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COMMUNICATION IN AN ISLAND SETTING:
A HISTORY OF THE MASS MEDIA OF THE
BAHAMA ISLANDS, 1784-1956

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Howard Sidney Pactor

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to John Wells, Edwin C. Moseley, Mary Moseley and Sir Etienne Dupuch who established, nurtured and kept alive a free and independent Press in the Bahama Islands, and to those Bahamian journalists, known and unknown, who also served.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to locate, identify and interpret the mass media of the Bahama Islands in terms of geographical and foreign influences. In so doing, the study created a bibliographic record which identified media enterprises, dates of operation and principal participants in their operations. In the course of the research for this study, 44 newspapers and information sheets were identified as in publication at various times between 1784 and 1956, and at several locations in the islands. Eight papers were found to exist, preserved at the Nassau Public Library. A single copy of a ninth paper at the Public Records Office in London. Two radio stations were also identified as serving the islands.

The mass media, initially newspapers, were introduced to the Colony following the American Revolution and, except for a brief period at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there has been continuous newspaper service to the residents of Nassau. At various times, generally in the present century, there have been a number of attempts to publish newspapers at various Out Island settlements.

Radio broadcasting was introduced to the Colony late in 1930, making the Bahamas the first British Caribbean colony to experiment with broadcasting. The initial attempt was not continued beyond the brief experimental period. Not until 1937, not 1936 as some have indicated, that a permanent broadcasting station, ZNS, was established by the Colony's government.

During the period studied, the early mass media were elitist, designed for the educated planter and professional classes of Bahamian society. At the end of the nineteenth century the infrastructure of modern mass media began to be introduced to the Colony. Following World War I, the media became truly mass media with the completion of the introduction of electricity-based publishing and broadcasting equipment.

Bahamian media were confined by the geography of the islands and the uncertainty of transportation to and from Nassau on New Providence Island. Although subscribers were served by inter-island mail boats, wireless telegraphy and broadcasting were the only media to overcome time and geography in bringing news and information to the Out Island settlements.

At various times, the Bahamian mass media have been influenced by the United States, particularly during the American Civil War and Prohibition/Great Depression era. The media have looked and sounded similar to American mass media, but underlying their sound and appearance, Bahamian mass media have reflected British concerns and been unswerving in their support of Great Britain.

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CHAPTER I

MASS MEDIA IN AN ISLAND SETTING

The mass media as an institution arrived in the Bahama Islands two centuries ago out of the turmoil and confusion of the closing days of the American Revolution. John Wells, a Patriot turned Loyalist from Charleston, South Carolina, established the first newspaper in those remote islands off the coast of Florida.¹ Wells' background was well-suited for the task. He had learned the printing trade from his father, Robert, who established the second newspaper in South Carolina and operated a major bookstore in the southern colonies in the mid-eighteenth century.² John and his brother Charles were also credited with bringing out the first newspaper in the British Floridas while they were refugees in St. Augustine at the end of the Revolutionary War.³

Since John Wells established the Bahama Gazette in Nassau in 1784, there has been virtually continuous journalistic service to the residents of the Bahama Islands. At least 44 newspapers and, in the twentieth century, broadcasting have brought news, information and entertainment to Bahamians and visitors alike.

¹Thelma Peters, "American Loyalists in the Bahama Islands: Who They Were," Florida Historical Quarterly, 40 (January 1962): 239.

²Isaiah Thomas, The History of Printing in America (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell, 1874), p. 172.

³"The Memoirs of Charles Wells," Royal Gazette (Nassau), 12 August 1818.

The Bahamas long remained a minor colonial possession of Great Britain, exerting little influence on world or regional affairs. Accordingly, the islands were ignored and neglected as long as no problems or strife marred the idyllic image of a tropical refuge in a troubled world. That neglect was longlasting and nearly total; indeed, some aspects of eighteenth century colonial government survived until well into the present century. Only the economic growth of the post-World War II period helped to alter, if not eliminate, that condition. Bahamian voters, for instance, could not use a secret ballot until 1948.⁴

The Problem in Perspective

Neglect of mass media history has been only a very minor problem in the Bahamas, but the impact of mass media to this nation of islands offers intriguing research and study opportunities. Through two centuries of mass media activity in these islands, little has been done systematically to record, preserve or interpret Bahamian mass media beyond binding the accumulations of newspapers into volumes and micro-filming the surviving volumes in the mid-twentieth century. The printed record is scanty. Beyond a few articles in Bahamian newspapers,⁵ the

⁴Gordon K. Lewis, Growth of the Modern West Indies (New York: Modern Reader Paperbacks, 1968), p. 313.

⁵There have been a few articles on newspapers in the Bahamas printed in Bahamian papers. As mentioned earlier, "The Memoirs of Charles Wells" gives some information about the Bahama Gazette. The first detailed history, however, occurs in the Nassau Guardian on July 20, 1864. This article gives incomplete information about some of the newspapers it enumerates and omits others. This article, apparently written by Edwin C. Moseley, the paper's founder, served as the basis of a number of

Miami Herald,⁶ a memoir by a retired Bahamian editor,⁷ a brief overview in a doctoral dissertation⁸ and a not altogether accurate account of Bahamian mass media in a recent book on Commonwealth Caribbean mass media,⁹ there is not an accurate, complete or organized record or history of Bahamian mass media. This study will attempt to provide the missing record.

Purpose of the Study

This study, then, proposes to investigate two significant facets of mass media history in the Bahamas. First, the historical record must be organized, constructed and examined. Second, the mass media must be related to the geographical, social and political history of the Colony.

There are three important parts to establishing the historical record. The first is to identify the newspapers and broadcasting services in the Bahamas from 1784 to 1956. Second, to identify founders,

anniversary articles written by his granddaughter, Mary Moseley, who edited the paper more than 40 years. She brought the article up to date for the last time in 1944. The 75th anniversary issue of the Nassau Tribune also provides information about that paper's history.

⁶Don Bohning, "Radio is Tie Binding Bahamas," Miami Herald, 14 May 1974, p. 16-A.

⁷Sir Etienne Dupuch, Tribune Story (London: Ernest Benn, 1967).

⁸John A. Lent, "Commonwealth Caribbean Mass Media: Historical Cultural, Economic and Political Aspects," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1972).

⁹John A. Lent, Third World Media and Their Search for Modernity (London: Associated University Presses, 1977).

publishers, editors and principals involved in media enterprises and to collate the material into a bibliographic record. The final part is to provide information about the locations of examples of Bahamian newspapers and related media artifacts if any are still in existence.

The second, and perhaps most important aspect of this study is to relate the mass media to the geographical, economic, social and political history of the islands. As a part of this aspect of the study, outside influences will also be evaluated. As previously noted, the earliest papers were influenced by eighteenth century journalistic practices in North America. Further, because the islands were a colonial possession of Great Britain, the influences of both British journalism and broadcast practices are important in Bahamian mass media.

For example, a reading of the Bahama Gazette under the editorship of John Wells (1784-1799) reveals a dynamic effort to establish American Loyalists as the dominant force in the colonial Bahamian government. There is also a continuing interest in the affairs of the infant United States where many of the new Bahamians had left family and economic ties in their search for other havens in the British Empire. Fifty years later, in 1834, the pages of the Bahama Argus were dominated by the concerns of an Empire and Colony faced with the emancipation of slaves and the effects of paid labor on the already weakened agricultural base of the Colony's economy.

The origins of the proprietors and managers of media enterprises were also important factors in the orientation of newspapers and later of broadcasting. The founder of the Nassau Gardian, Edwin C. Moseley,

who arrived in Nassau to edit the Argus in the 1830s, was an English-trained editor-manager. Elias Dupuch, an iron founder from France via Martinique, and Dupuch family progenitor, arrived in Nassau about the same time as Moseley. His grandson, Leon, would be second generation Bahamian when he established the Nassau Tribune in 1903.¹⁰

During the time span this study covers--1784 to 1956--the existing papers reveal shifts of editorial expression of concern with events outside the Bahamas--foreign wars and foreign affairs being the major items of interest. Insular concerns, those items which would be considered as local news items in modern journalistic practice, are generally missing except for shipping notices, court reports and legislative debates. However, in a community of only a few hundreds concentrated in Nassau on New Providence Island, word-of-mouth served as a faster means of communicating locals news than did the weekly and bi-weekly newspapers. Johann Schoepf commented on Nassau in his report of his travels in Florida and the Bahamas in 1783 and 1784:

Under the splendid name of Bourse there is frequented by the waterside a building, quite open, furnished with a roof only, where public sales are held of goods brought in, and all notices and regulations are posted; here may be found throughout the day buyers and sellers, ships' captains, and other persons, of affairs or of none, who come to hear or retail the news.¹¹

¹⁰Dupuch, pp. 19-20.

¹¹Johann D. Schoepf, Travels in the Confederation, trans. Alfred J. Morrison (New York: Bergman Publishers, 1968), p. 263.

Not until the coming of radio broadcasting in the twentieth century would a mass medium have the capability of disseminating information faster than the proverbial grapevine telegraph in Nassau, and in the Out Islands as well.¹²

The Research Plan

In its simplest form, the research plan for this study was the examination of the microfilm of Bahamian newspapers, a brief examination of some of the existing newspapers in Nassau and an interview with Harcourt Bethel who was involved with broadcast and print media in the Bahamas from 1938 through the last year of this study. An additional interview with Carl Bethel at ZNS-TV led to questions about the establishment of ZNS radio that were not adequately answered in either interview. This will be discussed at length in Chapter V.

The data collection aspect of this study proved to be time consuming inasmuch as all readable issues of every paper available on microfilm were scanned for information about newspapers, broadcasting and the people involved with the media. When information was found, it was either photocopied or transcribed verbatim for study. This involved reading local news reports and editorial columns in an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 newspapers. In some instances, only a sentence or two might be found referring to a newspaper, its editor or its

¹²The Out Islands, now known as the Family Islands, are those islands and cays not adjacent to New Providence Island, the site of Nassau. This study will use "Out Islands," the term used by Bahamian editors throughout the period of this study.

owner(s). Such references frequently are the only substantive information found to establish names and approximate publication dates for the paper in question.

The extremes of the research undertaking can be illustrated by a brief examination of publication dates for four newspapers. The Nassau Guardian was founded in 1844, and the file is virtually complete from 1849 to 1956, including more than 20 years when the paper published a multi-paged edition six days a week. The Nassau Tribune, founded in 1903, is virtually complete from 1919 through 1956. This paper became a multi-page daily before the Guardian. The Royal Gazette was in print from 1804 until 1857, but many of its later issues are missing from the files and no copies exist after 1837. The Parthenon, however, apparently published sometime between 1844 and 1864, ". . . was born and died in a day."¹³ Information about many media activities was equally as ephemeral.

The research plan also called for the study of documentation relating to the establishment of broadcasting in the Bahamas. Previous correspondence with ZNS in 1978 provided an information sheet giving some of the history of radio,¹⁴ but by the time Carl Bethel was interviewed in 1980, a copy of the sheet could not be provided.¹⁵ In the final analysis, as will be shown, the newspapers provide a more

¹³[Edwin C. Moseley], Nassau Guardian, 20 July 1864.

¹⁴Calsey Johnson, General Manager ZNS, personal letter, 14 February 1978.

¹⁵Interview with Carl Bethel, ZNS-TV, Nassau, Bahamas, 4 September 1980. (The two Bethels cited are not related.)

complete--and accurate--record than what was learned by on-site investigation in Nassau. The value of the papers in providing information about broadcasting is that they were on the spot. The editor of the Tribune, for example, was a member of the House of Assembly committee appointed to discuss the establishment of a permanent broadcasting service. The information gained through interviews and the meager documentation provided by the broadcasting service failed to provide any information or reference to the fact that ZNS was preceded by another experimental radio station several years before the establishment of radio station ZNS.

The bibliographic aspect of the study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What newspapers and broadcast services have been in operation in the Bahamas between 1784 and 1956?
2. Who were the founders, editors, publishers and operators of the mass media enterprises during this period?
3. What records or business-related data can be found from either the newspapers and broadcast entities themselves, or the public records, if such information exists?
4. Where are the physical remains of these newspapers currently located?

The result of these endeavors is to collate bibliographic information in one place.

The second aspect of the study attempted to relate the mass media to their social, geographical, economic and political milieu to establish some understanding of how mass media evolved in an island setting;

and further, how the media have served their audiences in this setting. Four additional questions were posed for this aspect of the study:

1. How the media are related to the environmental factors of geography, economics, society and politics?
2. And, to what extent applicable, have the factors listed above been affected by the mass media?
3. How have the Bahamian mass media been influenced by the United States, Great Britain and the insular concerns of the Bahamas itself?
4. What needs were met by the establishment of a national broadcasting service?

Primary documentation for this study exists in the original bound volumes of newspapers kept in the Nassau Public Library and on microfilm held by that library and the Latin American Studies Center at the University of Florida. The mid-twentieth century microfilming of these newspapers may have resulted in the best preservation of them inasmuch as an additional quarter-century of exposure to tropical environmental conditions has passed. These old newspapers are kept wrapped in brown paper in glass-front book cases in the cupola of the Nassau Public Library, which was built as a prison at the end of the eighteenth century. The building is neither air-conditioned nor otherwise climate-controlled.

Many of the newspapers of the Bahamas have disappeared, victims of the ravages of time and man's lack of interest. Of the more than 40 newspapers published in the Bahamas from 1784 to 1956, only eight are still in existence in the Nassau Public Library's collection and the

microfilm record. The American Antiquarian Society listed a number of scattered issues of Bahamian newspapers in its holdings in 1926,¹⁶ but these are apparently duplicated by the more complete holdings of the Nassau Public Library and the microfilm. In all, the best sources of information about the newspapers of the Bahama Islands are the existing newspapers themselves.

Information about the development of broadcasting service is reported in detail by the Nassau Guardian and the Nassau Tribune, as previously mentioned. The interview with Harcourt Bethel provided information about ZNS radio that proved to be incorrect. Chapter V, Cable, Wireless and Radio, explains in detail the discrepancies between Bethel's recollections and the historic record as revealed in the newspapers of the period. Only the newspapers revealed the existence of a previously unreported broadcasting service predating ZNS by almost seven years. Again, this will be detailed in Chapter V.

The primary sources, the newspapers themselves, provide the most complete answers to the bibliographic questions raised by the lack of a comprehensive record of the newspaper publishing activity in the Bahamas. Further, the bibliographic information established the finite limits of the materials available to relate the mass media to the Bahamian milieu, as well as to interpret the relationship between the mass media and the environmental factors of geography, economy, society and politics.

¹⁶Waldo Lincoln, "Newspapers of the West Indies and Bermuda," in Proceedings, 1926 (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1927), pp. 130-155.

Ultimately, successful adaptation of mass media enterprises to the Bahamian environment may be measured by the survival of individual media enterprises. In the Bahamas, it seems, survivability is low: only three newspapers (the Royal Gazette, the Nassau Guardian and the Nassau Tribune) survived more than 50 years, and only the last two papers are still in print. Radio station ZNS, now designated ZNS-1, is nearing a half-century of service although its first decade of existence was precarious.

The final aspect of Bahamian mass media investigated by this study is the influence of the bifurcated relationship of the Bahamas to the United States and to Great Britain. Founders of the mass media in the Bahamas came from the milieu of the American Revolution--most of the early printers were Loyalists--and developed their own media traditions. Later proprietor-editors were thoroughly British in outlook, but Bahamian by birth or immigration. In this regard, this study will attempt to identify periods of foreign influences and suggest possible interpretations of their effects on Bahamian mass media.

Organization

The narrative report of the findings of this study consists of six chapters, an appendix and a bibliography. The first chapter is introductory in nature, presenting the problem researched, a review of the pertinent literature, necessary operational definitions and limitations, a description of the research setting and a brief discussion of the research plan.

The summary report of the findings concerning Bahamian newspapers

is detailed in three chapters corresponding with three distinct periods of Bahamian colonial history. The first is the Loyalist Period from the establishment of the Press as a viable institution in 1784, through the end of William IV's reign in 1837. The second period covers the 63-year reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). The third period covers the twentieth century from 1901 to 1956 when control of the Colony's government shifted from the white oligarchy to the emerging black political power bloc.

Three papers of the Loyalist period survive with fairly extensive files and form the basis of the second chapter. From them, information can be found that provides some knowledge about the missing journals known to have been issued in Nassau during this period.

The third chapter, covering the reign of Queen Victoria, details what is known of the newspapers of this period. Three papers existing in the files of the Nassau Public Library make it possible to reconstruct something of the history of the missing papers. At least eight papers were published in Nassau or Governor's Harbour during this period. It is possible to identify them and provide some information about them from the existing sources.

The fourth chapter, dealing with the newspapers of the modern era, is divided into six sections. The first details the background of newspapering in the Bahamas at the opening of the twentieth century. The second section continues the history of the Nassau Guardian. The section is concerned with the details of the Nassau Tribune from its founding through 1956. The fourth section reports the "Press War" between the Tribune and the Guardian under its new owners following

the paper's sale by Mary Moseley to a group of local businessmen who were apparently intent on destroying the Tribune and its owner. The fifth section details what can be found about other newspapers published in Nassau but are missing from the record. There are at least 20 papers or news sheets in this group. The sixth section reports on the Out Island newspapers known to have been in print during the twentieth century. There are five papers included in this section, although one of them is known only to have been in publication before 1925. The final section reports on two Royal Air Force publications issued at the RAF base on New Providence Island in the final years of World War II.

The fifth chapter deals with the establishment of radio in the Bahamas. Building on the introduction of communications technology from the turn of the century until 1930, this includes the discussion of cable, wireless telegraphy and the introduction of radio in the nearby United States and experimentation with radio in Nassau. The chapter discusses in detail the establishment and commercialization of the Colony's permanent radio service, ZNS.

The final chapter provides a summary of findings in the study and discusses their significance. In addition, areas of research interest for the future are indicated. The appendix presents a time-line chart to provide a visual display of mass media activity in the Bahamas. A bibliography concludes the work.

The Research Setting

Because the indigenous population of the Bahamas had been eliminated by the Spanish as early as 1515,¹⁷ the present population of the islands developed over the centuries from European stock, primarily British, in the form of pirates, buccaneers, petty traders and settlers. Following the American Revolution, the population of the Bahamas nearly doubled with the influx of American Loyalists and their slaves. In 1782, there were slightly more than 4,000 people scattered over seven inhabited islands; 2,750 lived on New Providence Island and about 800 were slaves.¹⁸ At the end of the main period of migration, the population had increased by 3,247, consisting of 1,033 whites and 2,214 slaves.¹⁹ Thus the population of the Bahamas stood at approximately 7,250 when John Wells began his paper in 1784.

The economic and social development of the Bahama Islands began with the arrival of the American Loyalist refugees, mostly from the southern mainland colonies, along with their slaves and racial biases. The immigrants brought with them plantation agriculture--chiefly cotton--the slave labor to support cotton culture and the American tradition of free, if not free-wheeling, speech and press. The descendants of the original American Loyalists and their slaves, along with Africans who

¹⁷Carl O. Sauer, The Early Spanish Main (Berkeley: University of California, 1969), p. 160.

¹⁸Thelma Peters, "The Loyalist Migration from East Florida to the Bahama Islands," Florida Historical Quarterly 40 (October 1961): 128.

¹⁹Wilbur H. Siebert, Loyalists in East Florida (Deland, Fla.: The Florida State Historical Society, 1929), p. 208.

had been settled in the islands after being freed from slave ships,²⁰ now dominate the social and political life of the islands. The origins and interests of the immigrants who developed Bahamian society are important contributors to Bahamian mass media history.

From hundreds of miles in space, the view of the Bahama Islands and the seas around them is breathtaking. As the American astronaut, Russell Schweickart remarked, "Of all the beautiful sights I saw from the spacecraft, the waters of the Bahamas stick in my mind as the most spectacular of all."²¹ For generations of explorers, pirates, slaves and tourists, the Bahamas have always been a haven of sorts, providing golden beaches and secluded harbors, verdant fauna and tropical trade winds. These have earned the islands the sobriquet of the "Isles of June." From the air, the seas shade from emerald green over the shoals and reefs to the cobalt depths of the open Atlantic. Islands, cays and rocks are scattered like green jewels, and like the seas around them, have played man false for nearly half a millenium.

The Bahamas extend from about 60 miles off the coast of Florida, opposite Palm Beach, southeastward some 760 miles to parallel the

²⁰Michael Craton, A History of the Bahamas (London: Collins, 1962), pp. 206-07. Following the agreement to limit the slave trade prior to its abolition throughout the British Empire, the Royal Navy regularly deposited Africans recovered from slave ships at locations throughout the Bahamas. Several settlements, Adelaide and Carmichael on New Providence, were established in this manner.

²¹Bahamas Handbook (Nassau, Bahamas: Etienne Dupuch, Jr., Publications, 1970), pp. 30-31.

northern coasts of Cuba and Hispaniola.²² Although there are more than 2,000 rocks and cays (small uninhabited islands) and 700 islands²³ which total slightly more than 4,400 square miles of land area in more than 50,000 square miles of sea,²⁴ only some 20 islands are populated. New Providence Island enjoys the largest population. Freeport on Grand Bahama Island and Governor's Harbour on Eleuthera Island are other centers of Out Island population (see Table I and Figure 1).

TABLE I
BAHAMA ISLANDS: POPULATION¹

Island	Population	Island	Population
New Providence	46,125	Crooked Island	836
Grand Bahama	4,095	Exuma and Cays	2,919
Abaco	3,461	Inagua	999
Acklins	1,273	Long Cay	80
Andros	6,718	Long Island	3,755
Berry Islands	403	Mayaguana	615
Biminis and Cay Sal	1,330	Ragged Island	320
Cat Island	3,201	San Salvador and Rum Cay	320
Eleuthera, Harbour Island and Spanish Wells	7,596		
Total (1953 Census)			84,841

¹Report on the Census of the Bahama Islands, 1954 (Nassau: Nassau Guardian, Ltd., (1844)), 1954.

²²J. O. Cutteridge, Geography of the West Indies (London: Thomas Nelsons and Sons, 1956), pp. 191-92.

²³Helmut Blume, The Caribbean Islands, trans. Johannes Maczewski and Ann Norton (London: Longman Group, 1974), p. 112.

²⁴Alan Eyre, A New Geography of the Caribbean (London: George Phillip & Son, 1964), p. 104.

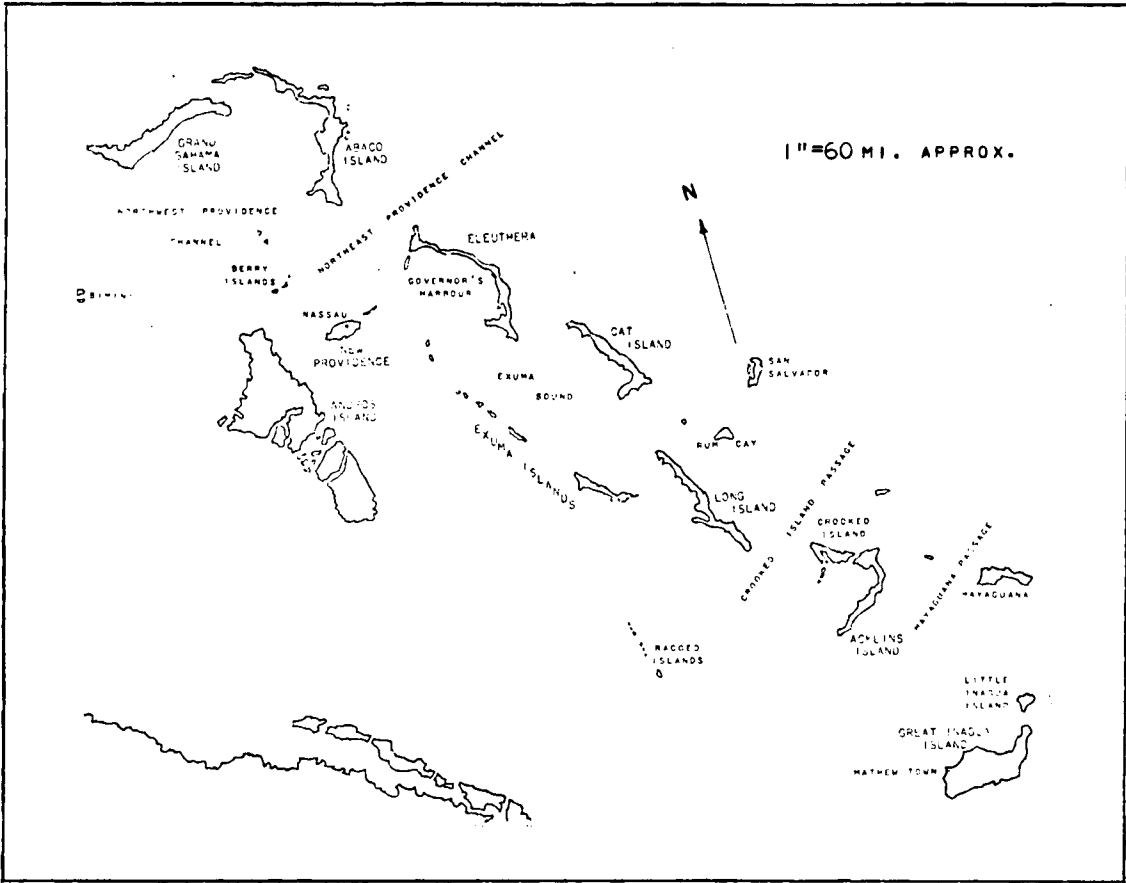


FIGURE 1
THE BAHAMA ISLANDS

The census figures for 1953 are included here to show the approximate population of New Providence Island, the major circulation area for Bahamian papers, and the Colony as a whole at the end of this study in 1956. As will be shown, in 1953 the combined circulation of both Nassau daily papers totaled perhaps six to seven thousand copies per issue. A fairly large portion of that circulation was among tourists. The inescapable conclusion is that the newspapers reached barely 10 percent of the population. It is far more likely that this is a generous estimate. The papers did, however, reach the segment of the population which counted--the social, political and economic leaders of the Colony.

The seas surrounding the islands have contributed to many of the troubles and most of the history of the Bahamas. Many of the islands are separated from each other by deep channels. Other channels are navigable only at high tide. The major inhabited islands, however, are generally separated by deep channels such as Tongue of the Ocean, Exuma Sound and the Crooked Island Passage.²⁵

Navigation in the Bahamas was extremely hazardous until the coming of accurate sailing charts and navigational aids such as lighthouses and anchored channel markers in the last century. That Columbus could sail without harm through the islands brought Daniel McKinnen, a visitor to the islands in 1802 and 1803, to remark,

. . . one cannot but admire the fortune and skill of the accomplished admiral [Columbus] in effecting a passage, at present never heard of, through that part of the Bahamas to Cuba; for probably nine out of ten strange

²⁵Blume, pp. 112-13.

vessels attempting it without the assistance of some chart, even in our improved state of navigation, would be wrecked. . . .²⁶

The area McKinnen refers to is a shallow area now called the Columbus Bank which lies southwest of the Ragged Islands.

Further, it should be pointed out that Columbus' ships ranged from 60 to 100 tons burden and drew only about six feet.²⁷ As ships grew in size and displacement, sailing through the Bahamas became even more hazardous. Newspapers from 1784 on make references to ships "cast away," cargoes lost and cargoes saved by wreckers--who often as not caused the wreck. Wreckers were sailors and landsmen alike who preyed on, as well as prayed for, wrecks.²⁸ The salvaged cargoes and ships' gear were frequent items announced for auction in the papers.

Until the coming of the American Loyalists as refugee settlers between 1784 and 1789, virtually nothing was done in the Bahamas besides pirating and wrecking--two occupations not always easily separated. Subsistence agriculture and supplying the necessities and delights of the sailors were about the only regular economic activities in the islands. Trade, such as it was, was primarily in support of wrecking, piracy and privateering during one of the wars, or quasi-wars,

²⁶Daniel McKinnen, A Tour Through the British West Indies in the Years 1802 and 1803 Giving a Particular Account of the Bahama Islands (London: J. White, 1804), p. 200.

²⁷Samuel E. Morison, Admiral of the Ocean Seas (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1942), pp. 152-157.

²⁸A story is told of a preacher stopping in mid-sermon to announce the sighting of a wreck. At the conclusion of his brief announcement he asked the congregation to remain seated so he could have an equal chance--it took him longer to get from the pulpit to the door than for his parishioners to get from their pews to the door.

between England and Spain. Because many of the Loyalists were planters, cotton culture and slavery were rapidly introduced into the islands and quickly became the mainstay of agriculture and trade through the first three decades of the nineteenth century.

It did not last. Cotton was vulnerable to insect pests which ruined the fiber; the thin soils of the islands were quickly exhausted through overplanting and the lack of fertilization. Then, in 1834, came the emancipation of slaves throughout the British Empire.²⁹ These circumstances combined to bring an end to the plantation life and economy of the Bahamas.

During the century or so following the abolition of slavery, Bahamian agriculture experienced only brief periods of profitability with the exportation of pineapples, tobacco, tomatoes and sisal for rope making, but success and profitability were always short-lived. Only the sea offered hope for the economy of the Bahamas. It has been said that success in the Bahamas was a house ashore, a ship afloat. For nearly a hundred years, until a blight wiped them out in the late 1930s, sponges were the principal export product of the Bahamas.³⁰

Until the post-World War II development of tourism and international banking, the Bahamas knew only two periods of commercial prosperity, and both were predicated on cataclysmic events in the United States. During the American Civil War, Nassau became the entrepot for blockade runners who brought the cotton of the Confederacy to the

²⁹Craton, p. 105.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 247-55.

Bahamas where it was exchanged for the military supplies and medicines so desperately needed by the South. This profitable commerce ended abruptly with the war's end in 1865, and brought financial depression to Nassau.³¹

One other period of prosperity, for a 14-year span, provided employment, excitement and profit for a select group of Bahamians and Americans alike. During the years between 1919 and 1933, while the United States experimented with national morality and sobriety, the Bahamas thrived as never before as a final staging area for dealers in alcoholic products. Rum-running, as the illegal shipment of liquor was called, provided a cushion of sorts to the economy after the coming of the Great Depression in 1929. But with repeal of the Volstead Act in 1933, and the devastation of the sponging beds by 1938, the economy of the islands was again in decline. Starvation was known in the Out Islands and only World War II and its effects on the economy brought a new measure of prosperity to the islands.³²

The economy of the islands, until relatively recent times, has been subject to the economic vagaries of the United States. Prosperity in the colossus to the northwest brought money to Nassau and into the papers as businesses increased their advertising and the papers reported the news of the United States for American businessmen and tourists who came to savor the delights of Nassau.

³¹Ibid., pp. 225-37.

³²Ibid., pp. 264-77.

Media Enterprises

As the population center of the Bahamas, Nassau has always been the center of economic, political and social life in the Colony. So too has it been the center of newspaper publication and broadcast activity for the entire period of this study. Except for a brief period between the cessation of the Bahama Gazette in 1801--and it may just be missing issues--and the start of the Royal Gazette in mid-1804, there has been continuous journalistic activity in the Bahamas. As noted, 36 newspapers have been identified in this study as having been published in Nassau. Two papers were mentioned in Nassau newspapers as having been in publication at Governor's Harbor at various times; three at Mathew Town on Inagua and one, published twice, at Bimini. And, as previously mentioned, two newspapers were published during World War II at the Royal Air Force Base on New Providence Island.

Two radio stations, one previously unmentioned in the scholarly literature, have been on the air in Nassau. The first was an experimental station broadcasting late in 1930. Its broadcast ended sometime in the spring of the following year. The second, and permanent station, was ZNS, which was supported by the Colony's government from 1937 until it became a commercial operation in 1950. The literature about broadcasting in the Bahamas, except for local accounts, has been incomplete and inaccurate, as this study will show.

Significance of the Study

Although the initial problems posed in this study--those of bibliographic aspect--are, to some extent, what Markham calls ". . . the pedestrian description of the mass media out of context, as if we picked

the stuff out of UNESCO data . . . ,"³³ the act of locating and organizing the bibliographic data is an important and necessary first step for any investigation of Bahamian mass media. Because the Bahamian mass media records are, at best, imperfectly preserved, offering incomplete runs or files, stray issues and vague references to content and location of components of the historical record, this "pedestrian" step is vital for this investigation. The assembly of this record was perhaps the most time-consuming aspect of the study, involving as it did scanning every readable Bahamian newspaper in the microfilm holdings from 1784 to 1956.

It is hoped that this study will, in one convenient source, identify and describe, however imperfectly, the mass media of the Bahamas for future use. This study is a pertinent summary of the Bahamian mass media before the records and people who were involved pass from the scene. Because so little has been researched and published in Caribbean-area mass media, and the Bahamas specifically, this study provides a starting point for future studies of greater detail. This study also points to the mass media of the region as a fruitful area of research for historians and mass media specialists alike.

As perhaps an altruistic hope, this study serves to collect and preserve aspects of Bahamian culture and history which have been ignored by both white and black Bahamians, and which, in the context of time,

³³James W. Markham, memorandum to "Internationales," August 7, 1969, quoted in John A. Lent Third World Mass Media and Their Search for Modernity (London: Associated University Presses, 1977), p. 17.

society and politics, offers a valuable record of the establishment of a cohesive and dynamic society in an island setting. Any gain in knowledge about a nation's past, particularly for an emergent state, is a contribution to knowledge and to the understanding of how it--in this case the Bahamas--arrived at its present-day media institutions. In addition, this study may contribute to our understanding of how media adapt to a difficult geographical environment.

Preservation of Bahamian mass media artifacts will be, in the main, a continuing problem for the Bahamian government. Especially acute are the problems facing libraries in the Bahamas, most specifically the Nassau Public Library, which is the custodian of the remaining materials. Paul G. Boultree, assistant librarian at the College of the Bahamas, has written:

Library service in the Bahamas suffers from deficiencies in three areas: lack of funds, lack of a definite policy and lack of qualified personnel. These three do not exist separately from one another but can be seen each in its individual context.³⁴

Government funding for libraries totalled less than \$50,000 in 1978, or about 25 cents per capita. The Bahamas dollar is on par with the U.S. dollar. In fact, both circulate freely throughout the islands. Obviously, preservation of old newspapers in the public libraries has a low priority. This study, then, may fill a need for preserving and organizing something of the mass media record--an historical record that is fragile and rapidly being lost.

³⁴Paul G. Boultree, "Library Service in the Bahamas," International Library Review 10 (October 1978): 151.

For scholars who may look to the Caribbean area as a setting for mass media research activities, this study may well indicate the diversity of materials available for such undertakings. In terms of mass media research in this area, little has been done. A study of this sort, then, breaks new ground for future research into Bahamian mass media history and into mass media history of other former British colonies in the Caribbean.

Literature Search

The underlying difficulty in studying the mass media of the Bahama Islands is that very little has been written about the topic. Only two works provide much information about the mass media on the islands. Sir Etienne Dupuch's Tribune Story and John Lent's Third World Mass Media and Their Search for Modernity, which is based on his doctoral dissertation, are the major non-newspaper sources for this study.

Dupuch's book is primarily an anecdotal memoir of the years he owned and edited the paper. It also includes a detailed history of the Dupuch family in Nassau and the founding of the Tribune. Much of the information in the book appears to be taken from newspaper stories appearing in the Tribune, or at least as Dupuch remembered, or thought he remembered them. The book does, however, provide a more open discussion of personalities and events than do the various newspaper accounts. Dupuch, who was a masterful storyteller, revealed his anger and frustration with people and events which he repressed in his news and editorial columns at the time the events took place. Dupuch's book, with his columns from 1920 to 1956, provides a fairly detailed glimpse

into incidents in Bahamian history through the perceptions of a noted journalist. While the book reflects his interests and biases, it provides the most detailed and compact account of Bahamian mass media available to the researcher.

Most of what has been summarized and published about Bahamian mass media appears in Lent's work. From his previously mentioned dissertation and one major book, a plethora of journal articles and bibliographic materials have been generated. It should be noted that Lent's work on Commonwealth Caribbean mass media encompasses Britain's presence in the area for about 260 years. During this period the number and arrangement of English colonies have varied widely. At the end of this study in 1956, there were 18 British colonies in the region. There were 13 colonies in the Caribbean Sea itself; two mainland colonies, British Honduras in Central America and British Guiana in northern South America, and three Atlantic colonies--the Bahamas, Bermuda and the Turks and Caicos Islands. This latter colony has at times been part of the Bahamas and of Jamaica.

Lent's voluminous and pioneering work is well deserving of the praise it has received. It is a monumental work for its span of time, media and geography. As a result of its reach, at least in the case of the Bahamas, it suffers from a degree of superficiality and inaccuracy. Some omissions are excusable; some newspapers were found for the present study only as the serendipitous result of meticulous reading of the newspapers. Given Lent's scope in his study, detailed examination of the record would have been time consuming in the extreme. If reading the number of issues of the papers entailed in this study is any

indication of the magnitude of the journalistic record--which is doubtful--the research for Lent's work, in retrospect, would have to have been superficial, given the number of colonies and media studied.

Although many papers are missing from the record, the eight existing Bahamian papers provide a fairly comprehensive source for locating and cataloging information about themselves and their missing contemporary journals. The newspapers tend to reflect and announce their triumphs and their tragedies, as well as those of the competitors whose journals are now missing from the files. It is only by detailed and comprehensive reading of the existing files that the record of Bahamian mass media can be compiled and studied. The occasional mentions of other newspapers in the existing papers permit the establishment of publication dates, identify editors of missing papers and determine some of their editorial content. In some cases, the only information about a paper is a scant three- or four-line reference to some event affecting the paper or its editor. Only these slender threads remain of what were the hopes and aspirations of well-intentioned colonial editors in the Bahamas.

The best source of information about Bahamian mass media over the longest period is the Nassau Guardian. Its files cover more than a century of publication from 1849, when its files begin in the Nassau Public Library collection, through 1956, when this study ends. The previously mentioned article about Bahamian newspapers which appeared in the Guardian in 1864, provides the initial survey of Bahamian journalism between 1835, when the Bahama Argus file ends, and 1864, when the article appeared. Moseley's sons and granddaughter, who operated the

paper in the years following his death, frequently updated and republished the original article. The article is useful.

Although the Guardian provides a longer file of newspapers to study, the Tribune provides better coverage of the period from 1920 on in terms of identifying and discussing newspapers and their editors. As long as the Moseley family owned and operated the Guardian in the twentieth century, there is either an air of condescension or of anger in discussing other papers. Throughout its history, the Guardian held to a white-oriented policy, going so far as to bill itself as the only "white paper" in the Bahamas.³⁵

Although a number of histories of the Bahamas have appeared over the centuries, they provide little information about the newspapers of the islands. An exception, to a small degree, is Michael Craton's A History of the Bahamas, which provides a brief summary of John Wells' Bahama Gazette.³⁶ Craton also includes extracts from other papers, although he does not cite his sources for most quotations. Such information would have proven useful for this study. A good bit of Craton's work, however, appears to have been based on Stark's History and Guide to the Bahama Islands, published in 1891.³⁷ While this source is useful in providing information about the Bahamas to about 1890, it does not provide much useful information about the newspapers at the end of the

³⁵"Here and There," Nassau Tribune, 9 July 1930.

