QUEENSLAND'S PIONEER JOURNALS AND JOURNALISTS

[By ALFRED G. DAVIES]

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The subject chosen for this paper surely needs no apology, for without journals and journalists no large community, and certainly no self-governing State, could exist. That being so it undoubtedly forms an integral part of the history of this Queensland of ours, and should not be overlooked in the compilation of records which is one of the main functions of a Society such as this. It is, of course, true that when the first newspaper was published in the Moreton Bay settlement, Brisbane Town was comparatively speaking a very small place. It had been a convict settlement, with all the sinister conditions, and brutalities associated therewith; but fortunately that had all been ended, and a free settlement created there by proclamation in 1842. It was four years later—in June 1846—that the "Moreton Bay Courier" made its first appearance. Up to that time the Moreton Bay settlement had been a mere scattered community, the existence of which was virtually ignored in Sydney, the nearest centre at which anything in the nature of a newspaper was published. In his "History of Queensland," William Coote, a thoroughly reliable authority, says that, according to a census taken in March 1846, the population of North Brisbane was 483; of South Brisbane, 346; of Ipswich, 103; of the squatting stations, 452; and the military and government officials together numbered 185. The need for a local newspaper began to be felt, and efforts were made to induce Mr. Arthur Sydney Lyon, "a gentleman of good education, indomitable energy and respectable connections" (and incidentally of some journalistic experience) to take the matter in hand.

Having canvassed the settlement for subscribers Mr. Lyon decided to take the risk, and he entered into arrangements with Mr. James Swan, a printer then living in Sydney, for the printing and publication of the proposed journal. According to William Coote, the prospects of the venture were not such as to arouse any particular enthusiasm in the mind of James Swan when
he came to Brisbane Town on his first visit of inspection. "The inducements held out by Lyon seemed to Mr. Swan, little likely to be realised. There were but few houses in Brisbane, and the streets existed only in name. The assurances of the settlers, however, calmed his apprehensions. He was told that the people in the grazing areas would afford advertisements, subscribers and cash. By degrees the faith necessary to enterprise was instilled into him, and the Moreton Bay Courier commenced its existence on June 20, 1846."

First "Courier" Office

It was first printed in the upper story, which Mr. J. J. Knight in his excellent book "In the Early Days" describes as the "garret," of a building at the corner of Queen and Albert Streets, Brisbane, where the Australian Hotel now stands. A publican's license was obtained for these premises which became known as the North Star Hotel. The place was burnt down in 1868, however, and on the same site was erected the Australian Hotel, built for the late Mr. Hayes. Mr. J. J. Knight says in his book that 'About May 1849, as if to keep pace with the times and growing importance of the place, the "Courier" forsook its garret at the corner of Albert and Queen Streets for the ground floor of the next premises, and began the issue of an extra sheet on the arrival of the mail steamer.'

The Moreton Bay Courier originally was published weekly. Its first issue was said to have been a really creditable production, the size being double demy, containing four pages, and sixteen columns of news and advertisements. Early in 1848 the paper was enlarged to double crown size, still consisting of four pages but containing twenty columns. In 1858 the "Courier" was issued twice a week instead of weekly, and its circulation had increased from about 200 in 1847 to about 1000. It became a tri-weekly on January 1st, 1860, and in the following April it was first issued as a "daily."

Arthur Sidney Lyon, the first editor, is described as "one of the most able and versatile writers of the period," and associated with him as printer and publisher was James Swan, who previously had been in the composing room of the "Colonist," Dr. John Dunmore Lang's paper in Sydney. He also was a thoroughly competent and experienced man. Furthermore his life story was a most extraordinary one to which possibly
some passing reference may be made later. Unfortunately differences arose between Lyon and Swan on matters of policy which eventually brought about a complete severance of relations between them. About that time the “squatters” were finding it impossible to get adequate supplies of labour to do the work on their station properties and were agitating to secure a renewal of transportation, with all its attendant evils. The trouble between Lyon and Swan chiefly arose through “a growing sympathy on the part of the former with the squatter party and their plans to secure convict labour, and an equally increasing desire on the part of the latter, backed up by Dr. Lang, to prevent the consummation of the scheme.” A claim to be actuated only by the highest journalistic ideals was made by the “Courier” at the outset, for at the top of the leader page appeared as a motto the words of John Knox: “I am in the place where I am demanded of conscience to speak the truth”; but that, of course, was not definitely binding in respect to the policy of the paper. The outcome of the disagreements referred to was that Mr. Lyon resigned the editorship, and Swan took over full control.

