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PRINTING IN NEW MEXICO
BEYOND SANTA FE AND TAOS 1848-1875

By JACKSON E. TOWNE*

ACCORDING to some unpublished notes in the Douglas C. McMurtrie Manuscript Collection at Michigan State University, a 27-page pamphlet entitled *Catecismo Popular de la Doctrina Democratica*, by Ramon Francisco Gamarra, was printed at Las Cruces some time between 1847 and 1853 with the imprint "Impreso en la Oficina del Fronterizo." The pamphlet is undated and McMurtrie, one of the great authorities on the history of printing in the United States, felt that "the internal evidence allows considerable latitude in choosing a date. . . ."

McMurtrie tells us that "about 1852 there appeared another pamphlet, lacking imprint and undated, which resembles the *El Fronterizo* pamphlet so closely in its typography that it almost certainly came from the same press. This item is entitled *La Politica de Belzebu y su Reverso*. McMurtrie found no information regarding a newspaper called *El Fronterizo* at Las Cruces prior to 1874, or about the establishment of a press prior to the Civil War. The *Borderer*, started in 1871 by Jeremiah V. Bennett and continued by him until his death in 1876, McMurtrie noted as having been "generally . . . considered the first newspaper in the southern part of New Mexico." However, a first issue of the Mesilla weekly *Times* for October 18, 1860, is held by both the Huntington Library and the New York Historical Society. The Huntington also has a copy of the Mesilla *Miner* of June 9, 1860. This item, preceding the Mesilla *Times*, changed to it after one issue.

For its fourth foothold in New Mexico (if Las Cruces actually was third in point of time, as McMurtrie definitely ranked it), the press became active in the old town and ultimate metropolis of the state, Albuquerque. Here Colonel Richard H. Weightman, who had gone to Washington as a

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senator under the proposed government of 1850, started a little paper called *Amigo del Pais* in 1853 and conducted it for a few weeks, according to the *Rio Abajo Weekly Press* for January 20, 1863.

About 1860, Theodore S. Greiner began the publication in Albuquerque of a weekly paper called the *Review*. This is recorded in the *History of New Mexico, its Resources and Peoples*, Volume I (Los Angeles, 1907), on page 470. After two years Greiner sold out to Hezekiah S. Johnson, who started the *Rio Abajo Weekly Press* on January 20, 1863. Under several changes of ownership and with a return in 1870 to the name *Review*, this paper survived for more than ten years, when it was merged with a younger publication named the *Democrat*.

Hezekiah Johnson had lived in New Mexico since 1849, and before founding the *Rio Abajo Weekly Press* had apparently had some previous newspaper experience, for in his salutatory he says: "this is not the first time we have presented ourself to the New Mexico Public." The salutatory goes on to announce the appearance of what was frankly a business enterprise for its founder: "The subscriber pays us his subscription; we furnish him with the best and most accurate news the market affords. . . . The merchant, or other individual, pays us a certain price for a certain space in our columns for advertising; we publish his advertisement. These are plain business transactions" . . . with no "beatified transcendentalism" about "repugnance" to the "almighty dollar."

After Albuquerque the next point at which a press began operations was Mesilla, a town adjacent to Las Cruces. The Bancroft Library at the University of California has a copy of the first issue of *The Mesilla Times*, showing that publication began on October 18, 1860. The American Guide Series for *New Mexico* summarizes:

In July, 1861, Lieutenant Colonel Baylor of the Confederate Army, after capturing Fort Fillmore with little resistance, made his headquarters at Mesilla, proclaiming himself military governor and Mesilla the capital of the new territory of Ari-

zona, which included all of New Mexico south of the 34th parallel, a part of Texas, and all of Arizona, Nevada and California. After August, 1862, when the Confederates fled before the California Column under General James H. Carleton, La Mesilla was made headquarters of the Military District of Arizona under the United States.

La Mesilla was on the west side of the Rio Grande until 1865 when the river changed its course. The walls of the adobe house, which held the courtroom in which Billy the Kid once stood trial, still stand on the corner of the plaza. The main interest of the town, aside from its special charm and mellowed quality, is the privately owned Billy the Kid Museum, that contains . . . relics. . . Other items include relics said to be of Maximilian and Carlotta of Mexico . . . rare maps, old branding irons, swords, guns and blankets.

