

## **Forgotten Stories, Odd Facts and A Few Lurid Tales: The History of Brazos County Newspapers**

By Bill Page  
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### **Introduction**

Strictly speaking, a newspaper is a business. Most people view a paper as a public trust, however, and not merely as a profit-making company. A newspaper does not simply detail the events of the day – it reflects a community’s values and provides insights into the character of its readers. Local newspapers reveal the history of Brazos County in ways that no other resources can equal.

Knowing something about the history of those papers is vitally important. In the days when even small towns had multiple newspapers, no one expected journalistic impartiality. Readers knew editors would slant news coverage to fit their points of view. In the nineteenth century, most newspapers were openly biased. Some supported a single political party. Everyone in town would know which paper backed the Democrats and which one favored the Republicans – or some other political group that may be forgotten today. Some papers were religious, perhaps favoring a particular denomination. Some catered to certain ethnic groups. Still other newspapers took stances for or against a controversy of the day, such as prohibition. In other cases, papers favored groups such as farmers or labor unions. Knowing something about those biases can be essential in understanding what you find – or don’t find – in any given paper.

Newspapers always have been meant to be read and discarded. In addition, early newspaper offices were fire traps, with capricious equipment, flammable ink and large quantities of paper. As a result, few issues of the more than sixty publications discussed in this history have been preserved. The microfilm files of the Battalion and the Eagle have gaps in the early years, and many of the other papers are known only from comments made in journals such as the Dallas Morning News and the Houston Post.

The importance of the disappearance of these publications transcends the mere loss of systematic news records – we have lost the daily lives of the men and women who settled and built Brazos County.

### **Millican in the 1860s**

The end of the Civil War found turbulent times in Brazos County. The railroad from Houston ended in Millican, and many of the travelers and much of the freight going to or coming from the interior of Texas passed through the county. Local speculators made (and lost) fortunes almost daily, and it comes as no surprise that the flourishing economy of the period led to the founding of the first newspaper in Brazos County.

William Lambdin began publishing the county’s first newspaper, the Millican News-

Letter, in January 1867. Lambdin, a native of Wheeling, West Virginia, had been born on 28 January 1843. Lambdin doubtless knew that the first American newspaper had been the Boston News-Letter, founded in 1704, and he likely chose his paper's name with a nod to journalistic history. A Dallas paper greeted the News-Letter's debut with these words:

We have also, this week, received the first number of a new paper just started at Millican, the terminus of the Central Rail Road, called the News-Letter. It is published semi-weekly, by Lambdin & Co., and is well filled with selected and editorial matter.<sup>1</sup>

The Galveston News heaped even more lavish praise on the new enterprise:

The Semi-Weekly News-Letter is the title of one of the handsomest and best papers in the State, just started at Millican by W. Lambdin & Co. The proprietors evidently understand what they have undertaken. It affords us pleasure to command such a specimen of the "art preservative."<sup>2</sup>

Even out of state papers made favorable comments about the newspaper. Here is what the New Orleans Daily Picayune had to say:

The Pic. acknowledges the courtesy of a call from A. B. Cunningham, Esq., editor of the Bryan (Texas) News-Letter. This paper is one of the best of our country exchanges from that State, and being published in a wealthy, populous and generally go-ahead section, offers inducements as an advertising medium to those of our houses doing or desiring to do business with that part of Texas. Mr. C. may be found at the City Hotel.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Paper Moves to Bryan**

Subscriptions to the News-Letter cost \$2 per year. In September 1867 Lambdin moved the business to Bryan, because of the extension of the railroad line and the decline in Millican due to a yellow fever epidemic. After the move, Lambdin renamed the paper the Bryan News-Letter. Mr. A. B. Bowman was also associated with the News-Letter in 1868. Other staff included Jerry C. Brasher (printer's devil) and perhaps James F. Martin. Year's later Brasher recalled that printing by hand and then washing the type after the paper was run was a "disagreeable job" for an eleven year old boy.<sup>4</sup>

Martin's published recollections conflict with most other accounts, and if, as he stated, he first worked for R. J. Smith, it seems likely that he labored for one of the papers that came after the Millican News-Letter. Regardless of which paper Martin worked on, he did clearly recall what was involved in producing the paper. When interviewed Martin said all the printing was done on an old style George Washington hand press. He went on to say that device was an instrument of torture to the printer's devil.<sup>5</sup>

Martin was not exaggerating about the torture involved in running a Washington hand press. A skilled worker could print about 250 single-sided sheets an hour using that equipment. Eleven separate steps were necessary to print a page even after the type, paper and ink had been prepared. Operating the press required manipulating both cranks and levers. Producing a full run of a newspaper would take many hours, working in an area that was typically noisy, badly lighted and subject to temperature extremes.<sup>6</sup>

In March 1869, the Galveston News noted, "The Bryan News Letter ... is doing well, and it is certainly deserving of a liberal patronage. Mr. Lambdin, the popular proprietor, is a gentleman who reflects credit on the profession, and Mr. [Albert] Cunningham, the junior partner, is a gentleman of more than ordinary intellect, and a good writer." Some measure of the respect accorded Lambdin, a Confederate veteran, by his colleagues can be gathered from the fact that they selected him to chair a meeting of Texas editors held in Houston in June 1869 and then picked him as the first vice-president of the newly organized Texas Press Association. Lambdin was probably related to George Lambdin, who published a paper at Waco in the 1850s.<sup>7</sup>

Also working with Lambdin and Cunningham on the News-Letter was Franklin L. Denison, a native of Stonington, Connecticut. Denison, who had been born on 7 April 1831, had owned a paper in Mississippi before the Civil War, and shortly after the war he founded the Waco Register. Denison had married Lambdin's sister, Hannah, on 11 August 1859. Denison moved to Burleson County in 1877, where he purchased the Caldwell Eagle. He then went to Belton in 1879 and initiated the Courier, which soon burned. He next founded the Texas Farmer, which he sold, and then started the Belton Register. Denison died on 7 February 1889.<sup>8</sup>

Albert B. Cunningham, of the News-Letter, campaigned unsuccessfully for the Texas senate in the spring of 1869. Cunningham practiced law for a living and had his offices in the News-Letter building while he lived in Bryan. In August 1869 he became editor of a new paper in Robertson County titled the Calvert Tri-Weekly Enterprise. Cunningham wrote at least two poems, "The Dying Soldier Boy" and "The Soldier's Death," which both appeared in Allan's Lone Star Ballads. This book, "a collection of southern patriotic songs, made during Confederate times," was published in Galveston in 1874. After leaving the Brazos valley, Cunningham had quite a varied career. He continued his law practice in New Orleans for a period, and later served as editor of the St. Louis Globe Democrat. He later held the same office at the Washington Post, and after that served as editor of the Baltimore Herald. Cunningham was judge of the Baltimore Tax Appeal Court when he died in September 1915.<sup>9</sup>

### **The News-Letter Is Sold**

In August 1869 William Lambdin sold the News-Letter to Dr. W. H. Farner, an experienced journalist who had been born about 1813 in Kentucky.<sup>10</sup> The Galveston News reported on the change in ownership in this way:

The Bryan News-Letter of the 7<sup>th</sup> comes to us with the salutatory of W.H. Farner as the new editor and proprietor ... The News-Letter also contains a card from W. Lambdin, the late editor, who says he sold the office simply as a business transaction because there was not sufficient interest in the paper to warrant him in keeping it up, and it would necessarily have had to suspend.<sup>11</sup>

A Houston newspaper made these additional comments:

The Bryan News Letter has passed under the editorial control of Dr. W. H. Farner, an ex-Confederate but a sound and zealous Republican. His son, W. H. Farner, Jr., assumes the business management. Dr. Farner is an old editor, an able writer, and will bring the News Letter from out of the quagmire; and bogs of old foggy Democracy into which it had sunk so deeply through the agency of its former proprietors, into the front ranks of the army of progress. Democratic papers are dying and those of liberal ideas springing from their ashes. So mote it be.<sup>12</sup>

Local whites generally associated the Republican Party with the northern troops occupying the area, and many of the county's prominent citizens doubtless disliked Farner. Despite that, Farner claimed the business was doing well. In September, a Houston newspaper reported:

Dr. W. H. Farner, of the Bryan News-Letter, enlivened our sanctum by his presence a short time yesterday. We are glad to learn of the increased prosperity of the News-Letter since it passed under his control.<sup>13</sup>

However, the company quickly went broke under Farner's management. No doubt competition from the recently established Bryan Appeal was an important factor. In November, the Galveston News published this note:

W. H. Farner announces "the end" of his connection with the News-Letter, and of the News-Letter also, we imagine, as that journal is advertised to be sold under a deed of trust Monday – tomorrow.<sup>14</sup>

At the auction, Lambdin was able to buy the News-Letter for \$2100 less than he had sold it for to Farner only a few months earlier. Lambdin may have purchased that equipment intending to use it in conjunction with running the Appeal, or perhaps he wanted to keep it out of the hands of any possible competition.<sup>15</sup>

## **The Bryan Appeal**

William Lambdin founded the Bryan Appeal of 1869. In September of that year, the Galveston News reported:

We had the pleasure of meeting this morning with our friend, W. Lambdin, late editor of the Bryan News-Letter. Mr. Lambdin is on his way to New Orleans to purchase printing material to start a new paper for Bryan, to be called The Bryan Appeal. It will be tri-weekly, at least during the campaign, and will support the Hamilton ticket. We wish it success.<sup>16</sup>

Lambdin wasted no time, for his new paper "hit the streets" by the second week in October. The Galveston News said this about the Appeal:

We have received the first issue of the Bryan Tri-Weekly Appeal, W. Lambdin and J. H. Henderson, editors. It is printed on new type and presents a very neat typographical appearance. Its editorials give evidence of ability and independence. The following is the conclusion of its salutatory:

We believe in the adoption of the constitution and the election of A. J. Hamilton lies our speediest return to the Union, and once within the fold, we will be in a condition to redress some of the wrongs of which we complain. To that great end we intend to labor with all the zeal and capacity that God and nature has given us; and we call upon our fellow-citizens, far and near, to come up and assist us in this laudable undertaking; and if our united efforts shall be crowned with the fruition of victory, then indeed will a new song be put into our mouths, even the song of our deliverance.<sup>17</sup>

The Appeal came out three times a week, and annual subscriptions cost \$3. Lambdin and John Nathaniel Henderson were partners in its operation. Henderson, born on 26 February 1843 in South Carolina, moved to Texas with his family in 1846. During the Civil War Henderson served in Hood's Texas Brigade, and, after the end of that conflict, he attended Baylor University, where he received a law degree. Henderson eventually achieved prominence in the field of jurisprudence. Local voters elected him Bryan District Attorney in 1874 and state senator in 1880. After being appointed district judge in 1880, Henderson was elected to that post in 1888. Henderson was made associate justice of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in November 1894. He died in Dallas on 22 December 1907.<sup>18</sup>

In February 1870, Lambdin managed to raise a bit of cash by selling some surplus equipment. The Galveston News reported at that time that Mr. W. J. Bocker had purchased the "printing material" of the Bryan News-Letter and moved it to Gatesville to start the Coryell Frontiersman. Doubtless that was the older equipment that had earlier been used to print the Appeal.<sup>19</sup>

Lambdin moved to Waco by 1879, when he became business manager of the Daily Sun. Lambdin's son made news in 1897 by killing the Kivett brothers at Waco, apparently in self defense. The elder Lambdin died on 5 November 1925, in McLennan County.<sup>20</sup>

## The Appeal Changes Hands

Early in 1870, Judge R. J. Smith, an experienced journalist, purchased the Appeal. At that time the paper had a circulation of 600 subscribers. Smith had been born in Logan County, Kentucky, on 23 December 1819. Smith, only thirteen when his father died, was faced with supporting his mother and five younger siblings. He became a printer's devil at a local newspaper, and his hard work was followed by a series of rapid promotions. Knowing the value of further education, Smith attended night school. His perseverance paid off, and by the time he was seventeen, he was editor of his own newspaper, the Russellville Herald. Although successful in his journalism career, Smith had further ambitions. He continued his studies, and when he was 28-years-old he was admitted to the bar as a practicing attorney. In the winter of 1869, Smith moved with his family to Bryan. Smith not only published the Bryan Appeal, but he also held the position of Bryan city secretary and recorder. He also supported the establishment of the Bryan public school system. Smith eventually moved to Burnet, Texas, where he died in February 1899.<sup>21</sup>

The Appeal supported the conservative, white Democratic Party, which ruffled a few feathers. In the fall of 1869, the Houston Union, a staunchly Republican newspaper, wrote:

Hamilton's election as Governor of Texas will be the signal for a reign of terror never paralleled even in the history of this prejudice-cursed State. The Ku-Klux organs even now conceal their hellish purposes. The Bryan Appeal, one of the vilest and most vindictive among them, in its last utters the following ominous sentence: "The only hope of the country is to elect Hamilton and the next sun that dawns upon Texas after the vote is announced will light up a land freed from carpet-baggers and all their damning influence. God speed the day!"<sup>22</sup>

In September 1870, the Union added:

We want a Republican paper in the judicial district embracing Bryan. We need a paper that is not subsidized by murderers and assassins. Let us have one as soon as possible. Nothing can ever be done in the way of ridding that fine country of the bloodshed that has disgraced it while such a leprous spot as the Bryan Appeal is allowed to exist.<sup>23</sup>

Politics wasn't the only topic on the mind of the Appeal's editor. In July 1870 an Idaho newspaper carried this story:

The Bryan (Texas) Appeal thanks God that it has heard of no Southern woman "perambulating the country with green spectacles and hermaphrodite apparel preaching 'woman's rights,' 'free love' and 'spiritualism,'" as it has often seen "those lantern-jawed, thin-shanked, and forked-tongued women do who hail from that region where of

Boston is the social center."<sup>24</sup>

Newspaper editors had no problem speaking their minds in those days.