**Remarkable Record**

Whatever may have been Mr. Lyon’s merits or demerits as a journalist it is a remarkable fact that the first four newspapers established in what is now the State of Queensland—two in Brisbane, one in Ipswich and one on the Darling Downs—were all started under the editorial control of the same man—Arthur Sidney Lyon. That fact surely gives this brilliant but possibly erratic gentleman the right to be hailed as the Father of Queensland journalism. It is doubtful whether any parallel for such a remarkable sequence of events can be found in the annals of British journalism.

After having edited the “Moreton Bay Courier” for two years Mr. Lyon sold out to Mr. Swan. He then appears to have been out of journalistic harness for about two years. In July 1850, however, a newspaper entitled the “Moreton Bay Free Press” was started with Mr. Henry Buckley as registered proprietor and Mr. A. S. Lyon as editor. Mr. J. J. Knight in his book “In the Early Days” says: “The transportationist cause was championed by the ‘Free Press,’ and, if its
efforts in that direction were not successful, it was not because of any lack of ability or enterprise on the part of the editor. ... The "Courier" greeted its rival with a very fair and (on the whole) complimentary notice, even declaring that the establishment of a second newspaper was a proof of the increasing prosperity of Moreton Bay. These friendly sentiments, however, were not reciprocated; and, ere a month had elapsed, a war, sometimes fierce and bitter, was being waged between the twain."

Mr. Lyon's next change was in 1855 when he was appointed to fill the editorial chair of the "North Australian," published at Ipswich; and, three years later, he became the founder and editor of the "Darling Downs Gazette," first issued from its printing office at Drayton, then commonly known as "The Springs." Messrs. E. J. and A. C. Bays were the original proprietors of the "North Australian" and Hugh Parkinson, who came up from Sydney with the plant, was the foreman printer. Later, he was for many years senior proprietor of the "Queensland Times." The Bays Brothers were twins and were recognised as "the fathers of the Ipswich press," according to the late George Harrison in his "Jubilee History of Ipswich." Their devotion to their journalistic offspring, however, was comparatively short-lived. The first issue of the "North Australian" appeared on October 2nd, 1855, and in January 1862, the Bays brothers shook the dust of Queensland from their feet, and returned to England to spend their remaining years. The first issue of another paper "The Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser," appeared on July 4, 1859. The printer and publisher was Edmund Gregory who was engaged in Sydney by Mr. Arthur Macalister, representing a company formed by Ipswich residents.

Queensland's Separation

In the second issue of this paper the announcement of the granting of Separation to Queensland was made—a momentous event following upon a stern and protracted fight. The "Ipswich Herald" subsequently became the "Queensland Times," under a new proprietary, consisting of Messrs. H. Parkinson, J. B. Sloman, and Francis Kidner, the change of name being effected on October 8th, 1861. Two years later a claim was made on behalf of the "Queensland Times" that its
circulation was greater than that of any other paper in the Moreton Bay territory. This may have been true but Ipswich always was a boastful little place and the claims to big circulations in those days were not backed up by certificates signed by chartered accountants as we expect them to be to-day. In later years the Stephenson family held a controlling interest in the "Queensland Times." Mr. A. J. Stephenson was one of the members for Ipswich in the Legislative Assembly of 1896–9 (there were several double-seated constituencies in the Queensland Parliament of that time) and he afterwards was a member of the Legislative Council. His son (Alderman Alfred T. Stephenson) was Mayor of Ipswich for several years and also was a director of the "Queensland Times."

Most of you are aware that in the very early days the ambitions and the pretensions of the good folk of Ipswich were almost unbounded. Ipswich, according to their notions, was to be not only the political capital of Queensland; but also the head of navigation. The issues thus raised, if they did not actually originate in the newspapers, were fought out often with extreme bitterness in the columns of the press of Ipswich and Brisbane.

Apart from this, there was always the old bone of contention between the journals which never lost an opportunity of barracking for the squatters and their privileges, as against the just rights of other sections of the community.