Next, at Elizabethtown, in Colfax County, Scranton and Aken started the *Elizabethtown Lantern* in 1869; in the same year this paper was sold to William D. Dawson and became the *Railway Press and Telegraph*. McMurtrie found a reference to this paper in a Colorado journal, the *Colorado Miner*, in which the editor wrote sympathetically of the editor of "the only paper published at Elizabethtown, New Mexico . . . in a furious rage," because the people were displeased with their paper. Elizabethtown is a ghost mining town today with a population of less than 150.

Finally, at Las Vegas and at Cimarron newspapers were started in 1870: the *Las Vegas Mail*; and at Cimarron the *Press* and the *News*, which were merged in 1875 into the *News and Press*.

From the care with which McMurtrie traced and published every shred of evidence regarding the printing activities of Padre Martínez of Taos (in the *New Mexico Historical Review* and elsewhere), we can only conclude that the following from the American Guide Series on the *Cimarron News and Press* is wholly apochryphal:

The paper, housed in a warehouse used as the Indian Agency Headquarters, was said to have been printed on the press brought to New Mexico by Padre Antonio Jose Martinez and first used by him in 1853 to print school books, religious propaganda, and a Taos paper, *El Crepusculo* (the dawn). It is re-

lated that one evening Clay Allison and some of his cohorts, angered by an item in the newspaper, battered in the door of the building, smashed the press with a sledge hammer, and finally dumped the type cases and office equipment into the Cimarron River. Not satisfied, Allison and one of his men went back to the plant next morning, found a stack of the previous day's papers, and went from bar to bar, selling the papers at 25 cents a copy.

NOTES FROM MANUSCRIPT
By DOUGLAS C. MCMURTRIE

Oliver P. Hovey and Edward T. Davies, on September 10, 1847, began the publication at Santa Fé of a newspaper with the title *Santa Fe Republican*, with the first leaf of each four-page issue printed in English and the second leaf in Spanish. We have found a statement to the effect that the printing equipment for this enterprise came from Missouri,⁷⁰ and it is interesting, in this connection, to quote the following article from a St. Louis newspaper in November, 1846:⁷¹

"A Printing Office for Santa Fé.—We noticed at the Type Foundry of A. P. Ladew, yesterday, a number of boxes marked for 'Santa Fe Army.' On inquiry we learned that he had just filled an order from Gen. Kearney for a complete printing establishment on Government account. The Quartermaster will forward immediately, press, type, fixtures, ink, paper, &c. &c.—a full supply of every thing necessary to start a newspaper at once, and do all the job work required. As Mr. Ladew's establishment is equal to any of the kind, either east or west of the Alleghenies, we doubt not that we shall see, in the course of a few months, as good printing done in Santa Fe as in St. Louis. This printing establishment is necessary there, that the orders of Gen. Kearney, the ordinances, regulations, &c., may be distributed among the people. It may be considered a new mode of carrying on war, but as the design is to 'conquer peace,' paper bullets may effect as much in Northern Mexico as leaden or iron ones. At all events, the typos in the army will find employment when the press reaches them."

70. R. E. Twitchell, *Old Santa Fe*, p. 286.

71. *St. Louis Daily Union*, November 6, 1846, page 3, column 2.

Because of the difficulties of transportation, it was ten months from the filling of this order by Ladew's typefoundry in St. Louis to the appearance of the first issue of the *Santa Fe Republican*. With the establishment of the new press, the most colorful and romantic chapter of New Mexican printing history came to a close. Typography was immensely improved technically under the new regime, but in comparison with what Baca produced with his battered types it cannot but seem to us somewhat uninteresting and commonplace.⁷²

The *Santa Fe Republican* (the title of its Spanish section was *El Republicano*) continued under Hovey & Davies until April, 1848, when Davies withdrew and Oliver P. Hovey became the sole publisher. The paper was somewhat irregular in its issues, skipping a week or two now and then; in February and March, 1848, five weeks passed with no issue of the *Republican*. Rather unique among the many peculiarities of early newspapers was the haste of the *Republican* to attain the appearance of age. Number 22 of volume 1 appeared on March 18, 1848; the next recorded issue in any file is number 25, on April 22, but this issue is numbered in volume 2. Number 44 of volume 2 is reached on October 15, but the next issue (after the omission of a week) is volume 3, number 45, on October 29. For a time then the paper appeared only every other week. An elaborate New Year's greeting, in Spanish, from Oliver P. Hovey to the readers of *El Republicano* (no. 48 in the Bibliography), an issue of April 28, 1849, and an extra dated August 8, 1849 (no. 54 in the Bibliography) complete the record of what is now known of the *Santa Fe Republican*.⁷³ However, we encounter Oliver P. Hovey again in 1860, when he was the territory's public printer, and Ed-

