CAPE FEAR NEWSPAPERS.

If we may believe the historian Williamson, the Lords Proprietors and the royal governors during their administration of affairs were extremely hostile to the establishment of newspapers in the colony. Doubtless they knew well the power of an unfettered press, and dreaded its influence upon the minds of the people. Nor did the circumstances and conditions of the early times offer any financial inducement for establishing a printing house. It was not until 1749 that a press was set up in the colony. In that year James Davis erected one at New Bern; and in 1755, some post offices being then established by which newspapers could be distributed, Davis began the publication of a paper in that town. It was called the *North Carolina Gazette,* and was printed on a small sheet, and issued weekly.

The second press set up in North Carolina was at Wilmington, in 1763, by Andrew Stewart, who printed a paper called the *Cape Fear Gazette and Wilmington Advertiser.* That paper was discontinued in 1767, but was succeeded the same year by the *Cape Fear Mercury,* published by Adam Boyd. Boyd was a man of versatile talents, an Englishman, but a true friend to the colonies. He was a member of the Committee of Safety for the town of Wilmington, in 1775, and was a prominent member of the Committee of Correspondence. In 1776 he entered the ministry and was appointed a chaplain of the Continental Line.

We have no means of knowing how long the *Mercury* existed, nor have we been able to find copies of any other publications prior to 1818. In that year, Mr. David Smith, jr., father of the late Col. William L. Smith, formerly mayor of the city of Wilmington, commenced the publication of the *Cape Fear Recorder,* which continued under his management until 1835, when Mr. Archibald Maclaine Hooper succeeded him. Mr. Hooper had fine, scholarly attainments and was fond of the classics. He had the pen of a ready writer, and his style was characterized by ease and elegance. He was felicitous in expression, and clothed his ideas in language chaste and beautiful. He was a near relative of William Hooper, the signer of the Declaration of Independence, and he was the father of Johnson Hooper, in his day so well-known to fame as the author

of *Simon Suggs, Taking the Census,* and other humorous works. For a number of years the *Recorder* was the only paper published in this part of the State. The next paper established was the *Wilmington Advertiser.*

About the year 1832, Mr. Henry S. Ellenwood came to Wilmington, and assumed the editorial chair of the *Advertiser.* He was an educated gentleman, and fitted for the duties of a journalist. He courted the muses with considerable success, and much of his work gave ample evidence of wit and fancy and *belles-lettres* culture. His connection with the paper was, however, very brief, as he died suddenly a short time after taking charge. After his death the paper was purchased by Mr. Joshua Cochrane, of Fayetteville, and conducted by him until the summer of 1836, when he died and Mr. F. C. Hill became the editor and proprietor, and continued its publication until about the year 1842, when it ceased to exist.

Contemporary with the *Advertiser* was the *People's Press,* a paper published by P. W. Fanning and Thomas Loring, the latter being the editor-in-chief, which position he held for some time, when he disposed of his interest and purchased the *Standard,* the organ of the Democratic party of the State, issued at Raleigh, and he removed to that city. There he brought to the discharge of his duties great energy, perseverence, marked ability, and a thorough familiarity with political history. He was a man of sanguine temperament and a warm partisan, and in the excitement of controversy often indulged in expression towards his political opponents, which, in his calmer moments, his judgment condemned. He wielded at one time a political influence second to but few men in the State, and was an acknowledged leader of his party; but, differing from them in 1842 in regard to their course towards the banks of the State, he retired from the position he held rather than continue to hold it at the sacrifice of his independence. Returning to Wilmington, he established the *Commercial,* which he conducted for a number of years, until failing health compelled him to discontinue it.

The *Wilmington Chronicle* was established about the year 1838, by Asa A. Brown. It was an exponent of the principles of the Whig party, and advanced them with great zeal and ability. Mr. Brown was a capable editor, a good writer, and a man of more than ordinary ability. In 1851, he disposed of the paper to Talcott Burr, jr., who changed its name to the *Wilmington Herald.*