Coote in his "History" referring to the time when the "Courier" had the field to itself in Brisbane—that was just on the eve of Separation, said (page 235): "There was only one (newspaper) in Brisbane—the old Courier—whose politics at the time were professedly liberal, which meant anti-squatting in the district and of the Manchester school in other respects." The same commentator says: The North Australian at Ipswich, fierce in defence of its own town and defiant of opposition, was nevertheless menaced by the rivalry of the "Herald" in the formation of which Mr. Macalister and some pastoral friends took a leading part; and at Drayton the "Darling Downs Gazette" sneered at the shop-keepers below the Range, and advocated the claims of the squatters. The principle peculiarity attached to this last-named journal at the time, he says, was the curious nature of its accommodation—a wooden shanty
elevated on some piles, apart from the few houses of the place, and where the music of the waving trees and the trickling waters of a creek below were favourable to meditation if not to comfort.

Let me now return to the story of the activities of Mr. A. S. Lyon. As I have told you he was the first editor of the "Darling Downs Gazette." Whether he was entitled to the sole credit of having been the "founder" of the paper is of course, open to argument. He doubtless was a moving spirit in the venture; but it is fairly safe to assume that it would be necessary for him to look to others for financial backing. It is generally believed that the "Darling Downs Gazette" was started by the "squatters" and this is borne out by a statement made by the late Hon. John Douglas, one time Premier of Queensland, in a "History of Thursday Island" of which he was for some years the Administrator. In an interesting pamphlet on this subject based upon his own reminiscences Mr. Douglas refers to the Australian Federation movement and says: "You will find it all set out in black and white in the pages of the 'Darling Downs Gazette' of those days—a little weekly periodical much after the style of 'The Pilot' which was started by me in those days of youthful exuberance." From this it would appear that the Hon. John Douglas was prominently associated with the first publication of the "Darling Downs Gazette." At that time, as is widely known, he had extensive pastoral interests in that part of Queensland, and for some time sat in the New South Wales Parliament as member for the Darling Downs. The reference to "The Pilot" is interesting because numbers of North Queenslanders are familiar with the diminutive news sheet published at Thursday Island under that name for many years.

"Darling Downs Gazette"

A homely touch is given to the reflections on this epochal event—the publication of the first newspaper on the Darling Downs in an article by "Ben Bolt" (Duncan M. Cameron) written for the "Darling Downs Gazette" in 1921. Mr. Cameron, who was a real journalistic veteran, writes: "I can just manage to cast my memory back to that day in June, 68 years ago, when as a kiddie I stood open-mouthed with astonishment while the late Joe Burton, under the supervision of the late George Hooper (Lyon's foreman) unloaded a mys-
terious assortment at Joe Kitchen's cottage, next to the old lock-up, across the Drayton Creek. . . . Lyon named his paper the “Darling Downs Gazette” with the motto ‘Ferio! Tego!’—‘I strike! I defend!’” When in a couple of years the circulation was verging on 300, Lyon sold out to William Henry Byers, a practical printer who, in 1862, removed the plant to Toowoomba, where the “Darling Downs” grew and flourished. After giving up control of this paper, Mr. Lyon disappeared from the journalistic stage, and died at Cleveland on October 22nd, 1861, at the comparatively early age of forty-four.

James Swan’s Life

In view of the prominent part, not only in newspaper activities but in the municipal and Parliamentary life of Queensland it seems only fitting that more should be said about the Honourable James Swan—for that was the designation by which he was known in his later years. The late J. J. Knight, who personally had a thoroughly practical grasp of all the processes pertaining to newspaper production, had a high opinion of James Swan’s capabilities and character. After mentioning the fact of Mr. Swan’s engagement to come to Brisbane as publisher of its first newspaper, Mr. Knight said: “Mr. Swan came here and, while laying the foundation of the printing profession, also established what is now recognised as the leading Queensland journal, the “Brisbane Courier.” That, you will remember, was written half a century ago, and big changes in the newspaper world have taken place since then. Mr. Knight, in his book “In the Early Days” expresses the opinion that, at the time of James Swan’s death (in 1891) there was no better or more widely known man in Southern Queensland than he. His life story—a veritable romance—ended practically in Australia in 1891; but it began with what was known as the Bell o’ the Brae murder trial, a truly sensational case which had caused a big stir in Scotland seventy years earlier. This remarkable murder trial was commenced at the Justiciary Circuit Court of Glasgow on September 24th, 1823, when Mary Horn or Muckstraffic was charged with having killed Janet McLaren, a deaf and dumb woman. McLaren, it was stated, had cohabited with a man named Mitchell, the successor as paramour of a soldier, Private James Swan, who had been killed in the Peninsular war. Mitchell deserted
McLaren and took up with Mary Horn or Muckstraffic who, for this purpose, had run away from her husband. As the climax of a bitter quarrel between the two women in which fisticuffs were resorted to, Muckstraffic lifted a hammer from the fireplace and struck McLaren on the head and shoulders, causing injuries from which the unfortunate woman died in hospital some days later. One of the witnesses for the Crown at the trial was James Swan, aged thirteen, a son of the victim. He had been an eye-witness of the assault which had had such a tragic result, and he gave his evidence so frankly and with such an obvious resolve to tell an unbiased story as to call forth a strong commendation from Lord Justice Clerk Boyle, who presided over the trial. The woman Muckstraffic was sentenced to transportation to Botany Bay.