72. It might be noted, in passing, that the types brought to New Mexico under the new regime seem to have been inadequate for printing Spanish. To judge from specimens of the printed work, the fonts lacked most of the accented letters required for correct Spanish typography.

73. There is no known file of the *Republican* which is even approximately complete. The Henry E. Huntington Library has 14 issues, extending to November 25, 1848, and the extra of August 8, 1849; the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, has 5 issues, including v. 1, nos. 1, 4, 5, and 6, and a duplicate of an issue which is also in the Huntington file; the Historical Society of New Mexico has 2 issues, both of which are in the Huntington file; and the Library of Congress has the issue of April 28, 1849—the latest regular issue recorded.

ward T. Davies reappears in connection with the next newspaper in the territory, the *New Mexican*.

The *New Mexican* (with a Spanish section entitled *El Nuevo-Mejicano*) is known to have begun on November 24, 1849.⁷⁴ It was established by Edward T. Davies, one of the founders of the *Republican* over two years earlier, in partnership with William E. Jones, as Davies & Jones, editors and proprietors. Its prospectus, published in the first issue, declared that in matters of politics and religion it would "maintain a strict neutrality, regarding partizanship as utterly unnecessary and a barrier to the general good of our Territory." But it promised to advocate "the views entertained by the people of New Mexico, in Convention assembled, for the purpose of urging upon Congress the immediate formation of Supreme Civil Government"—to take the place of the hybrid military-civil government under which the territory then existed.⁷⁵

Besides the first issue, two extras of *El Nuevo Mejicano* are known, one dated June 18 and the other July 4, 1850.⁷⁶ These appeared under the names of Ceran St. Vrain as proprietor and publisher, and of J. Houghton and T. S. J. Johnson, editorial committee. Beyond these dates the career of the first *New Mexican* at Santa Fé remains at present unknown.⁷⁷

New Mexico was finally organized as a territory of the United States by an Act of Congress of September 9, 1850, which went into effect with the inauguration of the new territorial government on March 3, 1851. Almost immediately thereafter—presumably on April 12, 1851, the *Santa Fe*

74. The Historical Society of New Mexico has a copy of v. 1, no. 1. The *Union List of Newspapers* (1937) also records a copy of this issue in the University of Illinois Library and one in the Wisconsin Historical Society. The *Union List* reports that the *New Mexican* began as the *New Mexican Review*, "1848—Nov. ? 1849," but we cannot verify this earlier title. Other issues recorded by the *Union List* under the title of the *New Mexican* belong to another paper of much later origin.

75. See the note on no. 52 in the following Bibliography.

76. We record these from copies in the possession of Mr. Thomas W. Streeter, Morristown, N. J.

77. The *New Mexican* begun at Santa Fé about 1863 by William Henry Manderfield and Thomas Tucker seems to have nothing in common with its predecessor except the title. However, the daily evening *New Mexican* and the weekly *Nuevo Mexicano*, published currently at Santa Fé, claim descent from their namesakes of 1849.

Weekly Gazette, the first really successful newspaper in the territory, made its first appearance. The earliest issue now located, no. 6, of May 17, 1851, had a Spanish section entitled *Gaceta de Santa Fe* and was published by William E. Jones (one of the founders of the *New Mexican*), with James L. Collins & Co. as proprietors. Extant files of the earliest years of this paper are quite incomplete, and its history is therefore somewhat sketchy at the beginning. From the earliest known issue there is a gap in the record to January 24, 1852, eight months later. At this date the paper was published and edited by William G. Kephart,⁷⁸ with James L. Collins & Co. still the proprietors. But we know that Kephart joined Collins at some time in 1851, as is shown by the imprint on no. 70 in our Bibliography.

