial (November 1) in which it called for financial reform in political campaigns because, "parties and party leaders are becoming so corrupt and unfair in conducting political campaigns that it is becoming alarming and dangerous to American institutes and American liberties." Reams was also known for his colorful editorials in strong support of Prohibition and was recognized "more than any other man in having saloons voted out of McMinnville."

When Reams ceased publishing the paper in 1924, Tom C. Price bought the publishing company. In 1925, a fire in the *Southern Standard* building destroyed the plant, editorial offices, and files. Price moved operations to a new location. The paper has continued publication to the present day (<http://www.southernstandard.com/>).

The Athens Post

In 1841, Captain James Williams established the *Knoxville Post*, a weekly Whig newspaper in Knoxville, Tennessee. The paper was published by New Jersey native, Samuel P. Ivins, with Williams serving as editor. At thirty years old, Ivins was already an experienced newspaperman. His career began at the *True American* printing room in Trenton, New Jersey, in 1824 when he was just fourteen years old. Ivins spent four years there before leaving to become a journeyman printer, traveling to most of the larger towns in Pennsylvania over the following five years. He then spent several years in New York City before heading south, where he traveled for some time, eventually settling in Knoxville in the early 1840s.

In 1844, Williams retired from the editorial department of the *Knoxville Post*, leaving Ivins in charge. Ivins ran the paper in Knoxville for the next four years, then in 1848, foreseeing the potential of the region to the south of Knoxville, he moved the paper to Athens, Tennessee, renaming it the *Athens Post*.

Construction of a railroad linking Knoxville and Dalton, Georgia, had commenced in 1837 but halted in 1839 due to financial and legal problems with the Hiwassee Railroad Company. Ivins determined that the success of the area hinged on that railroad. Writing editorials in the *Athens Post*, he campaigned for the completion of the railroad, and for Athens to be a depot on the line. Interest in the area's undeveloped resources was reawakened and construction resumed in 1849, under the newly named East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad. The line reached Athens in 1851.

Like many towns in East Tennessee, loyalties were divided during the Civil War. In 1861, Athens voted against secession by a narrow margin. Ivins was opposed to secession at first, but when Tennessee left the Union, he followed his state and declared support for the Confederacy. Publication of the *Post* was suspended from September 1863 to December 1867. However, upon its suspension, the occupying Union Army launched the [*Athens Union Post*](#). Little is documented about this publication as the inaugural issue is the only one known to survive. In addition to news, the paper printed some lighthearted material such as poetry and jokes. In its first issue, the paper apologized for its appearance, noting that “the former editor (Mr. Ivins), probably not thinking that we would want to issue his paper in his absence, took with him nearly all the material necessary to give it a genteel appearance; consequently we were thrown upon our ingenuity in making up the forms.”

In 1864, Ivins was taken prisoner by General Sherman’s troops and sent to Camp Chase, Ohio. When he was released in 1865, he went to Nashville to edit the [*Nashville Daily Press and Times*](#). In 1866, he edited the [*Daily American Union*](#) in Chattanooga, and later the [*Atlanta Daily Intelligencer*](#), before returning to Athens to resume publication of the *Post* in December 1867. Ivins continued working at the *Post* until his death in 1887. The town’s current newspaper, the [*Daily Post-Athenian*](#), is a direct descendant of Ivins’ newspaper..

The Comet

On March 15, 1884, Nathaniel C.T. Love published the first issue of the *Comet* in Johnson City, Tennessee. Attorneys Robert Burrow and Robert L. Taylor (later governor of Tennessee) served as the newspaper’s editors. The paper’s salutatory piece affirmed its perspective: “In politics, we are democratic; in religion, we are orthodox.” At the time of the *Comet*’s first issue, the town had just one other newspaper, the politically independent [*Enterprise*](#), established the previous year.

The *Comet* covered political issues and local affairs and offered entertaining short stories and poems. In a town served by two railroad lines (later three), the paper unsurprisingly devoted much column space to train schedules and railroad news. On political issues, Taylor’s staunch support of the Democratic Party and his strong political ideology were clearly apparent. Taylor later ran for governor of Tennessee against his brother, Republican Alfred A. Taylor. This heated but cordial race later became known as the “War of the Roses.” Robert L. Taylor won the race and served as governor from 1887 to 1891, and again between 1897 and 1899.

