



Journal Printing Company's Building, Talbot Street



Times Printing Company's Building, Talbot Street

St. Thomas Newspapers

THE FIRST paper started in St. Thomas was The St. Thomas Journal, edited by George and Thomas Hodgkinson and sometimes assisted in an emergency case by a third brother, Philip of Aylmer. This paper was started in 1821, and in 1832 another, The Liberal, also party and political, was established, and soon they were battling each other after the most ultra style of newspaper warfare. This contemporary of The Journal was owned by fifty stockholders, "independent yeomanry of Middlesex," and edited by a young man of remarkable ability as a political writer, Asahel B. Lewis, the eldest of the Lewis brothers who settled here about that time. It was an era of much bitterness and rancorous feeling between the two parties. "Family Compact" and "Clergy Reserves" are the two terms which most plainly tell the nature and issues of the conflict. Editorial writing as well as anonymous correspondence in our day sometimes degenerate into personal abuse, but the "amenities" of 1832 are far from striking; and no wonder, when at the political meetings not only "amenities" but shillelahs were striking. The Liberal office was situated on the north side of Talbot street on the embankment just opposite the present street car barns. As already stated the political writings of Editor Lewis were able, and, it may be added, pointed. Evidence of this is convincing, for following a number of particularly powerful editorial broadsides, during the hottest of the fight for responsible government, the staff of the Liberal arrived at the office one morning to find that the entire plant of type and presses had been dumped out the back door and lay a hopeless wreck at

the foot of the embankment, a similar fate to that which befell the printing plant of Wm. Lyon Mackenzie on the bank of the Niagara River, about the same time.

Serious handicap as this was it did not daunt the editor and owners, who speedily got together another plant, and the dissemination of Liberal doctrines was continued until they became part of the accepted laws of the country. These things are mentioned as items of history, for the purpose of giving a true picture of the times, and without fear of awakening any of the feeling now.

Here is a "specimen brick" from correspondence of that day: "I had intended to take no further notice of that miserable concern printed in St. Thomas, but since the editor has published an entire false statement to my letter, I shall condescend to notice the blackguardly vehicle, and expose its puerile evasions and contemptible perversions in their proper light." The following is editorial between the London Sun and one of the St. Thomas papers:

We make use of the following extract to show the unblushing impudence of this black hearted libeller: 'Dost thou think, thou poor, pitiful, grovelling wretch, that we ever wrote a word for the press, which dying we could wish to blot.'

The Liberal was a 48 column sheet and contained much editorial matter and much argumentative correspondence, all terribly in earnest. After the untimely death of Mr Lewis, which occurred at an early age of twenty-eight, it was edited by John Talbot (not a relative of Col. Talbot). The London Sun was edited by Edward A. Talbot, of Port Talbot. The St.