The boy, James Swan, from early childhood, had been of a serious disposition and had made the most of the educational opportunities available to him. After spending a year in a solicitor’s office, and putting in some time as apprentice to a carver and gilder, he conceived the idea that he was meant to be a printer. An opening was found for him in the “Scots Times” office where he served his time as a compositor.

**Dr. Lang’s Influence**

He then came under the influence of Dr. John Dunmore Lang and was persuaded to try his fortune in New South Wales. Arriving in Sydney in 1837 Swan took up a responsible position on the staff of the “Colonist” where he remained for six years and (as I have already mentioned) he came to Brisbane in 1846. Mr. J. J. Knight says of him—“Swan, by his brightness of intellect, his integrity, his canny shrewdness in business, and keen interest in public affairs, speedily took and was conceded a prominent place in the growing town.” He gave up his control of the Brisbane “Courier” in 1861 and devoted the remainder of his days to the discharge of public duties. He did good service as an alderman; and, like Dick Whittington of old, was three times elected to the Mayoral chair. In 1878 he was called by the Governor to the Legislative Council of Queensland. At the age of eighty years (says Mr. Knight) Mr. Swan “with the sprightliness of youth took unto himself a wife just out of her teens.” The newly-married couple left on a voyage to Scotland
which was not destined to be completed—at least so far as the bridegroom was concerned, for he succumbed to the effects of the extreme heat as the steamer was passing through the Suez Canal.

Although it may appear to have little to do with "Journalism in Queensland," one cannot resist the temptation of bringing in some reference to the remarkable developments arising from the terms of his will. It transpired that, upon his marriage, Mr. Swan made a settlement under which he bequeathed his household furniture and other personal effects, and the life rent of his suburban villa and grounds, together with £500 per annum, to his widow—"for so long as she live or until she marry again, in which case the annuity will cease." Five hundred pounds was bequeathed to the Treasurer, for the time being, of the Baptist Church of which he was a member, for the use of the congregation. As to the residue of his estate which, it was believed, would realise between £45,000 and £50,000, Mr. Swan directed his executors and trustees that the same should be paid to the Treasurer for the time being of the Queensland Baptist Association in Brisbane, in such sums, at such times, and on such conditions as they thought fit, for the purpose of assisting them in supporting evangelists who should be engaged in preaching by the Association.

Will Proves Defective

It was not long after the testator's death, however, that it was found that the will, although drawn up by a solicitor of repute, was defective. It had only been attested by two witnesses, instead of by three, as required by "The Religious, Educational and Charitable Institutions Act." Furthermore the will had not been registered before the testator's death as it should have been. The result of this was that the Baptist Church lost the handsome legacy it had been led to expect. On the other hand the young widow found herself in possession of an unencumbered fortune of about £25,000 in addition to her annuity of £500 for life or until she married again.

As to the remaining £25,000 Mr. J. J. Knight says—"It will be remembered that Mr. Swan was an illegitimate child, and that his father died in battle. The romance of the Glasgow printer boy will not be completely closed until the £25,000 which is going
a-begging, so to speak, is claimed and granted to some distant relative of the Peninsular hero, or of the victim of the Bell o’ the Brae murder of 1823.”

Wilkes Champions Separation

William Wilkes, who was editor of the “Courier” in the early 50’s was reputed to be a journalist of marked ability and a high sense of his obligations as a moulder of public opinion. William Coote, the historian, praises very highly the ability and the thoroughness with which Wilkes had gone into the question of Separation and the scrupulous care with which he had prepared estimates and statistics to support his case.