A man named Charles Evans became associated with the Appeal at some point. Evans was a 28-year-old lawyer originally from Mississippi. In February 1871 the Galveston News stated:

We were gratified yesterday, to meet Mr. Charles J. Evans, of that excellent interior journal the Bryan Appeal. Mr. Evans is in Galveston in the interest of his journal. We hope that his visit will be both pleasant and profitable.<sup>25</sup>

Evans had been living in Burleson County when the Civil War broke out. He enlisted in the Second Texas Infantry. He moved to Bryan after the war, and then in 1872 relocated to Austin. He eventually settled in Dallas. In 1884 he was appointed judge of the forty-second judicial district of Texas.<sup>26</sup>

By 1873 George Iverson Goodwin had joined R. J. Smith in editing the Appeal. Goodwin was married to Smith's sister. The paper then came out on Fridays. At that time Goodwin, Smith and a man named W. H. Martin were partners in the Texas Land Agency at Bryan. Evidently it was necessary to supplement the revenue they got from the paper with some other income.<sup>27</sup>

The Bryan Appeal began daily publication in February 1875, as the first daily paper ever published in Brazos County.<sup>28</sup>

After six years of owning the Appeal, Smith sold it in 1876 to Sam Hunter, a native of Tennessee. The Appeal may have been having financial difficulties at that time, for there are three different mortgages on file relating to that paper dating from the first half of 1876. Hunter was active in the local council of the Patrons of Husbandry, or Grange as they were more commonly known, and served as the secretary of its executive council in Bryan in 1875. Hunter was also a member of the Odd Fellows and the Masons.<sup>29</sup>

### **Colonel William Falconer**

Colonel William Joshua Falconer, a native of Alabama, joined the staff of the Appeal in March 1875. Falconer had quite a colorful life. He was born in Huntsville, Alabama in 1827. He was the son of Joshua and Lucy (Irby) Falconer. Falconer lived in Shreveport, Louisiana, from 1846 to 1849, where he worked on a newspaper. By 1860, Falconer was back in Alabama, where he owned property valued at \$90,000. After the war Falconer served as a tax collector, built a large store, and helped establish an Episcopal Church. He also served as editor of the Montgomery Ledger for a few months in 1865. Falconer wrote a novel titled Bloom and Brier; or, As I Saw It, Long Ago, which was published in 1870.<sup>30</sup>

Falconer may have left Alabama under a cloud. In 1875, an east Texas newspaper asked whether Colonel Falconer of Bryan was "the same fellow who robbed the city or county of Montgomery, Alabama, of \$19,000, fled to Florida, and to escape a requisition came to Texas."<sup>31</sup>

Colonel Falconer was in Texas by 1873, when he bought the Ellis County News in Waxahachie. After the purchase, he moved the paper to Ennis and renamed it the Ennis News. Falconer left the Appeal in October 1876 for unknown reasons. By April 1877 Falconer was in Pensacola, Florida, taking care of "private business." In June 1877 Falconer's daughter Lucy married Guy M. Bryan, Jr. in the town of Bryan.<sup>32</sup>

Falconer returned to Brazos County a few years later. While in Brazos County Falconer participated in politics and civic affairs. He served as the first secretary of the board of directors of Texas A&M University. In 1882 Falconer was precinct chairman for the Democrats at Millican. By 1884, Falconer was heading the Democratic Executive Committee of Brazos County. In 1891 Falconer purchased an interest in the Brazos Pilot. He also worked for the Bryan Eagle for a time.<sup>33</sup>

Albert Buchanan, who worked with Falconer in the 1890s, described him in this way:

Small of stature, but with his long, silver hair hanging over his shoulders, and his strong face, he was indeed a picturesque character.<sup>34</sup>

By 1895 Falconer was editing The People, a "silver paper," published in Bryan. In August 1896, Falconer briefly moved back to Alabama, locating in the town of Evergreen. Falconer soon returned to Texas, settling first in Navasota and then in Calvert. Falconer died in Calvert on 17 February 1899 and was buried in the Bryan Cemetery the next day. He was 80 years old at the time of his death.<sup>35</sup>

## **Murder Rocks Bryan**

In the fall of 1876 Sam Hunter sold a partial interest in the Bryan Appeal to Carrick W. Crozier, Jr. and John B. Dale. Dale had previously edited the Bryan Post. The name of the Appeal changed at that time to the Bryan Appeal and Post, indicating that the two papers had merged.<sup>36</sup>

Misfortune soon befell the Appeal. The first tragedy occurred when Dale died on 28 December 1876, of natural causes. Dale's body was taken back to Ellis County, where he was buried in the Waxahachie city cemetery.<sup>37</sup> Although the paper survived this hardship, the next blow came on 1 March 1877, when Crozier killed Hunter. Here is how one paper described the events leading up to that crime:

C. W. Crozier, Jr., editor of the Bryan (Texas) Appeal, who killed Hunter, his former partner, was a native of Knoxville, Tenn. Hunter opened a private love letter of Mr. Crozier's during his absence, and showed the same on the street. Mr. Crozier, when he returned, confronted Mr. Hunter and informed him that he intended to take action against him for



opening his private letters. Hunter replied by cursing and striking, and Crozier returned the blow. Hunter then put his hand on his pocket, and as Crozier had been told that Hunter had threatened his life, he at once put his hand on his pistol. When Hunter began to draw out his hand Crozier fired and killed his antagonist.<sup>38</sup>

While the first trial resulted in a mistrial, a later jury acquitted Crozier of the murder charge. Apparently the murder and resulting disorder proved too much for the business, for the Appeal suspended publication by the end of May, 1877. The paper's assets were sold at a trustee's sale for \$100 to the firm of Davis, Beall and Taliaferro. That firm then sold the Appeal to R. M. Smith, of the Brazos Pilot. Thus, when the Bryan Eagle later purchased the Pilot, it established a link through the Pilot to the Appeal, and then back to the first paper published in Brazos County, the News-Letter. After his trial, Crozier left the area. By 1883 he was editor of the Big Spring Pantagraph. In 1887, he founded a paper titled Public Opinion in San Antonio. He later moved to New Mexico, and in 1909 founded the Haileyville Signal in Oklahoma.<sup>39</sup>

### **The First Brazos Eagle**

In the summer of 1870, Dr. Rensselaer R. Gilbert founded the Brazos Eagle. Gilbert, a New York native who had been born about 1821, was well qualified to run the paper. Before founding the Eagle, he had owned and edited the Crockett Journal, and still earlier, he had founded the Texas Weekly Record in Houston during the spring of 1865. During the Civil War Gilbert served as a war correspondent for the Houston Telegraph, writing under the well known pseudonym, "High Private." His war columns were collected in a book titled High Private's Confederate Letters. Gilbert operated the Brazos Eagle in conjunction with Henry Alonzo "Lon" Moore.<sup>40</sup>

In June 1870, the Galveston News had this to say about the new paper:

Brazos Eagle – A handsome tri-weekly paper bearing this title has just been started at Bryan, Texas, by R. R. Gilbert, Esq. It will be independent in politics, giving all parties a piece of its mind as occasion may serve, and will especially endeavor to be first-rate in the news and commercial line. The editor has had much experience, and this number of the Eagle bears evident marks of his well-known ability and enterprise.<sup>41</sup>

The Dallas Herald added:

We have received the first number of the Tri-Weekly Brazos Eagle, published at Bryan, Texas, by R. R. Gilbert (High Private). The editor says the Eagle will not be a political or religious paper, but will be a news and commercial sheet adapted to the local wants of the community. The Doctor can, and no doubt will, make an excellent paper.<sup>42</sup>

Like editors everywhere, Gilbert constantly sought ways to expand his paper's circulation. In September, 1870, the Galveston News noted:

Two columns of that handsome paper, the Brazos Eagle, at Bryan, are now devoted to Masonic matters, under the editorship of George I. Goodwin, M. E. H. P. of W. T. Austin Chapter No. 87, and the Hon. Wm. P. Taylor, P. G. M. of Crockett.<sup>43</sup>

The Masonic Lodge was, of course, one of the most influential fraternal organizations in nineteenth century America.

Next to nothing is known about the buildings which housed the first newspapers in Brazos County. An inspection made by the Bryan fire department notes that in December 1870 the Brazos Eagle office had three flues "in good condition." At least that building seems to have been well heated.<sup>44</sup>

The Houston Union further praised the Eagle in December 1870, saying:

The Brazos Eagle, published at Bryan, is without doubt one of the best advertising mediums in the interior. It is the official organ of the 28<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, and circulates throughout Brazos, Burleson and Milam counties; consequently it reaches many whose trade is worth soliciting. Our merchants and manufacturers should bear this fact in mind.<sup>45</sup>

The Union firmly approved of the Eagle's political philosophy. In March 1871 that paper wrote:

Mr. H. A. Moore, of the Bryan Eagle, gave us a call yesterday. His paper is an excellent journal, and soundly Republican. It is edited with taste and ability.<sup>46</sup>

For a while the Eagle, with its two owners, had a rather two-faced political outlook. Local residents responded to this strange arrangement by calling the paper a "political hermaphrodite." Years later here is how one person described the paper's editorial leanings:

Dr. R. R. Gilbert, known everywhere as "High Private," commenced the publication of the Brazos Eagle and soon sold an interest to the well and kindly remembered Lon Moore. Moore and Gilbert soon differed about the political policy of the paper, and a novel feature of the last few months of its existence was the fact that Gilbert ran his half of the sheet as a roaring Democratic organ while Moore conducted his part with equal zeal in the Republican cause.<sup>47</sup>

Actually, the interviewee's memory was not entirely accurate. In September 1871, Gilbert bought Moore's interest in the paper and ran it as a Democratic paper for a few months. The Eagle ceased publication early in 1872. In February of that year

William K. Homan purchased the paper's printing equipment, to use it in publishing the Marlin Telegram.<sup>48</sup>

After Gilbert left Brazos County, he continued his career in journalism. By the fall of 1872 he was connected with the Houston Age. In October 1875 Gilbert founded the Bremond Sentinel, and by 1880 he owned and edited the Freedmen's Journal in Palestine. In 1882 he briefly edited the Parker County Herald. By December 1885, Gilbert was editing two popular columns, "Walkabout" and "Texas Tidings," in the Austin Daily Statesman. By 1893 or 1894 Gilbert held the position of Exchange Editor for the Galveston News. In January 1895 he published the first issue of The New South, a monthly magazine, also in Galveston. Gilbert stated that the publication was to be non-sectarian and non-partisan, with annual subscriptions costing \$2. Gilbert died in October 1899.<sup>49</sup>