³⁶Craton, p. 305.

³⁷J. H. Stark, History and Guide to the Bahama Islands (Boston: Photo-Electrotype, 1891).

century. Craton's work appears to reflect the attitudes, biases and interpretation of events of the white ruling class at mid-century. In light of some of the findings of this study, Craton's work is inaccurate and omits much information available to him through a closer reading of the newspapers and talking to major figures in journalism and the life of the Colony who were still alive and had information which could have aided him in his research.

The two major figures in the first half of the twentieth century in Bahamian journalism are barely mentioned or even quoted in Craton's history. Etienne Dupuch, for example, is mentioned by name only twice, both times in conjunction with the investigation of the Oakes murder in 1942.³⁸ Mary Moseley is mentioned only once, and that in connection with a proposed aerial survey of Andros Island in 1926.³⁹ Although their newspapers and words are utilized in his book, Craton apparently omitted or overlooked their personal importance to the Colony.

It should be kept in mind, however, that the period at which Craton's work ends coincides with rise of political organizations--particularly Dupuch's Bahamas Democratic League and the Progressive Liberal Party--and movement toward greater participation of blacks in the political life of the Colony. No one in the Bahamas could foresee the direction these events were to take, but certainly those with an interest in the Colony were apprehensive about the future. Their concerns were evident in the newspapers following World War II.

³⁸Craton, pp. 174 and 276.

³⁹Ibid., p. 17.

Basically, in a study such as the one reported here, the mass media themselves are the best source of information about events. Although Dupuch's Tribune Story looks at a single newspaper, no other work provides details about other newspapers to the extent this source does. The present study is the only work to research and report in detail, organize a bibliographic record and attempt to relate the media to the history of the Bahamas.

The in-fighting between and among the newspapers of the Bahamas about public policies and journalistic endeavors at any point in the Colony's history is complex and often confusing. The printed record often tantalizes without providing hard information for the researcher to use. The issues as reported, tempestuous as they may have been when first reported, are often unclear when one reads the reports at this time and distance from the events. For example, the letters to the editor of the Bahama Gazette in response to the comments in the Royal Lucayan Herald in August 1789, are unclear to the modern reader. The events and the participants are obscure and now unimportant.

The arrival of the American Loyalists caused major social and political changes in the Colony as the pre-migration colonists in the Bahamas were pushed from their domination of the Colony's affairs. The Loyalists simply outnumbered and, when given the franchise, outvoted the old residents.

Emancipation and tourism--particularly in Nassau--have had significant and long-lasting effects on the Bahamas. Although black activism and the final assumption of political power by the black majority lie outside this study, their roots can be followed in the newspaper

reports from emancipation in 1834, through the elections of 1956.

Tourism, although, it developed slowly, became the mainstay of the Bahamian economy and an important aspect of journalism survival. When tourism expanded following the Second World War, the newspapers shared in the boom--both for advertising and for editorial content.

The most common circumstance, however, was economic disruption. It followed the American Civil War, the repeal of the Volstead Act and America's Great Depression. Moreover, England's policies in foreign and colonial affairs, various wars, withdrawal of governmental support of the church and changes in the colonial administration of the colonies also played roles in economic disruption. These interrelationships have been chronicled in the newspapers. The relationships among events and newspapers, the relationships among the newspapers themselves and the modernization of mass media institutions in the Bahamas provide an opportunity to study the development and activities of mass media in a unique setting.

CHAPTER II

THE LOYALIST PERIOD

Although the forerunners of modern newspapers have been traced to northern Germany as early as 1609, and further back to the Acta Diurna of the ancient Roman Senate of 59 B.C., a true newspaper has been defined as meeting the following criteria:

1. it must be published once a week
2. it must be produced by mechanical means
3. it must be available to anyone willing to pay the price regardless of class or special interest
4. it must print anything of interest to a general public
5. it must appeal to a public of ordinary literary skill
6. it must be timely, or at least relatively so in light of technical development
7. it must have stability.¹

In addition to these criteria establishing a definition of what a newspaper is and must do, the development of journalism as a viable economic and social institution depends on a population which has an interest in community affairs, has self-government, is prosperous and has cultural leadership. Therefore, journalism in the British North American colonies marked time: only when frontiers were conquered could citizens share such concerns as religious and political differences, and their problems with Great Britain. When these critical

¹Otto Groth, Ein System der Zeitungskunde (Journalistik), (Mannheim: J. Bensheimer, 1928), V. 1, pp. 21 ff; quoted in Eric W. Allen, "International Origins of the Newspapers: The Establishment of Periodicity in Print," Journalism Quarterly, 7 (December 1930): 311.

requirements were met, there was a need for newspapers.² In the Bahamas, however, the critical points were the establishment of American Loyalists in the governing fabric of the Colony, economic development of a remote and basically unprofitable area and the relationship between the races.

Background

After Benjamin Harris's abortive initial attempt to publish a paper in Boston in 1690 (Publick Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestic), John Campbell's Boston News-Letter became the first true newspaper in the colonies in 1704.³ Eighty years after Campbell's paper, at the end of the American Revolution, there were 35 weekly newspapers in print in the thirteen American states. Twenty of these had survived from before the war. An additional 35 papers were established during the war and of these, 15 survived to the end of the war. Thus the former colonies had maintained the same number of papers, but an equal number, 35, failed.⁴ Survivability was low among colonial newspapers, and, as will be seen in the case of Bahamian papers, none of the early colonial papers survived into the modern period. In all the British Caribbean colonies, including Bermuda and the Bahamas, only five newspapers survived from the nineteenth century. No currently publishing newspaper in the area is older than the Bermuda Royal Gazette, which

²Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, The Press and America: An Interpretative History of the Mass Media (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), pp. 16-21.

³Ibid., pp. 21-26.

⁴Ibid., p. 69.

was established in 1828. The Nassau Guardian, established in 1844, is the oldest paper in the Bahamas.⁵

Printing evolved slowly during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but with the coming of improved printing presses and the penny newspapers, growth was dramatic in the major population centers of the United States.⁶ Conversely, in the small, nearly forgotten colony of the Bahamas, the development of print journalism languished at the hand-set type and hand-operated press stage well into the present century when, for example, the Nassau Tribune began using its first Linotype and a cylinder press in 1922.⁷

Bahamian newspapers did not reach any degree of timeliness in their foreign or Empire reporting until the installation of the submarine telegraph cable late in the nineteenth century and the use of wireless early in the present century. There was little need for immediacy, given the usual impoverished state of the Bahamian economy and the relative unimportance of the Colony to either the United States or Great Britain. Given the slow pace of life, fostered by wind- and animal-powered transportation in the Bahamas, immediacy of news dissemination was not a major factor in the journalistic enterprises of the Colony.

⁵ John A. Lent, Third World Mass Media and Their Search for Modernity (London: Associated University Presses, 1977), p. 47.

⁶ Emery and Emery, pp. 107-33.

⁷ "Tribune Comes of Age & Grows," Nassau Tribune, 21 November 1978, p. 17.

It should be remembered, too, that the majority of the population of the Bahamas was slave for virtually all of the Loyalist period. Following emancipation, freed slaves or their descendants formed the majority of the population. Not until fairly recent times did the majority become literate enough, and economically situated, to use a newspaper.

It has been said that a newspaper should print anything of interest, but Bahamian editors did not always have the space and supplies to do so. The early editors could not provide timely local news because such news items could be told and re-told the length and breadth of Nassau before the editor could compose and strike off copies of his paper. The editors of the period, however, were adept at providing foreign news and literary material for their few subscribers. Until the telegraph, Bahamian editors had to depend on exchanged newspapers from England, the United States and other British, primarily Caribbean-area, colonies.

Books, which were expensive and not protected by copyright laws, provided material which could be reprinted to augment columns not otherwise filled with news and advertising. Reprinting from other newspapers and books provided a method of disseminating at least some elements of culture for Bahamians. For those residents in the Out Islands, the papers provided a fairly regular connection with Nassau; for many Bahamians, the papers were probably the most reliable source of news and information about their former homes, families and friends in the United States. Although Bahamian editors were staunchly loyal to British interests, the dominating presence of the nearby United States

tended to keep events in that country at the forefront of an editor's decision-making on what to include in his journal.

The Bahamian newspapers indentified in this study do not, in every case, meet every criterion outlined above by Groth. Weekly publication was sometimes beyond the capability of an editor who had difficulty obtaining news, supplies, equipment, economic support and qualified employees. For some papers, the single reference found for it does not provide publication information to establish it as a weekly. Some may have been monthly or occasional news sheets. Although some of the Bahamian papers survived for fairly long periods, all of the papers described in this study, except the Guardian and the Tribune, have disappeared.

Colonial Printing

From the days of Johann Gutenberg's movable type and hand-operated press until the arrival of John Wells in Nassau, printing had been essentially the same handcraft for three centuries. In the Bahamas, it would continue as such well into the twentieth century. As a handcraft, printing was a slow, labor-intensive process which frequently was only a small part of the colonial printer's activities; others might include job printer, bookseller, postmaster and anything else his inclination might lead him to in his pursuit of economic survival. Colonial newspapers rarely paid their own way, especially in the Bahamas.

But what was a colonial printing establishment like when Wells moved to the Bahamas? There are a number of books on colonial printing,

which, along with a few articles in early nineteenth century Bahamian newspapers, give some idea of what printing may have been like in colonial Nassau.

A typical colonial printing establishment would consist of a hand-operated wooden press (iron presses would not be in use until after 1807), its ancillary equipment, type and its related paraphernalia, supplies of paper, ink (more likely lampblack and varnish for compounding ink) and perhaps some bookbinding equipment. If the printer could afford it, he might have a well-cast font or two of type from Holland, which then produced the finest type available. More likely, the colonial printer would have to do with a half ton or so of type in various sizes and degrees of serviceability.

Printeries were known as "one-press," "two-press" and "three-press" shops, depending on the number of printing presses in use. The manpower to operate a printery was a constant problem for the owner, given the scarcity of labor and the tendency of apprentices to abscond and journeymen printers to move frequently. The printer might rely on his wife--and there are numerous cases of printer's widows taking over the shop--his children and apprenticed youths whom the printer was to instruct in the art of printing in return for their labor. The heavier tasks of operating the press were usually performed by the master printer, or owner, or by an itinerant journeyman.

It is difficult to determine the value of a colonial printery, but given the relative lack of inflation during the first 75 years of the eighteenth century, the value of a one-press shop equipped with a new press and type averaged about 85 pounds () sterling. A two-press shop

equipped with two used presses and equipment was valued at about the same. William Park's three-press shop in Williamsburg, Virginia, sold for 288 in 1753. Wroth estimated the value of a two-press shop at about two-thousand dollars in 1930.⁸ Inflation since that year would increase the dollar value of the 1750 printery to about ten-thousand dollars, but in terms of modern printing equipment, the valuation is not comparable.

Supplies for colonial printers were the source of much worry and vexation. Although paper was made in the North American colonies as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century, supplies often were hard to obtain when needed and were costly. For Bahamian editors, who had to depend on uncertain shipping, obtaining supplies, especially paper, was a continuing problem throughout the 172 years of this study. A ream of paper (500 sheets) cost ten shillings, or about two and one-half dollars at mid-eighteenth century, when an unskilled laborer might earn 31 cents per day.⁹

In 1821, Neil McQueen, editor of the twice-weekly Royal Gazette in Nassau, was forced to print his paper in a half-sheet format to conserve paper. When his supply ran out, he was forced to suspend his paper for about six weeks until he could obtain more paper. Even after obtaining paper, he was forced to print only once a week until he could insure a regular supply of newsprint.¹⁰

⁸Lawrence C. Wroth, The Colonial Printer (Portland, Me.: The Southworth-Antoensen Press, 1938), pp. 62-86.

⁹Ibid., p. 151.

¹⁰Thus the Royal Gazette published as a weekly from January 31 to May 16, 1821, to conserve newsprint supplies.

Ink also represented a problem for early printers. Imported supplies were uncertain, both in quality and availability, so ink was usually mixed, or "rubbed," by an apprentice in the printery. The process was fairly simple: lampblack, a carbonaceous substance, was mixed with varnish, which when dry, left the lampblack bonded to the surface of the paper. The apprentice mixed the ink as each job required. This practice also kept an otherwise idle apprentice busy.¹¹

For the first hundred years or so of Bahamian newspaper history, the papers continued to follow the layout practices of the eighteenth century. The paper consisted of four pages; additional pages were added occasionally as supplements. The first and third pages usually contained a mix of editorial matter, advertisements and government notices. The second page was always used for editorial material. The fourth page, in the early days of the paper or during periods of economic depression, might contain a mix of editorial material--usually a literary extract--and advertising. For a well-established paper, advertising might fill as much as 50 percent of the paper, but was usually somewhat less. Advertising was always one column wide and might consist of a simple list of items for sale. For a newspaper used by the government for legal advertising and government notices, revenue and solvency were often assured.

Local news, such as it was, appeared on page two and carried over to page three if needed and space was available. News was often mixed with opinion and editorial commentary in these early papers. These

¹¹Wroth, p. 121.

colonial newspapers were often personal journals, or single-issue papers, which reflected the ideas, opinions and biases of their editors. Local news might consist of reports of the legislature, the various courts, Out Island correspondents, letters to the editor and informational articles. Much of what would be considered spot, or breaking, news today was rarely reported, although fires, burglaries and hurricane damage reports dominated this category.

Advertisements for runaway slaves, strayed livestock, government-required notices of arrivals and departures, auction notices and commercial announcements provided some information that could constitute local news. Some of the reports, however, are understandable today only if the reader knows the issue or issues being discussed. The early editors often assumed that their reader was already familiar with the topic and knew both the issues and the participants.

The appearances of these newspapers were, at best, dull. Headlines were a problem for early editors whose papers were limited by the size and amount of type available to them. The small size of the paper available to the editor did not give him much discretion in using significant amounts of space for headlines and labels. Headlines, as known today, were not used, although some verbatim reprints might include headlines if they were used in the original report. Generally, a class of news might be headed with a label such as "Foreign Intelligence," "Nassau," "Shipping" or simply the name of the paper. Only once in the Loyalist period was anything like a modern headline used. The Bahama Gazette issued a Bahama Gazette Extraordinary which has a full-width

banner headline, "Glorious Victories in Germany!" for a one-page issue summarizing battles in Germany during the Napoleonic wars.¹²

Display advertising using artwork and running more than one column in width did not come into Bahamian journalistic practice until late in the nineteenth century. In the early Loyalist period, about the only artwork to be used were cuts of ships for sailing notices and running black figures which announced runaway slaves. Later in the period, cuts of houses were used for real estate sales, and of horses and cows for livestock sales. Standing ads often ran unchanged for months, reducing the need for typesetting and labor.

In the Loyalist period of Bahamian mass media, from Wells' arrival in 1784, until 1837, when Victoria became Queen of England, at least six newspapers were published in Nassau. Of these papers, the files are substantial but incomplete for three, and missing for three others. Three of the papers were still in print during the first years of the Victorian era and one of these survived until 1857 (see Table II).

The Loyalist Press: The *Bahama Gazette*

In the southern colonies along the Atlantic seaboard north of the Bahamas, a vicious internecine war had broken out between Patriots in rebellion and Loyalists who maintained their allegiance to King George III. The fighting divided families and friends and left death and destruction in its wake. Loyalists were forced to flee to British warships or to areas still held by the British, such as Canada and the Floridas, or to England. Robert Wells, for example, who had immigrated

¹²Bahama Gazette Extraordinary (Nassau), 22 November 1813.

TABLE II
NEWSPAPERS OF THE LOYALIST PERIOD (1784-1837)

Newspaper	Dates	Editors
1. <u>Bahama Gazette</u>	1784-1819	John Wells Joseph Eve John P. Traub/Neil McQueen John P. Traub William Gathorn
2. <u>Royal Lucayan Herald</u>	1789	Alexander Cameron
3. <u>Royal Gazette</u>	1804-1857	Robert Wilson Robert and John Wilson Robert Wilson Neil McQueen/Theodore G. Alexander Neil McQueen Alexander McLeod
4. <u>Bahama Argus</u>	1831-ca.-1840	George Biggs
5. <u>Bahamian</u>	ca. 1836-1837	William Robertson
6. <u>Observer</u>	1837-1840	Dr. Samuel J. Clutsam

to South Carolina from Scotland in 1758, fled to London from Charleston at the outbreak of the war, leaving his family and his businesses.¹³

He left behind at least two sons, John and Charles, and a daughter, Louisa,¹⁴ who were writers, editors and printers. Wells also abandoned

¹³Christopher Gould, "Robert Wells, Colonial Charleston Printer," South Carolina Historical Magazine, 79 (January 1978): 23.

¹⁴The oldest son, John, was credited with starting the first newspapers in both Florida and the Bahamas. Charles, however, should be given credit for the Florida newspaper. John continued his career as an editor and died in Nassau. Charles moved to London where he became a noted physician. Louisa Wells fled to England early in the Revolution

his thriving bookstore, which served customers throughout the southern colonies, and his newspaper, the South Carolina and American General Gazette.¹⁵

Following Wells' departure for England, the paper was first published by his daughter and Alexander Aikman, who was to become Louisa's husband. They would later publish the Royal Gazette in Jamaica.¹⁶ In 1778, when Louisa joined her father in England, John Wells took over the paper and ran it as a Patriot journal. This journal ceased publication when Charleston fell to the British in 1780, and resumed as the Royal Gazette after John Wells, like many of his contemporary Charlestonians, reaffirmed his allegiance to the Crown. The paper continued to publish as a Loyalist journal until December 1782, when the British withdrew from Charleston.¹⁷

Following the evacuation of Charleston, Charles Wells moved the family's printing business to St. Augustine, East Florida, in the first of their efforts to find a haven in a loyal English colony. With the help of a black carpenter and an instruction manual, Wells reassembled the press after the pressman refused to do it on the grounds that it was a press joiner's, not a printer's job. Charles operated the press in

and left an interesting account of her departure from Charleston as a refugee in The Journal of a Voyage from Charleston, S.C., to London undertaken during the American Revolution by a daughter of an eminent American Loyalist in the year 1778.

¹⁵ Isaiah Thomas, The History of Printing in America (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell, 1874), p. 343.

¹⁶ Thelma Peters, "American Loyalists in the Bahama Islands: Who They Were," Florida Historical Quarterly, 40 (January 1962): 239.

¹⁷ Thomas, p. 351.

John's name until May 1784, when John came to St. Augustine following reconciliation with his father in London.¹⁸ His stay in St. Augustine was undoubtedly a short one since the Nassau paper came out on or about July 31, 1784. Still, from February 1, 1783, until at least March 22, 1784 (the last known issue), the East-Florida Gazette was published. It was the first newspaper to be published in either of the two Floridas.¹⁹

From the outbreak of the American Revolution until early 1783, perhaps as many as 5,000 whites and 8,300 slaves fled to safety in St. Augustine in East Florida. Like the Wells brothers, they generally came from the southern colonies of Georgia and the Carolinas and joined a resident population of 2,000 whites and 3,000 slaves living in the old Spanish colonial capital which clustered about the Castillo de San Marcos.²⁰

With the Treaty of Paris in 1783, colonial holdings in North America and the Caribbean were considerably altered. Among the changes to be made by the treaty was the retrocession of the English colonies of East and West Florida to Spain after 21 years of British rule.²¹ When the results became known to East Florida's governor, Patrick Tonyn, he

¹⁸"The Memoirs of Charles Wells," Royal Gazette (Nassau), 12 August 1818.

¹⁹Douglas C. McMurtrie, "The Beginnings of Printing in Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly, 23 (October 1944): 67.

²⁰Charlton W. Teabeau, A History of Florida (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1971), p. 87.

²¹Charles L. Mowat, East Florida as a British Province 1763-1784 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942), pp. 140-44.

issued a proclamation on April 21, 1783, announcing the intended return of the British Floridas to Spain and urging the colonists to settle their affairs.²²

The Loyalists, now augmented by the residents of the Floridas, were once again on the move, seeking homes throughout the British Empire. In apparent response to this, Charles Wells, again using John's name, issued a book titled The Case of the Inhabitants of East-Florida With an Appendix Containing Papers by Which All the Facts Stated in the Case Are Supported. It is prefaced with the remark that, "The following pages contain some facts thrown together by a few gentlemen residing in St. Augustine, and was originally intended for a newspaper."²³ The work is dated March 25, 1784, three days after the last known issue of the East-Florida Gazette. The line, ". . . intended for a newspaper," appears to imply that the Gazette was no longer in print.

General Sir Guy Carleton, Britain's commander-in-chief in North America, feared the influx of refugees into Canada. Accordingly, he suggested to the British government in London that vacant lands in the underpopulated Bahama Islands be made available to the refugees from the southern colonies. It was felt that this group, already accustomed to a similar environment, would be reluctant to move to the harsh climate of Canada.²⁴ Although the records are inexact, figures compiled

²²Mowat, p. 142.

²³The Case of the Inhabitants of East-Florida With an Appendix Containing Papers by Which All the Facts Stated in the Case Are Supported (St. Augustine, East Fla.: John Wells, 1784).

²⁴Michael Craton, A History of the Bahamas (London: Collins, 1968), p. 153.

by William Brown, the commissioner for the evacuation, list 1,003 white and 2,214 blacks residing in East Florida as seeking refuge in the Bahamas during the two years and five months of the transfer. In any event, nearly one-third of the refugees from East Florida went to the Bahamas.²⁵

Although many East Floridans managed to find their own transport, shipping at government expense was to be provided to any point in the British Empire. On May 6, 1784, Governor Tonyn issued a proclamation ordering residents to apply to Brown for directions by May 29.²⁶ Sometime between May and July, 1784, the Wells brothers dismantled their print shop and left the Colony. Charles, who was never to see his brother again, went to London. John moved the printing establishment and supplies to the turbulent setting of Nassau, the main settlement on New Providence Island in the Bahamas.

Although the first bound volume of the Bahama Gazette in the Nassau Public Library begins with the fourth issue covering the week of August 14-21,²⁷ working backward from August 21 suggests that the first issue of the paper appeared on July 31, 1784. This issue would have covered the week of July 24-31, or Saturday to Saturday. Allowing some time for finding housing, setting up the press and preparing to print the paper, Wells could not have arrived in Nassau much later than the first of July.

²⁵Wilbur H. Siebert, Loyalists in East Florida (Deland, Fla.: The Florida Historical Society, 1929), p. 208.

²⁶Mowat, pp. 144-45.

²⁷Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 21 August 1784.

Like other printers of the period, Wells sold printed forms, stationery, books, slaves and any other item of merchandise on which he might turn a profit. The offices of the paper served as the post office for mail going abroad or to Out Islands settlements. There are frequent requests in the paper for shipmasters to pick up mail and newspapers for residents in the islands.²⁸ Wells became the government printer by virtue of being the only printer in the Colony.²⁹

For the first five years of its publication, the Bahama Gazette and its editor were embroiled in the fighting that would characterize the establishment of the Loyalists in the social and political ascendancy in the islands. Wells had apparently established his print shop and entered into the fighting between the Loyalists and the governor, John Maxwell, who represented the old settlers who had been in the islands before the influx of refugees from the continent. In a letter to London in July 1784, Maxwell enclosed a handbill announcing a meeting of Loyalists to be held on July 29. Maxwell feared a coup d'etat and wanted military help.³⁰

Maxwell returned to England in 1785, and the legislature passed a resolution thanking him for his efforts on their behalf. The Loyalists, first in Nassau and later in the Out Islands, were quick to react. A notice appeared in the Bahama Gazette in March 1785, stating:

It appearing that an Address has lately been procured for Governor Maxwell, expressing in very fulsome language, the Addressors' approbation of his conduct in the Government

²⁸Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 11 March 1791.

²⁹Lent, p. 29.

³⁰Craton, pp. 167-68.

of this Country; and there being a great reason to think that it is couched in terms calculated to create a belief, that it contains the sentiments of the American Loyalists and other Inhabitants lately settled in the Bahama's [sic]: We the Subscribers, therefore deem it necessary publicly to disavow all knowledge or approbation of the same; having every cause to deprecate Mr. Maxwell's return to this Country as the greatest evil that can possibly befall these Islands.³¹

The notice was signed by 126 Loyalists, including Wells; in the April 2-9 issue of the Gazette, 53 more Loyalists from Abaco had associated themselves with the announcement by the Loyalists in Nassau.³²

In the campaigning which seated Loyalists in the legislature for the first time, political fighting, including arbitrary certification of pre-migration settlers as duly elected to the legislature when, in fact, Loyalists had been elected, prevented the Loyalist majority from assuming control of the legislature. A Protest printed by Wells was burned in the courthouse door by the hangman. The protest resulted in its authors and printer being barred from public office.³³

The following years, 1786 and 1787, were years of peace and relative prosperity. The lieutenant governor, James Powell, succeeded

³¹Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 12 March 1785.

³²Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 9 April 1785. It should be pointed out that the extracts and quotations used in this chapter follow the spelling, punctuation and style accepted as correct in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One readily apparent difference is that correct practice was to capitalize virtually all nouns to distinguish them from other parts of speech. For a fuller explanation of printing in colonial America, see August Klapper, The Printer in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg (Williamsburg, Va.: Colonial Williamsburg, 1964), p. ii. Citations from the original will follow the original style, except those cases of obvious error will be followed by the Latin "sic" in brackets.

³³Craton, pp. 168-69.

Maxwell and was able to undo much of the damage the unlamented former governor had done. The respite was brief: Powell died in 1786 and was succeeded by John Brown, who was president of the Executive Council. He was as easy-going as Powell. They were followed by the despotic governor Dunmore who had been the last--and perhaps most inept--royal governor of Virginia. To vex the Loyalist planters further, the chenille bug appeared in the cotton fields. This pest stained and ruined the fibers of the sea island cotton, the one product on which Bahamian prosperity seemed to rest.³⁴

The year 1789 brought the last of the Loyalist migration to the Bahamas, and it also saw

Dullness of trade and scarcity of cash; [sic] are the principal topics of conversation; and it is to be regretted that the complaints on that score are so well founded.³⁵

Still, it was a good year for Wells as he noted the anniversary of his paper:

The Bahama Gazette now completes its fifth year. In common with other familiar Attempts, it had to encounter many Difficulties; but these have been fully compensated by the Patronage and Countenance of readers, whose approbation would do Honour to efforts in the higher Walks of Science.

To his friends, therefore, (and among them he is proud to recognize many of the most respectable characters of the community) and the Public at large, the Editor begs leave to offer his most grateful acknowledgments.³⁶

³⁴Craton, pp. 170-72.

³⁵Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 18 July 1789.

³⁶Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 25 July 1789.

Although 1789 was a poor year for the Colony, Wells was optimistically planning to increase the paper's publication frequency. With eighteenth century style he announced:

The subscribers to the Bahama Gazette are respectfully informed that it is proposed to publish it twice a week after the close of the present year; and in order to render the papers more useful to those who bind them up, to give each volume a title page and copious index. The additional charge will be twenty-two shillings, making the whole annual subscription three pounds.³⁷

Although Wells indicated that an index would be prepared, none is found bound into the existing volumes of the paper. They may well have been prepared, but obviously did not find their way to the existing bound volumes in the Nassau Public Library. The price of the paper, three pounds sterling, was high; the pound sterling was worth about \$4.27,³⁸ thus the price of the paper would have been somewhat less than \$13 per year. The value of the dollar was considerable--in 1786 a barrel of flour cost \$8 in Nassau, double what it cost in 1784.³⁹ A slave could be bought for \$200 to \$300.⁴⁰

Circulation figures for the Bahama Gazette and its contemporaries are difficult to ascertain, but they were certainly quite small. Population figures for the Bahamas in 1786, two years after the establishment of Wells' paper, are given as 2,948 white and 6,009 blacks for a total population of 8,957. Only 1,572 whites are listed as living on New

³⁷Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 17 October 1789.

³⁸Craton, p. 304.

³⁹Ibid., p. 171.

⁴⁰Lent, p. 35.

Providence Island.⁴¹ Thus the potential subscriber list would have been even smaller, allowing for the number of women, children and illiterates in that population. Jamaica, in the turbulent 1830s, for example, had a population of about 25,000 whites; of the 20 or so journals in print, the Jamaica Despatch had the highest circulation with some 500 subscribers.⁴² The paper averaged one copy per 50 whites.

As late as 1867, Edwin C. Moseley estimated the readership of his Nassau Guardian as one copy per 40 residents of New Providence and one copy for every 133 Bahamians throughout the Colony.⁴³ If 40 residents per copy is taken as a reasonable average for Wells' paper, and assuming that it would circulate among the 3,000 white residents of the Colony, circulation would amount to only 75 copies of the paper. It can be reasonably assumed, however, that circulation for the Gazette was higher, given the number of educated people among the Loyalists. There were at least 26 merchants,⁴⁴ in addition to lawyers, planters, clergymen and government officials who were literate enough and probably economically able to subscribe to the paper. A subscription list of about 100 would be more likely, inasmuch as the paper circulated in Charleston, South Carolina; Savannah, Georgia; and the British colony of Bermuda.⁴⁵ With the normal exchange of newspapers among colonial editors, it would be reasonable to assume that the Gazette circulated more widely in the Caribbean than the record would indicate.

⁴¹Craton, p. 166.

⁴²Lent, pp. 35-42.

⁴³Nassau Guardian, 25 September 1867.

⁴⁴Peters, p. 240.

⁴⁵Ibid.

Wells' impact in the life of the Colony was significant. He established the Press as a viable social and economic institution within the community. It served as a focal point for expression of public opinion, represented the interests of the newly arrived Loyalists until they had achieved parity with the original settlers and, after they had been integrated into the society, the paper supported the development of the Colony. During the eighteenth century, the Gazette established and nurtured the traditions of a free and unfettered Press. Within the then normal print shop-bookstore-newspaper organization of a colonial printery, Wells was also able to make his paper something of an economic success.

The Bahama Gazette itself provided an important link between the outside world and the Colony, and between Nassau and the Out Islands. New ideas of government, European and American affairs and some of the amenities of civilization were made available to residents on the widely scattered Out Island plantations and settlements. Extracts from current literature, reprinted essays and poetry kept alive at least the literary aspects of civilization for the colonists. It should be noted, however, that the Loyalists did not consider themselves Bahamians; they were Englishmen living abroad, even though many had never been to England and most were born in the colonies.

Wells published the Bahama Gazette until his sudden death at age 47 on October 29, 1799. At the end of a long and effusive eulogy, unidentified "firends" [sic] announced that they, being

. . . impressed equally with Sorrow of his Death, and a desire of being serviceable to his Family, [they] have undertaken to Continue Press and to continue the Bahama

Gazette until more permanent arrangements can be made for their benefit.

The purpose of publishing a full Paper weekly, say on Friday, and a kind of supplement on Tuesday containing advertisements and a Nassau Article, if any Thing interesting to the Public should occur [sic]. The Printing Office will be kept open in future from Nine o'Clock in the Morning until One, and from Four until Six in the Evening.

The Public will be informed when any Alteration in these Arrangements is about to take Place, and they are [illegible] to continue to them the Support and Patronage that they ever bestowed on Mr. Wells himself.⁴⁶

From the next issue of the Bahama Gazette on November 5, 1799, until February 14, 1800, the masthead carried the line, "Published by the Friends of John Wells, for the benefit of his Heirs."⁴⁷ On February 18, 1800, Joseph Eve's name appears on the masthead as the editor of the paper. In the announcement of his assumption of the editorship, Eve identified himself as one of the "friends" who published the paper during the interim.⁴⁸

Joseph Eve, who was probably born in South Carolina, immigrated to the Bahamas from Pennsylvania at the close of the American Revolution. With his brother, Oswell, Eve became a cotton planter on Cat Island southeast of Nassau. Eve was something of a mechanical wizard, improving on Eli Whitney's cotton gin and adapting it to Bahamian conditions. The improved cotton gin, capable of cleaning up to 360 pounds of cotton lint per day, could be powered by cattle, tidal flow, or the most common

⁴⁶Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 1 November 1799.

⁴⁷Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 5 November 1799.

⁴⁸Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 18 February 1800.

way in the Bahamas, by wind power.⁴⁹ The colonial legislature voted Eve a monetary award for his machine, which held out the promise of greater cotton production for the Colony.⁵⁰ Eve, something of a mini-Franklin, also helped design St. Matthew's Church in Nassau and probably helped in its construction between 1800 and 1804.⁵¹

Although a considerable portion of her unpublished manuscript is concerned with the Eve family, Lydia Austen Parrish provides little information about Eve and his activities in the Bahamas.⁵² Eve is said to have returned to the United States around 1800,⁵³ but his name appears on the masthead of the only issue of the Gazette for 1801.⁵⁴ While this does not establish conclusively that Eve was still in Nassau beyond 1800, there is no indication in this issue of the paper that Eve either intended to cease publication of the paper or return to the United States. The possibility of missing volumes of the newspaper exists, given the poor care Bahamian newspapers have received over the years.

From 1801 until the establishment of the Royal Gazette in 1804,

⁴⁹Peters, p. 237.

⁵⁰Daniel McKinnen, A Tour Through the British West Indies in the Years 1802 and 1803 Giving a Particular Account of the Bahama Islands (London: J. White, 1804), p. 184.

⁵¹Craton, p. 185.

⁵²Lydia Austen Parrish, "Records of Some Southern Loyalists, Being a collection of manuscripts about some eighty families, most of whom immigrated to the Bahamas during the American Revolution," (Unpublished manuscript, original in Harvard Library).

⁵³Peters, p. 238.

⁵⁴Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 1 January 1801.

the Bahamas may have been without a newspaper of any sort. None of the first issues of the Royal Gazette mention a Bahama Gazette as being in print at any time between July 10, 1804 (when Robert Wilson began issuing the Royal Gazette⁵⁵), and October 21, 1810. Four days before the Bahama Gazette appeared, Wilson ran the following announcement in his paper:

(The following is published, unsolicited, and unadvised, by the Proprietor of the Royal Gazette. The merited acknowledgement they [the editors of the new Bahama Gazette] pay to the distinguished abilities of my deceased employer and friend. Mr. John Wells, meets my idea, so much so, that, even if its appearance operated against the establishment [the Royal Gazette], I was determined to give it.)
--Ed. Royal Gazette⁵⁶

Indeed, working back from the January 2, 1812, issue of the new Bahama Gazette (the first existing copy of the paper), a twice-weekly publication schedule places the initial appearance about October 21, 1810.

Wilson's announcement preceded the prospectus for the new Bahama Gazette by its editors, John Philip Traub and Neil McQueen, who acknowledged their debt to Wells and expressed the hope that their assumption of the venerable Bahama Gazette would meet with public approval. They noted that the paper, under Wells' editorship, had been considered one of the most respected journals in the West Indies.

The new paper was to be printed on "a fine demy (paper size about 10¼" by 15½"⁵⁷) Paper" with a "handsome English Type." It was,

⁵⁵Royal Gazette (Nassau), 10 July 1804.

⁵⁶Royal Gazette (Nassau), 17 October 1810.

⁵⁷Wroth, p. 273.

according to the announcement, to be published on Thursdays and Sundays beginning on October 21, 1810. The subscription rate was \$8 per year in advance.⁵⁸

While it cannot be established if the new Bahama Gazette was a transfer of ownership of all or part of the Wells-Eve paper or a new business entity altogether, the new paper exhibited an appearance similar to that of the old paper. The masthead used the same artwork; the local news and editorial columns with the same colophons; and it used the same motto Wells had used both in Nassau and St. Augustine: Horace's adjuration, Nullius Addictus Jurare in Berba Magistri (Not abound in loyalty to any masters). This same motto has been used by the present-day Nassau Tribune since its founding in 1903.

Traub and McQueen operated the Bahama Gazette as partners until the end of 1812. Traub became the sole owner-editor in 1813,⁵⁹ and McQueen later appeared as the co-editor of the Royal Gazette. By 1814, Traub's health was in decline as he informed his subscribers and advertisers,

The Editor of the Bahama Gazette respectfully acquaints the people of the Bahamas, his Subscribers and friends in particular--that his long ill state of health and advice of his physicians, render it indispensably necessary that he goes to sea, and benefits by a temporary change of clime for the complete eradication of his complaints. He therefore takes this public manner of expressing his grateful acknowledgements to them for their liberal support, and past favors, begging, at the same time, leave to inform them that he has left the Bahama Gazette Office under the direction of

⁵⁸Royal Gazette (Nassau), 17 October 1810.

⁵⁹Royal Gazette (Nassau), 8 January 1813.

Mr. William Gathorn, his attorney, under whose guidance, he trusts that their patronage and support will be continued.⁶⁰

The year continued ill for Traub with the death of his second daughter in August.⁶¹ Traub did not survive much longer himself; a black-bordered issue of the paper printed Traub's own death notice less than a month later. The obituary provides an insight into the career and intelligence of a rather remarkable man living in these remote and obscure islands.

At Sandy's Parish in the Bermuda Islands (to where he had gone in the fond hopes of being restored to health) John Philip Traub, Esq., aged about 41 years.

Mr. Traub came to these Islands about 16 years ago, and soon became conspicuous for capacity. In the course of his time his consummate abilities advanced him in the estimation of the community, and to important and lucrative situations; he has also for the last [illegible] years, been Editor of this Gazette.

The community, in common, will experience loss in Mr. Traub, he being the master of at least ten languages; he has also left a Widow and three small Children to moan their irreparable loss.⁶²

Traub's familiarity with languages permitted him to serve as something of an official translator to the Bahamian legislature for whom he frequently rendered local law into Spanish for those Cuban merchants who used Nassau as a free port.⁶³ He also translated foreign newspaper articles for use in the Bahama Gazette.

⁶⁰Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 11 June 1814.

⁶¹Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 18 August 1814.

⁶²Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 8 September 1814.

⁶³Royal Gazette (Nassau), 19 February 1805.

Although there is no indication that William Gathorn had any training as a printer-editor, the Bahama Gazette continued in publication under his direction from June 1814, until at least April 30, 1815, when the file ends abruptly. There is no indication in the last paper in the file that Gathorn intended to suspend the paper.⁶⁴ The paper, under Gathorn's control, declined in its appearance, content and frequency. The paper was poorly printed and edited; it did not reflect the ideals or craftsmanship of its previous owners.

There is a four-year break in the file, but on March 10, 1819, Gathorn returned to journalism with volume one, number one, of a resurrected Bahama Gazette. A detailed prospectus to potential subscribers asserted:

The Subscriber from the encouragement held out to him by many individuals, and under the hope of support from the Bahama Press; and purposes to set up his Printing Press; and print and publish a Newspaper in manner and upon the terms following.

1st. The Paper shall be entitled the Bahama Gazette: shall be issued twice weekly, to wit, every Sunday and Thursday morning, and contain every matter of news obtained or furnished up to sun set [sic] of the preceeding evening.

2nd. All Ship news shall be particularly attended to, and detailed in a full and distinct manner.

3rd. It shall contain a weekly Price Current in the Nassau Market, at auction or otherwise, for cash.

4th. It shall contain all Domestic News, especially such as may appear conducive to the prosperity of the Bahamas, or of importance to the Commercial or Agricultural Interest thereof.