There is another gap of nine months in the files of the *Gazette* to the issue of October 23, 1852, which names W. G. Kephart as publisher but does not mention Collins. Two weeks later, Kephart was editor with William Drew as publisher, and the Spanish section became *La Gaceta Semana Aria de Santa Fe*. Kephart appeared as publisher again, in place of Drew, on May 21, 1853, and on the following September 3 J. L. Collins was editor and the name of Kephart disappeared from the newspaper records. At the end of 1853, on December 24, Collins was succeeded by W. W. H. Davis as editor, and imprints of 1854 and 1855 record "J. L. Collins & W. W. H. Davis, printers,"⁷⁹ although the name of Collins did not appear in the *Gazette* in those years.

In 1856, James L. Collins was again the editor of the

78. Twitchell, *Old Santa Fe*, p. 366, relates that: "In 1851, the Presbyterian Missionary Union sent Rev. W. G. Kephart to Santa Fé. He was more of a politician than a missionary. He soon identified himself with newspaper work, became the editor of the *Santa Fé Gazette*, and espoused the anti-slavery cause." We note that in all its occurrences in the newspaper and in the imprints of 1851-1853 the name of this missionary-editor is spelled "Kephart."

79. William Watts Hart Davis was not a practical printer. Born in Massachusetts in 1820, he came to New Mexico as a lieutenant in the 1st Massachusetts Infantry during the Mexican War. He was United States attorney at Santa Fé in 1851 and later secretary of the territory and acting governor. He served in the Civil War as colonel of a Pennsylvania regiment and died at Doylestown, Pa., in 1910, in his ninetieth year. Among other works, he wrote *El Gringo; or, New Mexico and Her People* (New York, 1857), a colorful description of the territory as he found it in the early days. (Twitchell, *Old Santa Fé*, p. 368, footnote.)

Gazette, beginning February 23, when the name of Davis ceased to appear. Collins was joined by David J. Miller on May 23, 1857, but at the end of that year, on December 5, after a lapse of four weeks during which publication was suspended, a new beginning was made with volume 1, number 1, under Samuel M. Yost as editor. David J. Miller joined Yost on August 25, 1858, but another change occurred on February 5, 1859, when the paper appeared with Hezekiah S. Johnson as editor. Augustus De Marle succeeded Johnson on November 19, 1859, and there was then another suspension of publication until May 8, 1860, on which date a second new start was made, this time with volume 2, no. 1, under James L. Collins as publisher with John T. Russell as editor. Under other changes of ownership and editorial direction, the *Santa Fe Gazette* continued to appear until 1869.⁸⁰

During the period here under investigation, the supremacy of the *Gazette* at Santa Fé was disputed only once. In the year 1857 the Bibliography shows five titles with the imprint "Printed in the office of the Democrat," or its Spanish equivalent. This paper presumably began on August 6, 1857, to judge from the only issue of it which has yet been found, volume 1, number 9, of October 1, 1857.⁸¹ In this case we seem to have to do with a paper which had its main title in Spanish, *El Demócrata*, with an English section under the title *The Democrat*. The issue in question was edited by Miguel E. Pino and was published "in the house of Nicolas Pino, corner of Calle Principal and Callejon, west of the Plaza, Santa Fe, New Mexico." But it contains an announcement in Spanish, over the name of Hezekiah S. Johnson and dated September 30, 1857, to the effect that Johnson, at the request of many of his personal and political friends, had consented to become editor of *El Demócrata* and would begin his duties as such as soon as Miguel Pino had concluded his present contract as

80. The *Gazette* suspended publication on a number of occasions besides those noted. It missed 18 weeks in 1855, 17 in 1856, 9 in 1857, 7 in 1858, 17 in 1859. It seems to have been especially irregular in the summer months of those years.

81. A copy of this issue is in the National Archives (Records of the Department of State), Washington, D. C.

public printer, which would be in the following November or December.

An interesting feature of Mr. Johnson's announcement was his assurance that a subscriber to *El Demócrata*, which would come to him every two weeks for the sum of "dos pesos cuatro reales" (*i.e.*, \$2.50), would enable his children to acquire a love for reading, be instructed in matters concerning their obligations to the human race, broaden and enrich their minds in everything that pertains to human excellence. But in spite of these splendid incentives, the placid Spanish-speaking New Mexicans evidently were not moved to subscribe to *El Demócrata* in sufficient numbers to insure its success. Except for what is here recorded, we know nothing more at present of this newspaper.