In 1870 the Brazos Eagle was appointed one of the official state newspapers, giving it a fairly lucrative source of income. H. A. Moore was not only one of the proprietors of the Eagle, but he also served as a Bryan alderman in 1870 and as Bryan postmaster from 1871 to 1877, all of which indicate that he was a well respected member of the Republican Party. Moore had been born in 1848 in New Jersey. He listed his occupation as "printer" in the 1870 Brazos County census. He was the brother of C. Frank Moore who was the Brazos County District and County Clerk in 1870. H. A. Moore died at his brother Frank's home in Bryan in 1883.<sup>50</sup>

William Kercheval Homan, who purchased the Eagle's printing equipment, was quite an interesting character. A Tennessee native, Homan married Virginia Broaddus, a Bryan resident, in August 1875. He served as state representative from Burleson County in the late 1870s and early 1880s, and renewed his ties to Brazos County in 1884 when he served as editor of the Temperance Banner. While living in Caldwell, Homan held the position of Burleson county attorney. In September 1886, the state prohibition convention offered Homan, then a resident of Caldwell, the nomination for associate justice of the Texas Supreme Court. Homan declined the nomination. In 1888 he moved to Dallas and served as the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Texas. Homan was a minister in the Christian Church and from 1888 to 1901 edited the church organ, The Christian Courier. He died in Colorado City, Texas, on 12 April 1908.<sup>51</sup>

## **The Bryan Post**

The Bryan Post began publication in 1875. It was printed on equipment that had formerly been used by the Groesbeck Clarion. One paper welcomed the Post's arrival, saying, "The Bryan Post is ... one of the most skillfully edited papers on our exchange table." The Post was published once a week, on Thursdays, and subscriptions cost \$2 a year. John B. Dale, its publisher, had been born about 1849 in Mississippi. Research has not disclosed when or where Dale began his journalism career, but by 1870 he was working as a printer in Ellis County, Texas. In 1873 Dale purchased the Waxahachie Democrat in that same county. Fire destroyed this paper, and by 1875 Dale had moved to Bryan. Dale doubtless knew William Falconer in Ellis

County, and it seems likely that there was more than coincidence involved in their moving to Brazos County at about the same time. Not surprisingly, the Post and the Appeal sometimes quarreled. In February 1875, for example, the Appeal accused the Post of "stealing" another paper's editorials. The Post suspended publication from July to October 1875, to make unspecified repairs. As noted above, the Post and the Appeal eventually merged. Dale died in 1876, being less than 30 years old at the time of his death.<sup>52</sup>

Another prominent journalist started his newspaper career in the 1870s. George Iverson Goodwin had worked in the newspaper business at least as early as 1870, when he wrote a column on Masonic affairs for the Brazos Eagle. Goodwin was born in Americus, Georgia, on 1 August 1835, and he and his family moved to Grimes County, Texas, when he was ten years old. After serving in the Civil War, Goodwin located in Bryan, where he practiced law for about ten years. His third wife was Sallie Smith, sister of Judge R. J. Smith who published the Bryan Appeal. Curiously, all of Goodwin's wives were named Sallie. Goodwin was among the organizers of the Texas Odd Fellow's University and Orphan's Home in Bryan in 1870. By April 1872 Goodwin was listed as an editor of the Bryan Appeal, along with Judge Smith. Goodwin Hall on the Texas A&M University campus was named after the early journalist, largely due to his efforts on behalf of the fledgling college during his tenure as state legislator in 1874 and 1875.<sup>53</sup>

In February 1875 the Patrons of Husbandry met in Bryan and recommended the establishment of a Grange newspaper in Texas. A few days later, Goodwin announced that he would start such a paper, to be titled the Rural Texan. In July 1875 Goodwin made a deed of trust (mortgage) on the equipment used in printing the Rural Texan, including one Fairhaven brand power press, "bed size 31x46." In January 1878, R. M. Smith, Goodwin's nephew by marriage, offered to take over the publishing of the paper. Goodwin eventually moved to Brownwood, in north central Texas. Like many journalists, Goodwin was apparently something of a poet. One of his poems, "Old Time Confederates," appeared in the Confederate Veteran magazine in 1900. That verse was intended to be sung to the tune of "Old-Time Religion." George Goodwin died in Brown County, Texas, on 26 October 1916.<sup>54</sup>

### **The Brazos Pilot**

The founding of the Brazos Pilot set the stage for a third member of the Smith-Goodwin family to become prominent in local journalism. Richard M. Smith, a Kentucky native born about 1851, established the Hearne Argus in Robertson County in the fall of 1876, and early in 1877 he started the Brazos Pilot in Bryan. Smith was the son of R. J. Smith and the nephew of George I. Goodwin, whose careers have already been chronicled. The younger Smith edited the Pilot from 1877-1882, and again from 1886-1889. He returned once more to the Pilot in the early 1890s.<sup>55</sup>

Smith sold his interest in the business in 1882, and Luther W. Clark replaced him as editor. Clark had been born in Hardeman County, Tennessee, in 1854. Like Smith, Clark was a practicing attorney, and when he purchased the Pilot, Clark held the

office of Brazos County Attorney. At the time of the sale, Smith described Clark as "a gentleman of clever capacity as a writer, combining the essential elements of sound discretion, spice and individuality, eminently conservative, and very proper withal." He was joined by his brother, Joe W. Clark, in running the Pilot. Clark sold the paper back to Smith in January 1886. Clark then moved to Dallas, where he purchased an interest in the Dallas Herald. In 1889 he joined the editorial staff of the Dallas Morning News. In 1900 Clark became editor in chief of the Galveston and Dallas News, the largest and most influential newspapers in Texas at that time. He held that post until his death in 1919.<sup>56</sup>

Like many other papers of the day, the Brazos Pilot relied on contract printing jobs to augment its revenues. The paper published, for example, the first catalog for Texas A&M, as well as other items for the college. The Pilot also printed smaller specialty jobs. From 1879 to 1882, that paper printed funeral notices for at least 29 different people. It also printed advertisements for a local school on two occasions. One of the more intriguing jobs was the printing of 500 "ballads" for the Reverend F. L. Lights, a local African American minister.<sup>57</sup>

The Pilot was by no means the only local paper to print specialty items. The program for the inauguration of Texas A&M in October 1876 was published by the Appeal and Post Book and Job Printing Establishment.<sup>58</sup>

Not surprisingly, the newly established Pilot did not get along well with its older rival, the Appeal. One paper described their competition in this way:

There are two papers in Bryan now, and they quarrel with and tell tales on each other, like a brace of ill-tempered children.<sup>59</sup>

Little is known about the people who worked for the Brazos Pilot. One of its writers was Professor W. H. Colman, principal of the Bryan Female Institute, who wrote the paper's educational column.<sup>60</sup> The first known female member of a newspaper's editorial staff in Brazos County also worked for the Pilot. In 1888, the Brenham Banner reported:

Miss Lou Ware is now the local editor for the Brazos Pilot, and she makes her department fairly sparkle.<sup>61</sup>

Ware, a native of Georgia, had been born about 1865. The 1900 census lists her occupation simply as "literature."<sup>62</sup>

Under Luther Clark's direction, the Pilot reached a milestone late in 1882. Here is how that paper described Clark's accomplishment:

Perhaps for the first time in the newspaper history of Brazos County, she has a newspaper entirely free from debt. The Pilot owes no man anything.<sup>63</sup>

One of the best, or at least the funniest, retractions ever written was penned by the Gatesville Advance in 1885. It simply said: "The Bryan Pilot is not a skunk." Research has not revealed any details about the nature of the Gatesville paper's original disagreement with the Pilot.<sup>64</sup>

In December 1878, the first newspaper was founded at Texas A&M. At that time the Austin and Calliopean Literary Societies began publishing a paper titled the Texas Collegian. This journal was published only for a short time.<sup>65</sup>

The earliest magazine published in Brazos County may have been the Voice of the People. This monthly religious magazine appeared in Bryan in 1879 and continued operation until at least 1885. Rev. F. M. Law, a Baptist minister, was either the editor or publisher of this magazine. In 1879 he paid to have 3000 copies of the magazine printed.<sup>66</sup>

Bryan may have had an African American newspaper in 1881. If so, it was short lived. The only reference to it is this brief notice in a Dallas paper:

Bryan is soon to have a newspaper published by John N. Johnson, a colored man, which is to be devoted to the interests of the colored race.<sup>67</sup>

Johnson was a school teacher and later became Bryan's first African American lawyer. By 1883 he was writing for an African American newspaper in Austin.<sup>68</sup>

### **The Mysterious Blades**

A newspaper promoting religion began publication in Bryan in April 1882. Little is known about this paper except its name, the Battle Blade. It may have been related to another newspaper called the Brazos Blade, which appeared in Bryan on 5 February 1886. At that time its editor was Z. W. Richardson. These may have been two unrelated publications.<sup>69</sup>

Complicating matters further is the fact that by 1887 there was a paper in Bryan called the Texas Blade. It is unclear whether this newspaper had any connection to the earlier paper (or papers) with similar names. The Texas Blade, supporting the labor movement, came out once a week on Thursdays, and an annual subscription cost \$1.50. In June 1887 the Galveston News reported that the Texas Blade had undergone a change in ownership. Mr. I. H. Newton, the junior partner, sold his interest to Captain D. D. Dawson, the Brazos County sheriff. Like most of the other early area journalists, Dawson had served in the Confederate army during the Civil War. In November or December 1887 the Texas Blade and the Brazos Pilot merged, the papers continuing under the name of the Pilot.<sup>70</sup>

As if all of this were not confusing enough, on at least six occasions from 1886 to 1887, the Dallas Morning News referred to a paper it called the Bryan Blade. Maybe this was yet another name change, or perhaps the Dallas paper was just being

careless. This is why historians get gray hair.<sup>71</sup>

As early as October 1882 an additional newspaper was being proposed for Brazos County. The Galveston News said, "There is a move on foot to start another county paper in Bryan, and it is to be thoroughly Democratic from heart to bark." The new paper, the Bryan Enterprise appeared soon afterwards. John W. Doremus was initially associated with the paper, but he left it in May 1883. In December 1883, the paper's editor George L. Smedley, who had replaced Doremus, got married. One paper had this to say about that event: "The bride received a large number of handsome presents, and those present were handsomely entertained with choice music and a table laden with the richest delicacies." Smedley had been working as a printer in Bryan in 1880, most likely for the Brazos Pilot. Apparently the Bryan Enterprise prospered. About the same time that Smedley got married, the Galveston News noted that although the Enterprise was scarcely a year old, it would abandon its patent outside. In April 1885, J. W. Phillips took over as editor. Oliver B. Huckabee bought the paper about the time that Phillips took charge. Huckabee had earlier worked as a printer for the Brazos Pilot. Smedley later worked as a journalist in Louisiana.<sup>72</sup>

In January 1886 the Dallas Morning News reported that R. M. Smith had purchased the Enterprise from O. B. Huckabee. The Enterprise was then merged with the Brazos Pilot, and O. B. Huckabee went back to work for the Pilot. Huckabee's brother, Edgar C. Huckabee had been associated with the Pilot in 1879 and 1880. Edgar had started his newspaper career as a printer in Bryan at the age of 12, but the name of the paper that employed him is not known. Edgar went on to found the Waxahachie Mirror in 1881. By 1890 O. B. Huckabee had joined his brother at the Mirror. Edgar Huckabee later moved to Corsicana, where he worked for the Corsicana Daily Sun.<sup>73</sup>

### **The Temperance Banner**

Originally founded in Caldwell, Texas, the Temperance Banner moved to Bryan late in 1884. In November of that year W. K. Homan became one of the paper's editors. The paper was the "official organ of the United Friends of Temperance" in Texas, with a stated goal of suppressing "the legalized liquor traffic in our land." In January 1885, a Galveston paper had this to say about the Banner:

The Bryan Temperance Banner has adopted a patent inside, and says: "With the new year we send out the Banner, in a new dress, which we hope and believe will meet the approval of our patrons. We make this change and improvement on our faith in the temperance people of Texas, believing that they will sustain a first class paper, and such we intend the Banner shall be." The Banner prints advertisements of Herb bitters, Hop bitters, Iron bitters, Prickly Ash and Hostetter's bitters. The later is a favorite tipple of some toppers, and if alcohol is not a leading ingredient in the others, those who take them are badly fooled. Webster's dictionary defines bitters as "a liquor, generally spirituous,

in which bitter herbs or roots are steeped.”<sup>74</sup>

The Temperance Banner had serious financial problems through the years. In February 1885 the newspaper was reduced in size to a four column, eight page paper. Rev. J. L. Lemons, another editor, stated that he was once reduced to a diet of "bread, molasses, and water." The Banner's opposition to many popular vices may have had something to do with its troubles. In August 1885 the paper announced that it favored the inauguration of a crusade against smoking. Then, in September, the Temperance Banner achieved widespread notoriety when newspapers across the state reported that Lemons had viciously attacked Senator Richard Coke, calling him "an emissary of Hell." Lemons quickly pointed out that the Prohibition Advocate, a Dallas paper, had made the statement and that Lemons had nothing to do with it. At about the same time, the Temperance Banner and the Gatesville Advocate announced that they would merge. Apparently the results were unsatisfactory, for by October of that year Lemons announced that he had severed his connections with the Gatesville paper.<sup>75</sup>

Another paper was being published in Bryan by January 1885. Titled the Star and Crescent, this weekly paper was edited by the Rev. J.W. Phillips and a Mr. Billington. It was said to be devoted to "the farm and household, science, and religion." Phillips was the same man who also edited the Bryan Enterprise, and those two papers merged later in 1885.<sup>76</sup>

### **A Paper for the Czechs**

Bryan also had a Czech newspaper in the 1880s. In La Grange in February 1879, F. J. Glueckmann founded the Texan, the first Czech language newspaper in Texas. In July 1879 Frank Lidiak purchased the weekly paper and renamed it Slovan. This publication included fiction, information on laws, customs of the people, and other important subjects. The newspaper remained in La Grange, and Josef Cada purchased it there in 1885. Under Cada, the paper began issuing a supplement titled Cesko-slovansky Rolnik v Texasu (the Czecho-Slavonic farmer in Texas). The magazine became a separate publication in 1887 and continued operation until 1889.<sup>77</sup>

In 1886 controversy forced the paper to relocate from La Grange. Problems began when the Slovan criticized Fayette County Judge Augustine Haidusek over his requiring that all public schools be conducted entirely in English. That action angered many in the Czech community. That conflict led to Haidusek founding a rival Czech paper in La Grange. While the Slovan's editor Cada and Haidusek were locked in a bitter competition for readers, Cada suffered an unfortunate lapse in editorial judgment; he published an article comparing Czech and native American women. Cada described the Czechs as being industrious and virtuous, while the Americans were said to be lazy and sometimes immoral. Haidusek translated the article into English and gave copies to local English language newspapers. The resulting scandal forced Cada to move his paper to Bryan in May 1886. Later that year he sold it to Edward A. Krall.<sup>78</sup>



Controversy again reared its head after The Slovan relocated to Bryan. In July 1886 the Galveston News carried this story:

The La Grange Journal prints the proceedings of a meeting of the Bohemian citizens of Bluff and Cedar neighborhoods. The meeting adopted some very stringent resolutions relative to J. S. Cada, editor of the Slovan, formerly of La Grange, but now published at Bryan. The following was among the resolutions adopted by the meeting:

The communities in which the Slovan is being circulated have been poisoned by that paper to such an extent that instead of peace and harmony, discord, hate and quarrels prevail among neighbors and families; therefore we declare and pronounce the Slovan to be an infamous sheet. That its sole purpose is to subserve evils and dishonesty. We further pronounce the paper to be revolutionary in its tendencies, whose object it has been to destroy family relations and sow discord among our people. We pronounce it to be the equal of other anarchistic sheets of this country.<sup>79</sup>

Cada quickly responded to the meeting's actions. In August of that year the LaGrange Journal carried this story:

Forty-five citizens, Bohemians, of residents of Bluff neighborhood, in this county, were arrested last week by Sheriff Rankin on warrants issued from the County Court of Brazos County. The parties gave bond for their appearance at the October term of said court. It will be remembered by our readers that an indignation meeting was held on the bluff a few weeks ago, by the Bohemians, and strong resolutions passed condemning the course of J. S. Cada, editor of the Slovan. He, smarting under the resolutions, resolved to get even, and, in order to do so filed information in the County Court of Brazos County, against the signers of the resolutions and had warrants issued for their arrest. His object is to annoy and harass them by taking them from their homes and families and subjecting them to expenses in attending court in a distant county.<sup>80</sup>

The outcome of this controversy has not been determined.

### **Prohibition Controversy Heats Up**

In 1887, Brazos County residents became embroiled in a statewide debate over the sale of alcohol. That year Texas voters were faced with an election concerning an amendment that would ban the sale of alcohol in the state. The Slovan joined the Brazos Pilot in opposing prohibition, while the Blade supported the amendment. The public's reaction to the Slovan's action is not recorded, but many of the people favoring prohibition did vow to boycott the Pilot. Their actions did not, however, have

any long term effect on the paper. Here is what the Pilot had to say about the uproar:

Several subscribers have already had their names taken off the Pilot books on account of our opposition to the prohibition amendment, and we learn from friends that others say they intend to follow suit. We have been warned that our position on this subject will cost us five hundred subscribers before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of August. We will make no appeal in this connection to the lovers of American liberty – personal liberty, religious freedom, freedom of speech and of the press, to rally our standard. Such an appeal is not necessary. The spirit of justice is not dead, and does not slumber.<sup>81</sup>

The Czech-immigrant readers of the Slovan likely were less inclined to support the prohibition amendment than their English speaking neighbors.

In 1887, the Austrian government revoked the privilege of three American newspapers to circulate through its mails without prepayment. The Slovan was one of those papers. No explanation for the government's action has been found, but this does prove that some copies of the Slovan were being mailed back to the Czech homeland.<sup>82</sup>

The first editor of the Slovan was Hugo Chotek, who was followed by Josef Bunata. The Galveston News noted the illness of Bunata in October 1888. In that year the Slovan had a circulation of over 750. It came out once a week on Wednesdays, and an annual subscription cost \$2.50. When the Slovan ceased publication in December 1889, it was the property of a corporation, whose officers were Edward Krall, Frank Stasny, William Frankel, and V. C. Marek. Bunata described his experiences in editing the paper at some length, as well as his thoughts on its financial problems. He also noted that when the Slovan closed, its creditors took the old bound issues of the paper to a vacant lot, where they were burned. J. Drozda was the last editor of the paper. Drozda moved to Houston, where he later edited another Czech newspaper. The owners of the Slovan became embroiled in a lawsuit which lasted from October 1889 until February 1891. The case primarily involved a dispute over mortgaged property, including a printing press made by the Campbell Company.<sup>83</sup>

In 1887, Amos W. Buchanan, another area journalist, represented Brazos County in the state legislature. Buchanan had attended Texas A&M for one year and was probably the first Aggie to serve as a state legislator. He may also have been the first Aggie to edit a Brazos County newspaper not connected with the college. Buchanan held the position of editor and publisher of the Brazos Pilot. Buchanan served as Bryan postmaster from 1898 to 1900, and later served as Brazos County extension agent. Afterwards he held the post of District Agent for the Extension Service for east Texas.<sup>84</sup>

In May 1888, Brazos County Sheriff D. D. Dawson, one of the shareholders of the Brazos Pilot bought out the stock of R. M. Smith. Smith had been the majority

stockholder. Newspaper notices stated that "Mr. Smith has no further connection in any way with the Brazos Pilot."<sup>85</sup>

In May 1889, William D. Cox bought a half interest in the Brazos Pilot from Dawson. Cox had been born in Fayette County, Texas, in 1862. Before purchasing the Pilot, Cox had owned the Temple Times. In December 1889 Cox sold James H. Admire 1/6 of the Pilot. Less than a year later, in September 1890, Cox disposed of the rest of his ownership and purchased the Bryan Eagle. Later, he served as secretary of the Texas Press Association. When he retired from journalism, Cox became a traveling salesman for a typesetting machine company.<sup>86</sup>

Although a number of Confederate veterans had been involved in local journalism, James Admire was unusual, perhaps uniquely so, in that he had served in the Union army. After leaving Brazos County he may have worked on a paper in Indian Territory. When he died in November 1904 in Fort Worth, he left a daughter who was an actress in Buffalo, New York, and a brother in Kingfisher, Oklahoma.<sup>87</sup>

### **The Bryan Eagle**

Richard M. Smith established the Bryan Eagle as a weekly publication on Thursday, 24 October 1889. On the front page of that paper's first issue was an original poem praising the new paper, which wound up, "Now speak, proud bird of Jove, and tell ... what is the news from Heaven and Hell." The Eagle eventually became the longest running and most influential newspaper ever published in Brazos County. The business, which had no connections to the earlier Brazos Eagle, originally occupied the site on Main Street where Woolworth's later stood. Smith owned the Eagle for only a short period, and on 25 September 1890, William D. Cox purchased the paper and became its editor. The early Eagle strongly supported the Democratic Party. It also backed the "White Man's" movement in politics and opposed the election of African Americans to local office. The Pilot treated political and racial issues somewhat more even handedly but still routinely endorsed the all-white Democratic candidates.<sup>88</sup>

Richard Smith had quite a political career. He ran for the state legislature several times. One of his more interesting defeats occurred in September 1890, when he withdrew from the contest for state senator at a local political convention on the 419th ballot. Local voters finally elected Smith as state representative in 1894, when he was again working for the Brazos Pilot. Upon his election, he severed his connections with that paper. In 1896 after serving one term as state representative, Smith ran for Brazos County Attorney but lost the election. In 1897 he moved to Wood County, where he founded the Winnsboro Free Press and the Wood County News. He served two terms as Wood County Judge and served for a time as judge of the Seventh District. Smith died in Wood County on 20 August 1935.<sup>89</sup>

### **More Papers Come and Go**

Any discussion of local publications must include those associated with Texas A&M.

Like the Eagle, the College Journal began publication in 1889. This monthly journal was not the first newspaper at A&M; recall that the Texas Collegian had appeared there in 1878. The Galveston News had this to say about the newly published College Journal:

No. 2 of the College Journal has reached the compiler of this column. It is published by the Austin and Calliopean societies of the Agricultural and Mechanical College, near Bryan. The editorial staff is a strong one, in numbers at least: John S. Radford, editor-in-chief; Major W. D. Bringhurst, supervising editor; Professor W. B. Philpott, alumni editor; C. S. Mitchell, Austin Society; J. H. Luckett, Austin Society; S. J. Herstadt, Calliopean Society; W. D. Anderson, Calliopean society.<sup>90</sup>

The College Journal ceased operation in February 1893.<sup>91</sup>

In 1890 the Millican News appeared. W. D. Ward, a former New Yorker, issued this newspaper on a weekly basis. The Millican News did not last long, and by 1891 Ward was editing the Reagan Herald. The reasons for the paper's failure remain unknown, but probably too few people lived in the Millican area at that time to support a newspaper. Shortly before World War I, the building where the News had been printed became the home of the new Millican telephone exchange, thus creating a continuity of sorts between an older form of communication and a newer one.<sup>92</sup>

Another publication started in the 1890s was the Brazos Farmer, serving the Farmers' Alliance of Brazos County. The Galveston News of 4 August 1892, reported, "Mr. W. L. Turner, one of the proprietors of the Brazos Farmer published in this city [Bryan], has bought out Mr. Chas. W. Pinkston's interest in that paper and will hereafter run it alone." Turner, a Brazos County native who had been born about 1861, began his journalism career by working for the Bryan Appeal in the 1870s. Issues of this paper dated 29 March and 5 July 1892 were removed from the cornerstone of the old Brazos County courthouse in 1954. By 1899 the Brazos Farmer had gone out of business, and Turner was employed by the Brazos Pilot. He eventually moved to Madisonville, where he purchased and edited the Madisonville Meteor. In April 1927, a train hit Turner in Madisonville, killing him instantly.<sup>93</sup>