In 1891, Robert Burrow retired from the *Comet* when the partnership between him and Lyle was dissolved, leaving Lyle as sole proprietor. In the April 9, 1891 issue, Lyle announced his intention to publish the [*Daily Comet*](#), beginning the following week. The *Daily Comet* was “a morning paper [with] full Associated Press Service.” However, a couple of years later, an article in the June 29, 1893 issue of the weekly *Comet*, announced that the daily would cease publication, declaring that, “The *Daily Comet* is simply off its orbit” and that “Publishing a daily paper in Johnson City is like running a free lunch counter in Washington. It is well patronized, but not profitable.” An elaborately illustrated masthead was introduced featuring a comet descending over industrial and rural landscapes with a train at center, pulling a car labeled “progress.”

The weekly *Comet* built up a large circulation in its first decade. By 1895, the paper had 1,000 active subscribers in a town whose total population was approximately 4,000. Over the first decade, the *Comet* employed inventive means to increase subscriptions. In 1885, the paper ran a promotion offering new and renewing subscribers the chance to win one of several prizes such as a silver watch, a sewing machine, and the grand prize, a parlor organ from the Chicago Cottage Organ Company. An ornate illustration of the organ accompanied several of the promotional announcements.

The *Comet* remained in publication at least through 1918, but the exact date of its demise is not known.

The Maryville Times and Maryville Daily Times

First published in 1884 by A.J. Neff & Sons, the *Maryville [Tennessee]Times* has been in continuous operation under a family ownership model for more than a century. Colonel Andrew Jackson Neff moved his family from his native home of Indiana to Maryville, Tennessee, in late 1883--a year that had seen the closure of several Maryville newspapers. With several years of publishing experience in Indiana, Andrew Neff saw a prime opportunity to start a new paper in Maryville. Neff was a Republican and had served in the Indiana legislature (1856-57) and state senate (1871-75), so, unsurprisingly, his newspaper reflected his political leanings. Neff was an ardent supporter of the temperance movement and fought for the strict restriction of alcohol in the region.

Under the leadership of Neff & Sons, the *Maryville Times*--published on Wednesdays--delivered national, state, and local news ranging from politics and taxes to agriculture and even sports. Advertisements for local merchants featured prominently, sometimes taking up a third of the front page. For the \$1.50 annual subscription rate (later the price dropped to \$1.00), readers received an honest, intelligent, aggressive, Christian family newspaper, as the publication's first masthead asserted. On January 13, 1886, editors reminded readers that the weekly was a "Republican journal devoted entirely to the best interests of Blount County." To better serve those interests, and perhaps the family's own bottom line, a daily edition was printed--the *Maryville Daily Times*--during the week of the 1884 Blount County Fair. The weekly paper's circulation continued to grow and by 1890, its masthead claimed it was, "The largest and cheapest family newspaper in the state."

In 1890, Neff & Sons sold the *Times* to G.S. Bishop and Andrew Goddard. Goddard's son, Leonard, was appointed local editor. Bishop left the partnership in 1891, and in 1898, Andrew Goddard's other son, W. Clyde Goddard, became editor while Leonard fought in the Spanish-American War. In September 1914, Clyde Goddard sold the weekly newspaper to John H. "Doc" Mitchell, a local drug store owner, and H.J. Greenlee. The salutatory piece stated that although Mitchell was a Democrat, the paper would be under Greenlee's editorial control and would remain Republican. The arrangement was apparently unsuccessful because after only a few months, the *Times* was sold to Clyde B. Emert, who served as the newspaper's owner until 1955.

In his salutatory article, Emert made no mention of politics and the paper subsequently was devoid of any political news. Under Emert's ownership the *Times* dropped the ready-print articles and boasted on each of its eight pages that it was "All Home Print."

Since the 1950s, the newspaper has been operated by several family newspaper groups and continues to be published today as the *Daily Times*.

The Morristown Gazette

The history of the *Morristown* [Tennessee] *Gazette* is dominated by one family: the Helms. Four generations of the Helms family published and edited the newspaper for over a century, from 1873 to 1975.

W. Neal founded the *Morristown Gazette* soon after the end of the Civil War, in either 1866 or 1867. In October 1867, the *Gazette* was sold to brothers Lawrence P. and George E. Speck, who owned the paper until September 1873, when John E. Helms (b. 1827) became the publisher. No stranger to newspapering, Helms was just 12 years old when he began his apprenticeship at the *Knoxville Argus and Commercial Herald*. In 1847, Helms and his brother William T. became publishers of the *Knoxville Standard* and together later founded the *Knoxville Plebeian*, Knoxville's first daily.