5th. It shall be open to all free discussion that may be instructive, interesting or amusing, but at the same time temperate and modest.

⁶⁴Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 30 April 1815.

6th. There shall be added a Monthly Index of every useful or important paper published, as well as a Yearly Index of Editorial or Closet [sic], articles Political or Miscellaneous selections, Domestic, Agricultural, Biographical, Matrimonial, Obituary, or Literary, productions, records or sketches, so as made the yearly papers, when bound, answer every purpose of an Annual Register, or Brief History of the Bahamas.⁶⁵

The ambitious goals of Gathorn's undertaking were not to be realized, however, partly because he began publication before he was staffed to do so. In the introductory issue of the paper, for example, he advertised for "two well recommended boys" as apprentices, and to hire a "negro Man-Boy," or "free person of color" to work the press.⁶⁶ Soon, Gathorn was forced to apologize to his readers:

We feel truly sorry in having nothing but an extra sheet of Advertisements to presen [sic] to our readers to day, in consequence of our wanting another compositor, in place of the one who deserted us.⁶⁷

Whether conditions were so bad that Gathorn had nothing to print, or whether he did not have time to spend with the paper, personnel problems were only one of Gathorn's troubles because on May 15, 1819, he was offering the paper for sale.⁶⁸ In a now badly mildew-stained June issue, he suspended the paper.⁶⁹ The printing office, however, remained open for job printing.

⁶⁵ Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 10 March 1819.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 21 April 1819.

⁶⁸ Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 15 May 1819.

⁶⁹ Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 12 June 1819.

Gathorn's second attempt to run the Bahama Gazette was a dismal failure. The paper appeared at various times as a half-sheet, printed on one side only, and as full-sized paper. Printing and editing were less competent than during the Wells-Eve and Traub-McQueen operation of the paper. By the time the Bahama Gazette disappeared, it was a poor caricature of the first paper in the Bahamas.

There is a divergency of opinion about the various Bahama Gazettes. Lent lists the Bahama Gazette as being in print from 1784 to 1857, but there is no evidence in the files to support this terminal date for the paper.⁷⁰ Lent also mentions the Traub-McQueen paper, but not the William Gathorn issues. Mary Moseley, who owned and edited the Nassau Guardian at its centenary, wrote a long article, apparently based on her grandfather's article from 1864,⁷¹ which provided information about the newspapers in the Bahamas up to 1864. Although her article revealed little about the Wells-Eve publication, she cited an 1810 issue of the Royal Gazette which indicated that a new Bahama Gazette--the Traub-McQueen paper--was about to begin publication. She surmised that the Wells-Eve paper had either suspended publication or had ceased to exist. She went on to explain that the new paper

. . . was run by a Mr. Traub and on his death the venerable Mr. Neil McQueen, in the absence of a professional, took over the paper. . . .⁷²

⁷⁰Lent, p. 323.

⁷¹[Edwin C. Moseley], Nassau Guardian, 20 July 1864.

⁷²[Mary Moseley], "Newspapers of the Bahamas," Nassau Guardian, 23 November 1944.

Miss Moseley, as she is always titled, was obviously incorrect in her explanation of the Traub-McQueen relationship with the Bahama Gazette.

The various Bahama Gazettes, then, would appear to have expired with the June 12, 1819, issue of Gathorn's abortive second attempt. Although both Lent⁷³ and Craton⁷⁴ give 1857 as the termination date for the Bahama Gazette, the bound volumes of this paper clearly indicate its correct publication dates with the exception of the period between 1801 and 1810. In Table III that information is shown. There is no indication in the microfilm record, or in the files of the Nassau Public Library, that any issues of this paper were printed after 1819. Apparently, those who have given the 1857 termination date for the Bahama Gazette have confused this paper with the Royal Gazette, which did, in fact, end its publication in that year. In 1928, John C. Oswald reported that the title of Wells' paper was the Royal Bahama Gazette,⁷⁵ something of an amalgamation of the names of the two papers. At no point was "Royal" used in the Bahama Gazette masthead, or any references to it by that title by any of its editors.

The Loyalist Press: The Lucayan Royal Herald

At the end of winter in 1789, Alexander Cameron, a Loyalist from Virginia, began publication of Nassau's second newspaper, the Lucayan Royal Herald. No copies of this paper exist in the files of the Nassau

⁷³Lent, p.

⁷⁴Craton, p. 294.

⁷⁵John C. Oswald, A History of Printing (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1928), p. 227.

TABLE III
THE BAHAMA GAZETTE PUBLICATION RECORD

Issue Dates	Editor(s)
1784-1799	John Wells
1799-1800	"Friends of the Editor"
1800-1801	Joseph Eve
1801-1810	No issues found
1810-1811	In print, no issues found
1812-1813	John Philip Traub/Neil McQueen
1813-1814	John Philip Traub
1814	William Gathorn for John Philip Traub
1814-1815	William Gathorn
1815-1819	No issues found
1819 (March to June)	William Gathorn

Public Library, but a single copy of the weekly dated August 19, 1789 (vol. 1, no. 23) can be found in the Public Records Office in London.⁷⁶

The survival of this single issue apparently resulted from remarks made by Cameron about alleged illegal operations of a Nassau-based trading company in Spanish Florida. There are three letters to the editor of the Bahama Gazette regarding Cameron's comments⁷⁷ and apparently in

⁷⁶Wallace Brown, University of New Brunswick, Canada, personal letter, 20 April 1984.

⁷⁷Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 22 August 1789.

the government's reaction to the charges, Cameron's paper was sent to England where it was preserved.

Working backward from the publication date of the known issue of Cameron's paper suggests that the Lucayan Royal Herald began publication on Wednesday, March 18, 1789. It was short-lived. A death notice appeared in the Bahama Gazette on October 10, 1789, announcing Cameron's death.⁷⁸ The previous week's issue of the Gazette is missing from the file, but in all likelihood, the Lucayan Royal Herald expired with Cameron's death late in September or early October 1789.

The Loyalist Press: The Royal Gazette

If the Bahama Gazette first disappeared in 1801, when Joseph Eve returned to the United States, the Colony may have lacked a newspaper only until mid-1804. The third newspaper--but the second of any consequence--to be identified was the Royal Gazette and Bahama Advertiser, hereinafter referred to as the Royal Gazette, its usual appellation. The Royal Gazette has the distinction of being the first Bahamian newspaper to remain in publication for more than 50 years (1804-1857). As such, it served as a bridge between the Loyalist period and the first third of the Victorian era.

The paper was first issued on July 10, 1804, as a semi- or twice-weekly journal, edited by Robert Wilson.⁷⁹ Mary Moseley mistakenly identified John Wilson, Robert's younger brother, as the editor in her

⁷⁸Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 10 October 1789.

⁷⁹Royal Gazette (Nassau), 10 July 1804.

article on Bahamian newspapers.⁸⁰ John Wilson did not become associated with his brother as co-editor of the paper until mid-1807.⁸¹

The paper was well-edited, as Robert Wilson had been employed by, and probably taught by, John Wells.⁸² This would establish Wilson's presence in Nassau sometime before 1799.

If, at some point between early 1801 and mid-1804, the Bahamas were without a newspaper, some residents were concerned about the situation and urged Wilson to start a newspaper in Nassau. Whatever their inducements, Wilson announced the establishment of the Royal Gazette in a typical prospectus in which he presented his ideas of a good newspaper and what he planned to do to make his paper a good one.

Wilson promised to report the events in Europe and their effects on Great Britain, provide summaries of Parliamentary debates and explain their importance and to chronicle the naval and military events of the Napoleonic wars then sweeping Europe. He also promised not to overlook local conditions. He would "attend to" local government, agriculture and commerce and provide:

Every useful information with regard to cultivation, trade and navigation, prices of produce, fluctuations of markets, maritime intelligence, etc., etc., shall be distinctly and accurately inserted. The earliest intelligence from our sister islands, and the continent of America, shall meet with ready notice.⁸³

⁸⁰ [Mary Moseley], op. cit.

⁸¹ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 13 July 1807.

⁸² Royal Gazette (Nassau), 10 July 1804.

⁸³ Ibid.

The paper was not to be all news and advertising. Wilson also announced that he would supply for his "Fair Readers," as well as planters and traders,

. . . columns . . . with choice selections from journals, and biographical sketches of eminent characters, interspersed with parnassian flowers, brilliant repartees, jocose tales, and supportive sallies of wit and humor. In the choice of our subjects, due regard shall be paid not to admit any article that may suffuse the cheek [of] meek-eyed modesty with a blush.⁸⁴

All this to be accomplished in four pages, twice a week!

From the prospectus, the Royal Gazette was to be an ambitious undertaking; in reality, however, the performance did not match the promise. There was virtually no local news beyond shipping announcements, obituaries and marriage notices. Almost all the content of the paper was taken from foreign--American, English and British colonial--newspapers. There was little advertising in the early issues, but as the paper became more accepted, advertising did increase.

Although the Royal Gazette held a virtual monopoly of printing in the Colony for more than six years, it evidently was not as lucrative as Wilson had hoped. By 1810, when the Traub-McQueen Bahama Gazette was getting organized, Wilson was apparently disenchanted with the life of the colonial newspaper editor. In a long commentary on the establishment of the rival paper and the difficulties of operating his own paper, he noted that the public would gain little and some individuals would lose a lot.

⁸⁴Ibid.

But the field which a colonial newspaper presents either to talent or to industry, at least in a literary point of view, is . . . for the most part, exceedingly limited indeed. For when we recollect the great paucity of local events at all worthy of notice, and indeed of every other article of information, except such as are copied from English and foreign papers, every reflecting man will be forced to acknowledge that, at least in Colonies as small as this, it would require infinitely more ingenuity than usually falls to the lot of those who publish colonial papers, to make them otherwise than what they are: the dull repeaters of little local incidents, for the most part well known to nine tenths of the community before they reach the press;--and of details from home [England], or from foreign countries, in which they are even sure to be anticipated by private letters and papers already in perfect circulation among all those who interest themselves in such matters.⁸⁵

Wilson also lamented the lack of contributors from the local community--too few had the leisure to contribute to his journal because island residents were too busy with other pursuits. Since the paper received little from the worlds of science and literature,

. . . in spite of ourselves, we are often compelled to eke out our humble sheet, as we can, with occasional gleanings of anecdote, song and the like, from other publications which are themselves perhaps composed of little else than the gleanings of the gleanings of others.⁸⁶

Unlike editors "at home," in England, colonial newspaper editors were not expected to be critical of local institutions, or the people who were responsible for them. Journalistic commentary about local institutions, Wilson noted, required

⁸⁵Royal Gazette (Nassau), 3 October 1810.

⁸⁶Ibid.

. . . that the editor must be a person of unusual hardihood, who would enter, at all in detail, into the subject of reformation in any one of these moral or political departments in our little community. Were he, for instance, to point out any one public institution or establishment, of any consequence, which might be altogether dispensed with, . . . how quickly would he find that he had got his head a hornet's nest! Indeed, in so small a community, it would be impossible for him to generalize his remarks even on any common folly or vice, so as to avoid drawing at the same instance, the public attention to probably a few particular individuals, whose resentment and that of their friends would be the immediate and inevitable consequence.⁸⁷

Such were the pitfalls and ensnarements facing the colonial editor. Still, like his brother editors before and after, Wilson persevered. Lack of news material, local custom proscribing many topics of content, offense to important segments of the community through editorial comment and essentially no real competition between newspapers in the community made the life of the editor miserable and, at best, precarious. Wilson bitterly noted that competing editors had to rely on the same sources as he, published their paper on the same days and ". . . few would . . . ask, except through curiosity, which was the dullest of the two."⁸⁸ The establishment of the competing new Bahama Gazette would force the little community to support two newspapers to do the work of one. Wilson, obviously, did not relish the appearance of a rival, no matter how well intentioned.

Wilson summed up many of the methods and techniques of news gathering used by colonial editors. He also laid bare the difficulties of reporting at least some of the local news in a small community. And, as he bravely conceded, his establishment would be hurt more in its job

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

printing than in its newspaper. He also revealed a deep-seated disillusionment with his situation in Nassau.

The problems Wilson encountered and complained about would continue to plague Bahamian editors for more than a century until the Colony was able to connect directly to news sources via the telegraph cable. Well into the twentieth century Bahamian editors were still extracting news from foreign journals and facing very real risks when they wrote critically of certain segments of the community and its institutions.

In 1811, Wilson's health declined and he planned to leave the Colony. Accidentally bound in a volume of Bahama Gazettes is a single issue of the Royal Gazette which provided readers of the paper with the news that Wilson was planning to leave the Colony--and leaves the researcher with an intriguing problem. The notice seems to imply that his departure was some months away.

The Proprietor of this Paper, being desirous of leaving the Bahama Islands for Europe, in the course of the summer, requests all persons to whom he may be indebted, to render a statement of their accounts, that payment may be provided for previous to the period of his departure; and those indebted to him are desired to make as speedy payment as possible, that he may be able to settle all accounts due him.

He begs leave to return his grateful thanks for the liberal encouragement he has met during a residence of seven years in the Bahamas; and requests to inform them that arrangements will be made for carrying on the establishment of the Royal Gazette, etc., during his absence.⁸⁹

The announcement creates some uncertainty about Robert Wilson's career in Nassau. Wilson, in commenting on the reestablishment of the

⁸⁹ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 26 October 1811.

Bahama Gazette in 1810, revealed that he had once worked for John Wells.⁹⁰ Yet in this announcement of his intended departure, Wilson wrote that he had been in Nassau seven years, or since 1804, when he began publishing the Royal Gazette. Since Wells had been dead nearly five years when Wilson began his paper, the question raised is: When and where did Wilson work for Wells?

The record of John Wells' printing activity in Charleston, South Carolina, during the British occupation is incomplete. Wells' career in East Florida was too brief to have given him much of an opportunity to have employed Wilson there. More likely, Wilson had been employed by Wells in Nassau prior to the latter's death in 1799, and certainly no longer than Eve's departure to the United States which had apparently ended the Bahama Gazette. Wilson had, it would seem, left the Colony before 1804. When Nassau found itself without a paper, local residents apparently persuaded Wilson to return to the Colony to set up the Royal Gazette. In this regard, Mary Moseley identified John Wilson (Robert's younger brother) as coming from New York to set up the paper. She was obviously incorrect in identifying John as the paper's founder, but probably correct in locating Robert in New York prior to his arrival in, or return to, Nassau in 1804.⁹¹ Wilson apparently did not live long enough to realize his intention of returning to Europe. His death notice appeared early the following year in the Bahama Gazette.⁹²

⁹⁰Royal Gazette (Nassau), 17 October 1810.

⁹¹[Mary Moseley], op. cit.

⁹²Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 8 January 1813.

Wilson's seven-year editorship of the paper was marked by little opposition to the government, as compared to Wells' Bahama Gazette in its early days. Certainly by Wilson's time the Loyalists had achieved leadership in the Colony, and were beginning to pass from the scene. There were no social or political problems to bother the Colony, or for Wilson to editorialize about. The wars in Europe, and at the end of Wilson's life the second war with the United States, were of more immediate concern. The stagnant economy of the Colony was of more concern to Wilson than local politics.

Typographically, Wilson's paper offered a more modern look, with advertising grouped by headings such as "Sales at Auction" and "House and Lands"--much the same as modern classified advertising is arranged. Like the Bahama Gazette, the Royal Gazette used supplements, rather than extra pages, when important news came to hand, or there was sufficient news and advertising to warrant such extra effort. The first supplement to the Royal Gazette appeared in 1806, and must have been something of an amusement to the community and a mortifying embarrassment to Wilson. Its title was incorrectly set by the compositor and the special edition appeared as "Suplment."⁹³

The Royal Gazette did not offer its readers much, as its editor noted, but it provided a continuation of the Press in Nassau at a time when a newspaper was probably not needed for news, information or advertising. It was, most likely, still a benefit to its Out Island

⁹³Royal Gazette (Nassau), 18 February 1806.

subscribers. It would, however, keep alive the institution for matters which would affect the Colony in the future.

It is not clear from the files of the Royal Gazette what its status was during most of 1812. Events at the Bahama Gazette were, however, to have a direct bearing on the Royal Gazette. On the last day of 1812, Traub and McQueen announced in their paper that they were dissolving their partnership and that Traub would take over the direction of the Bahama Gazette.⁹⁴

McQueen was evidently involved in acquiring a new partner and a new paper--the Royal Gazette. Near the end of 1813, volume one, number one of the revived Royal Gazette appeared in Nassau with the usual prospectus. In it, McQueen and his new partner, Theodore G. Alexander, announced their partnership and their hopes for the new venture into colonial journalism. Again, another prospectus announced:

Aware of the difficulties of their undertaking in a colony like this, affording in itself but little original matter; often without intelligence [news] from abroad; and which already possess the benefits of a similar nature, they promise little beyond an earnest endeavour, prompted by an anxious solicitude to obtain the favor and support of the Public.⁹⁵

The rest of the prospectus was a restatement of the one Wilson had used in 1804.

The Royal Gazette met with some success in its long career, although it was not without its problems. Typographically, it did not

⁹⁴Bahama Gazette (Nassau), 8 January 1813.

⁹⁵Royal Gazette (Nassau), 17 November 1813.

change throughout the 30 years or more of the papers which survive in the file; there is no reason to believe that it changed much during its last 20 years. After Alexander's death in 1820, McQueen advised his readers that he would continue to publish the paper on his own, and that his best ". . . endeavours shall be exerted to make the Royal Gazette as useful and entertaining as his abilities and the means of the Country will allow."⁹⁶

The competition faced by the Royal Gazette between 1814 and 1819 was inconsequential. During that period William Gathorn had attempted to publish a revived Bahama Gazette. In 1814 and 1815, Gathorn attempted to carry on Traub's paper and in 1819, he tried on his own. He failed. Not until 1831, when George Biggs was employed to edit the Bahama Argus, would the paper face serious competition.

Generally, McQueen's problems were more mundane. Unwanted visitors to the print shop caused McQueen to write in 1829:

The Editor desires that, in future, no person whatever will go into the work room of the Printing Office, and overlook the Compositors, while engaged in their usual employment: every idler ought to know that such a practice is improper.⁹⁷

But like Wilson, McQueen, too, continued to have enough trouble obtaining news that he publicly lamented the problem:

In the perusal of a Newspaper, the first thing looked for is something in the shape of foreign or domestic intelligence; but it is but seldom that a small community

⁹⁶Royal Gazette (Nassau), 5 April 1820.

⁹⁷Royal Gazette (Nassau), 12 August 1829.

like this one can afford so much of the latter as to make a paper sufficiently interesting.⁹⁸

If there were problems, there were compensations for the dedicated editor. Within the limitations of his sources, McQueen did provide useful information including news about the establishment of navigational aids, notices to mariners about local sailing conditions as occasion warranted and editorialized about the Royal Navy's efforts to survey and chart the waters of the Bahamas.⁹⁹

McQueen was a booster of the Colony's welfare--a prosperous community could provide more support for his paper. Residents, too, found his paper open to them for their views on improving the Colony. For example, McQueen printed a letter from a reader which gave a number of "Useful hints to the inhabitants of these islands," which included growing and shipping pineapples, extending fruit culture (chiefly citrus) to Abaco, the introduction of tobacco, beekeeping, silk culture, lumber, naval stores, livestock, turtling and sponging.¹⁰⁰ All of these suggestions, at one time or another, have been tried with varying degrees of success in the Bahamas.

By 1830, major changes were facing the Bahamas, as well as all British colonies--changes which would, over the next 125 years, alter the Colony's social structure completely. Within the context of this change, the Royal Gazette would become a target for one of the most pugnacious newspapers to appear in Nassau, the Bahama Argus.

⁹⁸ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 9 July 1825.

⁹⁹ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 15 June 1825.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

The Loyalist Press: The Bahama Argus

For nearly 30 years the Royal Gazette had been providing the small community with what could be gleaned and gathered and safely reported. No sacred cows were harmed, no citizens or institutions pilloried. The paper, like the Colony, seemed to sleep in its permanent summer doldrums. But change was stirring throughout the British Empire.

In Parliament, William Wilberforce and other abolitionists were working for the end of slavery and the emancipation of those in bondage. For Jamaica, where there were 311,000 slaves, and in the other sugar islands of the West Indies, the results of abolition would be catastrophic. In the Bahamas, where plantation agriculture was not a major economic factor, slave-holding was not a profitable institution; slave-produced agricultural exports had been in decline for years. In 1834, when slavery ended, there were 946 Bahamians in possession of 10,110 slaves; only 11 owners in the Bahamas held more than 100 slaves. Lord John Rolle, an absentee owner, held 376 slaves, more than twice as many as the next largest slave holding. The average number of slaves held by Bahamian owners was just under 11, including the unproductive old, infirm and children. In the compensation paid to slave holders upon emancipation, Bahamian owners received about 13 and three-quarters pounds sterling. By comparison, compensation paid in British Guiana was £52 and in Trinidad, £50. Of the 19 colonies compensated for slaves, the Bahamas were last.¹⁰¹

The emotional impact of emancipation, however, created a furor

¹⁰¹Craton, pp. 203-04.

long before it became fact, and it led to the establishment of one of most vocal and contumacious publications to appear in the Bahamas, the Bahama Argus.

With the appointment of abolitionist James Carmichael Smyth as governor of the Bahamas in 1829, turmoil soon developed when he suspended two local officials for having a female slave flogged. Again, in 1831, Smyth outraged local sensibilities when he asked the House of Assembly to suspend one of its members, John Wildgoos, for having one of his female slaves whipped and put in the workhouse.¹⁰²

In retaliation to Smyth's actions, Wildgoos and others--possibly merchant Henry Greenslade, if advertising in the first issue of the new paper is any indication--provided the money for George Biggs to set up the Bahama Argus in July 1831. The paper was to become vociferously anti-government and anti-emancipation. Like other newspapers of the period, Biggs announced his paper to the community with a prospectus which was as much a warning as it was an announcement for the new journal:

. . . Its readers will be made fully acquainted with all remarkable events which may occur in the domain of politics and trade. Political events are, however, of primary importance. . . . He (the editor) will, however, publish all measures of general interest which may be adopted here,--investigate their expediency, and discuss freely (when occasion calls for it) questions in political economy of doubtful tendency. . . . To the Bahamas, a large space in the Argus will be dedicated. The acts of Government, the discussions of its Legislative Bodies, the decisions of its Tribunals of Justice, &c, &c, are subjects of great interest to the community; and the Editor pledges himself that no opportunity shall be neglected, nor any exertion on his part

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 201.

spared, to lay them before his readers. He will also avow frankly, and express firmly and fearlessly his opinions of the best means of promoting the happiness of all--at the same time, evince a proper respect for those of others who would attain the same end by any honorable means; and he unhesitatingly avows his attachement to the cause of Civil and Religious Liberty--but in all cases will carefully avoid extremes.¹⁰³

Biggs apparently had his own definition of "extremes"; he did everything but avoid them.

In the second issue of the paper, Biggs began the first of a long series of attacks on the governor that would result in both a libel conviction and a prison term for the feisty editor. The first attack came as the result of an address from the "free coloured inhabitants of this town" petitioning the King to continue the governor in office.¹⁰⁴ At this point in Smyth's tenure of office, the local slave owners and white oligarchy had petitioned for the recall of the governor; the "free coloured inhabitants," on the other hand, desirous of seeing justice for their enslaved kindred, were as equally desirous of seeing the governor maintained in office. They lost.

Attacks on the governor continued, using news reports, editorial comment, letters to the editor and poetry. Each issue of the paper began with a poem, sometimes taken from some other source, but frequently from the venomous pen of the editor or a writer working for him. Acrostics were another useful form permitting clever attacks on the governor and other officials. In the following example, the initial

¹⁰³Bahama Argus (Nassau), 16 July 1831.

¹⁰⁴Bahama Argus (Nassau), 22 July 1831.

letters are separated from the rest of the word in order to illustrate the technique.

S o red without, so bare within,
 I ncipient idiocy so plainly seen
 R ound Hamish Rhua's caput and phiz,
 I ndicative of what he is
 A physiognomist would say:
 M uch pride, much passion in aray,
 E nwrap a foolish, stupid mind
 S elfish in dealing with his kind,
 C ontempt for others, scintillation,
 A rising from want of speculation,
 R especting the feelings and the passions,
 M ingled in man in varied fashions.
 I rascible as pug dog spoiled,
 C ontinually with some one embroiled,
 H e leads his friends a troubled life,
 A nd oft does all but beat his wife--
 E nvious of even another's praise,
 L ike fire and tow he's sudden blaze,
 S hould any fool in sudden cant,
 M ention with honour, General Grant--
 Y ou who would wish to have the world's regard,
 T ake care that men's rights by you are not marred:
 H onour, and merit, are never free from praise debarred.¹⁰⁵

The acrostic, then, spells SIR I[J]AMES CARMICHAEL SMYTH.

In the third issue of the paper, Biggs took on General Court Justice Sandilands for wanting to fine absent jurors 100 shillings instead of the ". . . mulct of ten shillings."¹⁰⁶ Two weeks later, Biggs printed another acrostic, this one identifying Sandilands as an "odious name."¹⁰⁷

Not only did Biggs take on the governor and the judiciary, he

¹⁰⁵Bahama Argus (Nassau), 17 August 1831.

¹⁰⁶Bahama Argus (Nassau), 27 July 1831.

¹⁰⁷Bahama Argus (Nassau), 10 August 1831.

began an attack on the Royal Gazette. Letters to the editor, commentary and, once again, poetry were used in the attacks on McQueen and his paper. In one forgettable bit of doggerel entitled "To the Man Wot Drives Neil," the opening line revealed the intensity of the attack: "When Neil and Truth quarrell'd, she fled to the Argus."¹⁰⁸

But by the time this blast at McQueen had appeared in print, Biggs was already on trial for libel. On January 18, 1832, Biggs was in court charged with four counts of libelling the governor. His bail was set at £400, which was soon posted and he was back at work the same day to report the events to his readers.

The Editor will not make the slightest appeal to the Jurors of this Island, with a view to warp their judgment, or influence their verdict: he feels that he should, by doing so, not only employ his time uselessly, but do them the greatest injustice--for he feels confident, he shall receive, at their hands, whenever the suits come to trial, the most ample justice.¹⁰⁹

The next day, arguments were heard concerning Biggs' request for a delay because his attorney was absent from the island. The decision, given the following day, granted the delay.¹¹⁰

The testimony at the trial on February 1 was brief, if the report in the Argus is accurate. One Elisha Swain testified that, in setting up the paper, Biggs had asked him to participate in the venture, but he declined on the basis that,

¹⁰⁸Bahama Argus (Nassau), 25 January 1832.

¹⁰⁹Bahama Argus (Nassau), 18 January 1832.

¹¹⁰Bahama Argus (Nassau), 21 January 1832.

. . . from the distressed state of the Colony, he thought two Presses could not be supported, and illustrated his assertion by saying "even Lawyers have nothing to do"--upon which the defendant turned round with a smile, and said, that he would "write Libels and make work for them."¹¹¹

The witness went on to say that the remark was made in jest. The jury evidently did not think it so; on February 8, they found Biggs guilty of the libels.¹¹² On February 17, Biggs was sentenced to three months imprisonment and fined £150. With a pen overflowing with sarcasm, Biggs addressed the governor:

With regard to our friend, Sir James, we beg to assure him that we have the same kindly feelings towards him, which, on all former occasions, we have evinced; and that our present retired habits will not prevent us from continuing to be faithful chroniclers of his good deeds. He may rest assured that the "Argus" will not be silenced. . . .¹¹³

Biggs, or perhaps a surrogate, did not let incarceration still his pen. On March 7, the paper attacked Governor Smyth for wanting an act passed by the legislature empowering him to send ". . . a few Baptist, or any other species of Sectarian preachers, among our Out Island negroes. . . ."¹¹⁴ On March 28, the paper reported that lack of space in the previous issue had prevented it from ". . . commenting on the

¹¹¹ Bahama Argus (Nassau), 8 February 1832.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Bahama Argus (Nassau), 18 February 1832.

¹¹⁴ Bahama Argus (Nassau), 7 March 1832.

arrogant measures of our Governor. . . ."¹¹⁵ On April 4, the Argus attacked both McQueen and the governor.

The Printer to King James I, of the Bahamas, having shaken off a little of the despair that was depicted in his visage, before his appointment to that high sounding, but dirty office, and we presume by virtue of AUTHORITY USURPED, charging his old usurious, iniquitous and unprincipled prices for printing a pack of absurdities, under the name of GOVERNMENT NOTICES, which have for their companion, on the score of rationality, the flight of mad King Lear; and having dared to use insolence towards the Argus writers, as well as towards ourselves, we shall take leave to read him a lecture for his future benefit.¹¹⁶

The writer goes on to attribute McQueen's insolence to the Argus' erosion of the Royal Gazette's subscription list.

On April 24, 1832, while still in jail, Biggs was again in court for trial on remaining libel charges. The proceedings were halted by the chief justice of the Colony,¹¹⁷ but in the issue announcing this action, Biggs again attacked the governor. He was soon back in court on a writ of habeus corpus, charged with another libel. The case was carried over to the July term of the court and Biggs was required to post £500 in sureties.¹¹⁸ The record of the Argus--the bound volume--ends with the July 14 issue; thus there is no record of the court's findings in the paper itself. Rather, we must turn to the Royal Gazette to learn the outcome of the trial. Late in July, the Gazette reported the outcome.

¹¹⁵Bahama Argus (Nassau), 28 March 1832.

¹¹⁶Bahama Argus (Nassau), 4 April 1832.

¹¹⁷Bahama Argus (Nassau), 25 April 1832.

¹¹⁸Bahama Argus (Nassau), 28 April 1832.

The Solicitor General said that, as the libel in question was rather of a personal than of a public nature; and His Excellency could not, in such a case, have any private resentments to gratify; . . . he (the Solicitor General) was happy to find himself in a situation, and not to press the prosecution.¹¹⁹

Thus Biggs apparently escaped at least one, or some, of the pending libel charges against him.

During Biggs' imprisonment, which lasted from February 17 until May 17, 1832, the Solicitor General issued a writ to collect the £150 fine levied against the editor. The provost marshall was sent to collect the fine, either in money, or by seizing the press and printing equipment. Biggs, or his supporters and backers, were able to raise the money and he was left, as he wrote from jail,

. . . in quiet possession of our lead: which, it would appear, is more valuable than either gold or silver, or even Corinthian brass, in the eyes of our worthy Solicitor General and more "worthy Governor."¹²⁰

Biggs served the full term of his sentence.

In the first issue after his release, he announced to his readers:

On Thursday last, the Editor of this paper was taken out of Gaol upon a writ of Habeus Corpus. The period of his imprisonment having expired on that day, say three months, and the fine of £150 having been previously paid, he was discharged upon giving securities himself in £400 and two securities in £200 each to keep the peace for 12 calendar months.¹²¹

¹¹⁹Royal Gazette (Nassau), 28 July 1832.

¹²⁰Bahama Argus (Nassau), 5 May 1832.

¹²¹Bahama Argus (Nassau), 19 May 1832.

Although Biggs was to stop his harshest attacks on the governor, he was back in print with an attack on the governor in the second issue following his release.

We have to inform our readers, that our castigations of the worthies composing the force of the "Great Phillistine," have been of considerable service, as they have crept into their holes, and are still as mice; therefore, we have nothing concerning them.¹²²

Apparently, the jail term and fine had served to dim the editorial passions aimed at the governor; it did little to end the villification of Neil McQueen and the Royal Gazette.

Following his release on May 17, Biggs kept his pen silent for nearly a month, but in a letter to the editor dated June 12, a correspondent who used the nom de plume "Civis," the Argus was again on the attack. This time the target was the magistrate of police, Charles R. Nesbitt. The complaint was that Nesbitt had not issued orders for police constables to patrol the streets of Nassau from sunrise to sunset on Sunday.¹²³ Two weeks later Biggs apologized to his readers for mentioning the police magistrate, "that contemptible personage,"¹²⁴ too often.

On June 20, the Royal Gazette was again under attack. A correspondent to the Argus referred to "A writer of well known duplicity . . ."¹²⁵

¹²²Bahama Argus (Nassau), 23 May 1832.

¹²³Bahama Argus (Nassau), 13 June 1832.

¹²⁴Bahama Argus (Nassau), 23 June 1832.

¹²⁵Bahama Argus (Nassau), 20 June 1832.

in reference to the Royal Gazette. Three days later another letter to the Argus accused McQueen with overcharging the government for public printing for 20 years.¹²⁶

Two points about journalistic practice and printing should be noted here. First, the practice of printing letters to the editor signed with noms de plume has always been a feature of journalism in the Bahamas. Letters to John Wells' Bahama Gazette were frequently signed such--and many of the participants in these verbal skirmishes knew who the writers were in spite of attempts to disguise. The practice was still in use, although less common, at mid-twentieth century. Further, editors have been charged with composing some of the letters and signing them with fictitious names so that they, the editors, could respond to a subject they wanted to talk about. Journalism in the Bahamas has been personal journalism; frequently the paper has been owned by a single entrepreneur, or the paper has been established to fight a single issue. This accounts, perhaps, for the demise of a number of the ephemeral journals.

The second point, that of government printing contracts, has been a proverbial bone of contention among the many newspapers and their editors since the first time there was more than one paper in the community. Wells, although not popular with the royal governors during the early years of his residency in Nassau, was the government printer by default--being the only printer in the Colony for some time. In later years, government printing often provided a paper with badly

¹²⁶ Bahama Argus (Nassau), 23 June 1832.

needed financial stability. It also provided the government with a measure of control over the papers. At times, the printing contract was divided between papers, one printing announcements, another printing government forms and documents. Biggs' allegations that McQueen was overcharging were not unusual, and there had been instances where the paper holding the contract for government printing lowered its price when threatened by a competitor's contract bid.

While Biggs was attacking the governor and the Royal Gazette, McQueen's response was generally that of ignoring the offensive remarks, or giving a measured, reserved reply to them. There are reactions to the attacks scattered throughout the fall of 1831 and the winter of 1832, but none of these reaches the depth of invective found in the Argus. In fact, the first significant commentary about the Argus and its editor are reports of Biggs' trial published in the Royal Gazette more than seven months after the Argus appeared in Nassau.¹²⁷

The harshest rejoinders to the Argus' attacks to appear in the Royal Gazette came from a writer identified as "A MAN OF COLOR" on April 21, 1832. The opening paragraph set the tone for the letter.

For several weeks past the calumnys [sic] of the Bahama Argus, that infamous sheet of scandal and falsehood, published here by a person, notorious as the avowed tool of a prejudiced and malicious faction, has teemed with all kinds of misrepresentations and abuse.¹²⁸

In reporting the April 24 trial of Biggs on the remaining libel

¹²⁷ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 8 February 1832.

¹²⁸ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 21 April 1832.

charges, McQueen mixed both the news report and his editorial comments, and in so doing, makes his strongest statements about the Argus and its editor.

. . . But to return to the popular excitements; whether they were to die a natural or a violent death; and die they soon must, either in the one way or the other; Mr. Biggs and his friends might rest assured, that the Argus, unless it speedily adopted a salutary change of character, must and would die with them. For that, a more ephemeral existence was ever the sure portion of every party, time serving periodical such as the Argus has shown itself to be; where vapid ebullitions of pointless wit, and mock politics resembled only these airy, noisy, brattling, empty bubbles, that ascent and dance so merrily for a time, upon the heated surface of fermenting substances; but quickly burst, and disappear, as the fermentation cools.¹²⁹

In the next paragraph, McQueen complimented the Argus as an example of the newspaper art--it is well written, edited and printed--and then pilloried the offending paper.

The Argus, as to externals, was a well looking sheet; neatly printed in good type and taste, and very well to look at until it came within reading distance. The Solicitor General often thought, what a pity it was, that such excellent letter press, and good paper, should be so poorly employed. For the printer and every thing good about it, he understood, we are indebted to a foreign country. Every thing bad about it, except the editor, he believed, we furnished from among ourselves.¹³⁰

The first bound volume of the Bahama Argus ends on July 14, 1832, and its story must be followed in the Royal Gazette until the file of the Argus resumes in 1834. Because the Argus began publication in July,

¹²⁹ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 24 April 1832.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

a volume number changed at the end of June the following year; the existing files are not complete. The final bound volume contains about a year and a half of the Argus beginning with volume IV, number 1 (July 16, 1834) and ends about half way through volume V (issue number 47, dated December 26, 1835).

The missing issues would reveal much. The Argus had become--as Robert Wilson had noted about his Royal Gazette nearly a quarter century earlier--a "dull, colonial paper."¹³¹ With some exceptions, as will be noted, Biggs settled into a somewhat more subdued role as an editor in the community. He was commissioned a lieutenant in the Colony's militia on August 8, 1834.¹³² And both Biggs and McQueen are listed as subscribers to the Bahama Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.¹³³

By this time many of the issues which raised Biggs' ire had ceased to be topics of anger or concern. Governor Smyth had been recalled to England in 1833, and the abolition of slavery had become a fait accompli on August 1, 1834. Biggs continued his editorials on the newly freed slaves and the new condition in which these Bahamians now found themselves. Actually, the former slaves were apprenticed to their former masters and would not gain their complete independence for some time. The apprenticeship period was legislated to last four years, but for all practical purposes it ended before that date in the Bahamas.¹³⁴

¹³¹Royal Gazette (Nassau), 3 October 1810.

¹³²Royal Gazette (Nassau), 9 August 1834.

¹³³Bahama Argus (Nassau), 21 April 1835.

¹³⁴Craton, pp. 203-05.

Biggs evidently was not content to compete with McQueen just for newspaper subscribers, advertising and job printing; he was also after the post office concession operated by the Royal Gazette's editor. McQueen was quick to defend his interests with his pen.

It would seem for some time past, "Argus" Biggs has had all his eyes about him regarding the Post Office, notwithstanding which, if truth lies at the bottom of a well, he has only in a late instance been glancing at the surface.¹³⁵

A career in public service also appealed to Biggs--or at least a career in the service of those endowed with the vote in Nassau. In an election for the House of Assembly, Biggs ran seventh in a seven-man race to represent Nassau in the legislature. He received 9 votes out of 464 votes cast.¹³⁶ A year later, he ran for office again; this time to represent Long Island in the House of Assembly. Again, he ran last in a four-man race, getting 8 of 106 votes cast.¹³⁷ At some point, apparently, Biggs became something of a public servant as he had found some employment with the colonial administration of justice--something he knew from personal experience. McQueen alluded to Biggs' duties as interfering with his ability to edit the Argus, noting that Biggs ". . . has now his Jail and Workhouse business to attend to. . . ." ¹³⁸ Biggs had assumed some position of responsibility for the Nassau jail and workhouse.

¹³⁵Royal Gazette (Nassau), 21 April 1835.

¹³⁶Royal Gazette (Nassau), 13 February 1836.

¹³⁷Royal Gazette (Nassau), 1 April 1837.

¹³⁸Royal Gazette (Nassau), 8 March 1837.

