

The pervasive dependence of the early press on government support and patronage had an important effect on newspaper tone between 1752 and 1807. The early editor was almost completely subservient to the officials of the day; since he needed government business, he carefully avoided comment on the conduct of those in authority. With rare and rather accidental exceptions, he refrained from examining contentious political questions. Such general newspaper docility made the characteristic journal of the time a pallid, neutral, harmless sheet without any really vital role to play in the social and political life of the community.

In keeping with its innocuous character, the pages of the journal of that day looked like the dull, unbroken columns of *Hansard*. What few heads it used were chiefly label heads, not much larger than the body type of the stories they introduced. Illustrations were extremely small wood cuts that were generally restricted to the advertisements. Because the papers of 1752 to 1807, unlike their modern counterparts, were read thoroughly from beginning to end by most readers, because stories did not have their endings lopped off at the last minute to make room for late news, and because no overworked head-writers were kept busy supplying headlines for a constant flow of news stories, there was no reason for using the inverted pyramid writing convention common in the modern newspaper. The "lead", as the twentieth century reporter understands it, was unknown. Instead, news accounts were presented in chronological order and written in discursive, literary style. News was not departmentalized, but items were generally thrown into the paper as they came to hand, so that two issues of the same news-organ were usually quite dissimilar in format. Early journals were closer to the modern tabloid than to the modern "bedsheet" urban daily in page size, although they varied considerably in both shape and size. The *Halifax Gazette*, for example, started as a half-sheet of foolscap and was a two-column production. Other papers were folio or quarto, while still others were not one of the standard sizes at all. The early news-sheets rarely contained more than four pages.

Since newspaper production was usually a laborious one-man operation that used a hand-operated, flatbed press employing handset type, press-runs were small and publication no more frequent than once a week. Small populations also kept circulations low. Thus the *Halifax Gazette* began life with only 72 subscribers, the *Royal American Gazette* of Charlottetown had a circulation list of not more than 50 names, and the first issue of the *Quebec Gazette* had only 143 buyers. At the end of the period, the three weeklies in Halifax had a combined circulation of 2,000.

MAGAZINE JOURNALISM

The magazine press was virtually non-existent during the first journalistic period. The earliest periodical was the *Nova Scotia Magazine and Comprehensive Review of Literature, Politics and News*, a Halifax monthly begun in July 1789 with Rev. William Cochran as first editor and John Howe as printer. Later Howe edited it as well. The project was abandoned in March 1792. Second of its kind, *The Quebec Magazine*, half of which was written in French, appeared monthly in Quebec City with Alexander Spark as editor, Samuel Neilson as first, and his brother John as later printer. It existed from August 1792 to May 1794. In the same City, John Neilson also edited *The British American Register* throughout its short life from January to August, 1803. *The Nova Scotia and New Brunswick or Historical, Literary, Theological and Miscellaneous Repository* was established in Halifax in 1806, but it too did not last long.

SECOND PERIOD: CONSOLIDATION AND GROWTH, 1807 TO 1858

Whereas the first period was a time of journalistic pioneering, the 1807-to-1858 era in Canadian journalism was a time of consolidation when the transplant growth of the early years thickened and roots were sunk deeper. There was a steady proliferation of newspapers in the two Canadas and in the four maritime colonies.