### **The Southern Horticulturist**

An agricultural magazine also moved to Bryan in 1891. In July of that year the Dallas Morning News carried this story:

The Southern Horticulturist has been removed from Pilot Point to Bryan, Tex. Dr. A. M. Raglan of Pilot Point is still its editor, and William D. Cox, Bryan, the business manager. The paper has an able corps of contributors to its columns, and is doing much good in advancing the fruit interests of Texas.<sup>94</sup>

The newspaper wasted no time in trying to boost its circulation. An advertisement in

a Fort Worth paper read:

Canvasser – Wanted, live canvasser for the Southern Horticulturist and Farmer. Pay good. Address Wm. D. Cox, Business Manager, Bryan, Tex.<sup>95</sup>

A few weeks later, the paper announced that it would issue a special edition devoted to raising pecans, as shown in this advertisement:

Pecan Culture in the South – The Southern Horticulturist and Farmer, an elegantly printed and illustrated 16-page paper devoted to Horticulture, Floriculture, Poultry, Bees and the Home Circle, will issue a special 5,000 copy edition on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1891, devoted especially to Pecan Culture in the South, by writers of authority on the subject. Send 25 cents for three months' subscription including this number, or \$1 for a year. Address, Wm. D. Cox, Bus. Man., Bryan, Texas<sup>96</sup>

The Southern Horticulturist and Farmer came out monthly and was originally printed by the Eagle. After 1 February 1892, this magazine had its own printing equipment and was issued twice a month. Its equipment had formerly been used to print the Slovan. J. H. Admire headed the publishing department and also held stock in the company. During this period Admire was also a part owner in the Pilot Printing Company.<sup>97</sup>

The Methodist was the appropriate name of a church newspaper initiated in Bryan in 1892. This may have been little more than a church bulletin. Horatio Philpott, pastor of the Bryan Methodist Episcopal Church, edited the publication. A native of Huntsville, Alabama, Philpott died in College Station on 8 November 1900.<sup>98</sup>

### **The Battalion**

In 1893 students at Texas A&M began publishing a magazine titled The Battalion. The editor of the new paper promised to do everything in his power to make the newspaper "lively, interesting and instructive." Horatio Philpott's son, William B. Philpott, served as faculty advisor for the new paper. William had earlier served as the alumni editor of the College Journal. Beginning soon after the College Journal ceased, the first Battalions came out on a monthly basis. Since that time hundreds of future journalists have begun their careers by writing for the college newspaper. Weekly issues of The Battalion did not commence until 1903.<sup>99</sup>

A lawsuit involving the Brazos Pilot reached the Texas Supreme Court for the first time in 1893. Titled "Wynne v. Admire et al.," another lawsuit dealing with the same matters reached the court for a second time in 1896. These cases concerned G. A. Wynne, of Huntsville, and a whether a mortgage covering materials owned by the Pilot included the paper's printing press and job press.<sup>100</sup>

One other noteworthy change took place in 1893. In September of that year W. D.

Cox sold the Bryan Eagle to "Messrs. Philpott and Drake." It is not clear whether the "Philpott" referred to was W. B. Philpott or his father, Horatio. At the time of the sale, A. F. Drake took over the business management of the paper, while Malcolm Carnes remained the Eagle's editor.<sup>101</sup>

In 1894 B. L. Appleby founded the Texas Factotum in Bryan. His introductory editorial stated:

With our hat off we approach you through the medium of a newspaper, it being a forceful custom to indicate our tenets in a general way. We affirm ourselves to be of liberal religious notions and in politics to be a straight pocket and knee-breeches populist, the only party that represents the true Jeffersonian democratic principles. In the social and domestic realms we are in the most part neutral. We believe in one lawful wife and whatever number of children the size of the house will admit.<sup>102</sup>

This paper supported the Populist Party. Appleby later worked on the Marlin Ball and the Calvert Citizens-Democrat. The Texas Factotum changed its name to the Bryan Independent in July 1894. The Galveston News quoted that publication under the latter title in October and November of 1894. In April 1895, the Bryan Independent moved to Calvert and merged with the Citizen-Democrat there.<sup>103</sup>

Three important events occurred in local journalism in 1894. First, Albert J. Buchanan took over the management of the Brazos Pilot. Albert was the brother of Amos Buchanan, who had earlier been connected with the Pilot. Albert had begun his newspaper career in 1884, when he became the Bryan correspondent for the Houston Post and the Fort Worth Gazette. One of the more important assets Buchanan brought to the paper was his wife, Stella Allen Buchanan. Mrs. Buchanan had been born on 13 November 1869, at Lexington, Lee County, Texas. The future couple met when they were students at Baylor University. Mrs. Buchanan wrote for the Pilot and later the Eagle. She became a well known civic leader, and served as president of the Texas Women's Press Association, the National Women's Press Association, the Bryan Women's Club, the L. S. Ross Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and as secretary of the Brazos County Chapter of the American Red Cross.<sup>104</sup>

Even after Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Buchanan left the Eagle, the Buchanan family was represented on the newspaper's staff. Their daughter Gussie Buchanan Branch worked for the paper for thirty years, and served as its Society Editor from 1944 to 1959.<sup>105</sup>

The second significant change in 1894 involved the Eagle. By 15 November 1894, W. P. Connelly, Jesse A. Palmer, and Malcolm Carnes owned the Eagle, with Carnes holding the position of editor. At this time the company occupied the offices above the old E. J. Fountain grocery store on Main Street. Research has disclosed little about Connelly's subsequent career, but in 1913 he served as a co-publisher of the Hillsboro Dispatch.<sup>106</sup>

Palmer had been born in Athens, Texas, on 31 August 1875. Having worked on several newspapers before coming to Bryan, Palmer provided valuable experience and knowledge in operating the Eagle. When the Eagle bought the Madisonville Meteor, Turner moved to that city. After five years working for the Eagle publishing company, Palmer sold his interest in it and moved to Huntsville. There he established the Post and subsequently acquired the Huntsville Item. He then consolidated the papers into the Post-Item. Palmer exhibited a long time interest in Texas' prisons, and was made warden of the Texas State Prison at Rusk in August 1912.<sup>107</sup>

The third event took place in September 1894, when the Eagle published a special edition to promote the area. Here is how the Galveston News described that issue:

The Bryan Eagle has issued a large, handsome special trade edition of 60,000 copies, with illustrated write-ups of Bryan and Brazos County and of the leading business men of Bryan, Wellborn and Millican. The edition is the largest and best ever gotten out in the county.<sup>108</sup>

Readers surely wondered how the Eagle could ever top this accomplishment. The editors found a way, however. In September 1895 the Bryan Eagle and the Brazos Pilot joined together to produce a special issue promoting Bryan. Although newspapers of the day often printed special "booster" editions promoting particular cities, this issue differs from most others in that rival firms jointly published it. It also differed from most other newspapers in that it was printed on pink paper.<sup>109</sup>

The equipment used in printing newspapers could be dangerous, and workers were sometimes injured in accidents. For example, in 1894, a Galveston paper published a story from Bryan that said: "Clarence Pierson, a printer's apprentice, had his toe mashed off in a job press here yesterday." In 1904, an Eagle employee named Tommie Bookman had three fingers mangled while feeding one of that paper's presses.<sup>110</sup>

The Eagle introduced a daily edition, the Bryan Daily Eagle, on 3 December 1895. The paper had announced a daily edition early in 1894 but that had to be postponed. This was not the first daily publication printed in Bryan. The Bryan Appeal had issued its first daily edition in 1875, and the Eagle itself had experimented with a special "Daily Commencement Edition" during the week long festivities surrounding the Texas A&M graduation in June 1892.<sup>111</sup>

The new daily had a rough time surviving, and in January 1896 it suspended publication. Customer demand led to the resumption of the paper in a little over a week, however. The publisher seized that opportunity to change it from an afternoon paper to a morning one.<sup>112</sup>

### **Even More Papers**

In the spring of 1895 the Bryan Watchword, "a small religious paper for colored

Baptists," began publication in Bryan. Rev. R. M. Holmes was its editor. Apparently this paper did not stay in business very long, for by 1896 Holmes was running another newspaper.<sup>113</sup>

A newspaper known as the People was established in Bryan sometime in 1895. William Falconer, who had long been active in local journalism, edited this short-lived publication. R. M. Smith served as its business manager. The Burnett Bulletin had this to say about the new paper: "It is independent and free silver in politics and the editorials ring with eloquent conviction." The Bryan Populist absorbed the People in 1896.<sup>114</sup>

The Bryan Populist started publication in February 1896. The Populist Party was an important third party in American politics in the 1890s. B. H. Knowles edited the Populist, which had as its motto, "There should be no power greater than the people." Knowles, a long time Brazos County resident, had been born in Alabama in 1841. In 1894 he had unsuccessfully campaigned for state representative from Brazos County on the Populist ticket. Knowles suffered a personal tragedy when his wife died in December 1896.<sup>115</sup>

The Populist's board of directors consisted of S. D. A. Duncan, W. J. Brogden, John McCorquodale, B. H. Knowles, Jesse Peters, H. Crenshaw, Pinkney Barron, J. M. Zimmerman, J. S. Francis, John Wheeler, John Brodieke, George Graham, and A. M. Hughes.<sup>116</sup>

Knowles' writing style must have been unusual. When the Populist ceased publication in January 1898, the Caldwell News-Chronicle stated,

We shall miss the visits of the Populist as edited by Brother Knowles. It was like going to a first-class comic opera with your best girl. It was restful and refreshing. It was sublime. Sometimes it was amusing. Very often it called up thoughts and reveries of what might have been. But it is past; no more shall we have such pleasure, as certainly no other human being could write in Brother Knowles' inimitable style, depth, and pathos.<sup>117</sup>

Other political parties also had their own organs. The Bryan Republican was the name of an African American newspaper. Established in January 1896, this publication doubtlessly reflected the growing frustration of local African Americans with the various attempts to exclude them from social and political power. R. M. Holmes, publisher of the Bryan Republican, had earlier operated the Bryan Watchword. The Republican's editor was Dr. W. T. Green, also an African American. Dr. Green was murdered by Dr. J. S. Reid, also black, in June 1896. Reportedly that crime grew out of a dispute over an article in the paper.<sup>118</sup>

### **Wanted – A Live Young Man**

In November 1896, the Brazos Pilot advertised for a man to help run the paper. An



ad in the Houston Post read:

Wanted – A live young man to report and solicit for daily paper; will give right man half interest in the paper for his services; must be sober and a printer. Address The Pilot, Bryan, Texas.<sup>119</sup>

The response to that notice must have been overwhelming, for the Houston paper was soon sporting this letter from the Pilot's editor as an advertisement for the effectiveness of their want ads:

Office of the Brazos Pilot.  
Bryan, Texas, November 16, 1896

Houston Post, Houston, Texas.  
Please discontinue "want ad" for "Pilot." Seven men and a boy could not answer all the applications. A. J. Buchanan.<sup>120</sup>

In January 1897 the owners of the Bryan Eagle bought the Madisonville Meteor. Jesse Palmer moved to Madisonville and took over editing the Meteor. This eventually led to an unusual special issue. In 1898 the Eagle and the Meteor printed a combined edition promoting Brazos and Madison Counties. The co-operation of publications in two different counties on a promotional issue is highly unusual and perhaps even unique.<sup>121</sup>

Also in 1897 the Brazos Pilot began publishing a daily edition called the Evening Pilot. It was a four page paper, with subscriptions costing \$3.00 a year. No doubt the Pilot instituted a daily in response to the daily issued by its main competitor, the Eagle.<sup>122</sup>

The year 1898 saw the birth of another newspaper, the Brazos Blade. C. P. Winstead and M. L. Vaden published this paper with the equipment formerly used in printing the Bryan Populist. The owners stressed that the new paper would be independent in politics. The paper was published weekly, on Fridays, and an annual subscription cost 50 cents. The Brazos Blade had gone out of business by April 1899, when its printing press and other equipment were sold to start papers in Anderson and Oakwoods.<sup>123</sup>

Dona Coulter Carnes, wife of Malcolm Carnes, became social editor of the Eagle in 1901. Born on 15 September 1878 in Bryan, Dona Coulter married Malcolm Carnes on 24 April 1901. She held the position of social editor until 1930. Long active in civic affairs, a few of her many positions include president of the Texas Press Women, and member of numerous organizations, including the National Society of Arts and Letters, the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce, the Brazos County Red Cross (a charter member and held the post of secretary for 35 years). Dona Coulter Carnes died on 3 July 1980.<sup>124</sup>

Sometimes odd bits of information turn up, the meaning of which is not clear. Consider, for example, this advertisement that appeared in the Houston Post in 1900:

Wanted to Buy – A good second-hand vault door. Brazos Pilot, Bryan, Texas.<sup>125</sup>

No doubt there was a story behind the paper's desire, but no other reference to this has been found. This mystery is all too typical of the problems faced in documenting the history of local newspapers.