In 1851 the offices of the “Courier” were transferred to a building at the corner of George and Charlotte Streets on the site now occupied by the Sister Kenny clinic. Nehemiah Bartley in “Australian Pioneers and Reminiscences” (p. 396) says—“William Wilkes, who edited the “Courier” in 1853 was a racy writer, and smart of speech as well, with a holy horror of High Church parsons, one of whom had refused to read the burial service over Wilkes’ little girl, who had died of scarlet fever, on the ground that he attended the Wesleyan chapel.”

An outstanding figure in journalistic circles in Queensland in the 50’s and 60’s of last century was Theophilus P. Pugh, who first came to Brisbane in 1853 to act as local correspondent for the “Empire” newspaper, which was being published in Sydney under the editorship of Sir Henry Parkes. Pugh, who was a trenchant leader-writer, was editor of the “Moreton Bay Free Press” for four years. As already mentioned this paper had been started in 1850 under the editorship of Mr. A. S. Lyon to champion the interests of the pastoralists and in opposition to the “Courier’s” Separationist policy.

First State Trial

In consequence of disagreements with the “squatters,” however, Mr. Pugh resigned from the “Free Press” and joined the “Courier” in the capacity of printer and publisher. He came into much prominence in 1861 when he figured as defendant in the first State trial in Queensland. As printer and publisher of the “Courier” he was prosecuted for the publication of a
leading article allegedly libelling the Legislative Council in references made to the salary of Mr. Justice Lutwyche. The keenest interest was taken by the community in the outcome of the trial and when Mr. Pugh's acquittal was announced it was followed by a great popular demonstration at night with bonfires and fireworks displays. Public meetings were also held at which subscriptions were raised to defray the expenses of the "Courier."

Mr. Pugh issued the first Queensland "Government Gazette" from the jobbing office in the "Courier" establishment, and he acted as Government Printer until the permanent appointment of the late W. C. Belbridge. Mr. Pugh probably will best be remembered as the publisher of Pugh's Almanac, which is so well known as a valuable record of development in Queensland over a period of seventy years. It was first published as Pugh's Sheet Almanac for 1858 and was then issued annually in book form from 1859 to 1927 inclusive.

Mr. Pugh sat in the Queensland Legislative Assembly as member for North Brisbane in the Second Parliament; and later was police magistrate at Goondiwindi, Rockhampton, Warwick and Bundaberg.

Changes in the "Courier"

Now let us again consider the developments in the career of the "Courier." In 1861 the control of the paper passed out of the hands of James Swan to those of Charles Lilley (who later became Chief Justice of Queensland) and W. C. Belbridge. A little later Mr. Thomas Blackett Stephens became the chief proprietor of the "Courier."

Meanwhile another newspaper, to which the name "Queensland Guardian" had been given, had been started in opposition to the "Courier" by Messrs. Fairfax and Wight. It was published three times a week, and made its first appearance in March 1860. Two years later it became a "daily." It does not appear, however, to have established itself very firmly among the people of Brisbane and in 1869 it was absorbed in the "Courier," Mr. T. B. Stephens retaining the controlling interest.

Another attempt to run a newspaper in competition with the "Courier" had been initiated in 1868 when the "Queensland Express" had been brought out
by Mr. W. C. Belbridge (the first Queensland Government Printer) and Mr. R. T. Atkin, who was the first member for Moreton in the Queensland Legislative Assembly. At the outset the “Express” was published twice a week, then three times a week and finally on 31st March 1870, it was issued as a daily at 2d. per copy, but its fortunes languished and exactly a year later it ceased to exist.

Mr. Atkin, in association with Messrs. William O’Carroll and W. W. Rutledge, however, were determined to make another attempt. They took over the building which had been used by the “Express” and which was in Queen Street, near the Bank of New South Wales and, with the same printing press, brought out a daily newspaper entitled “The Colonist.”

**Penny Evening Paper**

The first issue of this journal saw the light on June 7th, 1871. In the following year some of the business men of the city determined to take a hand in the establishment of another daily paper on a larger scale and the Telegraph Newspaper Company was formed in 1872. The first issue of the “Telegraph” was made available to the public on October 1st in that year as a penny evening paper issued from the office used for so brief a period for the production of “The Colonist.”

Later, an adjoining property was acquired and these two buildings ultimately were pulled down to make room for the retail stores of Messrs. Barry and Roberts.

Time will not permit me to follow the history of the journalistic development of the “Telegraph” newspaper which has become part of the life of Brisbane city to-day. Mention nevertheless should be made of the fact that the first editor of this evening journal was Theophilus Parsons Pugh, a gentleman of whom I have already told you quite a lot. After about twelve months in the editorial chair Mr. Pugh handed over to Mr. Arthur Morley Francis who, however, held his position for one year only.