The problem of government printing contracts surfaced again in 1837. McQueen complained that the announcement for the printing work had not been made to him and that the specifications for the printing were written so that McQueen could not meet them in any case. McQueen's response was to call the specifications ". . . humbug, in order to find some pretext for giving the contract to a more favoured and favourite printer."¹³⁹ On June 6, 1837, McQueen, Biggs and a Mr. Robertson who edited the Bahamian, were examined by a committee of the House of Assembly. The report of the committee's investigation comparing work by Biggs and McQueen indicated that, as McQueen's bid was the lowest, he was entitled to the contract.¹⁴⁰

Two days after the report of the hearing, McQueen wrote directly to the president of the House of Assembly, Joseph Hunter, to explain the problems encountered in trying to meet the specifications written in the contract for printing the eighth volume of the Bahama laws. The instruction sheet for preparing tenders, or bids, for the work were printed by Biggs, using the type size required in the specifications. McQueen pointed out in his letter that he did not have such a type size and that fact, he was certain,

. . . the framers of the instructions, I have no doubt, were aware of; and this circumstance, if strictly enforced, will prevent me from making a tender for the work, notwithstanding all the public printing I have done for such a length of time.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 8 March 1837.

¹⁴⁰ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 10 June 1837.

¹⁴¹ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 14 June 1837.

The reply chastised McQueen for his imputations against public officers, but did not address the points raised by McQueen concerning his problems in securing public printing contracts. At this point, McQueen dropped the subject and it does not reappear in print.¹⁴² In connection with this problem, McQueen had his "confidential assistant, Mr. [Alexander] McLeod,"¹⁴³ apply for the printing instructions. McLeod would eventually take over the operation of the Royal Gazette--possibly as a result of McQueen's failing eyesight which he mentioned as the reason why he no longer attended functions at night.¹⁴⁴ McLeod, as will be detailed in the next chapter, became embroiled in a devastating libel action that eventually forced the suspension of the venerable old Royal Gazette.

Although the files of the Bahama Argus in the Nassau Public Library terminate with the paper's last issue in 1835, several references to the Argus appear in the Royal Gazette during 1837. These show that Biggs was still issuing his paper in that year. The American Antiquarian Society listed a single issue of the Argus for 1837 in its collection of early American newspapers.¹⁴⁵ As the file for the Royal Gazette ends in December, 1837, there is no way of telling if the Argus continued beyond that year.

Without specifying a source, or what led him to his conclusion,

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³Royal Gazette (Nassau), 10 June 1837.

¹⁴⁴Royal Gazette (Nassau), 25 March 1837.

¹⁴⁵Waldo Lincoln, "Newspapers of the West Indies and Bermuda," Proceedings, 1926 (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1927), pp. 130-155.

Craton wrote, "Whether for lack of circulation or dispute, or both, the controversial Bahamas [sic] Argus faded away. . . ." ¹⁴⁶ He seems to imply that this occurred in the 1840s, but this cannot be substantiated from newspaper files as no papers from the 1838-1849 period exist in the Nassau Public Library's files.

Little can be reconstructed about Bahamian journalism during this hiatus in the record. There are, however, two papers--actually one paper carried on under two names--for which some data can be found. These are included in this chapter as they are more closely aligned with Nassau and its population at the end of the Loyalist era, rather than the Victorian era.

The Loyalist Press: The Bahamian/Observer

The final newspaper to be considered in this chapter is the Bahamian, later Observer. The Bahamian was established by William Robertson ¹⁴⁷ as an anti-government paper. ¹⁴⁸ Moseley ¹⁴⁹ and Craton ¹⁵⁰ both cite 1838 as the approximate date of the paper's founding. That date is certainly in error as there are at least three significant references to the paper which establish its beginning in print in 1836. First, there is a brief reference to the Bahamian in a letter to the

¹⁴⁶Craton, p. 218.

¹⁴⁷"Of This and That," Nassau Guardian, 8 April 1956, p. 1.

¹⁴⁸[Mary Moseley], op. cit.

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰Craton, p. 294.

editor published in the Royal Gazette of September 24, 1836.¹⁵¹ The paper is referred to again in the Gazette, March 25, 1837.¹⁵²

Robertson is mentioned as one of the editors examined in connection with the printing contract involving Biggs and McQueen, as previously indicated. Robertson was quoted as not having any interest in the printing contract, and it is likely that as an anti-government paper, he would have had no chance for the contract against either of the two older newspapers. Douglas M. Robertson, the founder's great-grandson, promised the Nassau Public Library a volume of the paper in 1956,¹⁵³ but there seems to be nothing of this in the library's collection.

At some point following mid-1837, Robertson died and was succeeded by Dr. Samuel J. Clutsam, who changed the name of the paper to the Observer. Edwin Moseley wrote that the Royal Gazette and the Observer ". . . played the part of the Kilkenny cats,"¹⁵⁴ who fought until nothing was left but their tails. The Observer may have survived past the establishment of the Nassau Guardian in 1844, but had expired sometime before 1850. There is a letter to the editor of the Bahama Herald that points to this possibility.

I am surprised your memory is so short Mr. Moseley. Do you forget your anagram made for you some years ago? And

¹⁵¹Royal Gazette (Nassau), 24 September 1836.

¹⁵²Royal Gazette (Nassau), 25 March 1837.

¹⁵³"Of This and That," Nassau Guardian, 8 April 1956, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴[Edwin C. Moseley], op. cit.

do you forget that you were summoned to General Court and found guilty for a libel on the Editor of the Observer?¹⁵⁵

Before the files for the Guardian and the Herald begin in 1849, the Observer had passed from the scene, although Dr. Clutsam was still in Nassau in 1850.¹⁵⁶ There is a remote possibility that a file of the Observer still exists in Nassau, however. Etienne Dupuch refers to an advertisement for his great-grandfather's iron foundry which appeared in the Observer about 1840. He goes on to say, "The file of this newspaper is in the possession of Mr. Jimmy French's family."¹⁵⁷ This reference was made in 1940, and there is, again, no reference to the paper in the Nassau Public Library.

In any event, little is known or can be found about these newspapers. Both references to these papers in the twentieth century are not dated and quite vague. Perhaps an active solicitation for current information on the part of the Nassau Public Library might generate further information about the files, if not produce them for that Library's collection.

The Loyalist Press: Summary

Throughout the Loyalist period--and it lasted until after emancipation¹⁵⁸--the newspaper provided Nassau and Out Island residents

¹⁵⁵Bahama Herald (Nassau), 21 September 1849.

¹⁵⁶Bahama Herald (Nassau), 10 August 1850.

¹⁵⁷"Today the Tribune Honors its 'Spirit'," Nassau Tribune, 23 November 1940, pp. 1 and 5.

¹⁵⁸Peters, p. 240.

alike with a vital link to the world they inhabited. The quality of the papers varied from editor to editor. The Bahama Gazette, first under the editorship of its founder, John Wells, followed by Joseph Eve and the John Philip Traub-Neil McQueen publication, was a well-written, well-edited colonial journal. Within the resources and the limitations faced by virtually all colonial printer-editors, the paper kept its readers well-informed with news and information; it also provided some connection with English and colonial thought, literature and culture. It sank to a low level of performance under attorney William Gathorn's direction, who, in two attempts, failed to bring out a paper of any merit. Lack of training as a printer-journalist, perhaps, caused Gathorn to fail. The chronic lack of competent printing help may have had a significant role in the final demise of the Bahama Gazette.

By the time the Gazette had made its final bow to the Bahamas in 1819, its rival, and perhaps the first paper in the British colonies to print for more than a half century, was under the direction of Neil McQueen, who, with John P. Traub, was the former owner of the Bahama Gazette. McQueen and his new partner, Theodore G. Alexander, had acquired the Royal Gazette which had been established in 1804 by Robert Wilson. This paper, while not as dynamic as its predecessor, provided a competent service to its readers. It faded as McQueen aged and the editorial topics of the day became more strident and the participants more verbally abusive.

The most controversial and daring newspaper of the period must be the Bahama Argus, printed and edited by the vitriolic George Biggs from 1831 until about 1837. As an anti-government, anti-emancipation editor,

Biggs served notice early and carried out his promise to print what he thought would be of interest to his readers. Convictions for libel and a jail term ended his attacks on the government, but not on selected individuals in Nassau. Thereafter, his invective was reserved mainly for Neil McQueen and the Royal Gazette until Biggs and his Argus faded from the scene about the time Victoria became Queen of Great Britain.

The missing files for the Royal Lucayan Herald, published by Alexander Cameron in 1789, and the Bahamian/Observer, edited by William Robertson and Dr. Samuel Cultsam between 1836 and the mid-1840s, would do much to shed light on both eighteenth century colonial journalism and that of the emancipation period. The lack of these files is a loss to the historical record of the Bahamas and of colonial journalism.

Each paper, in its own way, reflected the concerns of at least a fraction of the Bahamas; given the small number of whites in the Out Islands, the papers were reflective only of concerns in Nassau. The issues of the day--the acquisition of political recognition by the Loyalists, commercial development through improved navigation, concern for the Empire during the Napoleonic wars, the War of 1812 with the United States and the emancipation of slaves--were major topics for the editors of the Colony's newspapers.

Representing as they did, factions and rivalries within the government and society of Nassau, the papers were not able to extend the concept of "Bahamian" to their readers in Nassau or among the dispersed population of the Out Islands. Because the slave/freedman population was illiterate and economically unable to participate in the commercial and political life of the Colony, coupled with the slow and undependable

transportation of the period, Out Islands settlements and plantations could not be reached with regular and dependable mail and newspapers. Also, the sense of being Englishmen in a colonial setting kept loyalties and interests turned toward "Home"--Great Britain. The colonies were a place for younger sons and the dispossessed of England. For some, the sojourn in the Bahamas might provide the opportunity to amass land and property which would allow a return to England with style; for others, it was a chance to create a little England with its class consciousness. Amalgamated with the English attitudes were those of race and property brought to the colony by the American Loyalists.

Against the cultural and political ideas of the day, the newspapers, with the exception of the first years of the Bahama Gazette, the Bahama Argus and possibly the Bahamian, were content to reflect the thinking of the dominant faction within the Colony. Not until the coming of radio a century later would there be a media institution which would allow the immediate response to activities in Nassau, overcoming the delay between event and report that faced colonial and contemporary editors. In addition, radio would not depend on a literate populace for its adoption and utilization. It would also be the first medium to create an immediate sense of "Bahamian" and, later, of nation.

Still, the early papers were important in keeping alive English social and political institutions; they also kept alive many of the evils of both their English and American forefathers--not with a sense of inflicting indignities upon non-whites or the poor, but rather that their attitudes and beliefs were proper and just. The injustices would eventually be recognized for what they were, but it would be more than

a century before these were addressed and redressed by the descendants of slāves and the dispossessed of Europe and America. While this was far in the future, the ascension of Victoria to the throne of the United Kingdom would put conservatism and reaction in place in the Bahamas for the next 60 years. And it is the story of journalism in a forgotten Colony during the Victorian age that is investigated next.

CHAPTER III

THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

This period normally extends from 1837, when Victoria assumed the throne of Great Britain, until her death late in January 1901. For the purpose of this chapter, however, 1900 will be considered the last year of the period.

Background

In general, the Victorian period was one of benign and near-total neglect of the Bahamas on the part of the government in London. Only the American Civil War and the Yelverton Affair--a curious incident involving the Colony's chief justice and the editor of the Nassau Guardian--created something more than the stirring of trade winds and the passing of lives. Both incidents were to play a part in Bahamian journalism.

During this period, the islands were hindered in their development by poor transportation and poorer communications. At the beginning of Victoria's reign, sail still dominated transportation to the Bahamas, although steam packets were extending their services to the area. By the end of the nineteenth century, sail was relegated to serving the Out Islands. Although aids to shipping improved, it was still dangerous to sail through the islands. The islands produced little of value to insure the profitability of regular steam navigation, although several attempts were made to establish steamship service with varying degrees of success. Only during the American Civil War did the Bahamas--and

then only Nassau--achieve prosperity as the result of the Colony's proximity to the blockaded ports of the Confederacy.

Communications were hindered for much the same reasons--poor and unreliable shipping both within and without the Colony--and there was little news of value from the islands, which required faster communications than were then available. Added to the delay in improved communications was the lack of a rapidly growing population base literate enough and financially able to create a need or demand for improved communications. Although the technologies of communications were invented and developed in the United States and Great Britain, the Bahamas were unable to share in the communications revolution until the last decade of the period, and then only by the installation of the submarine telegraph cable. Improvements in printing and journalism would not come about until the twentieth century.

During the Victorian period, 15 newspapers or news sheets were published in Nassau and one at Governor's Harbour on Eleuthera Island. The Royal Gazette, the Bahama Argus and the Bahamian/Observer continued from the Loyalist period, but all were destined for oblivion by 1857. Other papers were established at various times at Victoria's reign, but only two survived into the twentieth century--one only briefly.

The microfilm and the file of original papers at the Nassau Public Library cover only six of these newspapers, and one of the files is complete. Fortunately, missing papers can be identified, and some information about the editors and their publications can be developed through reading the newspapers which were contemporaneous with the missing journals. Some information can be found for these missing

papers as their editors died and their obituaries reported data about them and their newspapers.

A basic problem in dealing with these papers is that their editors, like those of the Loyalist period, often assumed their readers knew who, or which paper, was being discussed when he, the editor, referred to "our contemporary," or used initials to identify an opposing editor or writer. Given the newspapers were usually days behind events, it can be expected that the papers' readers probably were familiar with the topics and participants before any information appeared in the journals. The modern reader of these old papers is sometimes at a loss when trying to re-create the significance of the issues and the relationships between or among the principals involved. Still, much information about the newspapers can be found because editors were frequently involved in journalistic feuds and, in the case of the Nassau Guardian, made references to the birth and death of competing publications appearing in the Colony.

The re-creation of the record of the Royal Gazette, the Bahama Argus and the first five years of the Nassau Guardian and the Bahamian/Observer depends on the later reports in the Nassau newspapers as all the series for these papers between 1838 and 1848 are missing from the files. Fortunately, the Nassau Guardian's files are virtually complete after 1848, with only scattered issues missing. The files of the Bahama Herald (1849-1877) are also useful in this regard.

Table IV summarizes information concerning titles, dates of publication and editors, as far as can be determined, of newspapers published in the Bahama Islands during the Victorian period.

TABLE IV
NEWSPAPERS OF THE VICTORIAN PERIOD (1837-1900)

Newspaper	Dates	Editors
3. <u>Royal Gazette</u>	1804-1857	Neil McQueen Alexander McLeod
4. <u>Bahama Argus</u>	1831-ca. 1840	George Biggs
5. <u>Bahamian</u>	ca. 1836-1837	William Robertson
6. <u>Observer</u>	ca. 1837-1848	Dr. Samuel J. Clutsam
7. <u>Nassau Guardian</u>	1844-	Edwin C. Moseley Percy J. Moseley Alfred E. Moseley
8. <u>Bahama Herald</u>	1849-1877	Dr. Frederick Duncombe Frederick Smith Thomas Murphy Philip Treco Thomas W. H. Dillet Thomas B. Thompson
9. <u>Bahama Times</u>	ca. 1850	Thomas E. Phelan
10. <u>Parthenon</u>	ca. 1850	Unknown
11. <u>Nassau Advertiser</u>	1861-1865	Unknown
12. <u>Young Punch</u>	1864	George Crouch
13. <u>Nassau Times</u>	1869-1893	Dr. F. A. Holmes Charles H. E. Kemp
14. <u>Our Gem</u>	1879-1880	Ward T. McLain
15. <u>The Freeman</u>	1887-1889	S. J. Bosfield S. A. Dillet
16. <u>Now and Then</u>	1897	Arthur W. Thompson
17. <u>Bahama News</u>	1897-1901	Arthur W. Thompson H. R. D. Sutton
<u>Out Islands</u>		
18. <u>Eleuthera Gazette</u> (Governor's Harbour)	ca. 1889-1890	Unknown

The Victorian Press: The Transition Papers

For the first seven years of the Victorian period, the newspapers of the Bahamas were the same papers from the final years of the Loyalist period. The Royal Gazette continued in print until 1857, although the paper was apparently in decline. The Bahama Argus disappeared sometime after 1837, but the final date for this paper cannot be established. The history of the Bahamian/Observer has been previously detailed, although there is little in the record to provide much more than sketchy information about the publication.

Although the files of the Royal Gazette are missing, the final history of this paper can be reconstructed to some extent by the Bahama Herald's report of litigation involving the Gazette and its editor, Alexander McLeod. Although Neil McQueen was still editing the paper when Victoria's reign began in 1837, his health was poor; thus sometime during the period from 1838 to 1850, his assistant, Alexander McLeod, became editor of the paper. Thomas Murphy, as editor of the Bahama Herald, identified McLeod as the editor in 1850.¹ There had evidently been a change in the Royal Gazette sometime in 1849, as a writer in the Bahama Herald noted.

A jocular "Old Friend" says that "the poor, enfeebled, decrepit old Gazette, tottering under the accumulated labor of more than a half century," has "survived the shock" of your paper's birth. . . . Yes, happy will any be, to learn that the Royal Dame not only lives, but hopes to soon stand on better legs than ever, not a type of what she was, but something better. I for one shall be delighted to look upon her in a new garb, for I began to be heartily tired of her

¹Bahama Herald (Nassau), 15 May 1850.

sleepy, wrinkled, unmeaning old face and patched up figure.²

On November 1, 1850, McLeod was on trial for a libel against the receiver-general (treasurer) of the Colony, John G. Anderson. After having been found guilty, McLeod was fined £60,³ a sum he could not pay. Murphy's comment in the next issue of the Herald was that McLeod had printed ". . . one of the most crude and caustic productions we have ever perused for a long time."⁴ From this point on, there are no references to the Royal Gazette until 1854 when the Herald printed the following article.

In February, 1850, an article appeared in the Royal Gazette in this town, and then edited by Mr. Alexander Norman McLeod, canvassing the abilities of the H. [Honorable] John Grant Anderson, Receiver-General of this Colony, and comparing the pay he receives with the work he does. For publishing that article the Editor had an action, brought against him by Mr. Anderson, was found guilty, and damages to the amount of £60 awarded. . . . But after judgment, as it was found he had not the wherewith to pay the damages, his press, with all his goods and chattels, were seized under a writ . . . , (and) sold by the Provost Marshall, and the amount of money arising from the sale was appropriated to the payment of a previous judgment. To avoid imprisonment, therefore, . . . the poor Editor, after losing his all, ran away to one of our Out-Islands, and remained there, suffering the greatest privations for want of food and clothes for more than two years. At the expiration of this time, he ventured to ask the then head of the government (the late Governor Gregory) forgiveness for what he had done amiss, and at the same time applied for a vacant situation as a public schoolmaster, the value of which was about £34 or £40 per annum. But his sufferings did not move the heart of the Executive. It had been thought that the ex-Editor was not the real author of the libel, and that he

²Bahama Herald (Nassau), 15 May 1849.

³Bahama Herald (Nassau), 2 November 1850.

⁴Bahama Herald (Nassau), 6 November 1850.

had suffered all his privations to screen someone else. The Governor, therefore, informed Mr. McLeod in reply to his letter asking for forgiveness and employment, of the propriety of his giving the name of the author of the libel for which he had exiled himself. This was, unfortunately, too sure a bait for a poor fellow who had suffered every thing next to starvation, and, therefore, after stating in his paper, and iterating and reiterating to his friends and others that the article was his own, without being believed, he named a gentleman as the author, who had for years assisted him in correcting his papers, and furnishing articles. This was none other than Mr. J. H. Webb, Inspector of Public Schools. So soon as the Governor was informed of this, His excellency immediately directs Mr. McLeod to make the same statement to the then Acting Attorney General the Hon. T. N. Matthews, with a view to the matter being brought before him officially. In the mean time, the Governor dies. Liet.-Governor [sic] Nesbitt assumes the reins of power. On the Acting-Attorney General's bringing the affair under the notice of the Liet.-Governor [sic], we understand His Honour referred the parties to a Court of law as the proper quarter whence to obtain redress. There must have been some doubt, however, as to the possibility of bringing the matter home to the person said to have been the author, before a legally constituted Court; and, therefore, the Acting Attorney General allowed the matter to remain in status quo till the arrival from England of the Hon. G. C. Anderson, the Attorney General, who is brother to the Receiver-General. Mr. McLeod's statement having been handed over to him he (the A. G.) then brought the matter under the notice of the Lieut.-Governor and asked for instructions. The Executive, however, did not give any; but referred the matter to the Duke of Newcastle, lately and at that time Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonial department. It is to the Duke of Newcastle, therefore, that we are indebted for the novel investigation which has taken place. It is the Duke who must have credit of instituting a new Court, not unlike those glorious Courts of old where facility of trial and punishment were their leading characteristics.⁵

It is difficult to determine if the Herald's writer is ending on a note of sarcasm or delight; in any event, the trial found Webb innocent of McLeod's charge and nothing further was said of the unfortunate

⁵ Bahama Herald (Nassau), 16 September 1854.

Mr. McLeod.⁶ It is doubtful that he had much of a chance when the officer libelled was the treasurer of the Colony and his brother the attorney general. Naming the inspector of schools as the author of the libel probably did not add credibility to McLeod's story. The death of Governor Gregory, who may have been somewhat sympathetic to McLeod's plight, certainly removed a possible influential friend and weakened the former editor's chances for relief.

From the record, it is apparent that McLeod lost control of the old Royal Gazette when it was sold in 1850 or 1851. The buyer cannot be identified; he is never mentioned in either the Bahama Herald or the Nassau Guardian for the six or seven years the Royal Gazette remained in print. Since no copies of the paper exist in the files, there are no printed indications of the editor's name. The other two papers were apparently not involved in any conflict with the Gazette; consequently, they do not mention him by name. In fact, the only knowledge of the end of the Royal Gazette comes from the editor's swan song as he announced the end of the venerable old paper.

Fortunately, the Nassau Guardian reprinted the editor's closing remarks, and from this we know something of the events surrounding the paper's end.

We are now addressing our readers and subscribers for the last time, and when these lines meet their eyes this evening the last number of the ROYAL GAZETTE will have been published, and the paper itself ceased to exist.

It has been under our management for somewhat less than seven years, but was established nearly a century ago, and

⁶Ibid.

its columns, much in their present shape, may have been perused by the grandfathers and great grandfathers of some who still subscribe to it.

We believe this community do not [sic] require and will not support, three newspapers; we have availed ourselves of the termination of the present half-yearly period to cease our editorial labors. We cheerfully resign the field to our two able and popular contemporaries, and we think we may fairly congratulate both of them and the reading public of the colony on the time and manner in which public journalism is here conducted.

In taking our last farewell, we desire truly to tender our sincere and grateful thanks to our kind supporters, whether subscribers, advertisers or contributors, to all of who we wish happiness and prosperity for many years.⁷

There is a certain amount of confusion revealed in the unknown editor's remarks. First, the paper was not nearly a century old as it was founded in 1804; even if he were confusing the Royal Gazette with the Bahama Gazette, the paper would have been only 73 years old in 1857. A second point of confusion arises when the editor reveals that he had operated the paper less than seven years; could this have been McLeod once again? The Bahama Herald reported in 1853 that McLeod had again been found guilty of a libel, this time of the French Vice Consul in Nassau, and ordered to pay one farthing (one-fourth of an English penny) in damages.⁸

Although writing nearly a century later, Mary Moseley said that McLeod, "the respectable bookkeeper of Mr. McQueen," ran the paper during its last seven years.⁹ This is not likely, however, given McLeod's

⁷Royal Gazette (Nassau), 27 June 1857, quoted in Nassau Guardian, 1 July 1857.

⁸Bahama Herald (Nassau), 27 July 1853.

⁹[Mary Moseley], "Newspapers of the Bahamas," Nassau Guardian, 23 November 1944.

self-imposed two-year exile between 1851 and 1853. To confuse the issue further, if the retrial or rehearing of the original libel against Anderson was heard in 1854, as reported in the Herald, could McLeod have been publishing or editing another paper in Nassau following his return in 1853? Could this have been the elusive Parthenon which Mary Moseley's grandfather said "was born and died in a day?"¹⁰ The questions are tantalizing, but they cannot be answered from the existing newspapers of the period. In any event, the unknown editor of the old Royal Gazette was off to America to win new laurels in a new career.¹¹ The departing editor's remark about the community not needing three newspapers was a significant comment on the precarious state of the Colony's economy. By mid-nineteenth century, the Bahamas produced little of value beyond pineapples.

One other newspaper appeared in Nassau during the mid- to late 1840s; it was the Bahama Times. The only information of this paper comes about indirectly. On June 5, 1850, the Bahama Herald reported that a boat with four men aboard had landed at Nassau the day before, and among them was Thomas E. Phelan whom the Herald identified as the "late editor" of the Bahama Times. The four were survivors of a filibustering attempt on Cardenas, Cuba.¹² The Bahamas, with innumerable uninhabited islands and cays, were a jumping off point for armed

¹⁰ [Edwin C. Moseley], Nassau Guardian, 20 July 1864.

¹¹ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 27 June 1857, quoted in Nassau Guardian, 1 July 1857.

¹² Bahama Herald (Nassau), 5 June 1850.

expeditions, filibusters, into Cuba where the Creoles were attempting to overthrow Spanish control of the island.

This, then, is the total information that can be gleaned from Bahamian newspapers about these now lost papers. What effect these papers had on the government or society of the Bahamas during the first years of the Victorian period is a moot point. Only the early issues of the Bahama Herald and the Nassau Guardian exist to shed an imperfect light on this period of Bahamian journalism.

The failure of these missing and minor newspapers would seemingly indicate that they did not meet the needs or wants of the community. Either there were too many papers competing for a restricted subscriber-advertiser list, or the papers were established with a single purpose--to fight a single issue or to kill a rival publication. Thus they had no clear purpose beyond a rather narrowly defined one. When the controversy faded, or when the paper was unable to destroy its intended victim, the paper failed.

The Victorian Press: The Bahama Herald

Although this newspaper came into existence after the Nassau Guardian, it will be considered here because its files cover only 13 of its 27 or 28 years of publication. The Bahama Herald began its publication on May 8, 1849, on a Tuesday-Friday publication schedule. The prospectus for this new paper put it on an even greater religious footing than the existing newspapers of the period. The editor noted:

But above all bearing in mind the Christian injunction,
"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," we shall

ever consider it our duty, as well as the highest privilege, to keep in view this, "the chief end," as well as chief good of man.¹³

The Nassau Guardian, then in its fifth year of publication, greeted the appearance of the Herald as an important event in the small community. The writer in the Guardian, however, was not convinced of the new paper's motives.

We quarrel with no one for holding or giving expression different from our own; and we in justice ask the like indulgence to ourselves. Such has not been conceded. We were the unflinching supporters of the late Governor's administration. A paper was being got up, as we will know, to attack it, and we awaited quietly the result. An opposition journal, temperately and honestly conducted, we at no period have been, or should ever be, averse. But we hold the organ of a government to be also necessary for the exposition or advocacy of any measure emanating from the Government. Such organ we publicly avowed this journal to be, and blushed not at the avowal. . . . But because we upheld the late Governor's administration, we have incurred, and now share in the hatred of some of his implacable enemies, part proprietors of the Bahama Herald, who hailed its advent as the fitting opportunity for crushing us, and have not failed to express that opinion openly.¹⁴

From this excerpt can be deduced a number of important facts. First, the paper was established as a joint stock company, one of the first in the Colony (the first was the Heneage Salt Pond Company, established in 1949, to harvest salt at Inagua Island¹⁵). The Bahama Herald, then, was the first investor-owned newspaper in the Colony. Most papers before and since have been either personally owned or

¹³Bahama Herald (Nassau), 8 May 1849.

¹⁴Nassau Guardian, 19 May 1849.

¹⁵Craton, p. 222.

partnership undertakings. Second, the Bahama Herald, like the old Bahama Argus, was anti-government and stridently opposed to the policies of the Nassau Guardian. It is important to note that the editor of the Guardian wrote that his paper was the voice of the government and, virtually throughout its long life, the paper supported the policies of the government of the Bahamas.

At the inception of the Bahama Herald, the stockholders had difficulty in finding an editor for the paper. However, Dr. Frederick Duncombe was persuaded to become the editor and remained in the position until October 19, 1849.¹⁶ Although Duncombe accepted the position, he later regretted his decision. The life of a colonial clergyman turned newspaper editor was not to his liking.

. . . we consented, on request, to undertake for a short time the Editorship of the Herald, until an abler party could be found to conduct it. In consequence of having placed ourselves in this invidious position, we have been subjected to one continual volley of unmitigated and malignant personal abuse. We have been assailed in our capacity as a Churchman, a Vestryman, an Editor, and a gentleman, not under any obligation to speak the truth.¹⁷

It is no wonder that Duncombe turned over the position of editor to Frederick Smith in October.¹⁸ Smith's qualifications as an editor were minimal; he was a dentist by profession, and, in his first issue, he was pleading for patience and understanding.

¹⁶Bahama Herald (Nassau), 19 October 1849.

¹⁷Bahama Herald (Nassau), 13 July 1849.

¹⁸Bahama Herald (Nassau), 19 October 1849.

We cannot be expected to know a great deal of local politics as yet, and therefore, until we have become more familiar with them, we shall be cautious about giving any opinion upon the subject.¹⁹

Smith's tenure as editor lasted only four months until he, too, was replaced. Thomas E. Murphy, a commission merchant and auctioneer, became editor of the Herald on February 12, 1850.²⁰ Murphy's undistinguished career as an editor was even shorter than his predecessor's. By April 9, the paper advertised for applications from anyone in or out of the Colony to become the editor of the Herald. The applicant had to be a British subject, however.²¹

Sometime during the period from May 7 to 17, 1850--the papers are missing--Philip Treco's name appeared in the paper as the printer and publisher;²² not until November 1, 1851, was Thomas W. H. Dillet identified as the editor. Dillet had been serving as the secretary of the Board of Education, a position he held from June 5, 1850, until October 31, 1851, when he was forced to give up the position as a conflict of interest.²³

The owners of the paper created numerous problems for the various editors of the paper. It had been established as a stock company with 42 shareholders holding 92 shares apparently valued at \$10 per share.

¹⁹Bahama Herald (Nassau), 23 October 1849.

²⁰Bahama Herald (Nassau), 12 February 1850.

²¹Bahama Herald (Nassau), 9 April 1850.

²²Bahama Herald (Nassau), 17 May 1850.

²³Bahama Herald (Nassau), 2 November 1850.

The number of shares varied in that 20 shares were held by "seven Wesleyans."²⁴ However, by 1854 the owners were evidently unhappy that the paper had not shown a profit, and they wanted out.

This may have possibly been the case with a few, who, under the cloak of supporting an "independent press," eked out 10, 20, or 30 dollars for their one, two, or three shares. . . .

Some of the Shareholders, however, anxious to become repossessed of their money, desire that the "concern" should be annihilated, and having met, gave the Editor notice, according to one of their rules, that at the end of six months they will require the redelivery of the press, &c., at which period they resolved to dispose of the same.²⁵

Economic survival continued to be an important issue for the Herald as it must have been for all the newspapers in the Colony. For most of the journals, survival rested on obtaining the government contract for the paper's job printing business. Although the Bahama Herald had held a contract for printing government notices for some time before mid-1853, in May of that year the colonial secretary asked for bids in regard to the upcoming contract period. The editor, Thomas Dillet, noted somewhat acidly that his bid was better than that submitted by the Nassau Guardian and that he had found out about the award of the contract only by reading a government notice to that effect in the Guardian.²⁶

²⁴ Bahama Herald (Nassau), 22 May 1849.

²⁵ Bahama Herald (Nassau), 27 December 1854.

²⁶ Bahama Herald (Nassau), 6 July 1853.

The problems faced by printers in Nassau, both in terms of government printing and newspapering, were serious. The Herald reported in 1854 that the Nassau papers were virtually poverty stricken at home and gouged abroad.

Some persons in this Colony consider the charges made for advertising and printing in general at the newspaper offices in this town are high. In a colony like ours, the circulation of a newspaper is very limited, not one of the three having perhaps 100 subscribers, and the advertising is small. No paper in England or America has a smaller circulation than a thousand copies per day or week, according to publication; but the profits derivable from it, come from the advertising. In either of those countries, the smallest newspaper has, at every publication, more advertisements than we have in two or three months, and some papers in one day more than we have in a year.

The argument which is frequently urged that things can be printed much cheaper in England or America is an unfair one . . . paper, &c. can be obtained cheaper in those countries than here, because, when imported, there are commissions, agency, insurance, freight, duties and other charges to be paid in addition to the first cost, and the importer must have a certain profit on the money he has laid out, of which no one doubts the fairness. The like have to be paid on all printing materials on importation. We know that foolscap paper, which cost 16s. or 18s. stg [sterling] in England--perhaps less--is sold here for £1 5s.²⁷

Thus Nassau printers had to pay about one-third more for paper, only one of the many items needed to keep a press in operation. It is apparent that conducting a journalistic enterprise, let alone a print shop, was a precarious venture at mid-century. Supplies were costly, deliveries uncertain, revenues low and subscription lists small.

In 1855, changes in the postal regulations created an additional hardship for the Herald and for other newspapers in the Empire.

²⁷ Bahama Herald (Nassau), 11 January 1854.

Previously, newspapers enjoyed low-cost transportation throughout the Empire; but the new penny-per-paper postage rate would cost the Herald about £12 per year in increased costs. It would be safe to assume that the paper was paying something less than £1 per month for postage before the rate was increased.

An approximation of the Herald's overseas exchange circulation can be computed from the £12 cost for postage. With 240 pennies in the pound, the penny postage rate meant that about 240 papers were sent abroad during the month. With eight or nine papers published each month, the total number of exchanges would have been about 25 or 30 per month (e.g., $240 \div 8 = 30$, or $240 \div 9 = 26$). Thirty exchanges may have been a bit high, in all likelihood.

The Herald's editor reported that in the future only paid subscribers would get the Herald; the Herald would not be sent as an exchange paper. This would create additional hardships for editors in the smaller colonies, like those in the West Indies, where editors depended on exchanged newspaper to provide material to fill their own columns.²⁸

Following Thomas Dillet's resignation as editor of the Herald, its printer-publisher, Philip Treco, became the owner-editor after buying the paper from its stockholders.²⁹ Treco was much less aggressive in his relations with the other papers in the community. Little controversial news or opinion appeared in the paper. The greatest problem

²⁸ Bahama Herald (Nassau), 19 December 1855.

²⁹ Bahama Herald (Nassau), 17 November 1855.

Treco and his fellow editors faced was the problem of finding enough news to fill the paper. It was not a new complaint.

Since our connection with the press, we have seldom been reduced to such straits and difficulties for the want of news as at the present moment. We can hear of nothing stirring in the Colony itself of sufficient interest to deserve the attention of our readers; and as for news from abroad, we not only have received none lately, but expect none for some time to come. . . . As long as we are nearly altogether dependent on the coastal trips of merchant vessels to America, we shall be subject to such uncertainties and irregularities, with respect to foreign news, as must every now and then prove very mortifying and embarrassing.³⁰

A major point Treco made was the very real need for regular and dependable transportation and communication between Nassau and foreign ports. In October 1858, Treco announced that steamer service between Charleston, South Carolina; Havana, Cuba; and Nassau would begin. The steamer Governor Dudley arrived in Nassau on October 10, 1858.³¹ The steamer service was not successful. Treco reported more than a year and a half later that the Colony was still trying to get regular steamship service to Nassau.³² Early the next year, the S. S. Karnak began making regular trips to Nassau.³³

Advertising lineage and revenue must have improved somewhat during the mid-1850s, because Treco announced that he would be starting an advertising sheet which would provide advertising, business notices,

³⁰Bahama Herald (Nassau), 26 December 1855.

³¹Bahama Herald (Nassau), 11 October 1858.

³²Bahama Herald (Nassau), 7 July 1858.

³³Bahama Herald (Nassau), 16 February 1859.

shipping news and current prices. He proposed to issue 300 free copies of the advertising sheet on Thursday evening for distribution to merchants and business establishments in Nassau. Copies were also sent to the paper's agents on the Out Islands.³⁴ This paper, like the Nassau Guardian, employed a number of agents at settlements in the Out Islands to handle subscription and advertising affairs. Agents were also employed in New York and London in the case of the Guardian.

On February 1, 1862, Thomas B. Thompson announced in the Herald that he had bought the paper from the widow of the late editor. His announcement also noted that he had been managing the paper for her.³⁵ This was, in all likelihood Treco's widow as he, Treco, was still editing the paper as late as May 5, 1860.³⁶ The surviving file of papers which can be attributed to Thompson ends with volume I, number 98, dated January 31, 1863; thus Thompson's ownership of the paper survived at least a year,³⁷ although the paper was in publication until 1877.

Like other colonial papers, the Herald reprinted war news from the United States during the Civil War. It is interesting to note that in its own news reporting, the paper continued to use labels of one or two words to identify some stories; in reprints from the Charleston (South

³⁴Bahama Herald (Nassau), 14 May 1856.

³⁵Bahama Herald (Nassau), 1 February 1862.

³⁶Bahama Herald (Nassau), 5 May 1860.

³⁷Bahama Herald (Nassau), 31 January 1863.

Carolina) Courier, for example, headlines and editorial material were copied exactly as they appeared in the Confederate paper.³⁸

Although American papers had been using headlines for some time, the practice was not adopted by Bahamian editors until some years after the American Civil War. The difficulties in obtaining paper probably served to restrain the colonial editors from using valuable editorial space for headlines. The lost editorial material would deprive subscribers of information, or it would require the addition of pages to the paper, resulting in increased labor costs for setting type and printing the paper.

With the end of the Herald's files in 1863, it is difficult to determine much of the history of the paper during its remaining 14 years of publication. Some information, however, can be found in other papers. Thompson was still editing the Herald in 1869, when he brought a libel action against the Guardian for publishing a humorous letter about him. The verdict was reached by the jury in a very few minutes of deliberation--"Not guilty."³⁹ In 1876, the Herald's editor was in court, along with the editor of the Guardian and a local resident, Ernest E. Higgs. The editors were being sued for publishing their co-defendant's letter which was critical of Robert H. Sawyer's operation of the inter-island mail contract. Sawyer sued for £500. The editors were found innocent; Higgs was not, but the jury reduced the award of damages to £30.⁴⁰

³⁸ Bahama Herald (Nassau), 7 June 1862.

³⁹ [Mary Moseley], op. cit.

⁴⁰ Nassau Guardian, 26 July 1876.

The editor of the Herald must have seen the economic handwriting on the wall--"owing to the generally depressed state of business in the Colony"⁴¹--and closed the paper in 1877. He sold the plant to the Guardian.⁴² Both the Nassau Times and the Guardian noted the closing of the Herald and that the former editor was about to begin a new, unspecified business career.⁴³

Although the Herald had been undertaken to drive the Guardian out of business in 1849, the two papers had, by the 1870s, settled into a professional respect for one another. There seemed to be a genuine affection for the Herald's editor when he closed the paper. Certainly there was some regard, because Moseley purchased the Herald's printing plant.

The Nassau Herald had some impact on the public of the Bahamas during its years in print. The paper provided a focal point for anti-government opinion which, over the period, had few outlets other than the Bahama Herald. The papers established between 1849 and 1877 were short-lived and did not offer the stability of long-term publication. The papers established in response to a single perceived need--anti-government reaction, religious controversy, political forum or personal journal--had a tendency not to outlive their original purpose, or to generate sufficient revenue to become viable social institutions in the community. Once the controversy passed, the paper disappeared.