### **Religion's Impact**

One of the most important influences on local society was, of course, religion. In 1903 another church newspaper appeared in Bryan. The First Baptist Church issued the Baptist Bulletin, with Dr. W. C. Friley, pastor of the church, serving as editor. Well known in Texas, Friley had fought in the Confederate army and later served as the first president of Simmons University at Taylor. The Eagle described the publication as being "well gotten up and full of good reading material."<sup>126</sup>

Religion played a key role in 1903 when prohibition once again became a hotly debated topic in Brazos County. Two newspapers dealing with this subject appeared that year: the Brazos County Signal (prohibitionist) and the Brazos County Bulletin (anti-prohibitionist). Elijah Shettles, a Methodist minister, published and edited the Brazos County Signal. Predictably, the Signal emphasized religious values as important reasons for abstaining from liquor. The only surviving issue of the Bulletin does not list either its editor or publisher. Shettles' autobiography, Recollections of a Long Life, details the prohibition campaign. Despite the efforts of the prohibitionists, liquor remained available locally until national prohibition was enacted in 1919.<sup>127</sup>

The formation of a typographical union in Bryan in the spring of 1905 provides some rare details about local typesetters. Among the union members were W. C. Hardy, a 20-year-old who had been working at the trade for four years; A. Upshur, who had been a printer for 25 years; Oscar E. Minkert, 26, who had been employed six years; Tommie M. Bookman, aged 20, who had been working since he was 15; M. E. Wallace, 26-years-old, at work for fully half his life; W. Frank Miller, 38, a printer since he was 21; and Frank H. Selden, aged 37, at work 20 years. One is struck by the young age at which many of these men entered their profession.<sup>128</sup>

### **The Pilot Advertises**

In 1905 A. J. Buchanan, the owner of the Brazos Pilot, began looking for someone to buy a partial interest in his paper. In November, the following ad appeared in the Dallas Morning News, and probably other papers:

For Sale – Half interest in Brazos Pilot, one of the best country papers in Texas and in the best town; reason, editorial and management too much for one man. Sell only to first-class solicitor and reporter. A. J. Buchanan, Bryan, Tex.<sup>129</sup>

When that notice failed to produce the desired results, Buchanan placed the following

ad in April 1906:

Wanted – A local editor and job and ad solicitor. If not first-class, don't write. The Pilot, Bryan, Texas.<sup>130</sup>

Buchanan's staffing problems just kept on going. In October 1906 he paid for this notice:

Wanted – Good, all-round printer for foreman. The Pilot, Bryan, Tex.<sup>131</sup>

Whether or not Buchanan found someone, by the following April he was once again advertising for help:

Wanted – Up-to-date printer foreman; take entire charge; understand presses and stock, read proof. The Pilot, Bryan, Tex.<sup>132</sup>

Buchanan never did find anyone to buy a part interest in the Pilot, and one suspects that by the time this last ad appeared he was pretty much ready to wash his hands of the entire business.<sup>133</sup>

### **Changes at the Eagle**

The Bryan Eagle may have been a more attractive investment opportunity than the Pilot, for in January 1906, W. P. Connelly sold his interest in the Eagle to M. E. Wallace. Wallace formed a new partnership with Malcolm Carnes, Mr. Connelly's former partner.<sup>134</sup>

The new century saw continued growth locally, and the Eagle, like many other businesses, benefitted. In November 1907 the company had again outgrown its quarters and moved to a building located where the Varisco Building now stands. At that same time the paper upgraded its printing equipment. Here is how the Dallas Morning News described those changes:

Messrs. Malcolm Carnes and M. E. Wallace, publishers of the Brazos Morning Eagle and Weekly Eagle, have announced that their office and plant will be moved during the present month to a commodious building on East Main Street, occupying both floors, and about \$10,000 worth of improvements will be made to the plant. These improvements will include a new model No. 5 two-letter Mergenthaler linotype, a new Optimus two-revolution book and job press, a wire stitcher, power perforator, nine-horsepower gasoline engine, and a large quantity of type and other material, as well as an increased stationery stock.<sup>135</sup>

The Eagle entered a new era of technological advancement when it purchased its first linotype, or typesetting, machine. Though the linotype had been invented in the 1880s, it took twenty years for this innovation to reach Brazos County. Before the purchase of that equipment, the Eagle employed five full-time workers who did

nothing but set type. Shortly after the Eagle moved the paper dropped the subscription price for the Weekly Eagle in an attempt to boost circulation.<sup>136</sup>

Allen Academy, a private school founded in Madisonville, moved to Brazos County in 1899. By January 1907, the school was issuing a newspaper titled The Maverick, but little else is known about this publication.<sup>137</sup>

A significant change occurred at Texas A&M in 1907. Prior to that time The Battalion and the student yearbook, the Long Horn (later titled the Aggieland), had independent editorial staffs. In the fall of 1907 students established a permanent board called "the Agricultural and Mechanical Publication Society" to coordinate the two student publications. T. J. Beesley was elected as its first president and C. W. Leggett as the board's secretary.<sup>138</sup>

A few months later, the history of The Battalion was impacted once more. Texas A&M was rocked by a massive student strike in the spring of 1908. After the students had returned to classes, the junior class took over the editing of The Battalion for a special issue, as was then the custom. They published an article that disputed a statement made by the Texas A&M president. That article so offended the college's Board of Directors that the seven students who worked on that issue were suspended. Predictably, this again inflamed discontent among the students, though emotions failed to reach the earlier levels.<sup>139</sup>

In August 1908, Eagle editor Malcolm Carnes died in Denver, Colorado, where he had gone in an attempt to regain his failing health. Carnes was only 38 at the time of his death. The Eagle noted that he was a member of the Methodist Church and belonged to a variety of fraternal organizations, including the Masonic Lodge, the Macabees and the Ancient Order of United Workmen. He also was serving as secretary of the Bryan Business League.<sup>140</sup>

In October 1908, the firm of Carnes and Wallace sold much of their stock, and the new owners organized a company called the Eagle Printing Company. Joseph M. Carnes, M. E. Wallace, J. J. Gilham, and George A. Adams comprised the company. Carnes held the position of editor in chief, and Gilham served as local editor.<sup>141</sup>

Joseph Carnes was the father of Malcolm Carnes, previous editor of the Eagle. The elder Carnes was a Tennessee native and had served as a lieutenant during the Civil War. Shortly after the end of that conflict, he entered the field of journalism in Tennessee. Joseph Carnes moved to Alpine, Texas, in 1898. On 1 January 1902, he purchased the Alpine Avalanche and published the paper for six years, selling his interest in that business at about the same time he acquired his interest in the Eagle.<sup>142</sup>

### **The Brazos Pilot Burns**

In January 1909 the Brazos Pilot office burned. The fire originated in the Pilot's business office and from there spread quickly. That blaze destroyed the paper's files,

causing a catastrophic loss to future historians. The same fire destroyed the First National Bank building, as well as a local grocery and a saloon. The Eagle bought the Pilot's name and "goodwill." Also at that time, A. J. Buchanan, editor of the Pilot since 1894, purchased J. J. Gilham's stock in the Eagle.<sup>143</sup>

In June 1909, the Belt and Buckle Club at Texas A&M published the Rip Saw, the first known unofficial newspaper at the college. Timed to coincide with the graduation festivities, this paper satirized campus residents and activities. The club produced another issue of the paper in June 1910. Such publications may have been an Aggie tradition of the day. A newspaper titled the Court Martial, with similar contents, appeared for graduation in 1916. By 1924, the college had an unofficial paper called the Longbat.<sup>144</sup>

Most of the local newspapers viewed matters more seriously. One example of this was the publication of special editions promoting local interests. In October 1909 the Eagle brought out a special "Trolley Issue," which discussed the advantages of constructing a trolley between Bryan and Texas A&M. The same paper printed a "Commercial Club" edition in September 1910, which listed local attractions and gave sketches of Bryan businesses. A "Prosperity Edition" of the Eagle with similar contents came out in April 1913.<sup>145</sup>

A newspaper titled the Sun began publication in Bryan in February 1911. The Sun came out once a week on Sunday. Curiously, the only issue preserved does not list the names of the editor or publisher. However, by 1913 Coleman Hardy was associated with the Sun Printing Office.<sup>146</sup>

Another African American newspaper appeared in Bryan in 1912. Titled the Torchlight, Rev. C. C. Smith was its editor, with Rev. D. H. Shivers, Rev. J. B. Daniels, Rev. J. D. Bibbs, and Mrs. T. A. Castle as assistant editors. Rev. A. A. Banks was its manager. With an editorial staff consisting primarily of ministers, this paper surely emphasized religious content. A year's subscription cost \$1.00, with six months costing 50 cents and three months 25 cents.<sup>147</sup>

J. M. Carnes retired as editor of the Eagle in January 1912, and A. J. Buchanan took over that office. In April 1917, Buchanan left the Eagle to work with his former colleague, M. E. Wallace, in the printing business. Late in life Buchanan served as justice of the peace in Bryan.<sup>148</sup>

Two magazines began in Brazos County in 1914. The Texas Nativist was published monthly from 1914 to 1915, by S. E. Asbury, the assistant state chemist with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station. In that magazine Asbury passionately argued for the support of all things Texan.<sup>149</sup>

The Southern Farm and Dairy was a semi-monthly agricultural magazine, also published from 1914 to 1915. Dillon T. Stevens, a 1913 graduate of Texas A&M, edited this magazine. The board of directors for Southern Farm and Dairy were C. M. Evans, of College Station, president; M. E. Wallace, of Bryan, vice-president; and

Sam Farrell, of Bryan, secretary. The Eagle Printing Company printed the magazine.<sup>150</sup>

### **The First Daily Paper in College Station**

The first daily newspaper in College Station appeared in 1915. Titled the Daily Bulletin, it served as Texas A&M's official publication. The paper was published by "the Publicity Department of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas" and was distributed free to all students, instructors and campus residents. This work included some news, a few advertisements, and also listed class changes, official announcements, schedules for recreational activities and other college information. The title changed to The Reveille in 1918 and reverted to the Daily Bulletin in 1919. The paper ceased publication in 1926.<sup>151</sup>

In January 1916 Marvin Eclipse Wallace purchased the publishing plant formerly known as the Sun Company. Probably the only local editor named after an astronomical event, Wallace's middle name resulted from his having been born on "the day of the memorable eclipse of the sun" in 1878. Wallace started his journalism career at the age of fourteen on 5 November 1892. He began work as a printer's devil for the Pilot, starting out at the low salary of only 75 cents per week. Wallace later said that at that time the highest paid printer in Bryan received only \$10 a week and that the editor was usually paid off in "shoes and vegetables." Clearly, folks were not going into journalism for the financial rewards. Wallace soon moved to the Eagle and eventually rose to prominent positions with that firm. In 1897, Wallace, along with Sam Woods, acquired an interest in the Citizen-Democrat at Calvert. When Wallace bought the Sun office, the paper had probably been closed for some time, with the printing company remaining in business producing specialty items or contract jobs.<sup>152</sup>

In 1916 M. E. Wallace founded the Bryan Daily Herald. The paper lasted only a short time. Wallace probably used the printing equipment from the Sun to produce the Daily Herald.<sup>153</sup>

Newspapers typically were fiercely patriotic, and the Eagle was no exception to this rule. During World War I, issues of that paper carried this statement on their front page:

Until Heaven offers peace to unrepentant hell, until the Lord invites Satan to a peace parley and to sit beside Him on the throne and rule the universe, we would be traitors to civilization and to God Himself to grant peace to an uncrushed, unrepentant, unpunished Germany. Peace for Germany without full punishment would be a premium upon crime and an endorsement of all Germany's fearful shedding of blood. It would moreover prove that we are poltroons and cowards and lack the moral force to punish criminals, if they are criminals of high degree. Democracy is a failure if it should let royal criminals go unhung or unshot because there are of royal blood, and it would deserve to be

destroyed by autocracy.<sup>154</sup>

When A. J. Buchanan left the Eagle in 1917, Ed E. Talmadge replaced him as editor. Talmadge and A. B. O'Flaherty purchased a controlling interest in the firm's stock at that same time. Both men were veteran journalists, Talmadge having previously worked in McGregor and O'Flaherty having earlier been employed in San Antonio. The paper underwent a period of turmoil, with Talmadge being quickly replaced as editor by J. L. Landrum and then C. A. Tunnell.<sup>155</sup>

An article written for the "Celebrate Bryan" festivities in 1996 offers insight into another facet of journalistic history: the experiences of a newspaper carrier. Dave Bunting described delivering copies of the Eagle in 1919 in this way:

Later, when I delivered the Bryan Daily Eagle, I rode a horse in bad weather and a bicycle in fair ... My delivery area was from West 26<sup>th</sup> Street down West 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> Streets, down to Beck. I delivered to more than one hundred customers on the west side of Bryan. This was the elite area of town in the twenties, where well-to-do families lived. The Eagle paid me fifty cents a week total for rolling and delivering all my papers.<sup>156</sup>

### **The Rountrees Buy the Eagle**

A new era in local journalism began when Mr. and Mrs. Lee J. Rountree bought the Eagle in 1920. Prior to purchasing that paper, Lee Rountree had edited the Sulphur Springs Gazette and the Georgetown Commercial. The Rountrees brought new stability to the paper, and the Rountree name was connected with the Eagle for nearly forty years.<sup>157</sup>

Like several area journalists before him, Mr. Rountree sought political office, and local voters elected him state representative from Brazos and Grimes Counties. Rountree died on 2 May 1923, after finishing a speech in the Texas Legislature urging citizens to honor praiseworthy people while they lived. Rountree completed the speech, sat down, and died. The combination of his dramatic death and his being a journalist guaranteed that most newspapers in the state devoted considerable space to his obituary.<sup>158</sup>

After her husband's death, Mrs. Rountree began editing the Eagle. The governor appointed her to succeed her husband as state representative, and she later won that office in her own right. To date, she remains the only woman elected as state representative from Brazos County. Active in community affairs, Mrs. Rountree organized what became the United Fund in Bryan and served as the president of the Chamber of Commerce. She was the first woman in Texas to head a Chamber of Commerce and was the first female president of the Texas Editorial Association. She also held the office of vice president of the National Editorial Association. In addition, she ardently supported the Bryan Public Library. Her column "Pavement Pickups" was widely read. Mrs. Rountree died on 5 December 1956.<sup>159</sup>

Women made another breakthrough in the 1920s. On several occasions during that decade women at Texas A&M took over the editing and writing of The Battalion for special, annual "powder puff" editions of that paper. Faculty wives and daughters, along with women who worked on campus, were responsible for the contents of those editions. Unfortunately, none of the "powder puff" Battalions are available on microfilm.<sup>160</sup>

The exact date that Bryan High School initiated a newspaper remains uncertain. In September 1923 Bryan High School students began writing a weekly news column in the Eagle. Titled "The Tattler," this column had an editorial staff, and comments indicated that the students hoped to issue it separately as soon as possible. By the fall of 1924 students had started their own monthly magazine titled the Bryan Review.<sup>161</sup>

Other school newspapers appeared in the 1920s. In March 1926 the school superintendent at Millican announced that his town's schools would soon have their own newspaper. And by 1927 Allen Academy had a newspaper called the Full Pack. This may have simply represented a name change from the Maverick previously issued by the school, or it may have been a completely new publication.<sup>162</sup>

Fraternal groups also had their publications. In 1925 the Bryan Lodge of the Knights of Pythias began issuing the Brazos Lodge News. The first two issues were published on a multigraph, but beginning with the third issue they were printed by the Eagle Printing Company.<sup>163</sup>

Like Bryan, the Eagle continued growing. The firm's old quarters eventually proved inadequate, and early in 1928 it moved to more spacious facilities, with better lighting and concrete floors. The new offices were located in the Edge Building on 25th Street, which also housed the Lawrence Motor Company.<sup>164</sup>

In August 1933, the First Baptist Church in Bryan again entered the field of journalism. At that time the church began publishing a weekly bulletin titled The Baptist Messenger. Milton R. Maloney edited the paper.<sup>165</sup>

## **The Bryan News**

In 1935, during the depths of the Depression, Lamar Williams founded the Bryan News. Shortly afterwards, Williams sold the publication to D. H. Reeves. That may have been about the time the Bryan News plant was destroyed by fire. At the time of that blaze, the News was located in the Coulter Building, on the corner of 23<sup>rd</sup> and Main, in downtown Bryan. In 1942 Walter Doney purchased the News. Doney had attended Texas A&M, but left college to fight in World War I. After the war, Doney began his career in journalism as a printer's devil for the Corpus Christi Caller Times. Doney later worked for Holland's Magazine, the Waco News Tribune, and in 1929 he became the Assistant General Manager of the Austin American Statesman. Several years passed, and the Chicago Office of the Texas Press League hired Doney. By the



1940s, Doney and his wife had tired of city life and began looking for opportunities in smaller towns.<sup>166</sup>

When Doney bought the Bryan News, it came out once a week. During the first five years he owned the paper, Doney increased its frequency until he was issuing it daily. Years later Doney stated that at the time the News ceased publication in 1952, he thought both it and the Eagle were losing money, but that the Eagle could afford to lose more money than he could.<sup>167</sup>

Even while he had been publishing the paper, Doney had sold office supplies to supplement the firm's income. After the News ceased publication, Downey continued the business as an office supply house.<sup>168</sup>

The last issue of the Bryan Weekly Eagle appeared on 15 September 1937. The owners dropped the weekly edition and initiated what they erroneously claimed to be the first ever Sunday newspaper in Bryan. The Eagle had earlier published a Sunday edition from February 1896 until March 1909. In addition, the Sun had been a Sunday paper in 1911.<sup>169</sup>

### **A Time of Growth**

Citizens of College Station voted to incorporate the city in 1938. Soon thereafter the city designated The Battalion as its official newspaper. Although this choice reflected the close ties which had existed for years between College Station residents and Texas A&M, it was unusual for a college journal to serve as an official city publication. After being so designated, The Battalion increased its publication frequency to three times per week. That same year, the paper added a weekly summer edition. The Battalion, like many other enterprises in newly established College Station, clearly was in a period of growth.<sup>170</sup>

Area residents had reason to be cautiously optimistic as 1939 began. The worst of the Depression had passed, and the chartering of College Station in 1938 seemed to presage a new era of prosperity. The first known newspaper published by A. & M. Consolidated High School appeared in the fall of 1939. Titled The Tiger Rag, this paper was a small mimeographed newsletter.<sup>171</sup>

In November of the following year Dillard Spriggs and Henry Gilchrist began publishing The Round-Up at A. & M. Consolidated. In September 1941 that publication became the official school newspaper, replacing The Tiger Rag which was abolished.<sup>172</sup>

The history of College Station changed dramatically when World War II caused the establishment of Bryan Army Air Field and increased the military activity at Texas A&M. These events created a population boom in the area and placed greater demands on city and county services than otherwise would have been the case.

Not surprisingly, the military presence also had an impact on area journalism. As

part of the war effort, the Navy established a number of training programs at Texas A&M. In December 1943 a weekly newspaper titled Sparks and Flashes appeared on campus. The paper's masthead stated that it would give "sparks and news flashes of life at the Naval Training School, College Station, Texas." This paper ceased in March 1945.<sup>173</sup>

Then, in May 1944, a paper called The Panel began publication at Bryan Army Air Field. Corporal Ted Stafford was the first editor but was replaced by Sergeant David C. Marburger fourteen weeks later. The Eagle Printing Company printed The Panel. This paper continued until October 1945.<sup>174</sup>

World War II also influenced The Battalion. By 1943, most of the juniors and seniors had left the college campus, and The Battalion was faced with a dizzying turnover among editors and other staff. As a result, much of the paper was turned over to the various military units on campus, with them writing and editing their own columns. During this period, The Battalion became a year-round paper, with no distinction between regular and summer issues. By the end of the war in 1945, paper shortages had forced The Battalion to cut back to a weekly publication schedule. In 1946, the paper resumed coming out three times a week.<sup>175</sup>

### **After the War**

In 1946, Texas A&M obtained the use of the Bryan Air Base, which the government had deactivated at the end of the war. At that time campus administrators assigned all freshman to the annex, as the former base then was being called. The officials cited lack of space on the main campus as the reason for the division of the students.<sup>176</sup>

Many freshmen felt isolated and complained that the facilities at the annex were substandard. An unknown humorist dubbed the outpost "Lower Slobbovia," after a desolate, frozen wasteland featured in the comic strip "Li'l Abner." Early in 1947, a mimeographed newspaper titled the Slobbovian Times appeared at the annex. This paper spoke out more freely about the conditions facing the freshmen than many people on the main campus would have preferred, and The Battalion denounced the Slobbovian Times. After a few issues, the paper's title changed to The Little Batt, and the staff toned down its criticisms of life at the annex. The paper ceased publication in May 1948, but the annex continued to house freshmen until 1950.<sup>177</sup>

In October 1950 Texas A&M celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a variety of special ceremonies. The Bryan Eagle honored the college by publishing a special, thirty-six page edition of the paper on 3 October 1950. The edition included articles and photographs highlighting the college's history.<sup>178</sup>

Efforts on the part of local residents led to the reactivation of Bryan Air Force Base. On 13 October 1951, the Bryan Daily Eagle published a 64-page edition honoring the base. In 1952 the base got its own newspaper, which was titled Jet Blasts. In June 1956, this award-winning publication changed formats from a newspaper to a

mimeographed newsletter. Despite concerted lobbying by local residents, the government closed Bryan Air Force Base soon afterwards.<sup>179</sup>

The reopening of the Air Force Base was not the only noteworthy development in 1951. In May of that year, a monthly magazine titled the Northgate Sentinel made its appearance in College Station. Something of a hybrid between a gossip magazine and a newsletter, this mimeographed publication chronicled the events occurring "around the coffee urn" at Northgate. Covering little of lasting significance, the Northgate Sentinel included information on a variety of concerns, ranging from haircuts to traffic jams to squirrel stew. This paper ceased publication in 1952.<sup>180</sup>

### **Mrs. Rountree Passes**

A turning point in the history of Brazos County journalism occurred when Mrs. Lee J. Rountree, editor and publisher of the Eagle for over thirty years, died on 5 December 1956. At the time of her death, Rountree had been hospitalized for ten days, after collapsing at her desk. In recognition of her long service, the Bryan Public Library closed for a full day in her honor.<sup>181</sup>

Mrs. Rountree had been especially proud of her foresight in purchasing a rotary press for the Eagle some seven years before her death. Previously the paper had been printed on a flatbed web press. At the time of the purchase, it seemed absurd that such a small paper as the Eagle would buy such an expensive press, but by the time Mrs. Rountree passed away, the growth of the Eagle had made the bigger press a necessity.<sup>182</sup>

Since her death a number of men have served as editors or managing editors of the paper, including Vick Lindley, 1956-1961, Robert C. Stewart, Jr., 1961-1967, James M. Butler, 1967-1968, Edward L. Horn, 1968-1971, Jim Holman, 1971-1973, Jerry Waggoner, 1973-1976, Paul R. LaRocque, 1976-1978, Robert A. Fleischer, 1978-1980, Glenn A. Dromgoole, 1980-1985, Bob Rogers, 1985-1988, W. O. Cawley, Jr., 1988-1990, David Crisp, 1990-1991, Tim Sager, 1991-1992, David Moneypenny, 1992-1993, Bernard Hunt, 1993-1996, Joe Michael Feist, 1996-2000, and Donnis Baggett, 2000 to the present.<sup>183</sup>