Mr. J. R. H. Lewis, in the jubilee history of “The Telegraph” mentions as rather a coincidence that both Mr. Pugh and Mr. Francis afterwards secured appointments as police magistrates, and both established reputations for astuteness and impartiality on the bench.
Many of you, I am sure, will have some recollection of Mr. Lewis who, for thirty years or more, was sub-editor of the "Telegraph" and who, for that reason, was in an advantageous position for writing the story of its first fifty years.

Mr. Lewis tells us that an attempt was made in 1873 to establish a weekly newspaper, "The Budget," in connection with the "Telegraph," but it did not take on, and its life was short. The "Telegraph" meanwhile was making good progress.

In 1874 Mr. George Hall, who previously had been associated with the "Courier," became editor of the "Telegraph." On 1st January 1876, a weekly newspaper entitled "The Week" made its first appearance as an off-shoot from the "Telegraph," and its publication was continued until, a few years ago, it met the same fate as most other weekly newspapers of the period and dropped out of existence. In later years the "Telegraph" had a succession of able men in its editorial chair, among whom should be mentioned Messrs. George Woolnough, Dr. F. W. Ward and Mr. T. W. Heney.

Let us now return to Brisbane's pioneer morning journal, the career of which had not been running as smoothly as might have been desired. Disagreements between the directors and the management had worked up to such a climax that in 1873 the "Courier," together with the weekly newspaper, the "Queenslander" which had been established in 1866, was submitted to auction when it realised £13,600. The purchaser was Mr. W. Baynes, who (however) only a few days later, sold the property embracing the two newspapers to Messrs. Gresley Lukin, E. I. C. Browne and W. Thornton. During Mr. Lukin's management of the company's affairs special attention was paid to the "Queenslander," which it was claimed, "became, in literary excellence and general get-up one of the best weekly newspapers in the Southern Hemisphere."

Mr. Lukin, who was a native of Tasmania, where he was born in 1840, had high literary gifts, allied to great organising ability. Coming to Brisbane in 1866 he entered the public service and was chief clerk in the Department of Justice until (in 1873) he became managing editor of the "Courier." It was Mr. Lukin who conceived the idea of constructing a railway from Blackall in Western Queensland to Port Darwin in 1878.
and organised and despatched an expedition under Mr. Ernest Favenc with the object of demonstrating its practicability. The expedition was quite successful, and, as a result, proposals for the construction of a railway were put forward by the McIlwraith Government, but were rejected by the Queensland Parliament. Mr. Lukin severed his connection with the “Courier” in December 1880, when he sold his interest to Charles Hardie Buzacott, an experienced journalist and thoroughly competent printer. A native of Torrington, Devonshire, England, Mr. Buzacott came to Queensland in October 1860, and established the “Maryborough Chronicle” with very little loss of time. Attracted by the rush to the mining field at Peak Downs in the Clermont district Mr. Buzacott started a newspaper, the “Peak Downs Telegram” in 1864. Six years later, he purchased the Rockhampton “Bulletin” (which had been established in 1861 as a tri-weekly) and in 1875 brought out the first issue of the “Capricornian,” a weekly publication.

Mr. Buzacott’s business acumen was soon productive of results, after he took control of the “Courier.” In 1883 he decided not only to reduce the price of the paper from 3d. to 2d. but to increase its size to eight pages.

A big forward move was made in the following year when Mr. Buzacott purchased the site upon which the handsome edifice familiar to Brisbane people for so many years as the “Courier Building” at the intersection of Queen and Edward Streets, was erected. In this building the “Courier,” the “Observer” and the “Queenslander” were printed and from it were first published in May 1887.

It was claimed at the time that these were the largest newspaper offices in Australia. Early in 1886 Mr. Richard Gailey, architect for the new building, purchased a one-third share in the company, then held in the name of the late Robert Little, on behalf of himself, and the executor of the late William Thornton. In 1887 the oldest surviving shareholder, the Hon. E. I. C. Browne, died and the share was transferred to his executor, Mr. J. T. Walker.

I cannot enlarge further on the history of the “Courier.” Many of my audience will recall that in 1904 it was called on to face the rivalry of a new paper, the “Daily Mail,” and that thirty years later the two
journals were amalgamated under the title of the "Courier-Mail," and shortly afterward transferred to the modern newspaper office from which this organ of public opinion now emanates.