In its early years, the *Morristown Gazette*--a four-page Democratic newspaper--was published weekly on Wednesdays. The paper circulated throughout Hamblen, Hawkins, Cocke, Jefferson, Grainger, and Claiborne counties, making it "the best advertising medium to Upper East Tennessee." The advertisements for the paper promoted businesses from this part of Tennessee and farther west into Knoxville. By 1878, the newspaper had an estimated circulation of 450 (Morristown's total population was around 1,200). In addition to national and local news and politics, the *Gazette* covered the railroad industry extensively, often publishing plans for railroad lines, and occasionally the meeting minutes from the East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia Railroad Company. Poems and short stories provided light-hearted material for the reader, and usually incorporated a moral lesson.

In 1884, Helms' sons, John E. Helms (b. 1857) and Arthur C. Helms, published the paper under the auspices of the Gazette Print Company. In 1890, they established the *Morristown Daily Gazette*, but it was not a success and was abandoned after only a couple of months. Between 1894 and 1918, several members of the Helms family ran the paper, and there was a very brief partnership with L.P. Speck early in 1897.

The younger John E. Helms served as postmaster for Morristown during the Woodrow Wilson administration. During his eight-year leave of absence, the *Gazette* was managed by his two sons, Harris Whiteside Helms and John E. Helms (b. 1895). In 1918, the paper was leased to Constance O'Keefe who had gained newspapering experience at the *Greeneville Democrat* published by her elder sister, Edith O'Keefe Susong. Upon his return from the navy, John E. Helms (b. 1895) joined O'Keefe, and together they revitalized the weekly. The *Gazette* absorbed

the *Morristown Republican* in 1920 to form the *Morristown Gazette and Morristown Republican*, and two years later absorbed the *Evening Mail* to form the *Daily Gazette and Mail*. Following World War II, proprietors John and Constance O. Helms were joined by their sons John E. Helms (b. 1926) and William O'Keefe Helms, who served as editor and business manager, respectively.

In the issue of September 30, 1975, co-publisher and editor John E. Helms announced that the *Morristown Gazette Mail* would cease publication, effective immediately. Lack of advertising support from the major chain firms in Morristown was cited as a principal factor in the newspaper's demise. This final issue brought the paper's 109-year existence to an end. It had been in the Helms family for 102 years.

The News and the Bristol News

In 1865, printer John Slack trekked nearly 90 miles from his new home in Bristol to Independence, Virginia, where he purchased a hand-turned printing press. He hauled the press on a wagon across rugged terrain back to Bristol where he began editing and publishing a weekly. Between 1865 and 1867, the paper was known simply as the *News*, with the words "The Bristol News" also printed on the front page. This publication perhaps revived a former Bristol newspaper dating to 1857, the *Virginia & Tennessee News*, edited by Albion K. Moore. J. Austin Sperry replaced Moore as editor in 1858, and the paper ceased publication in 1862 when Sperry moved to Knoxville to edit the *Knoxville Register*.

In 1866, Slack leased the *News* to David F. Bailey, and on August 7, 1868, it was sold to two brothers from Tazewell, Virginia, I.C. (Isaac Chapman) and Elbert Fowler, at which point it became the *Bristol News*. Early in 1869, the paper was moved to the adjoining town of Goodson, Virginia, but retained the title the *Bristol News*. In 1890, Goodson changed its name to Bristol, so that today there are two Bristols—one in Tennessee and the other in Virginia. As editor, I.C. Fowler was colorful, frank, and fearless. He served as mayor of Goodson from 1871 to 1875, working for development of both Goodson and Bristol. Fowler's outspoken journalism, including calling for closing of a local brothel, brought him political support. He was elected to three consecutive terms in the Tennessee legislature, serving as speaker of the house in his final term. Fowler retired from newspapering in 1884. He then turned his paper over to long-time employee, Albert C. Smith, who continued the *Bristol News* as a weekly until it switched to daily publication in 1890. Samuel Smith succeeded his father as editor, and the paper continued into the 20th Century. In 1912, the paper, by then entitled the *Bristol Evening News*, was bought out by the *Bristol Herald Courier*, which is still published today.

