

Shelbina Newspapers

Shelbina Gazette

Shelbina's first newspaper was the Shelbina Weekly Gazette, which published its first issue on January 10, 1866. The publisher was from Illinois, J. D. Moudy, a conservative Democrat. Four months after it started, Mr. Moudy sold out to E. D. Hoselton, who operated the paper single handed until in the fall when he sold a half interest to J. S. Bates, who soon sold to Frank M. Daulton, the original newspaper man of Shelby county. Later Daulton became the sole owner and then in 1871 sold to Colonel Shaefer and A. M. York who changed the politics to Republican, the name to Shelby County Herald, and moved the plant to Shelbyville.

Shelbina Democrat

On April 1, 1869 E. D. Hoselton, former owner and editor of the Gazette, established the Shelbina Democrat. It was an all-home print, 7-column, 4 page paper, much of the news being taken from city publications.

In 1870 Col. S. A. Rawlings became a partner in the publication. He was a Virginian who had come to Shelby county in 1848. He died September 28, 1875. During the Civil War Col. Rawlings served with the Confederates. At the death of Col. Rawlings Judge James C. Hale assumed editorial charge of the paper, remaining until in May, 1881 when Col. W. O. L. Jewett became a partner. The firm of Hoselton & Jewett controlled the paper until Nov. 4, 1891 when Mr. Hoselton sold his interest to J. W. Cox, a brother-in-law of Mr. Jewett. This partnership continued to publish the Democrat until July 31, 1901 when Mr. Jewett bought the interest of Mr. Cox.

The agitation for a new county courthouse and also the electric light proposition at Shelbina in 1891 was started by the Democrat. In 1911 the Democrat was a 6-column, 8-page paper, printed on a cylinder press run by a gasoline engine. The type was set by a Junior Mergenthaler. In Dec., 1910 Mr. Jewett leased the paper to his two sons, H. H. and E. W. Jewett. Thus ended the active newspaper career of one of Missouri's pioneer and best known newspaper editors.

The Jewett brothers continued publication of the Democrat, though Will Jewett took over the work of his brother, Howell. They sold the Democrat to S. R. Hoover in the fall of 1925. Mr. Hoover kept the paper only a few months when he sold out to Edgar P. Blanton and E. W. Jewett, who took possession January 1, 1926. Mr. Jewett sold his interest to Mr. Blanton in 1929.

Edgar P. Blanton has been editor and publisher of the Shelbina Democrat since 1926 to today (1957), a total of 31 years. His son, Carter V. Blanton, became a partner in the firm in 1948.

At the time this history is being printed in the Democrat office, there are eight men and one girl employed on the newspaper which goes into 2,910 homes.

Shelbina Index and Torchlight

William N. Bumbarger and H. P. McRoberts were the founders of this publication and their first edition came from the press July 13, 1881. In January, 1882 Simpson bought out McRoberts and a year later N. H. Downing became the sole proprietor and editor. Dr. J. M. McCully became a half owner on March 1, 1884 and the following July 1 the firm became McCully & Christie, C. W. Christie buying out Mr. Downing. In 1885 Dr. McCully sold his interest to his partner. The latter worked in a few months and the property went back to Dr. McCully. In the fall of 1885 McCully sold the property to William Mason who changed the name to the "Shelbina Torchlight." Mr. Mason died in about a year and the publication was resumed by his sons, Harry and George until January,



This picture of an old time office of the Shelbina Democrat appeared in the 1878 Atlas.

1889, at which time the ownership passed to A. L. Roe and Prof. E. L. Cooley. In April, 1891 Roe purchased his partner's interest and became sole proprietor. In August, 1893 the Torchlight became the property of Fred Naeter and Frederick Haskins.

Mr. Naeter, now publisher of the Cape Girardeau Southeast Missourian, tells why he left Shelbina, where he was barely making a living.

There came an election day, the first time the so-called Australian (secret) ballot was used. In the afternoon handbills were circulated stating that in "today's election two Republican votes have been cast, one by Fred Naeter, the other by Frederick Haskins, publishers of the Shelbina Torchlight." Sure enough, when the votes were counted that night, only two Republican votes had been cast. Mr. Naeter says that people who had never paid their subscription before came in to pay what was owed and had their paper stopped. This forced them to leave town. Mr. Haskins became a famous writer in Washington, syndicating a column on Questions and Answers, dying a few years ago and leaving some six million dollars. Mr. Naeter, frequently referred to by the metropolitan press as "A Millionaire," and who is said to have refused an offer of a million and a half dollars for his Cape Girardeau newspaper, has said he might still be in Shelbina barely making a living had not the above episode made it necessary for him to leave.

Naeter & Haskins transferred their ownership of the Torchlight to Rev. W. W. McMurry. In December, 1900 Mr. McMurry sold to Cleek & Williams. This firm lasted until Sept., 1902 when Mr. Williams bought out his partner. He then sold a half interest to J. E. Thrasher and in May, 1904 the publication was sold to P. B. Dunn, Jr. In 1907 he sold to C. J. Col-