In 1875 a very colourful figure appeared on the journalistic stage of Southern Queensland in the person of Archibald Meston. Born at Donside, Aberdeenshire, in 1851, he paid a visit to Queensland in 1870 but afterwards lived in New South Wales for four years. In 1874 he returned to Queensland to take up the management of Dr. Waugh's Pearwell sugar plantation on the Brisbane River. In December 1875, he became editor of the Ipswich "Observer" and when, three years later, the paper was transferred to Brisbane he continued to fill the editorial chair. In subsequent years he filled (in turn) the positions of editor of the "Toowoomba Chronicle" and the "Townsville Herald." "Archie" Meston—the name by which he was popularly known—was elected member for Rosewood in the Queensland Legislative Assembly in 1878. He was then twenty-eight years of age and it was claimed that he was the youngest man in any Australian Parliament. He retained his seat as a legislator for three years, and his later years were largely devoted to exploring and to studying the habits of Queensland's aborigines.

"The "Queenslander"

Passing mention has already been made of the "Queenslander," the weekly newspaper issued from the office of "The Brisbane Courier." The first number appeared on February 3rd, 1866, the editor being Mr. Angus Mackay, a journalist of proved ability and wide experience. In those pioneering days, with a sparse and scattered population, and limited telegraphic facilities, the weekly newspapers were much in demand, and the profits derived from their sale and from advertising were considerable. As a consequence they wielded a substantial influence, particularly in the pastoral and agricultural districts. The "Queenslander," with its high cultural standard, was entitled to a definite meed of praise for the encouragement it gave to literary aspirants and its generally uplifting trend. In 1874 Mr. W. H. Traill became editor of the "Queenslander" and under his guidance the high standard set by his predecessor was fully maintained. The quality of the production was at a very high level in the first
twenty years of the present century; but the writing was on the wall, and the need for weekly newspapers in view of highly developed aerial and other mail services and the radio, was rapidly on the decline. Some years ago practically all the weekly newspapers in the capital cities of the Commonwealth ceased publication, as you are aware, and the “Queenslander” was no exception. Apart from the “Courier” and the “Queenslander” there was another journal put out by the Brisbane Newspaper Coy. which for some years exerted a very real influence in the territory within which it circulated, and that was the “Observer.” General Spencer Browne, who has figured conspicuously both in journalistic and military circles in Queensland, in his highly interesting book, “A Journalist’s Memories” tells us that he took over the editorship of the “Observer” from Mr. Archibald Meston in February 1881. He had been editing a paper at Cooktown when the offer of the new position came to him, though at that time he was under twenty-five years of age. The owners of the “Observer,” which was then a morning daily, were Messrs. McIlwraith, Morehead and Perkins, three members of the Government, and McIlwraith was Premier. At that time the “Observer” office was at the corner of Edward and Adelaide Streets, where the Astoria Cafe now stands. Spencer Browne tells us that the “Observer” was bought for the purposes of strong political partisanship. It was opposed by the Brisbane “Telegraph,” an evening newspaper which had been started in October 1872, and which was violently anti-McIlwraith, and supported the Opposition led by Sir Samuel Griffith. The “Observer” got into troubled waters as a result of a libel action for which its editor was in no way to blame, and finally it was bought by the “Courier” proprietary and converted into an evening journal. Archibald Meston and Spencer Browne have already been mentioned as having had editorial control of the “Observer.” In later years the paper was edited for fairly long periods by Mr. Walter J. Morley and Mr. J. J. Knight. With Mr. Knight in charge the “Observer” exercised a very definite influence on public affairs, and particularly on local government activities in the metropolitan area. Eventually the “Observer”—under the name of the “SportsObserver” or the “Sports Referee” became primarily a sporting publication, issued on Saturday nights.
I must keep as closely as practicable to the limits set by the title of my paper—which is “Queensland’s pioneer journals and journalists”—and I propose to confine myself to a period of thirty years from the time of the first publication of the “Moreton Bay Courier” in 1846. At the same time brief reference to some happenings of later date is unavoidable. One of the ablest of the editors of the “Courier” was William O’Carroll who, after a few years service, retired in 1869; but a little later was reappointed and held control until 1883. His sons were well known in Brisbane. One (W.F.) was an official Parliamentary reporter in the Queensland Legislative Assembly and later in the Federal Parliament. Another (Tom) was Chief Traffic Inspector in the City of Brisbane, and another (David) was on the reporting staff of the “Courier.”