The Rugbeian, The Rugbeian and District Reporter, Plateau Gazette and East Tennessee News and The Rugby News

In 1880, Thomas Hughes, British author of *Tom Brown's School Days*, established the utopian community of Rugby in Morgan County, Tennessee. His involvement in the cooperative movement inspired his vision for a community which would allow the younger sons of the gentry to build an idyllic life away from the restraints of the British class system.

The settlement's formal opening took place on October 5, 1880, and the first issue of the *Rugbeian* followed soon after, in January 1881. The eight-page paper was published monthly for the first few months, and became a four-page weekly in July 1881.

No publishers or editors were named in the early issues of the *Rugbeian*, but Osmond Dakeyne is believed to have been the paper's first editor. Some of the earliest copies of the paper have handwritten names attributed to many of the articles, with the majority of the editorial content contributed by W. Hastings Hughes (Thomas Hughes' brother) and Osmond Dakeyne. The *Rugbeian* focused primarily on local news, but also published national news, and news from the 'Old Country.' Local businesses dominated the advertising space in the paper, but advertisements from further afield became more common as the paper grew. From February to June 1881, the front covers featured elegant illustrations depicting life in Rugby (reproduced from an article in *Harper's Weekly* in October 1880).

F. Fullerton Armstrong joined the community in the spring of 1881, and became the printer, publisher and editor of the *Rugbeian*. Shortly after, Dakeyne became the first fatality of the typhoid outbreak that blighted the community in 1881. A smaller two-page issue published on August 20th, 1881, bore Dakeyne's obituary on the front page. The next issue didn't appear until September 10th, 1881, due to "the fact that both our assistants were stricken down by the disease, [and] rendered the publication of the *Rugbeian* impossible until the present date."

In December 1881, Thomas Fardon took over as printer and publisher. Fardon changed the paper's motto to "Be Just, And Fear Not." Armstrong's departure was welcomed, as evidenced in a letter published in the January 7, 1882 issue: "we are pleased to know the Editor now in charge is not the man who hitherto has been running the paper."

Fardon remained as publisher/editor until 1883, when Thomas J. Davie and Ernest M. Berry took over. The paper went through several changes in name and ownership over the years. In 1882, it was called the *Rugbeian and District Reporter*. In a bid to extend its reach to the surrounding Morgan County and neighboring Fentress, Scott, and Cumberland counties, the name was changed again to the *Plateau Gazette and East Tennessee News* and later, the *Rugby Gazette and East Tennessee News*. Other editors at this time were Joseph H. Blacklock and Cecil S. Moore.

In November 1890, J.W. Giles established the *Rugby News*, a four-page paper with the outer pages comprised of ready-print (pre-compiled news and advertisements purchased by editors and integrated into the newspaper) and the inner pages providing a small amount of local news. The *Rugby News* is believed to have ceased publication in 1891.

The Sweetwater Forerunner and The Sweetwater Enterprise

Sweetwater's first newspaper, the *Sweetwater Forerunner* was established in September 1867 by Hugh L. Fry, a Monroe County native and Confederate veteran. In the March 13, 1868 issue, Fry wrote that the four-page weekly was "not intended to be either of a political or partisan character." He promised that the *Forerunner* would focus on matters of local interest and would not permit slanderous columns. However, in May of that year, when printer Charles M. Fisher became joint publisher of the paper, it took a more partisan tone. The *Forerunner* became a Democratic-leaning paper and began to denounce Radicalism. Fisher's name disappeared from the masthead for a few weeks at the end of 1868; then, in December 1868, he was credited as sole proprietor. Fisher's proprietorship of the paper was short-lived. In his *History of the Sweetwater Valley*, William B. Lenoir described Fisher as "the best all around newspaper man, the finest flute player and the most accomplished 'boozefighter' who ever lived in town." The latter apparently contributed to Fisher's downfall at the *Forerunner*. By February 25, 1869, Fry's name alone appeared on the paper's masthead. Fry's article in that issue alluded to Fisher's unreliability, and an apology was made for the "irregularity of the Forerunner" over the preceding weeks. Two weeks later, C.B. Woodward took over as the newspaper's proprietor. Woodward also issued an apology about Fisher's conduct and made it clear to subscribers and advertisers that he was not responsible for any contracts Fisher had made.

In September 1869, Woodward changed the paper's name to the *Sweetwater Enterprise*; it remained a Democratic weekly. Like other era penny press papers, the *Enterprise* contained stories related to domestic and international politics. Much of the content, however, was sensational, focusing on topics such as adultery. Advertisements in the paper promoted products ranging from household items to "medicinal" liquids claiming to cure everything from asthma to "female complaint."