A newspaper called the Twin City Star was announced in February 1957. The first issue was to appear sometime in March and was to be eighty pages long. The publisher was Paschal Price. He stated that about \$250,000 worth of new equipment had been purchased for the publication. In addition to Price, other people on the firm's board of directors were John Mayfield and Clarence Jamail, both of Houston; Herbert Shaffer and Marion Pugh, both of College Station; Bert Pfaff of Tyler; John Hill, Jr., of Dallas; and Pat Stanford of Midland. That journal never came out, but Price did publish a newspaper named The Brazos Valley Sun. The Sun suspended publication by the summer of 1957.<sup>184</sup>

Though many people nostalgically recall the 1950s as a period of calm, this was not

always the case. In the spring of 1954 the entire editorial staff of the Battalion quit over alleged censorship. Their actions came after the student life committee recommended that a publications board be set up in an advisory capacity. Professor Karl Elmquist became acting manager for the Battalion until students could hold an election to fill the post of Battalion editor.<sup>185</sup>

In 1958, debate over the possible admission of women to Texas A&M heated up on campus. At one point The Battalion published an editorial stating that coeducation could be accomplished if it were done gradually. This rather modest support of the proposal had unexpected results. The day after the editorial appeared, students burned several hundred copies of the paper, and editor Joe Tindel found about 100 copies of the paper in his office, all of which were torn neatly in half. No further violence against the paper occurred.<sup>186</sup>

## **The 1960s**

Area residents recalled a conflict of a different sort when the county observed the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War in 1962. As part of the celebration, The Bryan Eagle published a weekly historical column written by Broadus Smith. In June of that year, the paper printed a special Civil War "Centennial Section" that featured a variety of historical articles.<sup>187</sup>

The year 1966 saw two very different types of conflict. A continuing economic battle started that year with the founding of the Pictorial Press. For the next few decades, this paper competed with the Bryan Eagle for local advertising dollars. Distributed free, all of the Pictorial Press' income came from advertising. It contained local feature stories, and, in 1989, it added its first nationally syndicated columnist, Linda Ellerbee. Editors of the Press included W. F. "Bubba" Moore, Jeannie Powell, Rick Henderson, Kandy Rose and Donald P. Moore. Later, the name of the publication changed to the Bryan Press and the College Station Press.<sup>188</sup>

Another kind of conflict took place at Texas A&M University in 1966. In September of that year, a controversy arose over who actually controlled The Battalion. Soon after the paper printed a routine article concerning donations from former students, a reader wrote a letter to the editor challenging the story's accuracy. Almost immediately, campus officials abolished the letters to the editor column. The day after the cancellation, editor Tommy DeFrank submitted an article to The Battalion criticizing the way political speakers were being approved on campus. Administrators canceled the article despite DeFrank's protests. DeFrank met with General Earl Rudder, then president of the university, and later met with the A&M System's Board of Regents, who upheld the administration's right to control the paper's content. DeFrank and a few other staff members at the paper were fired. Although some students and faculty expressed concern, the administrators prevailed.<sup>189</sup>

Texas A&M University never experienced the student activism and unrest that characterized many colleges during the 1960s. A few people at the school,

however, did embrace the values of the counterculture of the times. A short-lived underground, or unofficial, newspaper titled Paranoia appeared on campus in 1969. Another such paper came out in 1974. Titled Le Fork, only two issues of this newspaper were distributed. The publishers of the latter paper had a sense of humor – they called its first issue “number two.”<sup>190</sup>

## **Campus Coverup**

The only large demonstration at Texas A&M University during this period had nothing to do with the Vietnam War. In 1974, a mob of students marched on the president’s house to protest the arrest of a student caught streaking, or running nude, across campus. That crowd quickly was dispersed. The Battalion attempted to publish photographs of several streakers, but was stopped by university officials who insisted the pictures could not run unless offending body parts were covered. The Battalion staff had little choice but to comply, but they did find an effective means of protesting the ruling. The paper used eye-catching black stars and other figures to block parts of the pictures, thus drawing attention to the very areas the administrators wanted covered.<sup>191</sup>

During the summer of 1967 the unthinkable happened – the locally-owned Eagle was sold to an out of town corporation. In June Harte-Hanks Newspapers bought the Eagle. This event caused extensive debate at the time, and it still creates discontent among some long time residents.<sup>192</sup>

In September 1969, The Bryan Daily Eagle changed its name to The Daily Eagle. The owners felt that dropping the “Bryan” from the title reflected the fact that the paper served both Bryan and College Station. At that time, the owners decided not to add “College Station” to the title because they “did not think The Bryan-College Station Eagle would look nice at the top of the page.”<sup>193</sup>

A few years later, in 1972, the paper’s name was shortened to The Eagle, and then, on 8 June 1981 the newspaper became the Bryan-College Station Eagle. Not long afterwards the Eagle changed from an afternoon publishing schedule to a morning delivery.<sup>194</sup>

Bryan High School opened in the fall of 1971, after a federal court ordered the immediate integration of the Bryan schools. That body resulted from a merger of Stephen F. Austin High School and Kemp High School. The new school’s newspaper was The Norseman.<sup>195</sup>

The civil rights movement had also affected local journalism by the 1970s. A newspaper for African Americans and Hispanics began publication in Bryan-College Station in 1976. It was called the Twin City Sentinel. This paper was published by Joseph C. Garner until about 1978. The Sentinel was not the only journal for African Americans. Trend Magazine began publication in 1955 in Bryan. Issued by the Rev. C. C. Jammer and later by a Mr. Toliver, it continued publication for several years. It contained significant amounts of biographical information and news.

Years later, Silhouette, published by Michael Buford, came out in the 1980s.<sup>196</sup>

## Minority Editors

Minorities had also made progress at Texas A&M University. The first African American to serve as editor of The Battalion was Cathie Anderson, who held that position in the fall of 1986.<sup>197</sup>

Determining who the first female editor of The Battalion was depends on how one defines that office. The first elected editor, Kim Tyson, headed the paper in the fall of 1978. Roxie Hearne, however, had served as editor in the spring of 1976 after the previous editor had resigned, and Debbie Krenek held the position of summer editor in 1978.<sup>198</sup>

In the 1970s the enrollment at Texas A&M University skyrocketed, and the communities of Bryan and College Station grew along with that school. The Eagle, too, was expanding, and eventually outgrew its old home in downtown Bryan. In 1979 it moved to its present location on Briarcrest Drive.<sup>199</sup>

A controversial newspaper spoof appeared at Texas A&M University in the early 1980s. Two issues of the Buttalion were published, the first coming the week before Thanksgiving in the fall of 1982 and the second appearing in March 1983. These rather savage parodies of The Battalion featured headlines such as "Racism is a Tradition" and "Easter Canceled, Carcass Discovered." The anonymous publishers of this paper made it look as much like The Battalion as possible and, as a result, many people erroneously assumed The Battalion staff put out the paper. Students and faculty members expressed mixed emotions about the issues. One student labeled the paper as the most disgusting piece of literature he'd ever seen, while a member of the A&M System Board of Regents called The Buttalion witty and clever.<sup>200</sup>

In March 1983 The Battalion staff published their own humorous spoof. Titled the Aggie Rag, this paper appeared as a supplement to The Battalion issue of 21 March 1983. The articles lacked the satirical bite of the Buttalion, but, predictably, the paper still managed to generate some controversy.<sup>201</sup>

In October 1987, Harte-Hanks Communications Inc. of San Antonio announced that it was selling The Bryan-College Station Eagle as part of a larger divestiture of assets. Worrell Enterprises purchased the paper a few months later.<sup>202</sup>

In 1989, the Eagle celebrated its hundredth anniversary by issuing two special centennial editions titled "Everything Old is News Again." The first came out on 27 April 1989 and the second on 24 October 1989.<sup>203</sup>

A newspaper covering the gay and lesbian community appeared in 1989. Titled The Alternative News, this was published monthly. Research has not determined how long it was published.<sup>204</sup>

Then, in 1990, a newspaper called The Touchstone with a liberal editorial slant began publication. Under the banner of "Alternative Views for the Brazos Valley," the freely-distributed paper often rankled conservatives at Texas A&M University, with articles concerning topics such as capital punishment, homosexuality, abortion, warfare and welfare. The paper received national attention for its insightful and critical coverage of the 1999 bonfire tragedy. Although this paper ceased publication about 2004, it gave birth to the current radio program called "Touchstone Radio" that airs daily on KEOS Community Radio 89.1 FM.<sup>205</sup>

In early December 1995, it was announced that the A. H. Belo Corporation, publisher of the Dallas Morning News, would purchase the Eagle. The new owners took over at midnight on Christmas Day.<sup>206</sup>

Beginning in the 1990s, Bryan and College Station have seen a number of mostly small and mostly short-lived publications appear on the market. These have included the Brazos Valley Community Journal, the Brazos Valley Monthly; and the Brazos Valley Informer, an African American monthly published by the Reverend Robert Wilson, as well as at least three papers serving the Hispanic community, La Voz Hispana, La Prensa, and El Pueblo, the Bilingual News.<sup>207</sup>

The Eagle's owner changed again in 2000, when the paper was purchased by the Evening Post Publishing Company.<sup>208</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Few of the newspapers which were published during the last 140 years are still in business. Only two area papers have large circulations, and, of those, The Battalion focuses on events at Texas A&M University. The Eagle is the sole commercial daily published in Brazos County and is almost certain to retain that distinction for the foreseeable future.

Economic conditions probably preclude the establishment of another daily paper, but advanced technology may lead to the creation of less familiar forms of newspapers. Both The Battalion and the Eagle already have web editions.

Just as changes in technology have influenced communications greatly during the past century, the coming years may see innovative applications of existing technology coupled with new inventions. The next generation may well view printed newspapers as quaint antiques, in the same class as kerosene lamps, Victrolas and tube-type radios.

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used by the Masonic Lodge, literally meaning "So may it be" but used as an equivalent for "amen"

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- <sup>14</sup> Galveston Tri-Weekly News, 22 November 1869, page 3
- <sup>15</sup> Page, Bill, "'Bryan News Letter' Debuted in 1867 After Move From Millican," Bryan-College Station Eagle, 6 June 1999, section D, page 1; Cleburne Chronicle, 11 December 1869, page 2, column 1
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- <sup>47</sup> Dallas Morning News, 4 January 1894, page 4
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(Galveston Daily News, 16 March 1896, page 6, column 7). An article in the Bryan Eagle further supports the idea that the Pilot began in 1877, saying A. B. Welch of Minter Springs was one of the first three subscribers to the Eagle in 1877 (Bryan Daily Eagle, 13 May 1924, page 3, column 4). Presumably the Eagle substituted its name for that of the Pilot. 1900 Wood County, Texas, Census, page 91a; McCarver, Norman L., and Norman L. McCarver, Jr., Hearne on the Brazos, San Antonio: Century Press of Texas, 1958, page 110; Galveston Daily News, 18 January 1877, page 2, column 3; Dallas Morning News, 14 January 1886, page 3, column 2

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<sup>58</sup>Copy of the book

<sup>59</sup>Waco Daily Examiner, 27 February 1877, page 2, column 1

<sup>60</sup>The Eclectic Teacher and Southwestern Journal of Education, April 1879, page 333

<sup>61</sup>Brenham Daily Banner, 11 July 1888, page 1

<sup>62</sup>1900 Brazos County Census, page 261a

<sup>63</sup>Galveston Daily News, 12 December 1882, page 2, column 5

<sup>64</sup>Fort Worth Daily Gazette, 14 April 1885, page 2

<sup>65</sup>Copies of the Texas Collegian located in the Cushing Library, Texas A&M University

<sup>66</sup>Burke's Texas Almanac and Immigrant's Handbook for 1885, Houston: Mrs. J. Burke, 1885, page 132; North, S. N. B., The Newspaper and Periodical Press, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884, page 338; Brazos Pilot Ledger Book, February 1879, page 95; Carnegie History Center, Bryan, Texas

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