⁴¹ Nassau Herald, 24 August 1877, quoted in Nassau Guardian, 25 August 1877.

⁴² [Mary Moseley], op. cit.

⁴³ Nassau Guardian, 25 August 1877.

A local depression following the bursting of the economic bubble at the end of the Civil War in 1865, and a worldwide depression in 1877, caused the Bahamas to slip into and remain in a state of economic torpor for more than half a century. From 1865, until the imposition of the Volstead Act brought national prohibition to the United States in 1920, the Colony languished. Only liquor smuggling, or rum-running, brought about by prohibition gave a measure of prosperity to a small group of Bahamians.

The Colony's newspapers reported the events and shared both "boom and bust" throughout the period. The Bahama Herald had become an early victim of the economic difficulties of the period. Every newspaper of the Victorian period, save two, would disappear from the Colony's life by the turn of the century. Only the Nassau Guardian, which is chronicled in the next section of this chapter, survives.

The Victorian Press: The Nassau Guardian

The history of the longest-lived newspaper in the Bahamas actually began seven years before it made its first appearance in print. The Royal Gazette of February 8, 1837, duly listed Mr. E. Moseley as a passenger lately arrived in Nassau.⁴⁴ Edwin Charles Moseley had been encouraged to come to the Colony by its governor, Sir William Colebrook, to assume an editorial position of George Biggs' Bahama Argus,⁴⁵ but

⁴⁴Royal Gazette (Nassau), 8 February 1837.

⁴⁵Nassau Guardian, 9 July 1864.

Moseley soon found himself in disagreement with the operation of the Argus and withdrew from the paper.⁴⁶

As required by law, Moseley served notice that he intended to leave the Colony on July 2, 1837, just six months after he had arrived in Nassau.⁴⁷ He was apparently dissuaded from leaving, for he advertised in the Royal Gazette late in September that he would be giving a lecture in vocal music in mid-October.⁴⁸ In another advertisement about the time of his lecture, Moseley announced that he was available for tuning pianofortes and that he would teach singing and dancing to a limited number of students.⁴⁹ For the next seven years, Moseley was on the faculty of King's College School in Nassau.⁵⁰

Moseley's background in journalism was remarkable for his day. He served his apprenticeship on the Times of London, took a course in printing and served on the staff of the Yorkshire Post.⁵¹ The need for a moderate paper in Nassau, following the roisterous Bahama Argus and a series of short-lived papers, to replace the aged Royal Gazette was obvious to a number of men in the community. Moseley was well-qualified to operate a newspaper such as that being contemplated for mid-century Nassau. As he noted in 1864, "We were solicited by about 100 of the

⁴⁶ [Mary Moseley], op. cit.

⁴⁷ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 26 July 1837.

⁴⁸ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 20 September 1837.

⁴⁹ Royal Gazette (Nassau), 17 October 1837.

⁵⁰ [Mary Moseley], op. cit.

⁵¹ Ibid.

creme de la creme to embark on our old profession. . . ."⁵² And on November 23, 1844, the first issue of the Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Magazine appeared as a small, ten-inch, two-column, eight-page newspaper. No example of the first issue remains in the files of the Nassau Public Library, but there is a facsimile of at least the front page of the original. The microfilming of the centenary issue of the Nassau Guardian was evidently incorrectly done as only the front page of the facsimile was photographed, then the underlying full page was turned--thus the facsimile and the front page of the centenary issue are incorrect in the film.⁵³

Sometime during the period from the founding of the paper as the Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Magazine and March 1849, the name of the paper was changed to the Nassau Guardian and Colonial Advertiser⁵⁴ (see Figure 2). Also during this time, the paper changed its publication schedule to a twice-weekly issue and appeared in a larger page size. The name change perhaps more accurately reflected Moseley's development of what began as something of a magazine into an example of colonial journalism as it was then practiced.

At the start of volume six in November 1849, Moseley again changed the name. The new name was the Nassau Guardian, Harbour Island and Abaco Advocate and Out-Island Intelligencer.⁵⁵ For the first time in

⁵² [Edwin C. Moseley], op. cit.

⁵³ [Mary Moseley], op. cit.

⁵⁴ Nassau Guardian, 3 March 1849.

⁵⁵ Nassau Guardian, 21 November 1849.



FIGURE 2

MASTHEAD

in Bahamian newspapers, an editor had included the names of individual islands; Moseley was also the first to identify his paper with Nassau as well. The probable effect of adding the names of the Out Islands to the paper's name, coupled with the development of Out Island agents, was to tie possible advertising and circulation to the Guardian as no other paper had been able to do. The name change may also have helped give the Out Islanders a closer identity with the Bahamas as a Colony, rather than as forgotten residents of obscure islands in an unimportant colonial possession.

With the first issue of the paper in 1850, Moseley added the name of Inagua Island to the masthead.⁵⁶ This may have been the correction of an oversight; but given Inagua's importance as a source of revenue through the sale of salt--then an important food preservative--the island was vital to the economic survival of the Colony and the Guardian.

⁵⁶ Nassau Guardian, 2 January 1850.

At some point about 1850, the artwork used in the masthead began to crack. The break is under the "U" in Nassau.



FIGURE 3

MASTHEAD OF THE NASSAU GUARDIAN

By November 5, 1851, it had finally broken in two places,⁵⁷ and with the first issue of volume eight, it was replaced. The new masthead was a cut of a full-rigged sailing ship flanked by the names of the inhabited islands. The name was again changed to the Nassau Guardian and Bahama Islands' Advocate & Intelligencer⁵⁸ (see Figure 4).

A year later, the masthead was again changed, this time to a cut of the coat of arms used by the United Kingdom.⁵⁹ In each case, the artwork was well executed and has a neat appearance, demonstrating Moseley's eye for typography and design. A masthead using the coat of

⁵⁷ Nassau Guardian, 5 November 1851.

⁵⁸ Nassau Guardian, 19 November 1851.

⁵⁹ Nassau Guardian, 20 November 1852.



FIGURE 4

MASTHEAD OF THE NASSAU GUARDIAN AND BAHAMA ISLANDS'
ADVOCATE & INTELLIGENCER

arms (Figure 5) has been used by the paper since. Although the paper was generally called the Guardian, it maintained the full title from 1851 until it was sold and the name changed in 1952.⁶⁰



FIGURE 5

MASTHEAD USING UNITED KINGDOM COAT OF ARMS

⁶⁰"Ownership of The Nassau Guardian Transferred to New Local Company With More Than 50 Shareholders," Nassau Guardian, 1 February 1952, p. 1.

Perhaps a clue to the success and longevity of the Nassau Guardian lies in the statement of goals used in volume five, A Semi-weekly Paper, Established for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge and the Furtherance of Commerce, and in the motto of the paper, "Be at Peace with all Mankind, but at War with Their Vices."⁶¹ With these, Moseley created a set of goals and principles to guide his paper; both he and his descendants, who edited the paper until 1952, followed them almost as a religion.

Moseley, like editors before him, had agents on the inhabited islands and in London. But only Moseley publicly identified these agents who solicited subscriptions and advertising for the paper and also served as news correspondents.⁶² The subscription rate for the Guardian was virtually stable for its first 75 years or so. At Moseley's death in 1885, the subscription rate was £1 14s. 4d.; at the outbreak of the First World War, the subscription rate for the paper was £1 15s. for the same 104 issues per year.

Circulation was a never ending problem for Moseley, as it surely was for the other papers in Nassau, for they had even smaller subscription lists. In 1867, Moseley printed a lament and an analysis of circulation in the Colony.

The limited circulation of the press of this colony confines its influence to about one in every 133 inhabitants, about one in every 40 in New Providence--supposing none but the subscribers to read it. But we know that this

⁶¹ Nassau Guardian, 3 March 1849.

⁶² Ibid.

is not the case--some of our patrons being in the habit of lending their newspapers about six deep! Now this is very well where the parties cannot really afford to pay for a paper. But where they can, we have no sympathy with them. . . .⁶³

Population data for 1871 show there were 11,410 residents on New Providence Island and 39,163 in the Colony; Nassau had a population of 2,019. Only 4,259 could read and write and a further 1,539 could read only. Thus there was a potential subscription list of 5,798 in the Colony.⁶⁴ The total circulation of all papers in Nassau in 1873, was about 560;⁶⁵ thus the Colony's newspapers reached perhaps 10 percent of the Colony's literate population.

The nearly £2 per year subscription price of the Guardian, and similar subscription rates for the other newspapers, made them something of a luxury for most of the residents of Nassau and even moreso for the residents of the less developed Out Islands. Income was modest for the average Bahamian. The American consul in Nassau, Thomas McLain, reported to his government that, among other information, the wage rates in Nassau ranged from \$4 (16 shillings) per month for a servant, to \$50 (ten pounds) for a sea captain. As McLain noted, needs were modest: food, clothing and shelter costs could be measured in pennies. He also wrote that the lower classes drank cheap Jamaican rum and spent

⁶³Nassau Guardian, 25 September 1867.

⁶⁴Nassau Guardian, 19 August 1871.

⁶⁵Nassau Guardian, 9 June 1875.

more money on fancy clothing than was necessary.⁶⁶ In such a poor community where a newspaper subscription represented a large expenditure for most people, it is remarkable that newspapers survived, or that entrepreneurs were willing to embark on such precarious ventures.

Growth in circulation was apparently slow but steady. By the thirtieth anniversary issue, Moseley could boast that the subscription list had increased threefold from the initial list in 1844.⁶⁷ An estimate for the original size of the subscription list can be determined through information in an article printed in the Guardian in 1875. The article, based on 1873 data, gave the circulation figure of the Guardian as 225;⁶⁸ therefore, the original subscription list would have been about one-third of the 1873 figure, or about 75 copies.

The business side of the Guardian was complex: although subscription rates were simply fixed, advertising rates followed a complicated pricing formula.

One square, not to exceed 25 lines, £3, with the privilege of changing it once every 3 months.

Half a square, not to exceed 12 lines, £2 with the same privilege.

Any yearly advertiser who pays £6 5 0 per annum may insert during the year 900 lines, three times and no more;

Who pays £4 3 4 550 lines

£3 2 6 400 lines

£2 12 1 300 lines

No less sum than £2 12 1 per annum will be accepted.

No advertisement to be considered by the year unless it is previously agreed upon between the parties.

⁶⁶Nassau Guardian, 12 September 1885.

⁶⁷Nassau Guardian, 25 November 1874.

⁶⁸Nassau Guardian, 9 June 1875.

The privilege of yearly advertisements will be confined to their regular business, and all other advertisements such as Auction Sales, Houses to Let, Dissolutions of Partnerships, Legal Notices, Ships, &c, will be charged for at the usual rate. Regular advertisers, and all others sending communications, or requiring Notices designed to call attention to Lectures, Soirees, Concerts or any public entertainments, all Notices of Private Associations; all addresses and Replies, every Notice designed to call attention to private Enterprises calculated or intended to promote individual interest, can only be inserted in Editorial columns, with the express understanding that it is to be paid for.⁶⁹

While this evidently covered all classes of advertising, including advertising in "editorial" or news columns, Moseley simplified the rate structure of his paper in 1870.

Notices not exceeding eight lines, 4s [shillings] for the first and 2s each subsequent insertion.

Six pence per line for every line exceeding 8 for the first insertion; second and third insertions half price and one penny per line for each subsequent insertion.

Special arrangements with yearly advertisements.⁷⁰

Either this did not raise enough revenue, or he discovered that he could increase his income by charging for the insertion of birth, death and marriage notices in 1871.⁷¹ The combination of advertising revenue, subscription income, government printing contracts, job printing and book sales,⁷² permitted Moseley to keep his paper prosperous during

⁶⁹ Nassau Guardian, 8 February 1854.

⁷⁰ Nassau Guardian, 18 May 1870.

⁷¹ Nassau Guardian, 21 January 1871.

⁷² Nassau Guardian, 1 February 1871.

boom times and afloat during the more common periods of economic stagnation in the Colony.

If income for the Guardian was uncertain, news itself was often in short supply. Local happenings were more quickly circulated, as they had always been, by gossip, and the legislature and courts were not always in session to provide colonial editors with news. Consequently, like editors before him, Moseley had to depend on an extensive exchange with editors in England, the United States and the West Indies. The Royal Mail Ship Esk, arriving in Nassau on December 13, 1853, for example, provided Moseley with 18 papers from 10 West Indian colonies.⁷³ Newspaper in Nassau regularly exchanged paper with New York, Savannah and Charleston and London, in addition to the casual papers which came to hand from other sources (see Table V).

Exchanges with American newspapers, both northern and southern, were the Guardian's main source of news during the American Civil War. As many of the Bahamians were descendants of southern Loyalists, sympathies tended to rest with the aspirations of the Confederacy--if not in support of southern liberty, at least in support of southern trade. Nassau, as the closest foreign port to the blockaded Confederate coast, was the terminus for the swift, but short-ranged blockade runners. These shallow-draft steamers brought cotton to Nassau and made the return trip to Charleston, South Carolina, or Wilmington, North Carolina, carrying medicine and munitions to the Confederacy.

Nassau became a boom town, with both Confederate and Union agents

⁷³Nassau Guardian, 17 December 1853.

TABLE V
SELECTED WEST INDIAN EXCHANGE NEWSPAPERS, 1853

Colony	Number of Newspapers	Newspaper
Antigua	4	<u>Weekly Record</u> <u>Weekly Times</u> <u>Constitutional</u> <u>Observer</u>
Barbados	1	<u>Globe</u>
Bermuda	1	<u>Royal Gazette</u>
Grenada	2	<u>St. George's Chronicle</u> <u>Observer</u>
Demerera	1	<u>Royal Gazette</u>
Honduras	1	<u>Commercial Advertiser</u>
Jamaica	2	<u>Morning Journal</u> <u>Christian Times</u>
St. Lucia	1	<u>Paladium</u>
Turks Islands	1	<u>Royal Gazette</u>
Trinidad	4	<u>Port of Spain Gazette</u> <u>Free Press</u> <u>Herald</u> <u>San Fernando Gazette</u>

mingling with the hordes of Europeans who descended on the town in pursuit of wealth. And money was to be made. Cotton bought in a Confederate port at eight or ten cents per pound could be sold in less than a week for a dollar per pound in Nassau. A return trip with munitions could bring five or six times their purchase price in Nassau. Profits on a round trip could run as high as \$300,000.

The government of the Colony paid off its debts; wages and prices soared. Bay Street in Nassau was widened, gas lights were installed along the thoroughfare, buildings increased and the Royal Victoria Hotel opened just in time to serve as the social center of the town. But more quickly than it developed, the "bubble burst." The end of the Civil War in 1865, outbreaks of disease--yellow fever in 1864 and typhoid fever two years later--and a devastating hurricane in the fall of 1866, reduced Nassau to its pre-war torpidity.⁷⁴

The Colony crashed into an economic depression--and perhaps a decline of spirit and will, too. By 1867, the boom days of the war were only a memory. Moseley noted the change somewhat wistfully.

This has been a week of dullness. Now that the Barracouta has left us, there is not a square-rigged vessel in port; and were it not for a few schooners and fishing smacks, our harbour would present a blank sheet of water.⁷⁵

Accordingly, news was in short supply as Moseley's paper reported a week later. "The only break in the monotony of time between our last publication and this has been the 'break' into the safe of Dr. Lamriere, our new Colonial Secretary."⁷⁶ The "safe" in question was a screened box for storing food.

Still, throughout his tenure as editor of the Guardian, Moseley was as good as his word in stating that his paper would be for the "furtherance of commerce." He was a civic leader and a strong booster

⁷⁴Craton, pp. 229-37.

⁷⁵Nassau Guardian, 31 August 1867.

⁷⁶Nassau Guardian, 4 September 1867.

of Nassau. He proposed and encouraged improvements for his community--often improvements which would improve the Nassau Guardian as well. As early as 1854, he was urging improvements to the harbor and to the little town which straggled along the north shore of New Providence Island.

This is the age of improvement. . . . Why should not this little colony vie with others and improve? Placed as our port is by nature, so that it is essentially one of refuge, why not deepen the harbour and blow up the bar? Let the Colonial Legislature boldly give a guarantee of four per cent on shareholders of such public-spirited stock as the "Dredging and Blasting Company," and in a very few years we should have a noble return in our harbour crowded with shipping. Why not also establish a "Tontine Hotel" as an inducement for invalids from America to sojourn with us for the winter? Let us not vegetate stationary, but let us rather imitate the youthful vigor of the great neighboring country.⁷⁷

In future years, Nassau would indeed deepen the harbor, remove the bar at the mouth of the harbor and establish a hotel.

The electrical telegraph came of age in 1844 with Morse's message between Baltimore and Washington, but while it was being extended throughout the United States and other parts of the world, Nassau was to be 50 years behind in adopting the invention. Until a feasible submarine telegraph cable was developed, transoceanic telegraphy was impossible. Although a cable had been laid from Canada to Great Britain before the Civil War, it did not prove practicable; not until after the war would a transatlantic cable be successful.

Still, Nassau got its telegraph, and the Guardian reported it. The first one to be installed in Nassau was erected in 1877, when a

⁷⁷Nassau Guardian, 8 April 1854.

wire was strung between a business firm in Nassau and New Providence .
Asylum some distance from the community.⁷⁸ This momentous event even
made the international press--two years later--perhaps to Moseley's
chagrin. The Nassau Times, then a bitter rival of the Guardian, reported
a story from the Key West, Florida, Dispatch which sarcastically noted:

The Nassau Guardian boasts of a telegraph wire recently
put up in that city which called forth all the big digni-
taries--Governor and all, to witness its "wonderful powers."
Well, Nassau has some sort of a telegraph at last,--and the
world moves.⁷⁹

It should be pointed out, however, that over the years the colonial
governors and administrators had been trying to secure a submarine
telegraph link with some point in the United States, Canada or the West
Indies, but with little success.

Although a telephone company was not established in Nassau for
another 30 years, the telephone came to Nassau in 1878, and was duly
noted in the Guardian.⁸⁰ Its importer in Nassau, Epes Sargent,
installed a pair of telephones between the acting colonial secretary's
office and the administrator of the government's office. It worked.

At first, the sounds and words were not quite distinct,
but afterwards they came along the wire with perfect clear-
ness. Practice of course in this simple mode of communica-
tion, as well as in other things, makes perfect. . . . The
instrument works well, and will result in a great saving of
time.⁸¹

⁷⁸Nassau Guardian, 28 November 1877.

⁷⁹Nassau Times, 11 October 1879.

⁸⁰Nassau Guardian, 24 August 1878.

⁸¹Nassau Guardian, 29 November 1879.

The submarine cable. The electric telegraph was to be the first modernization of the news gathering and dissemination infrastructure in the Bahamas since the introduction of the printing press in 1784. The telegraph provided the immediate, or nearly immediate, connection with the world beyond the Bahamas--particularly the United States and the United Kingdom and its empire. This was a decided improvement over the happenstance arrival of colonial exchange papers and the fortuitous gleanings from non-exchange journals brought to Nassau by transient seamen and visitors.

The colonial legislature first approved legislation in 1873, authorizing the expenditure of public funds to get a telegraph link with the outside world. The bill empowered the government,

. . . to enter into a contract . . . , or otherwise to make all necessary arrangements for establishing direct telegraphic communication between these islands and the United States or the Island of Cuba, so as to obtain for the Colony the benefits of telegraphic communication with the United Kingdom and elsewhere. The sum £2,000, payable annually, is the amount limited for defraying all expenses incurred in opening and maintaining telegraphic connexion [sic] for the period of ten years.⁸²

Although five governors were to be in office after the first legislation authorizing funds for a cable, no governor was able to induce a telegraph company to install a cable until 1891. In 1875, Governor Sir William Robinson attempted to persuade the West India and Panama Telegraph Company and Hoper's Telegraph Company to establish a cable from Nassau to Jupiter Inlet, Florida.⁸³ The Western Union

⁸²Nassau Guardian, 9 July 1873.

⁸³Nassau Guardian, 25 May 1875.

Telegraph Company's line into southern Florida ended at Jupiter Inlet and was the closest point to the Bahamas where a connection could be made. Nothing came of either venture. The lack of cable communication was a serious problem for visitors and local merchants alike. Moseley's paper editorialized on the subject, urging the necessity of a cable to bring the Bahamas into the mainstream of commerce and civilization.⁸⁴

In 1882, Moseley reported on another attempt to obtain a cable for the Bahamas if the government of the Colony would pay a subsidy to a proposed company planning to lay a cable from Florida to the island of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands. Although the attempt to obtain telegraphic cable service to Nassau in 1882 was unsuccessful, another plan was put forward a year later. Under the headline, "Nassau Ocean Telegraphy," the Nassau Times reported that there were two "speculators" trying to form companies to lay a cable from Cuba to Florida via the Bimini Islands.⁸⁵ This, too, died aborning. Again in 1886, the Times reported another attempt being made in England to raise capital to lay a cable from England to the United States, Bermuda, the Bahamas and the West Indies.⁸⁶ A week later the paper reported new details--that the cable would be laid in sections from England to the Azores, then to Nova Scotia. This was alleged to be cheaper than

⁸⁴Nassau Guardian, 1 February 1882.

⁸⁵Nassau Times, 31 January 1883.

⁸⁶Nassau Times, 15 December 1886.

laying a long, single span cable.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, the new plan also failed to materialize.

A further five years passed before the Bahamas obtained the longed-for cable connection with the outside world. During the administration of the energetic Governor Sir Ambrose Shea, Nassau finally had a chief executive officer whose leadership brought about improvements in the islands. Shea was a tireless administrator and booster of the Colony. He encouraged agricultural development and gave the islanders a sense of dynamism which had all but been extinguished by the lassitude engendered by the economic depression resulting from the fall of the Confederate government a quarter-century before.

The subject of the cable was again before the legislature in March 1890, as a result of Governor Shea's address to the House of Assembly.⁸⁸ According to a special report to the Boston Herald as reprinted in the Guardian, Governor Shea had concluded negotiations for a contract to lay a cable between the Bahamas and the United States.⁸⁹ At the opening of the legislature in 1891, Shea told the representatives that he was corresponding with the cable company and planned to present the legislature with his proposal as soon as he could.⁹⁰

Shea's proposal was finally enacted on October 6, 1891,⁹¹ following

⁸⁷ Nassau Times, 23 December 1886.

⁸⁸ Nassau Guardian, 26 March 1890.

⁸⁹ Nassau Guardian, 27 September 1890.

⁹⁰ Nassau Guardian, 25 February 1891.

⁹¹ Nassau Guardian, 7 October 1891.

his announcement in London that arrangements were finally completed for the laying of a cable from Nassau to Jupiter Inlet on the east coast of Florida.⁹² The cable law provided,

. . . £30,000, which would be paid to the Construction Co., who would hand the cable over to the Governor in working order for that sum. The cost of repairs of course would be unknown, but a guarantee would be given that no larger sum in one year should be asked than £700 per annum. This amount would be set aside each year, and although the cost of the repairs might exceed the amount some years, yet the Colony would never have to pay any more in one year than the sum named, the Contractor having to provide for the expense of repairs beyond that amount. This fund would be in special hands during a period of 20 years, and at the expiration of that time whatever of the amount remained would be divided equally between the Government and the Company.⁹³

The financing plan for the project was based on the Colony's treasury issuing 30-year debentures,⁹⁴ and early in 1892, the loan was taken up by the Bank of Nassau.⁹⁵ The company contracted to lay the cable was the W. T. Henley Telegraph Works Company of Great Britain.⁹⁶

The installation of the cable fascinated the residents of Nassau, and still makes interesting reading. The editor of the Guardian reported his visit to the cable ship, the S.S. Westmeath, and described preparations for laying the cable. The shore ends, one for Nassau and one for Jupiter, were three inches in diameter and the deep sea cable

⁹²Nassau Guardian, 23 September 1891.

⁹³Nassau Guardian, 7 October 1891.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Nassau Guardian, 6 January 1892.

⁹⁶Nassau Guardian, 23 January 1892.

was a half-inch larger. The cables were covered with water in huge tanks in the ship's hold and were tested periodically to insure they were working. One installation crew would remain in Nassau to put up the land lines while the ship sailed to Florida to begin laying the cable.⁹⁷

On January 20, 1892, the shore end of the cable was laid through Horses' Channel and landed at Delaporte, west of Nassau, near what is now an exclusive development at Cable Beach. The Guardian sent a correspondent along on the Westmeath to record the cable laying operations for the paper's readers.

The Westmeath weighed from her anchorage outside the Bar . . . and proceeded under easy steam to a position a short distance outside the buoy marking the outer end of the shore cable, near Delaporte point. Here the work of sounding commenced, the depth of water being ascertained every mile for a considerable distance. Having attained a certain depth, I think about 800 fathoms [4,800 feet], the distance was increased to five miles, and further on they were increased to ten miles, the ship being steered most carefully on a course previously determined from existing chart data. The sounding is obtained by means of a leaden weight of about 25 lbs., much in the shape of a small champagne bottle, and fitted with a grab at the lower end for recovering a specimen of the bottom; . . . the weight is attached to the end of a coil of piano wire. . . . The coil in use contained over 4,000 fathoms of this fine wire. . . . As the temperature in which a submarine cable is laid is a matter of much importance, a self registering deep sea thermometer is also frequently attached . . . as the depths decreased, so the soundings were increased in frequency till they were again taken at one mile intervals on nearing the Florida coast . . . a capital landfall was made, . . . off the Life Saving Station 2 miles south of Jupiter Inlet . . . we commenced the homeward journey, and now all hands are doing their best; the Cable Staff superintending the paying out and electrical staff constantly testing the cable. When I say constantly, I mean that every

⁹⁷ Ibid.

minute a record is taken of the electrical condition of the cable by a marine iron-clad galvanometric mirror on the scale, and every half hour a small conversation ensues to assure that all is well at both ends of the cable. While this is going on in the testing room, on deck in the counter-house may be seen the hardworking assistants . . . recording the revolutions of the great paying out drum. . . . On leaving Jupiter a speed of 4 to 5 knots was maintained in consequence of the shallowness of the water, but this was increased to 7 during the run across.⁹⁸

On February 8, 1892, the first telegram accepting the cable for the government was sent by Douglas Wells, the government's consulting engineer on the project.⁹⁹ The first official message sent was one of condolence to the Queen on the death of the Duke of Clarence.¹⁰⁰

The community was ecstatic with the novelty. The editor of the Times reported:

It was a proud hour for all loyal Bahamians, it made their pulse beat quicker and with a stronger throb, when the click, click, click, of the magnetic needle, in the little iron house on the westward beach, told the closely packed and interested beholders that the intelligence of the great American Republic was in close touch with the intelligence of these sea girt isles; and the proudest of all may well have been the distinguished statesman [Governor Shea] who has with so large a measure of success carried this long desired and much coveted enterprise to a successful issue.¹⁰¹

Three days later, the editor summed up what the cable would really mean to the Colony.

⁹⁸ Nassau Guardian, 10 February 1892.

⁹⁹ Nassau Guardian, 8 February 1892.

¹⁰⁰ Nassau Times, 3 February 1892.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

When the messages were first sent off by the cable through Florida on Tuesday night we scarcely felt the reality of the communication just established between this Colony and the world. The return messages, however, have impressed this reality of the great event upon us, and have brought us to feel that we are in touch with all our kind in the world. It is, indeed, a touch that makes kin with all the world. It is a novel sensation to be so near and yet so far distant and yet within reach. To feel directly the pulsations of this busy world around us, instead of, as heretofore, the faint echoes as they were dying off.¹⁰²

At last the Colony was connected to the world by telegraphic cable, but it would be years before the local newspapers reported more than the short news summaries prepared by telegraphers in Florida and made available by the colonial government. The summaries were provided by the government partly because the high cost of messages put regular news service out of the reach of the Colony's newspapers. Telegrams to the United Kingdom cost two and a half shillings per word; to the United States a shilling less.¹⁰³ The high cost of messages prompted the editor of the Nassau Times to write:

We hope that steps will be taken to supply the Press and the community with news by cable of transpiring events, worthy of record. With such a small clientele as the local paper has, it is obviously impossible for them to do this at their own expense. In time they may, when our population has increased several times, with wealth in proportion.¹⁰⁴

The Yelverton Affair. The year 1892 was of a monumental one for the Press of the Bahamas, not only for the long-awaited cable, but for

¹⁰²Nassau Times, 6 February 1892.

¹⁰³Nassau Times, 3 February 1892.

¹⁰⁴Nassau Times, 6 February 1892.

a legal matter which rocked the Colony and reached to the highest levels of the Colonial Office in London. The matter involved the editor of the Guardian who, like his father and brother before him, was a staunch defender of free and open expression in his paper. The senior Moseley, Edwin, had never been one for mincing words. In one scathing comment in 1880, he had characterized a local resident as, "That well known hypocritical scoundrel, Cyrus Armbrister."¹⁰⁵

Both Edwin Moseley and his son, Percy James, were found in contempt of court in 1881 as the result of an article critical of the General Court and its ability to carry out its duties.¹⁰⁶ The Moseleys were found guilty, fined £10 and half the court costs each.¹⁰⁷ Though they appealed the conviction, their appeal was denied in 1882. Reflecting the slowness of communication between England and the Bahamas, the official notification of the denial did not arrive in Nassau until early in 1883.¹⁰⁸ These legal difficulties for the first two editors of the paper were insignificant compared with the legal action which faced Alfred E. Moseley in the spring of 1892.

In that year, The Guardian's editor was in court charged with contempt. The event was significant, both for its legal importance and the excitement it caused in Nassau. On May 14, 1892, the Guardian published a letter that was highly critical of the Colony's chief

¹⁰⁵ Nassau Guardian, 20 November 1880.

¹⁰⁶ Nassau Times, 23 February 1880.

¹⁰⁷ Nassau Times, 2 March 1881.

¹⁰⁸ Nassau Times, 28 February 1883.

justice, Roger D. Yelverton. The letter, signed "Colonist," took Yelverton to task for his refusal to accept a gift of pineapples, a major export of the Colony, which offended local sensibilities. Yelverton also spent much of his time in London, away from the Bahamas which he morbidly feared as a source of "fever."¹⁰⁹ Yelverton's reaction to the letter was swift, bold and in keeping with his hostility to all things Bahamian. He ordered Moseley into court,

. . . the 17th day of May, 1892, and that you bring with you and produce to the said court the manuscript of a certain document, to wit, "A paper purporting to be a letter signed by 'Colonist,'" and which document was printed in the Nassau Guardian of May 14th, 1892, and also all letters, notes, envelopes or other documents which accompanied or in any way referred to the paper issued: herein fail not.¹¹⁰

Moseley duly appeared and replied to Yelverton's request.

I have appeared before your honour in obedience to the summons issued by you. This is a matter of greater importance to the community than to myself personally, and I desire your Honour will grant me an adjournment of ten days so that I might advise with counsel on the subject.¹¹¹

Yelverton, in something less than a gracious mood, denied Moseley's request. The chief justice asked if Moseley had anything else to say. Moseley did.

Under the circumstances, and from the fact that your Honour informed me in your Chambers yesterday morning that

¹⁰⁹ Nassau Guardian, 14 May 1892.

¹¹⁰ Nassau Guardian, 18 May 1892.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

it was your intention to imprison me for this publication,
I show no cause, but await your Honour's order in this
matter.¹¹²

Yelverton's judgment was immediate and harsh. He fined the editor 40
for publishing the letter and an additional £25 for contempt of court
for not revealing the name of the letter writer. Moseley was further
ordered to pay all court costs and remain in prison until the fines were
paid. Moseley, protesting the harshness of the fines and sentence, was
taken to the Colony's prison.¹¹³

The reaction in the community was immediate and vehement in sup-
port of Moseley--if not for his legal position, at least for the excite-
ment in the otherwise placid Colony. Moseley's fellow editor, Charles
Kemp of the Nassau Times, provided the public and posterity with a
description of what happened after Moseley was removed from the court
and taken to prison.

Never before in all our history has this city been so
moved as it was Wednesday afternoon. And, indeed, never
before had such an event occurred more calculated to arouse
public feeling and sentiment as the release of Mr. Moseley,
the Editor of the Guardian, from the prison, to which he
had been consigned by the sentence of the Chief Justice for
"contempt of Court."

Since the sentence . . . had been pronounced, and the
remarks from the Bench on the succeeding day, an uneasy,
unsettled feeling prevailed. This, however, was dispelled
by the happy intelligence of Mr. Moseley's release by
order of His Excellency the Governor. The relief was in-
tense and indescribable. For the Chief Justice has intimated
that no authority under Heaven, but himself, could set Mr.
Moseley free; and that it was his intention to prolong his
incarceration twenty years if necessary.

The news spread like wildfire, and before 6 o'clock p.m.
the hour at which Mr. Moseley was to emerge from "durance

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Ibid.

vile," the neighborhood of the prison was filled with an immense concourse of people.

In the meantime, however, another report began to spread, and that was that the Chief Justice had served notice upon the Keeper of the Prison forbidding him to release the prisoner. This report, was correct, but happily the Governor's authority in spite of all the previous statements to the contrary, was paramount and the Keeper felt bound to obey it.

At 6 o'clock, therefore, the gates were thrown open, and Mr. Moseley, accompanied by his wife, appeared. This was the signal for deafening cheers from the assembled multitude. The horses were taken away, and the carriage in which Mr. and Mrs. Moseley, the Revd. Mr. Bailey and other friends were seated, was drawn in triumph through the principal streets of the city, accompanied by over three thousand people. . . .¹¹⁴

There were only two or three thousand people in Nassau in 1892, and the population of the entire island was perhaps 15,000. Obviously, either Moseley was held with some affection and regard by the community, or the incident provided a highly dramatic interlude in what must have been a quiet existence in a forgotten tropical Colony.

Although the colonial editors had written what were termed "editorials," these were more often a mixture of news and editorial opinion by the editor. In response to the events surrounding his contempt of court conviction, Moseley wrote what might be considered the first modern editorial to appear in the Bahamas; it dealt with an issue of importance without including news, rancor or vehement personal opinion and comment. It was a fairly graceful and reasoned argument for freedom of the Press.

The liberty of the press; the right of free expression of opinion on all matters relating to public events and the public welfare, the right to criticise all public men without respect of person or position during the last half century

¹¹⁴Nassau Times, 20 May 1892.

has been conceded and assured in all the leading nations of the civilized world. No modern institution has played so important a part as the public press in moulding and educating human thought, in widening and defending human liberty, and in promoting human progress. It is today the fearless champion of popular rights and the exponent of public thought and opinion, and bestows on mankind untold benefits and blessings in reporting the wisdom and knowledge and doings of its sages.

The position which it occupies is not like one that it has come to lightly or easily; but has only been won at the expense of the blood and treasure of some of the noblest of our race. Its liberty has not dropped from the clouds, nor been plucked by the wayside, but was only obtained by our forefathers under stress and after many a struggle and many a heroic sacrifice.¹¹⁵

Yelverton did not let the matter rest after Governor Shea released Moseley from prison. He also called Miss Moseley (probably Mary Moseley who would succeed her father as editor in 1904) to court under orders to produce the letter in question. She produced a single page of the letter, but not the cover letter or anything that revealed the source of the letter. The Guardian reported that following Yelverton's order for her to stand down, ". . . instead of doing so she began, in a rather excited manner, to explain her motives and reasons for acting as she had done."¹¹⁶ The paper did not report what she said; we can only speculate about what may have transpired later between the editor and his erring daughter.

The immediate end of the affair was noted by a fireworks display in the harbor the night following Moseley's release from prison.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵Nassau Guardian, 21 May 1892.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

Although the immediate confrontation between the editor and the jurist was over, the legal skirmishing, which followed the event, continued for months. In the issue of the Guardian containing the letter from "Colonist" which set off the contretemps, there was a news item concerning the formation of an organization which would take considerable interest in the affair.

From Barbados came an item reporting the formation of the British and West Indian Alliance for the Defence of Civil Rights in the West Indies. This organization, similar to the American Civil Liberties Union, investigated infringements of civil rights in the colonies (it should be noted, however, that civil rights were not based on race, but rather on the rights of English colonists), and to lobby for West Indian interests in the Imperial Parliament in London.¹¹⁸

From all parts of the Colony and the West Indies, Moseley received support. In June, residents of Inagua passed a resolution in support of the editor.¹¹⁹ From Trinidad came a resolution expressing indignation for the chief justice's action in imprisoning Moseley.¹²⁰ At the end of July, Moseley reported:

From all parts of the West Indies and the British Colonies in South America we have received letters and newspapers referring to our case of alleged Contempt of Court. From several branches of the W. I. Civil Rights Defence Union we have received resolutions expressive of sympathy and approval. In fact, as the European Mail of July 6 observes, the action

¹¹⁸Nassau Guardian, 14 May 1892.

¹¹⁹Nassau Guardian, 29 June 1892.

¹²⁰Nassau Guardian, 2 July 1892.

of Chief Justice Yelverton "appears to have created a widespread feeling of indignation throughout the West Indies.¹²¹

Yelverton did not take his defeat passively. On June 24, the Times of London reported:

The Bahamas--We are requested by the Chief Justice of the Bahamas to state, with regard to some telegrams which have recently appeared in the Press as to the imprisonment and release to the editor of the Nassau Guardian for contempt of Court, that such telegrams do not convey an accurate account of the situation at Nassau at that time. Shortly before the Chief Justice left on his present visit to England a protest signed by 1,700 persons resident in Nassau was forwarded home indignantly repudiating the suggestions contained in the telegrams, rumours as to which had then reached the capital of the Bahamas.¹²²

Moseley's rebuttal appears to have destroyed the validity of Yelverton's assertion regarding the support he claimed in Nassau.

It is curious to observe that according to the above protest of 1,700 persons was obtained prior to the wording of the telegrams having been known in Nassau. The substance of the messages in question received a true account of the condition of things in this city as they were known to the public at the time, and inasmuch as we are sure that there was no opportunity of seeing the published telegrams here before the protest referred to was obtained, what reliability can be placed upon such a misleading statement as that which the Times was requested to publish.¹²³

By the end of the year the matter had reached the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London. The committee dealt with two basic issues in the matter; first, had a contempt of court been committed, and

¹²¹Nassau Guardian, 30 July 1892.

¹²²Times (London), 24 June 1892, quoted in Nassau Guardian, 20 July 1892.

¹²³Ibid.

second, did the governor have the power to order a release?¹²⁴ The committee ruled that there had been no contempt in the letter, although the letter contained material which might have subjected the paper to an action for libel. The letter did not interfere with the administration of justice as Yelverton claimed, nor was Moseley in contempt for refusing to reveal the name of the letter's author. The committee further ruled that if a contempt conviction was valid--and Moseley's was not--the punishments meted out by Yelverton, fines and jail, were in accordance with the law. The governor was also empowered with the power to grant clemency, which he did in this case.¹²⁵

In spite of these setbacks, Yelverton continued to press his claims. In November the Guardian reported on Yelverton's continuing fight for his position:

Is it not monstrous that this man who still clings with a death-grip to the title of Chief Justice of the Bahamas--who has shown that ignorance and malice are his distinguishing characteristics--whose actions were condemned by the Privy Council, and whose charges against many persons in this place were pronounced "scandalous" by the Lord Chancellor, who is unworthy to be trusted with the commonest responsibilities where discretion is required--should have been able to hang on to his place nominally, but to his pay actually for the past eighteen months, and long after his dismissal had been seen to be the inevitable act of justice to a wronged community--simply because of the old cobweb privileges that surround judges.¹²⁶

News received in Nassau in December revealed that Yelverton was to

¹²⁴Nassau Guardian, 7 January 1893.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Nassau Guardian, 25 November 1893.

be dismissed from his position as chief justice of the Bahamas. Moseley's commentary closed the matter in the columns of his paper.

