

One hundred years of service

THE PUBLISHING HISTORY OF THE GAZETTE
By E.J. Shrubb
1875-1975

The history of newspapering for Norwich goes back one hundred years this year.

Printing however was established in the village many years before, by two brothers Claudius and Joseph A. Tidey. Tideys Economical Printing Establishment as it was known was located on the west side of

Stover St. in the rear of John Tidey's drug store. The office was probably unique in the fact that outside of two Washington hand presses and a Braidwoods platen press, the outfit was all homemade.

Neither Claudius or Joseph A. were printers by trade but Joseph was quite a mechanical genius, he made case after case of wooden type. The type was made of applewood trees from around the district sawed and dressed type high and painstakingly cut by hand. Some of Joseph's handiwork is still around the Gazette office.

All kinds of printing was done. They produced sale flyers and posters for the merchants in the village to advertise their wares, which was in effect the forerunner of the paper.

About 1873 Miller brothers (D.W. and A.P.) built the brick block on the corner of Main and Stover Streets and occupied the ground floor as a general store. The printing office was moved from across the street to a large room over this store. After the move to the new quarters Joseph Tidey severed his connections with the business and went to New York.

Claudius Tidey was in conveyancing work and a Robert McWhinnie from Woodstock took charge of the printing establishment.

THE FIRST PUBLISHER

This arrangement continued until early in 1875 when Mr. H.G. Pilcher, an Englishman from Woodstock, bought the business from Claudius Tidey.

In June of that year the first newspaper to be published in Norwich came off the press. It

was known as the Standard. Along with his two sons Frank and Wallace, Mr. Pilcher published the paper for almost a year. For unknown reasons the publication was suspended in about the middle of 1876. The paper was printed on an old Washington hand press. It was a four page broad sheet, all home print. Each and every letter was hand set from a typecase, a time consuming process and a skilled one too from the look of some of the old papers available.

JAFFERY BROTHERS

The Jaffery brothers, R.M., J.P. and E.G., took over the plant and after a few weeks quickly re-established the paper under the name by which it is still known, The Norwich Gazette.

The three operated the business for about a year when J.P. and E.G. left. R.M. stayed on and took into partnership a Peter Craib of Woodstock.

Records are few and far between in this period but what records that are available tell us that Claudius Tidey, the original owner of the print shop came into the picture again and inserted the following in the paper of July 6, 1877:

TO THE PUBLIC

Gentlemen;
The time has come for the establishment of a successful

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The front of the Miller Block with the Gazette staff appearing at the upper windows. The publisher T.C. Bartholomew is the older gentleman at the second window from the left. The picture was taken in July 1893.

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