Woodward published the *Enterprise* until early 1876 when Joe Ivins became editor and publisher through the fall of that year. After the November 1876 presidential election, the publication of the paper was suspended. Nathaniel Pope Hight and Richard Francis Scruggs, two prominent Sweetwater citizens and owners of the town's general store, acquired the title and the printing outfit, but were immediately plagued with financial difficulties and sold the *Enterprise* to Joseph H. Bean of Knoxville in December 1876. Bean promptly changed the newspaper's name to the [Monroe Democrat](#), and it remained in circulation until 1890.

The Weekly Herald

The *Cleveland Weekly Herald*'s roots reach back to the [Commercial Republican](#), which was established in Cleveland, Tennessee, in 1872 and which was succeeded by the [Cleveland Herald](#) in 1874. The first edition of the *Weekly Herald* rolled off the press on July 14, 1876. The paper's proprietors were T.A. Hayes and E.C. Tipton, with William S. Tipton and William O. Wiggins as

editors. W.S. Tipton began his career as a newspaperman at the *Herald* when he was just 23 years old, and he served as publisher and editor until his death in 1904.

Through its various name changes, the *Herald* maintained a Republican perspective. Tipton also served two terms as Cleveland's mayor in the late 1870s and was a delegate to the Republican national convention which nominated James A. Garfield for president. The *Herald's* solid Republican stance made for a staunch rivalry with the Democratic *Cleveland Banner*. Snide comments were often exchanged in the papers' columns, usually highlighting the other's journalistic incompetency. The *Herald* noted, for example, that "[...] the *Banner* never has an original editorial of its own. One can always tell what will be in the *Banner* by reading the *Nashville American* or *Chattanooga Times*."

As a reflection of the farming community it served, the *Herald* devoted large sections to agriculture and commodity markets. Lighthearted literature, poems, and humorous remarks (often by Tipton himself) were scattered throughout the pages. The "Local" column provided a mix of local news, announcements, and advertisements

Under Tipton's editorship, the *Herald* outlived its chief competitor, the *Cleveland Banner*, and survived the arrival of a new Democratic paper, the *Polk County News*, which relocated from Benton to Cleveland in 1885. Later that year, the two papers merged to form the *News-Banner*, which lasted only a few years until 1891. The weekly *Cleveland Herald* remained in circulation until May 1949.

Union and American and The union

In 1875, the *Greeneville (Tennessee) American* merged with the *National Union* to form the *Greeneville Union and American*. At first, the new weekly Democratic paper's proprietor was listed as the Union and American Company, its editors Henry V. Sevier and Tom A. Baker, and William H. Brininstool, the manager. The three men were formerly publishers of the *Greeneville American* and *National Union*, respectively. In January 1876, Sevier and Baker became the proprietors of the *Greeneville Union and American*, and in March 1876, Brininstool became the paper's sole editor and proprietor.

Each week, beginning in November 1875, the *Union and American* printed a double-column, page-length 'prospectus' proclaiming itself to be the "largest weekly newspaper in East Tennessee" with "4 pages! 36 columns!" (later increased to "8 pages! 48 columns!"). The paper promised to deliver a weekly menu of news, literature, and humorous sketches including features such as agricultural articles, short stories, and an education department, as well as special columns on husbandry, housekeeping, and the latest in ladies' fashions. State news and market reports were also printed. Local coverage focused on items such as the law enforcement's efforts to eradicate illegal distilleries and floods which threatened farmers' crops. At least two front-page columns were often devoted to women's issues including marriage, the proper behavior of young ladies, and occupational concerns. On November 10, 1875, the writer of the "About Women" column praised the state of Tennessee for passing a law that made it illegal to "pay any teacher less money than another on the ground of sex alone."

The *Union and American*'s Democratic bias was evident in its vehement criticism of Reconstruction. In the November 24, 1875 issue, the paper argued that Reconstruction was just a tool for capitalists and northerners to steal the riches of the southern "promised land." Editorials sang the praises of Democratic politicians and denounced Republicans, both in Tennessee and other states.

In July 1877, the *Union and American* merged with the [*Greeneville Intelligencer*](#) to form the [*Union*](#), which Brininstool continued to publish and edit.

ⁱ <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=432> . "The Emancipator". The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, online edition. Viewed 2/16/2015.