Mr. Yelverton being now practically dismissed from the public service of this Colony, we should not again be called upon to consider him, and it may perhaps be as well we should dismiss him from our minds, as we would in case of a bad dream.¹²⁷

The Yelverton Affairs, as it was called, established the principle that the newspapers of the Colony did, indeed, have the right to print freely, but were still subject to the legal tests for libel and contempt of court. Yelverton had badly misjudged his power to determine contempt of court in a situation which was primarily one of fair comment on his conduct as a person rather than as the chief justice.

Following the Yelverton Affair, the Guardian was the dominant newspaper in the Colony. In 1894, the Nassau Times ceased publication and left the Guardian as the only paper in the Colony. Moseley noted the situation presented to his business.

It is a long time since Nassau has been without two local papers, but we think that experience has abundantly shown that until the reading public of our islands becomes much larger than it has ever yet been, there is not room for more than one paper conducted on business principles. So long as it is our lot to conduct the only local paper we shall not abuse the privilege or take undue advantage of our monopoly.¹²⁸

The Guardian bought the plant and "the goodwill" of its rival,¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Nassau Guardian, 30 December 1893.

¹²⁸ Nassau Guardian, 4 April 1894.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

and for more than three years pursued its monopoly with restraint and a lack of controversy. During this period the Guardian celebrated its jubilee in 1894, marking 50 years of continuous publication and service in the Colony. The article detailed the history of the early days of the newspaper, allowing glimpses into the years for which the files are missing. In this article it is revealed that Edwin C. Moseley obtained his press and supplies in the United States; began the paper as a very small, two-column weekly newspaper and passed the paper on to his sons.

The staff of the paper presented Alfred Moseley with a memento in honor of the event. The message accompanying the gift included the name of Leon Dupuch, who would establish the Nassau Tribune which became, and still is, the afternoon rival of the Guardian. The article also mentioned two Bosfields, probably related to the editor of the short-lived Freeman, and H. R. Dunlop Sutton, who would become the editor of the Bahama News at the turn of the century.¹³⁰ The Guardian was the training school for a generation of twentieth century Bahamian newspapermen who would acknowledge their debt to the Moseleys for their early training in their craft.

During this period of the Guardian's sole possession of journalism in the Bahamas, it supported and reported the sale of land in Nassau to Henry M. Flagler. The sale was a complicated transaction which gave Flagler control of the Royal Victoria Hotel, built before the Civil War, and other public land which would become the site of the Colonial Hotel. Flagler's interest in the Bahamas was the result of his development of

¹³⁰ Nassau Guardian, 24 November 1894.

the Florida East Coast Railway and a series of tourist hotels down the east coast of the Florida peninsula. After making a fortune with John D. Rockefeller in Standard Oil, Flagler had turned his interests to Florida and the opportunities it presented for development; the move to Nassau appealed to him, but as it turned out, it was not a prosperous one.

While the outcome of Flagler's scheme was not a financial success for him, it did help put Nassau within the reach of larger numbers of American tourists. The effects of increased tourism on Nassau and the Bahamas were slow in developing--delayed by wars and economic depression--but when the full force of their impact was felt, the Colony was fundamentally changed in its social and political institutions.

The Guardian, throughout its first-half century, and on into the twentieth century, was the dominant forum for the expression of public opinion--at least of the public that then counted. The paper had developed into a prosperous and well-edited journal which met the fairly simple needs of the community. It provided a modicum of local news, some foreign news, which was enhanced with the coming of the cable, and an advertising medium for local merchants. In its editorials, which improved during the final years of the century, and in its willingness to provide space for local expression, the paper served its constituencies well. Edwin Moseley's journal "conducted on business principles" survived where others failed.

The Victorian Press: The Nassau Times

The Nassau Guardian, for the most part, chronicled the development of journalism in the Colony throughout its long history. In mid-1869,

Edwin Moseley noted the birth of a new newspaper in the Colony. The paper,

. . . called the Nassau Times has been started in this city. It professes to advocate liberal principles, the first number was issued on Wednesday last.¹³¹

Although the first four and a half years of the Nassau Times' file is missing, these issues probably attacked the Guardian and its editor mercilessly, if the missing papers were anything like the existing examples of the Times. Writing of the Times more than 30 years after its founding, Alfred Moseley said the paper ". . . was the product of the Disendowment and Disestablishment Movement,"¹³² which arose during the turmoil surrounding the removal of economic support of the Church of England by the colonial legislature.

During the post-Civil War period in the Bahamas, the economy of the Colony was in a shambles. Overextension of the public credit, for example, had left government service salaries months in arrears. The colonial government could no longer afford to provide financial support for the Anglican Church. Apparently, an empty treasury and resentment by non-Anglicans in the House of Assembly who were taxed to support a church they did not attend, were sufficient reasons for the legislature to withdraw the subsidies provided to the church.¹³³ To support their arguments against subsidizing the Anglican Church, leading

¹³¹ Nassau Guardian, 5 June 1869.

¹³² Nassau Guardian, 13 November 1901.

¹³³ Craton, p. 241.

opponents of the subsidy established the Nassau Times as their forum for voicing their side of the hotly debated controversy. The bill to remove the subsidy was introduced in the legislature in March 1869,¹³⁴ and the paper began publication in July of that year.

The Times' first editor was Dr. Frederick Holmes who edited the paper until 1877. Throughout his tenure as editor, he engaged in a war of words with Moseley and the Nassau Guardian--frequently on a very personal level. Late in 1875, for example, Holmes called attention to Moseley's habit of early morning strolls through the streets of Nassau.

I perceive by the last number of the Nassau Guardian that the little man known as the Editor of that paper, who trots about town, prating of charity and goodwill, . . . has himself just had a fit of extreme irascibility, if not something else.¹³⁵

Calling Moseley a "little man" was a further insult because Moseley stood a head taller than most of his contemporaries in Nassau. Generally, the editors of the Guardian studiously ignored the Times and its attacks, although Moseley expressed himself in high dudgeon when pressed: "The sophistry of 'Observer' and of his shadow, the Editor of the TIMES [sic], is quite in keeping with the Character of their journal."¹³⁶

As long as Holmes was editor of the Times, the attacks on Moseley and the Guardian continued. "On Saturday last, the Nassau Guardian, in that shallow, sappy, incoherent style that so usually and so naturally

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Nassau Times, 12 January 1875.

¹³⁶Nassau Guardian, 6 January 1875.

characterizes its effusions . . ."¹³⁷ typifies the invective used by Holmes in the Times.

Charles H. E. Kemp became editor of the Times late in 1877,¹³⁸ and it was as day following night; attacks on one another ceased. The papers subsided into a mutual peace. As Alfred Moseley later wrote, the Times ". . . outlived the social crisis."¹³⁹

If the appearance of the Times is an indication of its financial success, the paper was a money-making enterprise. The paper was a full-sized broadsheet of four pages with six columns per page. It was not unusual for the paper to carry 19 columns of advertising and 5 of editorial matter. On the other hand, in 1873, its circulation figures were not impressive. The Times ran a distant second to the Guardian, and barely ahead of the Herald which was soon to expire. The Guardian had 225 subscribers; the Times, 170 and the Herald, 162.¹⁴⁰

Early in his editorship of the Times, Kemp proposed to add "short tales," or short feature stories, to the paper,¹⁴¹ but it was not until 1883 that Kemp made major changes in the paper. In that year he became the owner-editor of the paper and altered its layout by removing three columns of advertising from the front page in order to make room for more editorial material.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Nassau Times, 23 June 1875.

¹³⁸ Nassau Times, 24 November 1877.

¹³⁹ Nassau Guardian, 13 November 1901.

¹⁴⁰ Nassau Guardian, 9 June 1875.

¹⁴¹ Nassau Times, 19 November 1879.

¹⁴² Nassau Times, 5 May 1883.

The name of the paper was changed to the Nassau Times, Bahamas Semi-weekly in 1889.¹⁴³ The following year a story appeared using what can only be described as the first true headline to appear in a locally originated news item:¹⁴⁴

A HAPPY TIME

TWENTY-FOUR POUNDS, FOUR-
TEEN SHILLINGS AND EIGHT
PENCE REALIZED

The ladies of the Benevolent Society
make their Bazaar Chantant an
Enjoyable Event to Every
one that went.

While one may speculate on the nature of a "Bazaar Chantant," the event was apparently successful.

Prior to this headline appearing in the Times, local stories were included under the typical headings that had been in use since John Wells's Bahama Gazette appeared in 1784. Headlines had been used only when stories, including their headlines, were taken from foreign papers. If a local story carried a heading in type larger than the story, the heading was generally a one- or two-word noun label.

But if Kemp's paper was modernizing its appearance and reporting local news, his paper, like others before him, was faced with the immediate and pressing problem of survival. Colonial editors still

¹⁴³Nassau Times, 23 January 1889.

¹⁴⁴Nassau Times, 9 February 1890.

faced battles for subscribers and advertisers, and Kemp was no exception. In 1889, Kemp printed an explanation of what a local newspaper meant to a community, and appealed for greater economic participation to support his paper.

The Times is the Bahamian's local paper, and it is the duty of every good citizen to support his local paper.

The price at which this paper is published is so small, as to bring it within reach of everyone. The poor man can afford it, and the rich man cannot afford to do without it.

We pay great attention to news. Local news we give and are very careful, so that the public may rely on its authenticity. Foreign news we have,--as no telegraphic communication exists,--to clip from other papers. But only the most reliable of foreign papers we do we ever put shears to.

We aim to record facts without bias or coloring.

Every business man and Private citizen should help us and give us their active support in printing work and subscriptions.

And what sort of business man is he who does not let his fellow citizens know what he has for sale, by advertising. The poet describes him thus:

"The man who does not advertise
Displays as much good sense
As he who dons his Sunday pants
To climb a barbed wire fence."

And the private citizen, he can show that he appreciates his local paper, by coming forward and subscribing, and having a paper of his own. But do not borrow your neighbor's paper. There is nothing which will lower you more in your friends [sic] estimation. Nothing will show your meanness more plainly. Actually we know of instances where one copy of "The Times" is read by half a dozen families.¹⁴⁵

Even if Kemp's punctuation, typesetting and proof-reading left something to be desired, his sentiments were as valid at the end of the century as Robert Wilson's lament on colonial journalism had been at the beginning of the century. It was still difficult to make a

¹⁴⁵ Nassau Times, 27 March 1889.

newspaper a prosperous business undertaking in the Colony, even if the paper did contain more than 70 percent advertising.

Kemp's appeal for support for his journal apparently did not result in long-term improvement of the paper's financial stability. By early 1894, he advertised that he was going to suspend publication of the paper and he offered it for sale.¹⁴⁶ The last issue of the Nassau Times in the files does not indicate that it is either the last issue, or that a termination date had been selected.¹⁴⁷ The Guardian, however, announced on April 4, 1894, that the Times had ceased publication the previous Saturday, April 1, 1894.¹⁴⁸ That final issue of the paper, unfortunately, is missing from the last bound volume of the Times in the Nassau Public Library.

That the Nassau Times survived more than a quarter-century during the lingering depression which followed the end of the American Civil War, is a remarkable comment on the determination and effort of two men--first Holmes, then Kemp--who edited the paper. Of the pair, Kemp probably understood the realities of the changes facing both the Anglican Church and the Colony better than did Holmes. Kemp, once he gained control of the paper, was faced with making the Times a popular journal, rather than a religion-oriented one. It was necessary to change the paper's single-issue editorial policy to one of general interest in order to make the paper profitable, rather than one which merely got along.

¹⁴⁶ Nassau Times, 13 March 1894.

¹⁴⁷ Nassau Times, 28 March 1894.

¹⁴⁸ Nassau Guardian, 4 April 1894.

To a large extent, Kemp did improve the paper. He decreased the amount of space given to advertising in order to increase the editorial material that would appeal to a larger number of subscribers. He also actively solicited subscriptions and advertising. One can only speculate that perhaps a significant amount of advertising during Holmes's editorship may have been free or cut-rate. However, Kemp's efforts were not enough, and so the Nassau Times became another victim of the economic hard times--a world-wide economic depression began in 1893--and the lack of circulation.

The Victorian Press: The Minor Newspapers

The newspapers included in this section are, for the most part, missing from the files of the Nassau Public Library and can be identified only through references to them in other sources. A number of the papers would be of special interest to a study of this nature, but the papers no longer exist--much to the frustration of the researcher. In nearly every case, these papers lasted from only a few issues to a few years; as a result, their importance to journalism and the Colony can only be suggested and not substantiated.

During the American Civil War, one newspaper appeared in Nassau titled the Advertiser. Its name may well have defined its purpose; the paper began in 1861 and expired in 1865, exactly coinciding with the prosperity enjoyed in Nassau during the war. The Advertiser was referred to once by the Guardian during the war¹⁴⁹ and again in 1901,¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ [Edwin C. Moseley], op. cit.

¹⁵⁰ Nassau Guardian, 13 November 1901.

in another of the periodic summaries of Bahamian journalism history that appeared in the Guardian. There is no identification of the editor, where he was from, or any information about the paper other than the name of the paper and its existence.

The first of the minor newspapers to appear in Nassau after the Civil War was Ward T. McLain's Our Gem, which first appeared in 1879. McLain was the son of the American consul in Nassau, Thomas McLain. The young McLain may have initiated the "diminutive paper of four pages"¹⁵¹ as something to occupy his time and to provide the younger set in Nassau with something more to their reading tastes and interests than the more sedate Guardian or its contemporaries.

Although the paper was printed by the Guardian, the most complete chronicle of Our Gem survived in the Nassau Times. The Times' editor, Charles Kemp, noted the little paper's appearance on January 25, 1879, saying that its readers "will not be deterred from giving it their support on account of its subscription price."¹⁵² It was apparently fairly expensive, given its size and infrequency of publication. Kemp did not mention the actual cost of the paper, and it is clear from subsequent mentions that Our Gem was issued irregularly, at approximately monthly intervals. Following the initial issue, however, McLain did not get out another issue until April, and again, Kemp praised the publication and recommended it to "our young readers as deserving of their patronage."¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ [Mary Moseley], op. cit.

¹⁵² Nassau Times, 25 January 1879.

¹⁵³ Nassau Times, 2 July 1879.

In September, Kemp noted receipt of another issue of Our Gem and wrote that there was a problem with one of the stories in the little journal. Kemp reported that he had received a letter from a reader who was disturbed about an apparent plagiarism on McLain's part.

In the last number of an interesting little periodical styled "Our Gem" I was much amused by an article entitled, Logomachy, or War of Words; this facetiously describes the tail of a dog, and professes "to have been expressly written for the Gem by that indefatigable dog fiend, Snarleyow.

Herewith I enclose the same article, Ipsissimis, published in the New York Methodist, for 1873.¹⁵⁴

A week later, a letter titled "Smallbones" called on the editor of Our Gem to explain what happened.¹⁵⁵ In the next issue of the Nassau Times, McLain wrote that the place for his reply to the charge of plagiarism was in his own journal, not the Times.

If an article of doubtful authorship had appeared in the Times, who would think of demanding that the Editor of the Times should rush up to the Guardian office to publish his explanation. If the Editor chose to say anything on the subject through the Guardian, no one would object, just as no one would think of censuring him if he should reserve the full explanation of his own paper.¹⁵⁶

There was no indication in the Times, either the issue following McLain's reply, or in the announcement of the next issue of Our Gem, that the issue of plagiarism had been resolved. It was not mentioned again.

¹⁵⁴ Nassau Times, 3 September 1879.

¹⁵⁵ Nassau Times, 10 September 1879.

¹⁵⁶ Nassau Times, 13 September 1879.

Moseley, however, noted that the April 1880 issue of Our Gem deserved credit for its wit and the jeu d'esprit of its writing.¹⁵⁷ Moseley noted that McLain was going to New York in April,¹⁵⁸ as did Kemp, who further reported that Our Gem's editor had promised to bring his paper up to date when he returned to Nassau.¹⁵⁹ Late in May, Moseley thanked McLain for another copy of Our Gem, presumably the May issue, and the little paper seems to have faded from publication at that point.¹⁶⁰ In any event, it was not mentioned in either newspaper again.

Because Our Gem did not meet any regular publication schedule, it cannot be classified as a true newspaper according to previously defined characteristics of a newspaper. Further, Our Gem was designed to appeal to a juvenile audience, offering stories and other information which would appeal to that age group. From a technical point, McLain was an American citizen, and so it could be argued that publication in Nassau was the only thing that made the paper Bahamian. Still, it may have served a useful function for the young people of Nassau whose sources of entertainment were undoubtedly limited.

The next paper to appear in Nassau is one whose absence is a frustration for anyone researching Bahamian journalism. The Freeman appeared in Nassau, March 8, 1887, using the motto, "For God, and Right,

¹⁵⁷ Nassau Guardian, 31 March 1880.

¹⁵⁸ Nassau Guardian, 21 April 1880.

¹⁵⁹ Nassau Times, 23 April 1880.

¹⁶⁰ Nassau Guardian, 26 May 1880.

and Queen and Country."¹⁶¹ The inspiration behind this paper appears to have been the encouragement for such an undertaking given by L. D. Powles. Powles, a Catholic who was serving as a circuit magistrate in the Bahamas, offended local sensibilities by stating on several occasions that he ". . . would not believe a Methodist on his oath,"¹⁶² and by sentencing James Lightbourne, a member of one of Nassau's leading families, to jail for beating a black female servant.¹⁶³

In espousing equal rights for blacks, Powles ran afoul of local custom and was persona non grata; he soon left the Colony. Powles' book, The Land of The Pink Pearl, provides his view of relations between the races in Nassau in the 1880s. The book is also valuable to this study as the only contemporary account of the events leading to the founding of the Freeman. The contemporary papers, the Times and the Guardian, make reference to the Freeman twice; the only contemporary reference appeared in a letter to the editor in the Times in 1889,¹⁶⁴ and, seven years after the fact, a comment by A. E. Moseley about the Freeman's laudatory obituary for the Guardian's previous editor, Percy J. Moseley, who died in 1887.¹⁶⁵

It appears that the Freeman came into existence as the result of a

¹⁶¹L. D. Powles, The Land of the Pink Pearl (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1888), p. 101.

¹⁶²Craton, p. 214.

¹⁶³Powles, p. 105.

¹⁶⁴Nassau Times, 21 July 1888.

¹⁶⁵Freeman (Nassau), 10 May 1887, quoted in Nassau Guardian, 14 November 1894.

conversation between Powles and Henry Blake who served as governor of the Bahamas from 1884 to 1887. Blake noted that, "It is very difficult to do anything for them [the blacks] as long as they have no public opinion and no press."¹⁶⁶ Powles took it upon himself to rectify the situation and soon persuaded James C. Smith, a ". . . light-coloured gentleman of integrity and ability," who represented the western district of New Providence Island in the House of Assembly, to bring out the new paper.¹⁶⁷ The editor of the paper was S. J. Bosfield.¹⁶⁸ He was apparently replaced by Stephen A. Dillet at some point,¹⁶⁹ although the record is not clear.

No issues of the Freeman exist, but Powles quoted a letter which appeared in the Key of the Gulf (Key West, Florida), regarding the new paper for black Bahamians. This long letter explains why the paper was founded, and what its problems were as the first attempt to provide a responsible journal in which blacks could express their views of conditions in the Bahamas. The author of the letter wrote:

Will you allow me, through your columns, to make an appeal to the Native Bahamian residents at Key West to assist me to keep going The Freeman, the little sheet published here, which you have already been good enough to notice?

For the first time in the history of the Bahama Islands, an attempt has been made to issue a little sheet--scarcely big enough, indeed, to be called a newspaper--to be devoted solely to the interest of the coloured people.

¹⁶⁶Powles, p. 101.

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸[Mary Moseley], op. cit.

¹⁶⁹"Death of Capt. S. A. Dillet," Nassau Tribune, 13 November 1930.

It must seem strange indeed to you, sir, living in the strong light of day, that it should be difficult to get 400 subscribers at three cents a week each, to keep alive a paper born to so high a destiny! Yet such is the case. Printing is very dear, and we, the little of workers who support The Freeman are poor men who cannot afford to lose money for three whole years.

Ever since the Emancipation in 1837, this country has been dominated by a small gang of native whites and so-called whites, whose main object has been, since they could no longer keep the coloured people in slavery, to prevent their ever rising to be anything more than the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. They look upon them as dogs, and as dogs they treat them, not unkindly as a rule, but with the kindness they show their dogs, neither more nor less.

In order to carry out their ideas of keeping down the coloured people, no effort worthy of the name has been made towards making education general. . . .

The native whites have been further assisted in their conspiracy by the geographical situation of the country, which is cut off from the rest of the British possessions in the West Indies. Whilst the rest of the West India Islands have gradually become connected with the mother-country, with America, and with each other, by means of the electric telegraph and fast lines of steam packets, the Bahama islands have remained out in the cold, cut off from the rest. They have no telegraph, and their only steam communication is with America and a slow line of steamers that call at Nassau once a month, on their road to and from between Belize [Honduras] and England.

Meantime the greater portion of the coloured people have vegetated with just enough to eat and drink and a place to sleep in. . . . Not that the coloured people are contented, they have a strong idea things are not all right, and that they are little better than slaves, but they neither see where the remedy lies nor know how to apply it. What they want are "lights, not rights." Rights they have had in plenty for fifty years, but their rights have done them no good since they have no lights to teach them how to utilize those rights. Lights are coming to them in two ways, rapidly from Key West, and more slowly through the schools.

The object of The Freeman is to supply them with a third light, which shall teach them how to use the other two to the best purpose. But they have everything to learn, and first of all they have to learn the value of having an organ of their own.

At present they hardly realize what a newspaper is, and still less do they guess what it can do; and we calculate that at the slow rate at which things progress here, it will take three years to teach them the rudiments of this knowledge.

If ever there was a time when a newspaper was needed to speak out and tell the truth it is the present. A cruel wrong is being perpetrated in our midst, and there is no voice save that of The Freeman to protect.¹⁷⁰

The letter goes on to explain about Powles being asked to resign from the Colony's judiciary, and concludes with an appeal for Bahamians living in Key West to subscribe to the paper.¹⁷¹ By the time Powles wrote his book in 1887 or 1888, he noted that the Freeman had become a full-sized newspaper.¹⁷²

The sentiments expressed in the letter to the Key of the Gulf probably reflect conditions of the blacks in the Bahamas accurately. Certainly lack of education led to ignorance of rights and the remedies at hand to secure them. The editor of the Freeman was perceptive in recognizing the role of his newspaper in bringing about change if--and it was a big "if"--he could keep his paper afloat until the black population became educated enough to secure the rights they did not understand or know how to use.

The Freeman was not successful; it lasted less than three years until it expired in 1889, and the plant was bought by the Guardian.¹⁷³ The Nassau Times carried an item announcing that the press and plant of "The Freeman Newspaper, were sold at Public Auction to-day, and were

¹⁷⁰"A Voice from the Bahamas," Key of the Gulf (Key West, Fla.), 14 May 1887, quoted in Powles, pp. 102-105.

¹⁷¹Powles, pp. 105-06.

¹⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹⁷³[Mary Moseley], *op. cit.*

purchased by Mr. S. T. Smith, for £24."¹⁷⁴ It is not clear whether Smith bought the Freeman's press and plant for the Guardian, but no newspaper edited by anyone named Smith appeared in Nassau after the demise of the Freeman. Apparently, the Guardian bought defunct printing establishments as a method of controlling the appearance of new journals. It would take time and additional expense for anyone who wanted to start a new paper to import a printing press and supplies.

The curious lack of references to the Freeman may be attributed to the fact that the paper was founded by a black man for the black population of the Colony. As such, it may not have had any influence within the small world of journalism in the Colony. Powles reported that after Governor Blake left the Colony, the Freeman was not even accepted for delivery at Government House, the home provided for the colonial governor.¹⁷⁵

Local rancor at the time may well account for the paper not being in the Nassau Public Library's collection of newspapers. That institution was a bastion of white supremacy for virtually the entire period covered by this study. The biases of the government appointees who served on the Library Board may account for any number of the missing newspapers whose policies and editors offended board members or local leaders. As will be shown, leaders of the community could be vindictive and callous without remorse when occasion demanded.

The Freeman was the first journalistic attempt to represent the

¹⁷⁴Nassau Times, 2 September 1890.

¹⁷⁵Powles, p. 107.

black population's interests; it was not successful. Not until the establishment of Leon Dupuch's Nassau Tribune at the beginning of the twentieth century would black Bahamians find a champion for their cause.

One more paper, published under two different names, appeared in Nassau at the end of the century. In 1897, the "diminutive Now and Then came on the scene,"¹⁷⁶ and was in publication until it was renamed the Bahama News in 1898.¹⁷⁷ Alfred Moseley's Guardian noted the appearance of the paper, again warning that there was an insufficient number of subscribers in Nassau to support another paper. His paper by this time had outlasted five or six contemporary journals.¹⁷⁸

No copies of Now and Then exist in the Nassau Public Library's collection, but there are copies of its successor, the Bahama News. The News apparently continued Now and Then's small tabloid size until early in 1899, when it changed to a longer tabloid format.¹⁷⁹ Its founder and editor, Arthur W. Thompson, operated the paper from its beginning as Now and Then in 1897, until his death, February 24, 1899. Thompson was replaced as editor by his assistant H. R. Dunlop Sutton¹⁸⁰ who had been one of the employees mentioned as working for the Guardian at that paper's jubilee in 1894.

¹⁷⁶ [Mary Moseley], op. cit.

¹⁷⁷ Nassau Guardian, 13 November 1901.

¹⁷⁸ Nassau Guardian, 8 January 1898.

¹⁷⁹ Bahama News (Nassau), 10 January 1899.

¹⁸⁰ Bahama News (Nassau), 28 February 1899.

Although the existing file of the Bahama News covers only 1899, the early issues of that paper probably continued the appearance of its predecessor, Now and Then. The paper's columns were filled, for the most part, with light material--generally bad poetry and artwork in the form of one-column cartoons tied to the content of articles with which they appeared. It also featured an "Enquiry Column" in which a reader posed a question one week and received an answer in the next issue. Cable news supplied by the telegraph office, church news and local news and gossip filled the four-page paper. There was a paucity of advertising, none appearing on the front page as was the usual practice for English and colonial newspapers. The paper did provide, however, fairly extensive reprint and cable coverage of the Boer War, then being fought between the British army and the Dutch-descended Boer settlers in South Africa.

The Bahama News apparently had little impact on the Bahamian public. Except for the Guardian's comment on its name change in 1898, and the usual brief mentions in the various histories of journalism in the Bahamas printed in the Guardian, there are no other references to Now and Then or the Bahama News. The weekly publication schedule, lack of circulation and advertising, kept the paper weak. Its editorial policy, tending toward entertainment, gossip and foreign news via cable, gave the paper little or no influence with the Colony's ruling class. Because the file is so brief, only 50 issues or so, it is not possible to determine if there were any changes in the editorial direction or the financial support from advertising which might have given strength to the paper's influence in the Colony. Given its short life--it ended in

1901--it is not likely that the paper varied much in its appearance, content, support or impact on the Colony.

For the first hundred years or so of journalism in the Bahamas, all efforts at publishing newspapers had taken place in Nassau. However, sometime late in the 1880s, an attempt was made by someone to publish a newspaper at Governor's Harbour on Eleuthera Island. At that time, Governor's Harbour was the second-largest settlement in the Colony and was experiencing something of a boom based on the growing and exporting of pineapples. The importance of pineapples to the Colony might be inferred from the early postage stamps which incorporated a pineapple in their design.

The news sheet, the Eleuthera Gazette, was apparently issued monthly, although the brief mentions of it do not indicate its publication frequency. It can be inferred, however, from the references made to it at monthly intervals in the Nassau Times and the Guardian. The Times mentioned the paper twice, the Guardian three times. The first reference to the paper appeared in the Times, which quoted a report on the use of pineapple fiber for making cloth.¹⁸¹ The date of this reference seems to establish the earliest possible date of publication as November 1889; but given the slowness of transportation, it is more likely that the Gazette began publication on or before October 1889. The next reference to the Eleuthera Gazette also appeared in the Times and reported a regatta at Governor's Harbour which took place late in

¹⁸¹Nassau Times, 9 November 1889.

1889 or early 1890.¹⁸² There are no further mentions of the Gazette in the Nassau Times.

The slender thread of the Eleuthera Gazette's story next appeared in the Guardian, which quoted the Gazette of July 1890, as reporting the illness of George Preston, the resident justice at Governor's Harbour.¹⁸³ The July issue only mentioned Preston's name; the August issue supplied his place of residence;¹⁸⁴ and the September issue announced the subscription of £19 for Preston's widow.¹⁸⁵ Neither Preston's obituary nor the events leading up to his death is reported.

On this scanty information, it can be assumed that there was some form of a news sheet published at Governor's Harbour on a fairly regular basis for nearly a year. Given the community's importance as an agricultural center, there was certainly enough money in circulation to support a small venture such as the Eleuthera Gazette must have been.

The Victorian Press: Summary

The newspapers of the Bahamas during the Victorian period were, for the most part, typical of the state of journalism practice and the art of printing of the early nineteenth century. Because the newspapers of the Colony were owned by a single person, or small group of people espousing a specific cause, journalistic expression tended to be personal and often strident in tone. Usually, both news and personal

¹⁸² Nassau Times, 1 February 1890.

¹⁸³ Nassau Guardian, 23 July 1890.

¹⁸⁴ Nassau Guardian, 20 August 1890.

¹⁸⁵ Nassau Guardian, 20 September 1890.

opinion were mixed in news items and editorials; this resulted in no clear demarcation between the two. Personal journalism and single issue-oriented expression frequently polarized the community, although the basic assumption of white supremacy was not questioned by any newspaper except, perhaps, the Freeman. Although this paper is missing from the record, it may be assumed that it argued in favor of equal and shared rights rather than black supremacy based on numbers.

Because the islands were isolated from the mainstream of the Industrial Revolution, innovations were slow to be introduced and adopted by the colonists. Virtually no improvements, save perhaps the iron press, were introduced to printing or journalism until the last decade of Victoria's 63-year reign. Although an experimental telephone and a local telegraph had been introduced in the 1870s, no real attempt at creating an infrastructure to support modern journalism occurred until the 1890s, and then as the serendipitous result of improving the local business climate.

In 1892, the submarine telegraph cable were installed, primarily as an aid to commerce; only as something of an afterthought did the colonial government provide news summaries to the local newspaper editors. The first advertisement for a typewriter--a Hammond--appeared in 1896,¹⁸⁶ the same year electricity was first used to provide lighting for a local business establishment.¹⁸⁷ The technological infrastructure of journalism--telephone, telegraph, electricity and office machines--

¹⁸⁶ Nassau Guardian, 22 April 1896.

¹⁸⁷ Nassau Guardian, 18 July 1896.

were being introduced, although it would be early in the twentieth century before these were adapted to the needs of journalism and printing.

Automobiles, powered presses and typesetting equipment, too, were not introduced until the next century. The editors of the Bahamian journals were certainly aware of the innovations in journalism--the powered press had been introduced elsewhere as early as 1814.¹⁸⁸ However, at the end of the nineteenth century, the world was just coming out of another of the periodic economic depressions--something of a state of life in the Bahamas--and the local economy could not provide the revenue or capital the papers would need to equip themselves for the twentieth century, which was holding out the hope for the Colony and for journalism.

¹⁸⁸ John C. Oswald, A History of Printing (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1928), p. 343.

CHAPTER IV

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

As the twentieth century opened, the Bahamas were beginning to emerge from centuries of neglect and isolation. Part of the change came through the improvement of communications to and from the Colony. Journalism in the Colony depended upon news reports supplied via the government-owned submarine telegraph cable; economic survival depended in large measure on the award of government printing contracts and advertising revenue from the ruling elite who controlled the commercial and political life of the Colony. This group, a small number of whites and a smaller number of black and racially mixed citizens, dominated the social, political and economic life of the Bahamas. For an editor to alienate either the government or the ruling class--which were virtually the same--ruin was the very real fate for the offending journal. In actuality, only one paper, the Nassau Tribune was able to fight and survive.

Background

The future for journalism looked bright as the new century began. The president of the British Institute for Journalists, Robert Donald, predicted there would be growth in the number of urban dailies, but a decline in the number of other papers. Circulation, according to Donald, would increase, but so would the amount of capital needed to operate the papers. He further predicted the use of airships and

electric trains for the distribution of newspapers; reporters would use portable telephones and editors would get copy in column form. There would also be ways of disseminating news by gramophone and kinematograph hot from the sources. But in the midst of this rosy projection he noted that, "People may become too lazy to read, and news will be laid on to the house or office just as gas and water is [sic] now."¹ It would appear that Mr. Donald was predicting the use of radio, television, film and cable in news gathering and reporting.

For Bahamian journalists, the early years continued the introduction of the technological infrastructure that would be necessary for the establishment and continuation of modern print and broadcast journalism. By 1902, the first automobile, a four-horsepower Oldsmobile, "created more than usual notice" when it was parked on Bay Street.² By early October 1906, Nassau had its first telephone exchange with 147 of its 150 lines taken up by subscribers. It also had a directory compiled by Patrick Henry Burns,³ an American who had gone to Nassau for the installation of the telegraph cable and remained in charge of various electrical projects in the Bahamas until his death in 1930.⁴ In 1908, the Guardian imported a Lanston Monotype typesetting machine,⁵ and by 1913, virtually all type used at her paper was machine-set.⁶ By

¹Nassau Guardian, 20 September 1913.

²Nassau Guardian, 26 March 1902.

³Nassau Guardian, 6 October 1906.

⁴"Sudden Death of Mr. P. H. Burns, M. B. E.," Nassau Guardian, 26 July 1930, p. 4.

⁵Nassau Guardian, 19 December 1908.

⁶Nassau Guardian, 20 September 1913

1922, the Tribune was set by Linotype and printed on a Babcock cylinder press capable of 5,000 per hour.⁷ Throughout the first 56 years of the century, editors replaced wornout equipment and modernized their plants as the need for greater capacity and greater speed required and as capital became available.

Still, in the early years of the century, Bahamian editors continued to confront the same problems faced by John Wells and colonial editors for more than a century. Even though the telegraph was in operation, editors still bemoaned the lack of rapid and accurate acquisitions of news, and relied on sailing ships--Out Islands schooners, generally--for the dissemination of their papers belong Nassau and New Providence Island.

But for all the improvements, for all the modernization in Nassau, there was still a basic problem facing Bahamian journalists. In "Mid-Summer Musings," a writer identified only as M. S. M.--probably Mary Moseley--noted in the Guardian:

What with cable linking us to a continent, wireless extending our horizon of talk over the oceans, and telephone keeping us within hailing distance night and day, we are well provided with scientific methods of talk. Yet the old fashioned method of grapevine telegraphy continues to be the quickest means of communication between the ends of the town. A toll upon it would produce a handsome revenue all the year round and be a better paying proposition than an ice plant in an ice-less town.⁸

As in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, local news still traveled

⁷ Nassau Guardian, 25 November 1922, p. 5.

⁸ M[ary] S. M[osley], "Mid-Summer Musings," Nassau Guardian, 2 August 1913.

faster over fences and around corners by word of mouth than by printer's ink on paper.

At least 26 newspapers, or news sheets, appeared in Nassau and the Out Islands during the twentieth century reviewed in this study. Few of the papers survived more than a few years. The Herald, however, was in publication at various times under several owners and editors as an independent journal; it was also the party newspaper of the Progressive Liberal Party until fire destroyed the paper's printing plant in 1964.⁹ Others failed after brief appearances.

Only the Nassau Guardian survived from the nineteenth century, although the Moseley family severed its connection with the paper in 1952. With one interruption--from August 1904,¹⁰ until sometime late in 1905 or early in 1906--the Nassau Tribune was suspended while its founder was in Montreal, Canada, working as a printer.¹¹

The newspapers of this period, their publication dates and editors, are found in Table VI.

The Twentieth Century: The Nassau Guardian

Only two newspapers of the nineteenth century survived into the new century, but the death of the Bahama News in 1901,¹² had little effect on journalism in the Colony. The dominant paper was the already

⁹Doris L. Johnson, The Quiet Revolution in the Bahamas (Nassau: Family Islands Press, 1972), p. 32.

¹⁰Nassau Guardian, 10 August 1904.

¹¹Sir Etienne Dupuch, Tribune Story (London: Ernest Benn, 1967), p. 24.

¹²Nassau Guardian, 13 November 1901.

TABLE VI
NEWSPAPERS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1901-1956)

Newspapers	Dates	Editors
7. <u>Nassau Guardian</u> (continued from Victorian Period)	1844-	Alfred E. Moseley Mary Moseley Burton Lewis Benson McDermott Charles Arnot
19. <u>Watchman</u>	1901-1906	Leon E. H. Dupuch W. E. Pritchard
20. <u>Searchlight</u>	Feb. 1902	unknown
21. <u>Searchlight</u>	1902	Ernest A. Dyall
22. <u>Nassau Tribune</u>	1903-	Leon E. H. Dupuch Gilbert Dupuch Etienne Dupuch
23. <u>Daily Witness</u>	1908	Charles S. Rae
24. <u>Laugh and Grow Fat</u>	1915-1916	"Subterranean Barber"
25. <u>Observer</u>	1922-1930	Livingston Lunn
26. <u>Saturday Morning</u>	ca. 1929	Capt. Ellis-Wilde
27. <u>Nassau Leader</u>	1931	"Miss Marjorie Peacock" (Mrs. Gerassimos)
28. <u>Business Men's Weekly</u>	1931-1937	Edith Dupuch
29. <u>Bahama News</u>	1934-1938	Cmdr. John Scaife
30. <u>Herald</u>	1937-1964	J. Stanley Lowe Holly Brown William Cartwright Cyril Stevenson
31. <u>Mirror</u>	1938-1940	Cyril Stevenson
32. <u>Voice</u>	1945-1954	Dr. Claudius R. Walker
33. <u>Long Island Forum with Ragged Island Supplement</u>	1949	H. M. Taylor

TABLE VI (Continued)

Newspapers	Dates	Editors
34. "News Letter"	1951	"Citizens Committee"
35. <u>Whip</u>	ca. 1954	unknown
36. <u>Unity News</u>	ca. 1954	unknown
37. <u>Bahamas Opinion</u> (may not have been issued)	1955	William Cartwright Uriah Knowles
<u>Out Islands</u>		
38. "Local Advertiser"	1907	Lewis Duvallier
39. <u>Searchlight</u> (Mathew Town, Inagua)	1907-1908	Lewis Duvallier
40. <u>Inagua Record</u> (Mathew Town)	1908-1913	A. H. Meallet
41. <u>Eleuthera Palm</u> (Governor's Harbour)	before 1925	unknown
42. <u>Bimini Bugle</u>	1939-1941 1950-1953	Roderick Rollins Arthur Rollins
<u>Military</u>		
43. <u>Caribbean Wings</u> (Royal Air Force)	ca. 1944	unknown
44. <u>Liberator</u> (Royal Air Force)	1944-1945	Flt. Lt. Sheppard

venerable Nassau Guardian, which stood then, and throughout the period of this study, as the Establishment newspaper of the Bahamas. As the Guardian's ". . . columns were open only to the Government House 'set,'" ¹³ only the elite of Bahamian society--both black and white--were considered newsworthy by the journal. This selective factor may partially account for the slow, nearly stagnant, circulation growth of the Guardian until its owner-editor, Mary Moseley, sold the paper in 1952.