Carl Feilberg was editor of the “Courier” from 1883 to 1887 and Kinnaird Rose from 1888 to 1891. The latter made name and fame for himself as a war correspondent but he is best remembered as the central figure in a Bacchanalian happening in the Parliamentary precincts in Brisbane. It appears that he was in the habit of going down to the legislative chamber at night when the House was in session, and indulging in conviviality with members who were kindred spirits. On one notable occasion, after having indulged somewhat freely, he lay down to sleep off the effects. Sad to relate, however, some ill-disposed person with a perverted sense of humour took advantage of his helplessness and while he still slept, got busy with a razor, and shaved off one side of his beard which was growing beautifully in the Dundreary fashion. I will leave to your imagination the rest of the story of this journalist with the lopsided face.

Later “Courier” editors were Dr. F. W. Ward, and Messrs. C. B. Fletcher, E. J. T. Barton, J. J. Knight, John Macgregor and R. S. Taylor.

Toowoomba Newspapers

Now I want to take you back to Toowoomba. I have told you that the “Darling Downs Gazette” was transferred from Drayton to Toowoomba in 1862; but in July of the previous year a rival newspaper under the name, “Toowoomba Chronicle” had been started by a young Canadian compositor, Darius Hunt by name. The new paper, which was successful from the first,
was bought straight out in 1876 by the late Mr. W. H. Groom who, as managing editor, conducted its activities for many years. Its best known editor was J. V. McCarthy, a vigorous and versatile leader writer and good all round journalist. In 1922 the rival newspapers—the “Darling Downs Gazette” and the “Toowoomba Chronicle” —were both bought by the late Andrew Dunn, owner of the “Maryborough Chronicle.” They were amalgamated and subsequently published as the “Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs Gazette” from premises in Margaret Street, Toowoomba, which were thoroughly well equipped and modernised in every respect. Mr. Dunn also acquired the Rockhampton “Bulletin,” and the Warwick newspaper, though he subsequently disposed of the latter. The first paper produced in Warwick was the Warwick “Mail” which, however, survived for only a few months. In November 1864, Mr. Patrick Ritchie brought out the first issue of the Warwick “Argus,” but this newspaper in the following year passed into the hands of the late James Morgan, who previously had held the position of Inspector of Stock for the Warwick district. In later years the paper came under the control of Sir Arthur Morgan, son of the former owner, who had filled the positions of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Premier of Queensland as the culmination of a distinguished career as politician and journalist. In 1867 opposition appeared in the field in the shape of the Warwick “Examiner” and “Times,” the proprietors of which were Messrs. R. A. Cowton and Samuel Irwin. These rival journals carried on for many years, but in time an amalgamation came about inevitably. Meanwhile newspapers had been started, and become established in the Wide Bay and Burnett districts—the “Maryborough Chronicle” (a tri-weekly) in November 1860, and the “Maryborough Mail and Tribune” (weekly) in December 1869. Some of the early newspapers were very transitory in character. It is recorded that the “Burnett Argus” which first saw the light as a bi-weekly at Gayndah in April 1861, later changed its venue to Maryborough and became known as the “Maryborough Mail,” but later again made another move, and came out as the “Mount Perry Mail.” Meanwhile the town of Dalby had developed out of a mere crossing place on Myall Creek where a small bush “pub” had been established. All the teams and wagons on the way to Jimbour had to cross Myall Creek;
and, as settlement to the north progressed, it became the centre from which two roads branched off, one going down the Condamine to the west, and the other in a northerly direction to Auburn. At Auburn the road formed two branches, one going to Gayndah, and the other to Taroom. For these reasons the Myall Creek crossing from 1843 was a place of some importance. Captain Perry, the Assistant Surveyor-General was sent up from Sydney to survey the township and it was he who gave the name Dalby to it. The Dalby "Herald" was first published in 1865 as a weekly newspaper, and soon had a big circulation throughout Western Queensland. Its proprietor for some years was Mr. Michael Joran but in more recent times it has been under the control of Mr. J. Shaw Thompson. The "Western Star" was started at Roma by Mr. Alfred Robinson in 1876 and, two years later was owned by Mr. F. Kidner. About the same time new journalistic ventures were being launched in the Wide Bay and Burnett district, at Bowen, Townsville and as far north at Cooktown; but neither time nor space will permit me to pursue the subject further.