In 1873, the circulation of the Guardian was given as 225 subscribers; ¹⁴ 81 years later, in 1954, the Guardian's paid circulation had barely doubled--a fact the editor of the Tribune reported in a running battle with the Guardian concerning advertising and circulation figures.

Tribune readers will recall that early in 1950 The Guardian had a disastrous fire that might have put them out of business. But The Tribune printed their paper--and saved their printing contracts for them--until they could get back into business.

I can tell my readers that at that time The Guardian printed 800 newspapers daily. And that I was told that, if The Tribune was short of newsprint, the number could be further reduced because about 300 of this number were complimentary. ¹⁵

Although the Guardian did not have a large circulation during the 104 years it was in the hands of the Moseley family, as the Establishment

¹³Eileen Carron, "Born for a Purpose," Nassau Tribune, 21 November 1978, p. 3.

¹⁴Nassau Guardian, 9 June 1875.

¹⁵Etienne Dupuch, "'Tribune' Answers 'Guardian,'" Nassau Tribune, 22 November 1954, p. 3.

paper it reached the leaders of the community and probably served to reinforce their mores, biases and attitudes. While the issues of development, improved communications and relations between the Colony, the United States and the United Kingdom weave their way through the newspapers, the underlying concern, then as now, was the subject of race and relations among the racial groupings that made up the Bahamian community.

The Guardian's position vis-à-vis race reflected its role as the paper of the dominant minority racial group in the Colony. Its columns revealed a benign paternalism regarding the subject of race and appeared to prefer minimal public discussion of the subject in print. Only when the issue was forced did the Guardian respond on the subject, and then it seems its chief desire was to put the genie back in the bottle. In responding to a letter in the Watchman of September 16, 1902, a writer for the Guardian commented:

I said a few words in my last echoes in regard to the impolicy of raising the "Colour Question" in this Colony; but I cannot allow such a letter as the one written by Old Ebony in the "Watchman" of the 16th inst. to go unchallenged. When a man has no good word to say for his benefactors he is indeed in a bad way, and Old Ebony seems to have got into the desire to abuse his best friends.¹⁶

In reply to an editorial in the Watchman two months later, a writer to the Guardian voiced what might be considered the dominant view held by the Guardian's readers toward the efforts of non-white Bahamians to express their opinions about the inequalities among the racial groups of the Colony.

¹⁶"Island Echoes," Nassau Guardian, 27 September 1902.

I do not know what the circulation of The Watchman may be, or whether it has any, nor do I know whether any regular readers it may possess are inclined to take its somewhat puerile fulminations at all seriously, but I cannot think it advisable that the presumably vicious and corrupt members of the terrible oligarchy which, according to that paper, is grinding us beneath its heel, should be warned of the fearful fate impending for them--they are to be pulled downward and scattered to the far corners of the earth, and their "selfishness" which is "opposed to the progress of our Colony" made a by-word in the mouths of men! This is the dictum of the Watchman on the subject, which will make these evil-doers shake and tremble in their shoes:

"It is the intense desire of the present Editor of this paper to see it go on proposing to the pulling down of the strongholds of oligarcic [sic] domination and the building up of a free and independent democracy."¹⁷

Although it would require another 50 years, the Watchman editor's prophecies came to pass. To the Guardian, it seems, the plight of the black majority was rarely material for its columns. In response to a perceived and real lack of concern for the social, economic and political progress of the black and colored majority, a number of newspapers did develop in the twentieth century to fill the vacuum. The Watchman was the first; others were to follow.

But a change occurred at this point in the Guardian's story. On November 8, 1904, the Guardian printed the obituary of Alfred E. Moseley, who had been editor of the paper since 1887.¹⁸ His tenure as editor, following the two-year editorship of his brother, Percy James, reached its zenith in his defense of freedom of the press during the Yelverton Affair in 1892, when Moseley was jailed briefly by the chief

¹⁷Nassau Guardian, 3 December 1904.

¹⁸Nassau Guardian, 5 November 1904.

justice of the Colony on an alleged contempt of court charge.¹⁹ The significant result of Moseley's death, in terms of the Nassau Guardian, was the disposition of the estate. The eventual inheritor of the paper was Moseley's daughter, Mary, who for the next 47 years operated the Guardian.

Mary Moseley's name appeared as editor and manager for her mother in January 1905;²⁰ and by mid-year, Miss Moseley, as she was invariably titled, was the sole owner of the paper.²¹ Women had become editors and printers of newspapers in England's American colonies in the eighteenth century, but at the dawn of the twentieth century, however, this was still unthinkable to most British subjects. Still bound to the values of the Victorian era, they believed that a respectable woman's place was not in the world of commerce. As there are no surviving contemporary newspapers which might shed light on local attitudes toward Miss Moseley's position as editor of the dominant paper in the Colony, it might be assumed that polite society may have been somewhat scandalized. It should be noted, too, that Bahamian women did not win the right to vote until 1962, 58 years after she became editor of the Guardian and 10 years after she sold the paper.

As the years passed, Miss Moseley became a power to be reckoned with in the Colony. Although she could neither vote nor sit as a representative in the House of Assembly, she could wield considerable

¹⁹ Nassau Guardian, 14 May 1892.

²⁰ Nassau Guardian, 5 January 1905.

²¹ Nassau Guardian, 1 July 1905.

influence over the government and popular opinion by the commentary and reporting in her paper. A photograph published in 1944 shows a gaunt, silver-haired woman of considerable dignity and self-assurance.²²

Harcourt R. Bethel, the advertising manager of the Nassau Tribune and former manager of radio station ZNS, recalled that she was stronger-willed than most men in Nassau.²³ She had to be to keep her paper afloat during the years of war and depression when the Guardian's survival was threatened by the lack of equipment, supplies and news.

Although many newspapers were to come and go during her years as editor of the Guardian, their editors held her in high regard and affection. Her most consistent opponent and critic, Etienne Dupuch of the Tribune, wrote with considerable feeling after the first of two fires destroyed the Guardian:

No one in the colony can appreciate the feelings of Miss Moseley as we can. We are familiar with the severe strain of conducting a newspaper and printing office in this community under ordinary conditions and when Miss Moseley can raise her head out of the ruins of her old office with phoenix-like immortality and make a bold and desperate effort to continue the sequence of her paper unbroken we bare our heads in admiration of this woman--one who can smile and overcome such almost insurmountable difficulties. We feel today, that of all the men in the Bahamas there could be none so plucky and that she is a woman among women.²⁴

Once again in 1950, fire destroyed the Guardian's printing plant,²⁵

²²Nassau Guardian, 2 December 1944.

²³Interview with Harcourt R. Bethel, the Nassau Tribune, Nassau, Bahamas, 4 September 1980.

²⁴"The 'Guardian' Fire," Nassau Tribune, 5 March 1924.

²⁵"Major Calamity," Nassau Guardian, 15 March 1950.

and for nearly three weeks the Tribune shared its press and supplies in order to print the Guardian until Miss Moseley had her own printing plant back in operation.²⁶ Again, the Tribune commented:

The Guardian fire was a bit of personal tragedy Miss Mary Moseley, M. B. E., who has valiantly borne the heavy burden of this institution for many years, deserved better of fate in her mature years. I am told that she behaved magnificently at the fire. Observers say that she displayed the same high degree of courage in the face of disaster that she has required to carry her through the years in directions that everyone recognizes as one of the most burdensome tasks in the community.

As a fellow-journalist I take pride in her stoicism, and I feel sure that the community will rally to her support in this hour of difficulty in a manner that will help her to realize how much her services have been appreciated by all.²⁷

Miss Moseley ran her paper with sensitivity and with firmness. When Leon Dupuch, the first editor of the Watchman and founder of the Nassau Tribune, died, the Guardian noted with some pride that he had been apprenticed as a ten-year-old boy to the Guardian and had been a valued member of the paper's staff. In Dupuch's obituary, the Guardian reported that the members of its staff ". . . walked alongside of the hearse and lifted the coffin from the hearse to the grave."²⁸

Conversely, when her employees took a half-holiday on Armistice Day 1927, Miss Moseley withheld their overtime pay until they had paid back the time. She based her actions on the Public Holidays Act which granted the holiday to employees of shops, offices and banks. She held

²⁶"Towards Recovery," Nassau Guardian, 3 April 1950, p. 1.

²⁷"Political Back-Chat," Nassau Tribune, 16 March 1950, p. 1.

²⁸Nassau Guardian, 1 July 1914.

that since her business had not been enumerated in the Act, she was exempt from granting the holiday. The employees struck; the deliberations between the two parties resulted in return of the overtime pay and the drawing up of a list of holidays to be granted in the future. The strike was not reported in the Guardian. There are no other reported instances of labor unrest at the newspapers of the Bahamas during the 172 years covered in this study.²⁹

From late 1904, when she assumed editorial direction of the paper, until she went to Europe following the outbreak of World War I, Miss Moseley expanded the paper's interests to include not only Empire and regional (Caribbean) news, but also news of the Out Islands as well. Although other papers had occasionally reported news from one or another of the Out Islands, Miss Moseley went to some pains to report on the conditions at various Out Islands. She was particularly concerned with the hardships of the residents of Inagua who, for many years had suffered from exploitation by labor contractors and the loss of demand for their one crop--salt.

Their difficulties were chronicled in the Inagua Searchlight and the Inagua Record, both published at Mathew Town, the principal settlement on the island. What can be discovered about these papers is found in the Nassau Guardian which reprinted articles about conditions at Inagua. This information will be discussed in the section on the minor papers of the twentieth century at the end of this chapter. It should

²⁹"Strike at Nassau Guardian Plant," Nassau Tribune, 19 November 1927.

also be pointed out that Miss Moseley's brother, Daniel, represented Inagua in the House of Assembly for 21 years.³⁰

Even though the new radio-telegraph, or wireless, (installed in 1912), was helpful, Nassau's editors still depended on the cable and a tri-weekly mail service with Miami, Florida, for news. There were problems with both the cable and the wireless. The cable had reached the end of its life and like all early wireless equipment, the signal in Nassau was frequently rendered unintelligible by atmospheric conditions. In order to cope with telegraphic needs during the short tourist season, the government hired a temporary telegraph operator. When he left the Colony at the end of the season, there was no night service and very little news material available to the editors.³¹ The problems of cable and wireless service to the Bahamas will be discussed further in the next chapter as they contributed to the establishment of a permanent broadcasting service for the Colony.

When war between Britain and Germany began in 1914, the Guardian immediately supported England's war aims, pledging support until the war was ultimately won.³² In early September, Miss Moseley was appointed to a committee to raise money for Britain.³³ How long she stayed in Nassau following the outbreak of the war is unclear, but she soon went

³⁰"He Grew Beautiful Things That Sweetened His Life," Nassau Tribune, 2 December 1947, p. 2.

³¹Nassau Guardian, 15 April 1914.

³²Nassau Guardian, 5 August 1914.

³³"Public Meeting To Arrange Means Of Helping Great Britain In The War," Nassau Guardian, 5 September 1914.

to London, where for some five years she served as Secretary of the Ladies Committee of the West Indian Contingent which aided soldiers from the West Indian colonies.³⁴ For her efforts on behalf of the welfare of the West Indian soldiers, Miss Moseley was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (M.B.E.) in 1918,³⁵ and she proudly used the initials of the Order with her name. During her absence in Europe, the Guardian was edited by her brother, Daniel, who continued to operate his own businesses, the City Press and Moseley's Bookstore.³⁶

The exigencies of the war and its aftermath created serious problems of supply and production for the Guardian. A severe worldwide shortage of newsprint curtailed the paper's publication of its weekly Saturday supplement by the end of the war,³⁷ and nearly ended the paper's record of continuous publication since its founding 74 years earlier.³⁸ In 1920, the shortage of newsprint was still acute and the cost of producing the paper forced an upward revision of the paper's advertising rates.³⁹ Increased advertising rates provided the additional revenue needed to meet the expense of insuring a continuous supply of newsprint. Parts for aging printing equipment which could not be

³⁴Nassau Guardian, 14 January 1920.

³⁵Nassau Guardian, 20 March 1918.

³⁶"He Grew Beautiful Things That Sweetened His Life," op. cit.

³⁷Nassau Guardian, 9 November 1918.

³⁸Nassau Guardian, 23 November 1918.

³⁹Nassau Guardian, 3 January 1920.

replaced or properly maintained during the war were additional costly problems for the paper as well. A broken "vital part" in the Guardian's old printing press nearly ended the paper's record of continuous publication in February 1920, but the part was sent to Miami for repairs and was returned to Nassau in time to keep the paper's record intact.⁴⁰

Miss Moseley returned to Nassau on April 22, 1920, and resumed her duties as editor.⁴¹ In the second week of June, she commented that her paper had received its first telegraphic news since April 26; but it was totally American news and, in view of the limited space in the paper, not worth printing.⁴² Many of the pre-war problems remained, only made worse by post-war shortages and economic difficulties.

Between the world wars, Miss Moseley made four attempts to establish the Guardian as a daily newspaper. Supply problems, poor news service and worn-out printing equipment notwithstanding, Miss Moseley first launched the Guardian as a daily early in 1921.⁴³ The rival Tribune noted the event and commented on the difficulties.

We admire the courage and enterprise of the management and sincerely wish it the success it anticipates in full measure.

We also sympathetically admire the editorial courage that can hopefully undertake the triple strain involved in converting a semi-weekly into a six-in-the week edition.⁴⁴

⁴⁰"Our Troubles," Nassau Guardian, 2 February 1920.

⁴¹Nassau Guardian, 24 April 1920.

⁴²Nassau Guardian, 9 June 1920.

⁴³"To Our Readers," Nassau Guardian, 1 January 1921.

⁴⁴Nassau Tribune, 5 January 1921.

The problems were evidently insurmountable. Although the daily edition was planned to be a six-month experiment, Miss Moseley suspended the attempt early in April after three months, noting ruefully that ". . . as far as this community is concerned a daily is not an indispensable institution."⁴⁵

The Tribune, perhaps, explained the cause of the failure of the Guardian's first effort as a daily newspaper when a Tribune writer said:

Our experience in journalism could have to a safe degree qualified us as prophets, and the results of the Guardian venture does not surprise us. Neither from the standpoint of news nor appreciation of news by the public can there be justification for a daily newspaper in Nassau. Grape vine telegraphy and gossip speed in these parts are too rapid for the modern press. A semi-weekly printed news-service amply testifies the demand that is interested enough to read it--and pay for it.⁴⁶

Not only was there a lack of interest in a daily newspaper, the Tribune writer went on, but there was no need for daily editorial comment.

No member of the Legislature in his wildest ambition to make himself useful thinks himself capable of releasing his mind of impressive wisdom more than twice a week. Why should an editor?⁴⁷

But Miss Moseley was not through with daily editions of her newspaper. Seven years later, in 1928, the Guardian began publishing a small, two-page paper on a Monday-Tuesday, Thursday-Friday schedule,

⁴⁵"To Our Readers," Nassau Guardian, 3 April 1921.

⁴⁶Nassau Tribune, 6 April 1921.

⁴⁷Ibid.

in addition to the regular Wednesday and Saturday editions of the paper.⁴⁸ In four months, the Guardian suspended the two-page editions of the paper because of a lack of demand following the tourist season.⁴⁹ A major culprit once again may have been the speed by which local news--as rumor--circulated as compared to the newspaper.

Rumour circulates more quickly than news, and in no place is this more evident than in this city. The worst part of this circulation of rumours is that they are not always truthful, whereas news has to be verified before it is published. It is, therefore, just as well to advise people to place less trust in reports, heard up and down Bay Street, than in the printed version they will find on Wednesday and Saturday evenings in "The Nassau Guardian." We have to substantiate the news we print with facts, and if the facts are not forthcoming the news is not printed.⁵⁰

Four years after the failure of her second attempt to establish the Guardian as a daily paper, Miss Moseley tried again in 1932. This, her third attempt to establish the Guardian as a daily, was in reaction to the Nassau Tribune's plan to establish a daily edition. She announced her third attempt by promising:

The Daily Guardian makes its appearance today because a number of citizens, whose opinions we value, feel that Nassau ought to have a daily paper. . . . In acceding to this demand we do not propose to make any promises that cannot be performed. . . .⁵¹

There is a complex story behind this attempt to publish the Guardian

⁴⁸Nassau Guardian, 12 January 1928.

⁴⁹"Our Daily Edition," Nassau Guardian, 7 April 1928, p. 4.

⁵⁰"Notes and Comments," Nassau Guardian, 19 May 1928.

⁵¹"Our Daily," Nassau Guardian, 18 April 1932, p. 2.

as a daily, but it will be more appropriately related in the history of the Nassau Tribune. Once again, however, the Guardian could not sustain the effort needed to give the Colony competing daily newspapers. In killing this effort, the Guardian commented:

With conditions as they are in Nassau a daily paper must be considered a luxury and in accordance with the present policy of the Government and of every wise individual to encourage and return to our old standard of living, we have taken this step.⁵²

Finally, early in 1934, the Guardian brought out a daily edition which survived and became a permanent institution in the Bahamas. Miss Moseley again appealed to the business community to support the new undertaking because,

. . . it is impossible to carry on an undertaking successfully without support from those who are interested in or who benefit from the product turned out, and for a newspaper to function on a sound and a profitable basis it must have the support of the advertising public.⁵³

This plea reflected the Guardian's need for financial stability in its attempt to revive its daily edition. One technique utilized by the Guardian to encourage support by advertisers was to mention the advertised product or service in the editorial columns of the paper. This practice apparently dissatisfied some advertisers, not because their advertisement was mentioned in the editorial columns, but because they

⁵²"Daily Edition Discontinued," Nassau Guardian, 24 September 1932.

⁵³"'Nassau Guardian' Daily," Nassau Guardian, 2 January 1934, p. 2.

were expected to pay for the mention as well. The Guardian's editor wrote to remind the public that,

. . . advertisements form the most important part of the revenue of a newspaper and without this revenue no paper can exist. It should not be necessary for us to emphasise this but there is a growing tendency on the part of many persons to take advantage of the courtesies invariably extended in the news and editorial columns when an advertisement appears in the same issue of the paper and they apparently expect to receive all free publicity.⁵⁴

At the end of April 1934, the Guardian reported to its readers that in the opinion of many, the daily issue was filling "a great want in this community," and expressed the hope that both subscribers and advertisers would support it.⁵⁵

In establishing a daily newspaper with all the problems connected with such a venture, the Guardian, like other papers in the Colony, had difficulty in obtaining material for it. As noted at the time of the First World War, there were problems in getting news from England and, to a lesser extent, from the United States. The problems continued during the decades between the world wars and were not fully settled until the Guardian and the Tribune became subscribers to the United Press and the Associated Press, respectively, following World War II.

Like the Colony's earliest newspapers, economic survival of the Guardian was tied to services beyond the publication of a newspaper and the execution of government printing contracts. Like its predecessors

⁵⁴"Advertising," Nassau Guardian, 29 November 1938.

⁵⁵"To Our Readers," Nassau Guardian, 7 April 1934, p. 4.

and its contemporaries, the Guardian performed job printing and merchandising. By 1920, the Guardian was still following this time-honored pattern, but with a decidedly modern twist. The paper advertised itself as the local agent for recordings and Victrola phonographs with prices quoted in dollars⁵⁶ instead of English pounds. It should be noted that prices in Nassau could be, and were, quoted in both American and British currency. Throughout their history, until recent times, the Bahamas depended on whatever currency circulated most widely in the Caribbean area. The currency in use ranged from the Spanish milled dollar--the legendary piece of eight--to the pounds and pence of Great Britain and the dimes and dollars of the United States.

After the war, the Bahamas began to take on a modern look. New housing developments, new hotels, more automobiles, air service to Miami and increased and improved public services combined to induce tourists and foreign capital to the islands. And arrive they did, although much of the money and many of the visitors were there for the purpose of smuggling liquor into the United States in violation of the Volstead Act.

The Guardian, too, changed. Advertising, which had always been featured on the front page, was removed early in July 1920,⁵⁷ but returned in much reduced amount and display later in the year.⁵⁸ Although the Guardian, like its competition, had to work hard for advertising

⁵⁶Nassau Guardian, 25 September 1920.

⁵⁷Nassau Guardian, 3 July 1920.

⁵⁸Nassau Guardian, 6 November 1920.

revenue, it was patriotically selective in accepting advertising contracts. When several German firms inquired about advertising in the Guardian, Miss Moseley made her position vehemently clear.

We have had several communications from German firms on the subject of advertising in the Guardian which we have either ignored or replied to in terms calculated to convince would be advertisers that we are not prepared at this early date to besmirch the columns of this paper with advertisements intended to further the trade of our late enemies.⁵⁹

Editorial content of the Guardian also began to change after the war. Cable and wireless already made it possible for the Colony's papers to minimize reprinting news from foreign and colonial newspapers. The new technologies and improved transportation led to new content for the newspapers. The first cartoon to appear in the Guardian--an allegorical rendition of a chariot full of tropical produce being pulled toward England by lions labeled for each of the West Indian colonies--was published early in 1919.⁶⁰ It was followed in 1921 with the first regularly appearing comic strip, "Douglass and Dad."⁶¹

The 1920s saw the introduction of feature columns. As early as 1924 the Guardian had added a feature for local motorists titled "Motors and Motorists," which provided automobile owners with information about improvements in automotive engineering and local driving.⁶² By 1931,

⁵⁹ [Mary Moseley], "The Audacity of the Hun," Nassau Guardian, 5 January 1922.

⁶⁰ Nassau Guardian, 22 March 1919.

⁶¹ Nassau Guardian, 12 February 1921.

⁶² "Motors and Motorists," Nassau Guardian, 14 August 1924.

the paper regularly featured "The Looker On," a gossip column; "Literary Notes," a book review and commentary column; "The London Letter," a review of social and political life in London, and a weekly review of sports titled "Sport of the Week." On an occasional basis, "Science and Invention" and "Travel and Adventure" appeared in the Guardian.⁶³

But for all the improvements in the paper, residents of the Bahamas were interested in events developing in Europe, Africa and Asia in the 1930s. War in Spain, the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany, war in Ethiopia and the Communist excesses taking place in the Soviet Union were all topics of interest and concern in the Colony. It appeared to some in the Bahamas that there was even a "Red threat" to the Colony in the form of a new newspaper which came into publication on May Day 1937. As the new paper's editor, John (Jack) Stanley Lowe, wrote in the Guardian years later:

May 1, 1937. That was the day when Nassau was all agog with the report that the colony's first Communist paper, The Herald, was to make its bow before the public. It was also International Labor Day, and that made the case worse.

My partner and I had intended to attract public attention by giving our paper a pink cover. When we found out that the public had made us Communists in name, we couldn't take it, and so the pink cover had to go.⁶⁴

While the Herald was at least radical and not Communist, the reaction to that paper, as will be reported later in this chapter, was a

⁶³"Special Features In The 'Nassau Guardian'," Nassau Guardian, 6 June 1931, p. 6.

⁶⁴Jack Lowe, "One Man's Opinion: Some Herald History," Nassau Guardian, 1 May 1952, p. 1.

factor leading to the Newspaper Surety Act of 1938. This act required that all newspaper publishers in the Colony post bond in order to issue their newspapers. In the initial proposal to the House of Assembly, the bond was to be £500--a sum beyond the reach of many of the publishers or would-be publishers in the Colony. The bond was to insure the payment of judgments in libel cases.⁶⁵ The bill's supporters said this would keep irresponsible editors and publishers from committing libel. Until the requirement of posting a bond, editors and publishers of the under-capitalized papers had little to fear from judgments against them. For the small papers, and there had been a number of them during the twenties and thirties, the bond, as first set, would have effectively removed them from publication.

That the proposed newspaper bond was a potential threat to free speech seems to have escaped the editors of the major papers. Comment in the shops and offices along Bay Street indicated that the merchants and professional men of the Colony expected the newspapers to raise a protest. It did not materialize. The Guardian's first reaction was surprisingly mild for an institution which had survived the journalistic storms of more than 90 years. The paper's commentary held that:

There will doubtless be accusations that the Bill is aimed at some particular class instead of a general object and even more fantastic charges may be anticipated. Our only criticism of the Bill is that it is long overdue and we hope that members of the House will not be too credulous when cries of opposition are raised.⁶⁶

⁶⁵"The Newspaper Surety Bill," Nassau Guardian, 7 January 1938, p. 2.

⁶⁶Ibid.

The Guardian further pointed out that the poorly financed papers in the Colony had no fear of committing libel because they could not pay any damages assessed by the court. The bond was likened to a performance bond required in other professions.⁶⁷ In its final form, the proposed legislation lowered the bond from £500 to £100, but it also required that newspaper publishers obtain a license from the Licensing Authority, the same board which issued liquor licenses. The editorial writer for the Guardian was furious.

If the provisions remain in the Bill it will be, to say the least, a humiliating procedure for a paper such as The Nassau Guardian, which has been published continuously for over 93 years and has endeavoured to maintain a standard of decency, never having been convicted of libel,⁶⁸ or used its columns for the publication of scurrilous criticism, to be obliged to apply for a license to continue publication. We feel that due consideration was not given to this amendment by those who voted for it and it is to be hoped that it is not too late to be dealt with.⁶⁹

The Guardian's ire was raised, not by the threat to freedom of the Press, but by the indignity of being classed with dram shops and bar-rooms. Ultimately, the requirement to obtain a license to print was removed from the legislation.⁷⁰ Later, in reporting the adjournment

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸The editorial writer errs in this statement. The Guardian had been found guilty of libel in the 1840s, as reported in the Bahama Herald of September 21, 1849.

⁶⁹"The Newspaper Surety Bill," Nassau Guardian, 15 January 1938, p. 4.

⁷⁰"The House of Assembly," Nassau Guardian, 25 January 1938, p. 1.

of the legislature, the Guardian noted that Governor Charles Dundas had approved the Newspaper Surety Act.⁷¹

But if local freedom of the Press was being threatened, matters in Europe, Asia and Africa were about to create new, but familiar, problems for the Colony's newspaper editors. War was coming. In its first Sunday edition, the Guardian printed the text of the Emergency Powers Act of 1939 on August 27, a week before the war began.⁷² Three days later a "Government Notice" announced the imposition of censorship throughout the Empire.⁷³

On Sunday, September 3, the Guardian printed three special editions; the first, headlined "Britain at War," carried Prime Minister Chamberlain's declaration of war and pictures of King George VI and military leaders.⁷⁴ The second announced the entry of France into the war,⁷⁵ and the final issue printed the local "Government Notice" announcing a state of war between Great Britain and Germany.⁷⁶ Once again, as part of the British Empire, the Bahamas faced war and this time the Colony would have a role in it.

The confusion of finding itself at war resulted in some ludicrous situations in the Bahamas. Censorship was confounded by confusing rules

⁷¹"Prorogation of the Legislature," Nassau Guardian, 22 February 1938, p. 1.

⁷²Nassau Guardian, 27 August 1939.

⁷³"Government Notice," Nassau Guardian, 30 August 1939, p. 2.

⁷⁴"First Edition," Nassau Guardian, 3 September 1939.

⁷⁵"Second Edition," Nassau Guardian, 3 September 1939.

⁷⁶"Third Edition," Nassau Guardian, 3 September 1939.

and regulations. A Nassau resident returning to the Colony from England was required to turn over copies of the Times, the Daily Telegraph and the Observer--all from London--to the local censors, long after the material in the papers had been cleared by censors in England. The Guardian acidly commented:

We mention this incident merely to show the utter absurdity of restriction which subjects London newspapers to censorship in a British Colony. We are prepared to admit that censorship within reasonable bounds is . . . necessary in war time but we venture to suggest that the colony's interests would be more usefully served if the Government exercise equal vigilance in censoring news that goes out of the Colony.⁷⁷

Not all war activity in the Bahamas was military; although there were Royal Air Force and American military units on New Providence and some Out Islands, the Bahamas were an important source of food for England during and after the war. Canned fruits and tropical foodstuffs sent from the Colony put the islands second on the list of colonies supplying food for the British. Only Rhodesia, with its huge meat shipments to England, surpassed the Bahamas as a source of food for Great Britain.

The demands of the British war effort and the destruction of shipping by German submarines created hardships throughout the Empire. Like other businesses, newspapers suffered through reduced allocations and limited availability of supplies. Allocation of supplies, particularly of newsprint, to the war effort frequently caused newspapers to print on non-newsprint stock, odd-sized newsprint for types of presses not

⁷⁷"Censorship," Nassau Guardian, 18 October 1939, p. 2.

used in the Bahamas and on colored paper. Destruction of ships, added to the demand for supplies and war materials in England, reduced shipping space for supplies, including printing materials, to the Bahamas. Censorship and difficulties in obtaining war news, coupled with the supply problems, put Bahamian editors under the double burden of finding stories to print and finding something to print them on. Although the editors did not miss regular publication schedules, the papers were frequently of strange size and hue.

The hardships of war made the gathering and disseminating of news difficult. The Bahamas were dependent on wireless telegraphy and broadcasts by the British Broadcasting Corporation for much of the news. For the western and northern islands, broadcasts from the United States provided information, but for the islands south and east of Nassau, broadcasts and occasional papers from Nassau were their only links with the world and the war beyond the ocean.

Gathering news from the battle fronts was a severe problem for news agencies providing information for newspapers and radio services alike. The Guardian warned its readers about the difficulties and uncertainties of war news.

A prominent feature of the past days of furious fighting in the Russo-German war is the lack of news from the Russian capital. It is important indeed to remember this in studying the new war in which the world has so far been forced to depend mainly on communiques originating from the Axis High Command and round-about reports from the neighboring and neutral countries. Good communications have never been a remarkable feature of the Soviet Union and the strain of war dislocates the existing facilities still further. After a

week of war the situation may establish a degree of stability and we may then be able to assess the true military values.⁷⁸

Getting news from the Russian front, or any front for that matter, was difficult and often resulted in delays in reporting war news. As had been practiced regularly until the installation of the telegraph, reprinting from other newspapers was often the only method of gathering news from abroad. And again, newspapers in the Bahamas resorted to the old method for at least some of their war coverage. Late in 1942, the Guardian announced to its readers that,

. . . we are now able to publish quite frequently leading articles in their entirety from The Times and other important London newspapers, on topics of daily import. Several of our readers have indicated their approval of this feature and it will be continued whenever space permits. In tonight's issue will be found The Times' inspiring leading article of yesterday on the aftermath of Toulon.⁷⁹

The Times article would have appeared on November 30, three days after the German attempt to seize the French fleet at its base at Toulon. The attempt was thwarted by the French scuttling their ships at anchor.⁸⁰ The three-day wait by the Times in publishing the news about Toulon was not unusual, given war-time censorship; what was unusual was that the Guardian was able to reprint the article the day after it appeared in London.

Sending news from the Bahamas was also a problem for correspondents.

⁷⁸"Study The News With Care," Nassau Guardian, 28 June 1941, p. 4.

⁷⁹"Leading Articles From London Newspapers Reprinted in 'The Nassau Guardian,'" Nassau Guardian, 1 December 1942, p. 2.

⁸⁰William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), pp. 924-25.

There had been an "urgent press cable service" in the Bahamas, but it was suspended at the outbreak of the war and not restored by the Telecommunications Department until mid-1943.⁸¹ The Guardian, apparently, did not often run afoul of the local censors who were vigilant in their control of news leaving the Colony. The Tribune, on the other hand, was frequently in trouble with censors as it attempted to report local news and send it abroad. The Tribune's wartime experience with censorship will be detailed in the discussion of that paper later in this chapter.

Other wartime problems plagued the Guardian. War profiteering was not restricted to big business and war suppliers. It must have been with some chagrin that Miss Moseley was forced to print:

It has come to our knowledge that newsboys selling the Guardian in the streets at night are demanding three pence or more for each issue. The price of The Guardian has not been increased from two-pence and the boys in the street have no authority to charge more.⁸²

Amid the minor vexations of over-charging newsboys and the major tensions of trying to keep her paper operating with supply shortages and other uncertainties, Miss Moseley was able to celebrate the centenary of the Guardian. The event was widely celebrated by the Press and legislature of the Colony. The major events of the paper's first century were chronicled in a special issue of the paper on November 23, 1944.⁸³

The celebration of the Guardian's centenary was not just the

⁸¹"Press Cable Service," Nassau Guardian, 24 July 1943, p. 1.

⁸²"Avaricious News Boys," Nassau Guardian, 23 October 1943, p. 2.

⁸³Nassau Guardian, 23 November 1944.

newspaper's celebration; it belonged to the Colony as well, and the celebration began months before the actual date. The high regard and affection for Miss Moseley and her paper were vocally expressed by the legislature and the Tribune. The interrelationships among these institutions, although at times tempestuous, were intertwined to a great degree. The families of the owners of the two papers arrived in Nassau about the same time in the previous century, and generations of each family served in the legislature and government of the Colony. The editors of both the Guardian and the Tribune, over the years, shared a common schooling in journalism. The founder of the Guardian trained his own sons and many other boys who eventually became printers and editors in Nassau, the Caribbean area and the United States. During the periodic difficulties created by hurricanes, fires, wars and the lack of printing supplies and parts, both the Guardian and the Tribune shared resources in a spirit of concern for the community and for the existence of a viable Press in the Colony.

The legislature opened the tributes to the Guardian and its editor in July 1944, some five months before the celebration of the paper's centenary. The Guardian, in turn, expressed its appreciation for the good wishes.

The Nassau Guardian and its Editor were paid a unique compliment by the House of Assembly at its last meeting when, in anticipation of the approaching centenary of this paper, a resolution was adopted expressing the appreciation of the House of their services to the Bahamas. While this action on the part of the House places us in a rather embarrassing position we feel that we cannot allow the terms of the resolution and the cordial remarks of the members who supported it to pass without some acknowledgement and expression of sincere thanks for the kind tribute paid to this paper which

for well nigh a century endeavoured to uphold the ancient constitution of this Colony and the traditions of the House of Assembly.⁸⁴

In November, as the actual date of the celebration neared, the Tribune printed a long editorial which reviewed the history of the Guardian, and, in so doing, revealed a great deal about the lady editor.

Hers has been a stupendous task--a task that would have broken the spirit and physical strength of many a powerful man--and yet this frail little woman has courageously led this organization through forty years of its life, 25 [sic] of which have been marked by a restless and unstable development of various groups in the community. . . .

The Guardian has never had the reputation for being affluent and it has seen some hard times in the sphere of finance, but the feminine hand that has guided its destiny through some of its most difficult times, has never wavered, and while the hand may not be as strong as it was forty years ago, the spirit behind it is just as vigorous as it ever was.

But The Guardian has lived on. Never too strong. Never too weak. But always there--and its position has always been secure because it has been guided by a high idea, which lifted it above the sordid calculations of ordinary business and placed it on the lofty pedestal of a spirit.

It is in this spirit that we wish the paper may more years of vigorous usefulness, and today, because we can appreciate more than most people in the Colony the tremendous spiritual and physical effort it has taken for a frail woman to carry the heavy burden entailed in the direction of a newspaper and organization like the Guardian, we want to be the first to salute Miss Moseley as the outstanding woman of our period in the life of the Colony and as the outstanding Bahamian of today--with all the great and near-great thrown in for good measure.⁸⁵

On the anniversary, the leading citizens of Nassau met at the Guardian's office to toast the event and Miss Moseley's health.⁸⁶

⁸⁴"The Guardian's Centenary," Nassau Guardian, 29 July 1944, p. 4.

⁸⁵"The Old Guardian," Nassau Tribune, 25 December 1944, p. 2.

⁸⁶"The First Hundred Years," Nassau Tribune, 24 November 1944, p. 1.

Although the anniversary of her newspaper's founding made Miss Moseley's days happy, the fact that there were no direct heirs must have weighed on her mind. Two years earlier, news came from the Swiss Red Cross that Miss Moseley's cousin, Doyle Moseley, had died in an Australian Air Force bomber which failed to return from a raid over Germany. The young Moseley was the great-grandson of the Guardian's founder and was from Perth, Australia, where his grandfather settled after leaving Nassau in 1880.

Doyle Moseley chose journalism as a profession and worked for the West Australian of Perth. He moved to Nassau in 1939 to become associated with the family newspaper; and, one could surmise, he would have assumed direction of the Guardian on Miss Moseley's retirement if not for the war. At the outbreak of the war, he joined the Bahamas Volunteer Defence Force. Ultimately, he transferred to the Royal Australian Air Force and was commissioned. He received advanced training in England and then went into action against Germany.⁸⁷

The death of this young Moseley from Australia was not the final blow the war dealt to the family: during the latter part of the war her nephew, George Moseley, also an airman, was reported killed in action over Germany. His grave was not found until late in 1947.⁸⁸ Notification of its finding arrived in Nassau the very evening before the death of his father, Daniel S. D. Moseley. The elder Moseley never knew his son's grave had been found. There were no other Moseleys trained in journalism or apparently willing to take over the paper.

⁸⁷"Obituary," Nassau Guardian, 25 December 1942, p. 2.

⁸⁸"He Grew Beautiful Things That Sweetened His Life," op. cit.

If the loss of family members and the difficulties of supply in the post-war period were not enough to create hardships for Miss Moseley, 1950 brought a new, but familiar, problem for the Guardian--fire. For the second time in its history, the Guardian's printing plant was destroyed by fire. The fire, caused by the explosion of a gasoline tank, engulfed the building within five minutes. A burst fire hose delayed efforts to fight the fire, and a special call was broadcast over the local radio station for volunteer firemen. It took nearly two and a half hours to put out the fire, and only some light equipment and finished printing were saved.⁸⁹ The paper continued to print as a tabloid through the courtesy of the editor of the Tribune, Etienne Dupuch, who shared equipment and supplies with the Guardian until it was able to rebuild its plant.⁹⁰

Miss Moseley's age, the lack of possible heirs and the hardships of keeping the paper afloat in the post-war period were telling on her strength. Miss Moseley apparently looked for a buyer for her paper before the fire in 1950: as early as 1949, the Tribune reported the impending sale of the Guardian.⁹¹ She finally sold the paper to a consortium of Bahamian and Canadian businessmen, including Roy Thomson, whose involvement in the proposed Guardian takeover was linked to the sale of the government's radio station, ZNS. The new owners took over.

⁸⁹"Morning Fire Destroys 'Nassau Guardian,'" Nassau Tribune, 2 February 1950, p. 1.

⁹⁰"Towards Recovery," Nassau Guardian, 3 April 1950, p. 1.

⁹¹"'Nassau Guardian' Sold," Nassau Tribune, 11 February 1949, p. 1.

on February 1, 1952.⁹² After the newspaper's more than 107 years in the Moseley family, and in the forty-seventh year of her editorship, Miss Moseley and her family were no longer the Guardian. An era ended, although the new owners retained Miss Moseley as an advisor.

In a brief and poignant comment, the Tribune noted the change.

As far back as we can remember, Miss Mary Moseley, M. B. E., Editor of The Nassau Guardian, was always the most regular visitor to the House of Assembly.

Miss Moseley does not come to the House anymore.

This represents the close of a period in the life and history of the Colony.⁹³

The new paper, now owned by a company calling itself The Nassau Guardian (1844), Limited, had more than 50 shareholders who lived in the islands or who made them their home for some part of the year. The officers of the company were all local political and economic leaders who were politically conservative to the point of being reactionary. The company brought in two Canadian journalists, Burton Lewis as editor and K. G. Tipney as business manager, to run the new paper.⁹⁴ Although Miss Moseley continued as a consultant,⁹⁵ her moderate approach was soon missed as the new Guardian set out to drive Etienne Dupuch's rival Tribune into oblivion. The machinations of this fight will be related in another section of this chapter.

⁹²"New Guardian Set-Up," Nassau Tribune, 2 February 1952, p. 1.

⁹³"Another Day," Nassau Tribune, 30 January 1952, p. 1.

⁹⁴"Ownership Of The Nassau Guardian Transferred To New Local Company With More Than 50 Shareholders," Nassau Guardian, 1 February 1952, p. 1.

⁹⁵"Another Day Is Opening," Nassau Tribune, 2 February 1952, p. 1.

The significance of the Guardian during Miss Moseley's stewardship of the family enterprise was that of a forum which reinforced the beliefs and values of the white ruling class of the Colony. Although black and colored Bahamians worked for the newspaper, few had access to the editorial columns or supported it with advertising. It was basically a whites-only paper. In 1930, the Tribune reported to its readers an interesting and unsubtle comment on the inherent racial biases of the Guardian and the class it represented.

The following extract from The Daily Sketch should be of interest to our readers.

I [the editor of the Daily Sketch] have just met one of the few women delegates to the Press Conference who is a newspaper proprietor. She is Miss Mary Moseley of Nassau, Bahamas, and she owns the only white newspaper in Nassau. Which does not mean that other journals are printed on black paper.⁹⁶

This bit of gratuitous bigotry was not lost on the editor of the Tribune. His retort reveals something about him, his paper and the other journals in the Colony. First, Dupuch, whose racial heritage was mixed, would not suffer bigotry about his fellow Bahamians and his newspaper. Second, his comment explained something about journalism which cannot be discovered in reading black and white microfilm. The Tribune continued.

Of course not. Why, The Tribune is often printed on pink paper, and when paper is very scarce even on yellow paper! It is surprising that this newspaper proprietor [Miss Moseley], who has so very much to boast about in the Old Guard[ian], uses black ink to print with! If the colour of the paper used determined the value and usefulness of a publication

⁹⁶"Here and There," Nassau Tribune, 9 July 1930.

there are papers in this island that should appear regularly in an anaemic shade--something in a dingy B-L-U-E.

The pride of a successful journalist is to be able to state honestly: My paper is a newspaper--a strong, a useful, a representative publication. From the true journalistic viewpoint the editor of the Old Guard did not lay claim to much.⁹⁷

The Guardian, even in the closing days of Moseley ownership, was a respected institution. It was frequently assisted by the Tribune to overcome supply and equipment shortages during and after the war. Although there were sharp disagreements between the editors over the years, the Tribune's editor accurately described the relationship in 1944.

The Guardian acts as a check valve on The Tribune, while The Tribune operates as a stimulus to The Guardian. If either of these newspapers tried to step out of its allotted role, it would cease to have a useful place in the life of the community, & [sic] it would die. It is for this reason, therefore, that The Tribune is today as much concerned for the future welfare of The Guardian as it is for its own welfare. It is for this reason also that we would recently express the sincere hope that the Moseleys of the future, who catch The Guardian torch when a higher authority calls Miss Mary Moseley to her reward, will be worthy of the rich spiritual heritage that will be theirs. . . .⁹⁸

These high hopes of the Tribune in 1944, were not to be realized following the sale of the Guardian eight years later. Over the years the Moseley family owned the Guardian, it was in tune with the sentiments of the class it represented. It reflected the biases and tastes of the dominant social class in the Colony. Its longevity gave it a cachet

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Nassau Tribune, 25 November 1944, p. 1.

which permitted it to set and lead public opinion rather than follow it. As the leading paper until some years after the establishment of the Tribune, the Guardian stoutly defended its place in the business, social, economic and political life of the community. Not until Etienne Dupuch became the editor of the Tribune was the Guardian seriously threatened and finally overtaken by another paper in the Colony. The Guardian, if not a robust financial success, at least managed to survive until Miss Moseley's age and lack of heirs forced the sale of the paper.

As will be shown in the discussion of the Nassau Tribune, family inheritance has apparently been the commonality between the papers which have survived. As Edwin Moseley trained his sons and grandchildren in printing, so did the founder of the Tribune whose son, Etienne, would continue the practice and create a family dynasty in Bahamian journalism and printing which has survived nearly a century. The Guardian, on the other hand, has been taken over by a number of owners and has survived as a corporate entity. By the end of this study, the Guardian was a highly political paper dedicated to the destruction of Etienne Dupuch and the Tribune--not on the grounds of journalistic expediency, but rather as a reaction to the rising political power of the black residents of Nassau who were beginning to threaten white domination of the Colony's government. This situation would break into violent hostility following the sale of the Guardian. The events leading up to confrontation, and the journalistic impact of this fight will be detailed in another section of this chapter.

The Twentieth Century: The Nassau Tribune

Although this newspaper has at various times been titled the Nassau Tribune or the Nassau Daily Tribune, it will be designated either the Nassau Tribune or the Tribune in this study. Like the Nassau Guardian until its sale in 1952, the Tribune was, and is, family-owned. It is now owned and edited by Eileen Dupuch Carron, the granddaughter of its founder, Leon E. H. Dupuch, who started the paper as a very small daily in 1903.⁹⁹

The Tribune began as a reaction to the Watchman which, in turn, had been a reaction to the Guardian and its lack of interest in the majority class of the Bahamas. The Guardian's orientation to the ruling set at Government House--the governor's home and social center of the government--had prompted a group of Bahamians excluded from that elite group, to set up the Watchman with Leon Dupuch as editor. He soon fell out with the shareholders of the Watchman and ". . . started his newspaper [the Tribune] with a small treadle press, a few old cases of type--and a big chunk of nerve."¹⁰⁰ He managed to keep the paper afloat by working long hours and involving all members of his family in the undertaking--something his son, Etienne, would also do during his tenure as editor following World War I. Etienne, himself, began selling newspapers at the age of five when he filched papers from the office and set out on his self-appointed rounds.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹Nassau Tribune, 21 November 1903.

¹⁰⁰Etienne Dupuch, "The Story of The Tribune," Nassau Tribune, 16 March 1949, p. 2.

¹⁰¹Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 23.

It is apparent that Leon Dupuch's success in maintaining the Tribune during its first six years rested heavily on his first wife, Harriet, who was known as "Frizzy." Her youngest son, Etienne, would write lovingly of her in later years. She was the proverbial "pillar of strength" and inspiration for her husband and family. According to Sir Etienne, she was an accomplished gardner and on more than one occasion the flowers and produce of her backyard gardens supported the family and the paper during its frequent financial crises.¹⁰² The Tribune's first printing press was purchased with money "Frizzy" had earned from her garden.

Leon Dupuch started the paper in an attempt to provide a forum for people who could not find a place to express their opinions in the Guardian or the Watchman. The Tribune was the only outlet for the majority Bahamians--those of mixed and black racial heritage. Apparently, soon after the paper was founded, Dupuch was forced to suspend the paper's publication on August 6, 1904--less than a year after the paper was established--and move to Montreal to work as a printer.¹⁰³ He would be sorely missed as a letter published in the Guardian attested.

Understanding that you are about to leave the Colony we cannot allow you to depart from among us without conveying to you our deep appreciation of the good offices you have from time to time rendered to the working class in this Colony and the persistent and strenuous efforts you have made in their behalf to defend and protect their interests.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Dupuch, "The Story of The Tribune."

¹⁰³Nassau Guardian, 10 August 1904.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

The letter continues to record concern and affection for Dupuch. It is signed by 114 members of the Congo No. 2 Society and 135 members of its Auxillary. A similar note was sent to the Guardian by officers of the Fox Hill Burial Society of New Providence. Dupuch's reply, thanking the two societies, appeared in the same issue of the Guardian.¹⁰⁵ Dupuch's stay in Montreal was of short duration. By March 1, 1905, the Guardian printed a letter--locally mailed--from Dupuch questioning Miss Moseley about a comment she had printed concerning the use of the library by its patrons.¹⁰⁶ This would establish Dupuch's return to Nassau before the end of February 1905.

Following this interruption, the Tribune has continued to print through hurricanes, wars, legal attacks and illnesses of the various editors without missing an issue. But on more than one occasion the paper was nearly defeated by its problems, the opposition or its enemies, and there have been many. Soon after setting up his paper, Dupuch, who was a member of the House Assembly, was pressured by political leaders to support their interests. He refused, and from that point until his death in 1914, the struggle for survival was intense. The papers issued between 1903 and 1910 are missing--possibly the result of acrimonious library directors who refused to subscribe to or keep the paper in the files--and it is not possible to determine the extent of the problems facing Dupuch and his upstart Tribune.

Dupuch's opposition and refusal to bow to the pressures eventually

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Nassau Guardian, 1 March 1905.

were to cost him business, savings and, finally, his life. In spite of the obstacles and opposition, Leon and Frizzy managed to save enough to order a small cylinder press from New York. It was shipped to Nassau where, in trans-shipping it from freighter to lighter, it was lost overboard outside the harbor. The press was not insured and Dupuch believed until the end of his days that his political enemies had the press dropped overboard on purpose.¹⁰⁷ Given the often vindictive character of his opposition, his belief may have been well-founded.

Gilbert, Leon's eldest son, went to Montreal in 1909, where he worked as a print shop foreman and studied art. In 1912, he returned to Nassau for a visit and, on finding his father's health deteriorating, Gilbert gave up his career in art and stayed on in Nassau to assist in the operation of the paper. In addition, he started a magazine, The Strombus, which was a financial success. During this period, Leon told Etienne that he would accompany his brother to Montreal for more training and eventually would succeed Leon as editor of the Tribune. At this point, Etienne, who was just entering his teens, retorted that he had better things to do than be the editor of the Tribune. Later he recalled, "I shall never forget the look on his face. If I had shot him I couldn't have hurt him more."¹⁰⁸

In 1914, Leon suffered a heart attack while completing a government printing contract. He was working on the final touches of the printing when he was stricken; letting no one help him,

¹⁰⁷Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 24.

¹⁰⁸Dupuch, "The Story of The Tribune."

he returned to his work when the attack passed and completed the contract. He collected his money from the government, paid his bills and went home with a gold sovereign as his earnings--about five dollars in gold for his work. He never returned to his beloved Tribune. He was taken to a local hospital where he died on July 1, 1914, a month before the outbreak of the war with Germany. Gilbert took over the paper.¹⁰⁹

At Dupuch's funeral, the governor's private secretary, the colonial secretary, the chief justice and Miss Moseley were in attendance and the Guardian's printers served as pallbearers.¹¹⁰ Dupuch was described in his obituary as

. . . one of those large minded men and large hearted men who are seldom able to win the confidence of their contemporaries but whom it is the work of posterity to justify.

He was eminently a patriot first to his country then to his race. He was a firm believer in the reality of race and never missed an opportunity of encouraging and directing the ambition and the energies of his people.

Though not what is called a gifted man [sic]. Yet Mr. Dupuch was gifted with the determination that what little talent he possessed would not moulder in the earth, and he by his courage and resolution was able to go far ahead of others who though better provided with natural genius were not persistent enough to get the best they could with what they had.

The Tribune has no apprentice in the strict meaning of the term, but many a youth have learned their trade in this office and not the least of his achievements was the instruction of the boys who had graduated from his office and gone abroad to find profit and appreciation in foreign lands.¹¹¹

The war years were difficult for the Tribune, as they were for

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Nassau Tribune, 1 July 1914, p. 2.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 3.

other papers in Nassau and the Empire. Lack of money and paper forced Gilbert to suspend the Strombus, but he managed to keep the paper afloat. Etienne enlisted in the West Indies Regiment in 1916, at the age of 17, and served in Egypt, Italy and England before returning to Nassau in 1919.¹¹² Etienne's war experience changed him, as it did all who served in action, but it changed his attitude toward the Tribune and the Bahamas even more. The change in Dupuch would have far-reaching consequences for the Tribune, the Colony and for himself.

The army was a shock to me. Here we were fighting for freedom, but everywhere we went a sign stared us in the face; "Out of bounds to native troops." Many were the humiliations loyal "natives," sons of the Crown, were obliged to endure while voluntarily offering up their lives in the cause of freedom. . . . The only time I felt "accepted" in my three years service was during a brief stay in an American camp on my way back from leave in England to rejoin my regiment in the south of Italy. . . . The humiliations and hardships I endured in the army, the things I saw and learned about human relations, helped me to realize that, when the war was over, my place was back in Nassau on The Tribune, because I had a job of work to do among my own people.¹¹³

Etienne Dupuch returned to Nassau and joined his brother in editing the paper. In the Tribune's twenty-first anniversary issue in 1924, the editors--most likely Etienne, because the editorial reads as if from his pen--returned to an old theme, the development of a ". . . sane and wholesome public opinion where there never existed articulate expression of any opinion but that of self-interest."¹¹⁴ This problem

¹¹²Carron, op. cit.

¹¹³Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 27.

¹¹⁴L. Gilbert Dupuch and A. E. J. Dupuch, "1903-1924," Nassau Tribune, 24 November 1924, p. 20.

was noted during the governorship of Henry Blake (1884-1887) at the founding of the Freeman, the first attempt at establishing a newspaper for the black and colored population.¹¹⁵

The lack of public opinion on the part of the masses in the Bahamas, according to a Tribune editorial, was still a major problem in 1924; its lack hung ". . . like a pall over the community."¹¹⁶ The editorial went on to imply shortcomings in education for the majority of Bahamians. Earlier in the year, the Tribune had criticized the Guardian for its lack of support for education of the masses and closed with: "The shame is not on the ignorant and illiterate people, but upon those who for many years have been in a position to improve their condition."¹¹⁷ The Tribune was implying that the Guardian had been lacking in its service to the community by not supporting public education in the islands.

Critical comments about local political leadership were regarded as criticism of the governor, and local opinion held that the governor, as a representative of the King, could not be criticised because, in effect, it was criticism of the monarch. Dupuch, on the other hand, held that the governor, as the executive officer of the Colony, was responsible to the people of the Bahamas and was subject to criticism for what the Tribune felt was a failure to perform his duty.¹¹⁸ This

¹¹⁵L. D. Powles, The Land of the Pink Pearl (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1888), pp. 100-01.

¹¹⁶Dupuch and Dupuch, op. cit.

¹¹⁷"Here and There," Nassau Tribune, 22 July 1924.

¹¹⁸Dupuch, Tribune Story, pp. 33-34.

same problem would occur during the war-time administration of the Duke of Windsor, the former King Edward VIII.

Education for the black and colored majority of the Colony, following the war, improved with the opening of more schools in Nassau. For Etienne Dupuch, education was something of a personal stumbling block. As a child, he had been taught by his mother after working at the newspaper office. His later schooling, although imperfect, was adequate for the times and better than that received by most black or colored Bahamians. His education, was, however, insufficient for operating the paper at the level of subtlety demanded in a community like Nassau. It was a problem he recognized but was unable to rectify quickly.

I found that many men in high positions, men to whom I tipped my hat on the street with respect, did not hesitate to take advantage of my ignorance and inexperience. These people would give information. I would print it in good faith, only to find out later that it was either distorted or completely false. It served their selfish purpose to get the wrong information into print and they used me as the instrument of their scheming. It was like a circus after every issue of The Tribune when I walked down Bay Street. Passing one shop the people would call me in and tell me I was doing fine. A few yards down the street other people would want to cut my throat. I didn't mind people not liking what I did. That was my job, if it was right, but I was never sure I was right.¹¹⁹

In a sense, salvation was at hand. In 1922, Dupuch met Father Chrysostom Schreiner, O.S.B., and the meeting would prove pivotal in Dupuch's education about people, writing and journalism. This Catholic priest was the only person in Nassau to take a sincere interest in Dupuch's efforts as a journalist and as a person. Fr. Schreiner took

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 39.

it upon himself to teach and guide the young Dupuch as he tried to salvage, maintain, improve and expand the Tribune following his return from the war. The priest taught him editorial writing, the reaffirmation of Leon Dupuch's goal of an honest paper open to all Bahamians and, perhaps the most important lesson, that many of the people he would be writing about and dealing with were unscrupulous and would try to destroy him and the Tribune if they could.¹²⁰ The record shows that they tried, but were not able to deter or ruin Dupuch and his Tribune.

In addition to tutoring the young Dupuch, the priest also encouraged him to seek additional education in journalism. Following five years of study with Fr. Schreiner, Dupuch enrolled as a special student at St. John's University in Minnesota. Before leaving for St. John's, Dupuch had his first brush with libel when the man he had chosen to be his replacement inserted a story in the Tribune stating flatly that a resident of Nassau had contracted typhoid fever as the result of eating at a local restaurant. The incident was amicably settled, but as Dupuch noted, "It was then that I began to realize that it takes more than 'book larnin' to edit a newspaper. An editor needs a sixth sense to keep out of trouble."¹²¹

Not only were the twenties to witness a change in Dupuch himself, but they changed the Bahamas and journalism in the Colony. The "Roaring Twenties" were roaring in Nassau as well as the United States. The Bahamas waxed fat on the profits and taxes of the liquor trade which used the Bahamas as the starting point for smuggling liquor into the United States.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 42-43.

While a segment of the Bahamian business community was making money, Dupuch was making plans for improving the Tribune. Dupuch's plans called for new equipment, internal reorganization and a clear direction of purpose for his paper. He resolved to make the paper one of the best in the West Indies. "We have," he wrote, "the WILL and WE KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING!!"¹²² On the first of January 1927, the Tribune ran its first comic strip. Inexplicably, it was "Bringing up Father" in Spanish.¹²³ Advertising was removed from the front page early in the same month,¹²⁴ giving the Tribune a more American look than the Guardian, which retained front page advertising.

Although the twenties were a period of development for the Bahamas and for the Tribune, the price was high. The editors were unable to borrow money from the banks in Nassau and, as a result, were forced to turn to the Bahamian equivalent of loan sharks until the paper's floating debt totaled nearly £1,000. With interest on the notes running as high as 200 percent, members of the House of Assembly clique opposed to Dupuch and his paper quietly bought up the notes in order to put the Tribune out of business. At this point, however, politics played into Dupuch's hands. An argument between the governor and the Legislative Council provided an opportunity Dupuch was quick to grasp. At first, while Dupuch was at school in Minnesota, the Tribune's interim editor backed the House of Assembly in the dispute. When Dupuch returned, he

¹²²"Twenty-Three," Nassau Tribune, 24 November 1926.

¹²³Nassau Tribune, 1 January 1927.

¹²⁴Nassau Tribune, 5 January 1927.

felt the House was wrong and reversed the paper's policy in favor of the governor. With the switch in his support, Dupuch became both respectable and acceptable to at least a portion of the ruling class. What had been denied before was now obtainable--he could borrow money from the local branch of the Royal Bank of Canada at reasonable interest rates.

Dupuch quickly and shrewdly utilized his new-found respectability and entrée to resources hitherto denied. He borrowed the £1,000 from the Canadian bank and placed it in a checking account in his wife's name--a woman he had met and married in the United States. Then he instructed her to go to everyone the paper owed money to in Nassau, ask how much was owed, write a check for the amount without question and ask for a receipt. Soon the town was being swept with the rumor that Dupuch had married an American heiress and his debts were good. It worked. When the politicians discovered they had been gulled, they were furious but could do nothing but seethe silently. The admission that they had been tricked would have been more embarrassing.¹²⁵

Fr. Schreiner's advice about the nature of man was a lesson well learned by Dupuch, who commented:

The average person is a moral coward. The only value most people seem to have is money. They will court your favour if they think you have money. I began to get business I never had before.¹²⁶

Dupuch's cleverness would save him in a number of difficult situations

¹²⁵Dupuch, Tribune Story, pp. 45-47.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 47.

in the future. His innate shrewdness, careful training, ability to size up an opponent quickly and accurately, along with a well-conceived set of goals and objectives, allowed him to survive in the hostile world of Bahamian politics and business.

Although Dupuch could often manipulate politicians and business to his own ends, nature was not something he could control. A hurricane in 1929 destroyed the Tribune's printing works and there was no insurance to cover the loss. A policy had been discussed with a local agent but left unsigned when the agent went to England for a vacation. Following the hurricane, Dupuch worked for two days without rest to get some semblance of order into what remained of the Tribune's mechanical department. The paper was back in print with a "slip" of a paper printed on a foot press.¹²⁷ By the end of the year, Dupuch reported that his paper supply had run so low that an issue was being printed on colored paper.¹²⁸ In the same issue he announced that the paper was going to buy another Linotype machine capable of casting 36-point type, a new high speed press and some additional equipment. Bert Mimms of the Tribune staff was also going to be sent to the Linotype Company's school in New York for a technical course on the new machine.¹²⁹

Dupuch would continue to send Tribune employees and his children abroad for technical and academic training. This practice was a part of his long-range plan to strengthen the Tribune and insure its

¹²⁷ Nassau Tribune, 28 September 1929.

¹²⁸ "Here and There," Nassau Tribune, 21 December 1929.

¹²⁹ "'Tribune' Cables For New Machinery Sends Mimms To Factory," Nassau Tribune, 21 December 1929.

viability as a social institution in the Bahamas. He also learned the importance of good pay for well-trained technical personnel to run the paper.¹³⁰

Although the Tribune had begun its life as a daily newspaper, the exigencies of war, the lack of news sources and services and the business depression resulting from the crash of the stock market in New York made the outlook for journalism in the Bahamas something less than profitable. The Guardian had already attempted to become a daily, but had withdrawn from active six-day-a-week publication as early as 1921.¹³¹ Still, given the encouragement by Acting Governor Charles Dundas, Dupuch proposed to bring out the Tribune as a daily in 1932. Dupuch advised his readers that they would get news in a fresher state than the twice-weekly edition provided.¹³²

The acting governor had urged Dupuch to bring out a daily newspaper to meet the Colony's need for such a publication; Dupuch, on the other hand, argued that the community could not afford to support such a venture. Dundas was insistent, noting that at this previous post in Africa, the government had subsidized a local paper. Dupuch, desiring to keep his paper free and independent of the government, refused a direct subsidy from the government. He would, however, bring the Tribune out as a daily if the government were to guarantee advertising.¹³³

¹³⁰ Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 58.

¹³¹ Nassau Guardian, 12 January 1928.

¹³² "A Daily Newspaper for Nassau," Nassau Tribune, 23 December 1931, p. 1.

¹³³ Etienne Dupuch, "How Nassau Got A Daily Newspaper," Nassau Tribune, 21 November 1978, p. 21.

With the promise of advertising, Dupuch printed his announcement and Dundas' letter of encouragement¹³⁴ and the paper began its daily publication on January 1, 1932.

But once again, politics and the reality of life in colonial Nassau played Dupuch false. When Dundas was replaced by the new governor, Bede Clifford, the arrangement with the Tribune for advertising to support its daily publication fell through. One of Governor Clifford's first actions on his arrival in Nassau was to inform Dupuch that the government could not honor Dundas' promise of advertising support without approval of the House of Assembly. The House, seeing a possible chance of destroying Dupuch and his paper, refused its assent to the advertising arrangement. Years later, Dupuch mused on the outcome of the affair.

"Have you heard the news?" Noel Meallet, an employee of The Guardian, asked me in the Public Square while I was watching the John Canoe Parade in the darkness of early New Year's morning. "The Guardian has been awarded the contract for publishing the notices and it will resume its daily publication tomorrow."

And so Nassau had two dailies. And I had been double-crossed! But that was not the worst of it. Another blow fell when the Guardian announced that it would publish The Nassau Magazine! And so this was a double-double-cross by the politicians!¹³⁵

Dupuch had scrapped plans to bring out a magazine in favor of publishing the daily Tribune. Once again, the politicians had double-crossed Dupuch and tried to wreck his newspaper.

¹³⁴"A Daily Paper Will Be Welcome," Nassau Tribune, 26 December 1931, p. 1.

¹³⁵Dupuch, op. cit.

Dupuch admitted to losing money during the first three months of the daily's life. He considered suspending the daily edition at the end of the tourist season in March, but continued with a two-page bulletin with news briefs and advertising.¹³⁶ By the end of the bulletin's first week, Dupuch was claiming a thousand a day circulation.¹³⁷ A circulation manager was taken on to relieve Dupuch of collecting accounts and soliciting new subscribers.¹³⁸

While most of Dupuch's problems were with the adults of the community, boys could also cause him considerable trouble. Early in 1930, he wrote that because there had been a number of complaints about non-delivery of the paper to subscribers, he had checked into the matter and caught a boy stealing papers. Retribution was swift--and painful for the culprit. "We caught the offender, and the Magistrate had him flogged yesterday."¹³⁹ Although the theft of papers was not common, it did occur with the same harsh results. One such thief, caught red-handed, jumped into the harbor and swam for some time before trying to escape by leaving the water at the Colonial Hotel's beach and running through the grounds of the hotel until he was caught. He, too, was whipped.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶"A Daily Newspaper," Nassau Tribune, 30 March 1932, p. 2.

¹³⁷"'The Tribune' News Bulletin Already Popular," Nassau Tribune, 8 April 1932, p. 1.

¹³⁸"'The Tribune' Daily News Bulletin," Nassau Tribune, 9 April 1932, p. 1.

¹³⁹"Here and There," Nassau Tribune, 1 February 1930, p. 1.

¹⁴⁰"Got One," Nassau Tribune, 29 April 1940, p. 1.

The last years of the 1930s were active ones for Dupuch and his paper. For a keen observer of the world like Dupuch, the wars in Spain and Abyssinia were the harbingers of a greater war which could not be long delayed in involving the British Empire. Dupuch made plans to protect his family by buying a farm near Nassau in order to supply them with food if there were shortages like those experienced during the previous war. But the most important and immediate problem the Tribune and its editor faced in this period was the Newspaper Surety Bill of 1938. Although similar to the Guardian's reaction to the proposal, the Tribune's reaction was somewhat different, but ultimately resulted in the same position.

Dupuch, at the time the legislation was introduced requiring newspapers to post bond, was a member of the house of Assembly where the measure would be debated and decided. As previously noted, the Guardian's editor favored the legislation but objected to the Licensing Authority's being the issuing agency for the required license, given that agency's primary responsibility for liquor licenses. Dupuch, on the other hand, objected, not to the legislation itself, but to the original £500 bond as being too high. He feared that sum would preclude young men from trying to establish papers in the Colony.¹⁴¹ He did not protest, however, the threat inherent in such legislation--that of prior restraint of the Press in the form of a required license to print.

The Tribune reported the debate on the legislation in some detail.

¹⁴¹ "'Full Dress Debate' On Press Bill," Nassau Tribune, 11 January 1938, p. 4.

Kenneth Solomon, a leading businessman and politician who introduced the bill, called it a simple and harmless bill, drawn up to provide security in the event a newspaper failed to meet its responsibilities to the public. He further commented that there were newspapers in the Colony which had overstepped the bounds of propriety in their comments, but not to the extent that it was worth the effort to prosecute them for libel. These unnamed papers apparently provoked Solomon's ire on occasion and, as the papers had nothing to attach to satisfy a libel judgment, they had little to lose. Solomon's legislation, therefore, would force them to provide a worthwhile bond which could be attached in the event of a successful libel action. The bill, Solomon concluded, was not intended as censorship, but only to protect the public from irresponsible editorial attacks. He did not define which "public" was being attacked, but from later remarks it is fairly clear that the public being attacked was the Bay Street Boys and the offending journal was the recently established Herald.

Other legislators were less enthusiastic about the need for the legislation. One member somewhat acidly commented that if people stayed out of trouble, they would not be criticized in newspapers. Another called the measure a direct blow to democracy in that it had been introduced only to protect the government from criticism. Another Solomon's comment must have been something of an affront to his relative who had introduced the measure. Eric Solomon was paraphrased by the Tribune's report as stating:

I am satisfied that the principle may be an excellent one
but I am not satisfied with motives prompting the introduction

of this Bill. I believe this measure was brought to the House because certain people object to adverse criticism. The average Bahamian did not care about the criticism of the Press.¹⁴²

Alvin Braynen, who would settle a libel action against the Tribune some years in the future, observed that it was well known that preachers and journalists made less money than anyone. His question was, the paper reported, where would the Press get the money to set up the bond required by the law? Braynen reminded the House that,

From the days of the Watchman a fearless newspaper was found necessary in this community and the House should not be prepared to give up something which it had taken centuries to develop.¹⁴³

Ultimately, the legislation gained tentative approval by a margin of two votes.¹⁴⁴

The problems of colonial journalism were soon swept away by events in Europe and Asia, which would present Dupuch with the greatest challenges he was to experience as editor of the Tribune. War work, libel suits, elections and the post-war rebuilding of the Tribune would require all of Dupuch's efforts, abilities and attention in the decade of the '40s. Each of these demands took its toll on his finances, health and spirit, but he seemed to thrive on the vicissitudes and demands of his position as a leading figure in colonial journalism and Bahamian life.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Vitriol [pseud.], "Political Back-Chat," Nassau Tribune, 11 January 1938, p. 1.

At the outset of the war, the Tribune, unlike its rival, did not issue any special editions but noted with some prescience:

If this war lasts for any time it is going to be a question of endurance in this country, and the sooner people start facing the situation without panic and excitement and learn to conserve their resources, the more likely are we all to pull through the ordeal--badly scared but alive and ready for a reconstruction period.¹⁴⁵

As the war progressed through the winter of 1939 and the spring of 1940, little happened beyond the destruction of Poland and naval action in the Atlantic. In May, the German army struck at the British and French armies through Belgium and quickly split those allied forces in a successful drive to the channel coast of France. The British were driven into a small pocket at Dunkirk where the majority were rescued by sea in the most miraculous evacuation of the twentieth century.

Dupuch, along with his fellow colonials, agonized over the nightmare at Dunkirk and resolved to do more than stand idly on the sidelines as Britain faced its greatest challenge. When the local government and Governor Dundas--he had been returned to the Bahamas as governor after a period of service outside the Colony--could not determine a course of action, Dupuch, both in print and in person, urged the governor to begin a program of active support of the war effort. When Dundas could not, or would not, act, Dupuch suggested directly to London a plan to gather scrap metal and supply food to England. The Comptroller of Steel in England accepted his offer and Dupuch immediately called a meeting for all in Nassau wanting to work in the defense

¹⁴⁵"Reason," Nassau Tribune, 6 September 1940, p. 1.

effort. In a rare show of solidarity, Dupuch was chosen chairman of what would become the War Materials Committee. Even some of his enemies supported him in this activity. Ultimately, the War Materials Committee sent numerous loads of sorted, graded and pre-cut scrap metal which could be hauled directly to smelters without processing when it was unloaded in England.

Dupuch's success with the War Materials Committee created hostility and envy among the ruling class. With the formation of a companion "Fighter Committee" to raise money for fighter aircraft, there was a subtle push to join the two committees under the leadership of Sir Kenneth Solomon and thus reduce Dupuch's prestige. The fear and hatred of Dupuch had its humorous side. At the first meeting of the Fighter Committee, members announced their pledges to the fund. Solomon started the pledging with £100, and others followed. Dupuch, who had only recently paid off the Tribune's debts, also pledged £100. He learned later that the wife of one of the committee members had urged her husband to give more than Dupuch to avoid losing face.¹⁴⁶

Dupuch's troubles were not just with Governor Dundas over support for Britian and the local ruling class' fear of him, but also with Dundas' replacement as governor of the Bahamas. Dundas was reassigned to the governorship of Uganda in Africa to make way for the Duke of Windsor, the former King Edward VIII, whom the British government was anxious to isolate because of his mildly pro-German views. Although the ex-King was patriotic, the Germans plotted to kidnap him and his

¹⁴⁶Dupuch, Tribune Story, pp. 48-53.

Duchess in Portugal as they journeyed to the Bahamas. The Nazis believed they could use the Duke for propaganda and that he would support their aims.¹⁴⁷

Partly as the result of Edward's abdication to marry Wallis Simpson, the twice-divorced American, Dupuch expressed his dislike of the Duke's appointment to the Bahamas. He further objected to the Duke's appointment based on the waste of money spent on his training to be King, and for his obvious racial biases which were all too frequently displayed during his term as governor of the Bahamas. When a group of West Indian journalists were invited to Britain to report on the war effort, Dupuch nominated his younger half-brother, Eugene, as the representative of the Colony. Mary Moseley, whose Guardian, according to Dupuch, was doing little in support of the war effort in the Bahamas, nominated a niece's husband, an ex-bank clerk and non-journalist from Canada. The Duke chose Miss Moseley's nominee.¹⁴⁸

When airport construction became an important point in the war effort, a local black contractor was nominated to build part of the project. The Duke's reaction, according to Dupuch, who was involved in the discussion, was:

"We can't have a coloured man for this job," the Duke declared without hesitation. "We must have a white man." All the members of the committee looked in my direction but the Duke seemed completely oblivious to his indiscretion.

¹⁴⁷Shirer, pp. 785-92.

¹⁴⁸Dupuch, Tribune Story, pp. 83-85.

The job was given to Mr. Karl Claridge, and soon after this Nassau had its first riot.¹⁴⁹

But if Dupuch's problems with war work and the Duke dominated his attention, journalistic problems were soon to consume his time, money and efforts as another attempt was made to destroy the Tribune. This time the attack came through litigation for libel. The first libel case, although not directly connected with the attempt to destroy the paper, nonetheless cost Dupuch time and money. This libel, which cost Dupuch just over ten pounds, resulted when a reporter misrepresented a charge sheet from the Magistrate's Court. A group of taxi drivers brought the suit which was quickly settled. Dupuch noted without explanation that he thought the reporter's dereliction seemed deliberate.¹⁵⁰

In mid-1941, the Tribune published an apology to Alvin Braynen, whom Dupuch, in a moment of enthusiasm for the war effort, had charged with doing little for Britain. In the apology, Dupuch told his readers that he had been incorrect: Brynen, in fact, had made numerous anonymous donations to war funds. Dupuch also sent telegrams abroad to people in whose eyes Braynen's reputation might have been damaged. Ultimately, Dupuch's public apology and restitution of 100 guineas--£105, or about \$500--which Braynen had paid his lawyers, satisfied the plaintiff's demands.¹⁵¹

Ten days after the printed apology, Dupuch reported that an

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 86.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 104.

¹⁵¹"The Tribune Wrongly Accuses Mr. Braynen," Nassau Tribune, 18 June 1941, p. 1.

anonymous telephone caller had asked what the case had cost. When Dupuch inquired who was calling, the caller hung up. The following day, Dupuch found a letter on his desk containing 60 guineas and the following letter.

There are ten anonymous men in this town who feel that The Tribune erred in trying to do a piece of war work and, under the circumstances, you should not be penalized. Yesterday was a half holiday and I wasn't able to get around to them all, but here are the subscriptions of ten guineas each from six men. The other forty guineas will reach you on Monday. I want you to know that this town appreciates the war work done by The Tribune and the men of this town are with you.¹⁵²

Dupuch, in publishing his appreciation for this gesture, said his paper had to bear its own scars--and promptly donated the money to the War Materials fund.¹⁵³ There is no indication that the remaining forty guineas were ever forthcoming.

The third libel action was far more serious and began as the result of what might have been a setup. The April 10, 1942, edition of the Tribune reported the receipt of a letter containing four threepence pieces and a note that read, "A few monthly subscriptions from Frank Parks, W. T. Saunders, W. H. Sands and B. K. Thompson."¹⁵⁴ Although this could be interpreted as a newspaper subscription, it would not have paid for a full month; it was, one may presume, intended as monthly subscriptions to one of the war committees. It cannot be established

¹⁵²"One Hundred and Five Pounds," Nassau Tribune, 28 June 1941, p. 1.

¹⁵³Ibid.

¹⁵⁴"Anonymous Donation?," Nassau Tribune, 10 April 1942, p. 1.

who actually sent the money, but its small amount was an insult to the men listed as its donors. Dupuch, in his zeal for aiding Britain, erred in judgment when he printed the names in the note. It would tend to hold them up to ridicule in the community--a classic definition of libel--and as such, gave the businessmen cause for action.

On the day following the first publication, Dupuch received another note with 3d. (pence) and another name. This time he declined to publish the name, noting that he "smelled a rat."¹⁵⁵ Ten days after the first article appeared, the four men named in the article brought suit against the Tribune's proprietors for £4,000 damages.¹⁵⁶ The plaintiffs charged:

By the said words the Defendants meant and intended that the Plaintiffs were mean, selfish, contemptible and unpatriotic in subscribing such paltry sums out of all proportion to their standing in the community.

By reason of the publication of the said article the Plaintiffs have been held up to ridicule, contempt and scorn in the eyes of the public, thereby intending to engender an evil opinion of the Plaintiffs in the minds of their fellow-men.¹⁵⁷

The first result of this apparent "get the Dupuches" campaign was Eugene Dupuch's withdrawal as a candidate for the Long Island district in the 1942 House of Assembly elections. His withdrawal was based on the expense of fighting the libel action and maintaining the candidacies of the three Dupuch brothers, two of whom were already serving in

¹⁵⁵"Smell a Rat," Nassau Tribune, 11 April 1942, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶"Libel Action," Nassau Tribune, 20 April 1942, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷"Libel Action in Supreme Court," Nassau Tribune, 16 November 1942, p. 6.

the legislature.¹⁵⁸ Etienne Dupuch was ultimately defeated in his candidacy to be the representative of the Inagua-Mayaguana district.¹⁵⁹

The libel case, however threatening, turned out to be something of a chimera. The case came to trial on Monday, November 16, 1942,¹⁶⁰ and lasted three harrowing days.¹⁶¹ The Tribune ran day-by-day, blow-by-blow accounts of the trial. Dupuch apologized to his readers for the lack of attention he could pay to the paper since his trial was consuming most of his time and energy.¹⁶²

Dupuch devoted a chapter in his book, Tribune Story, to the libel case and it is far more revealing and interesting than the contemporary newspaper reports. In the book, Dupuch wrote that his attorney, Godfrey Higgs, suggested that he, Dupuch, conduct his own defense. There was sound wisdom in doing this. First, Dupuch could introduce points of evidence which, under the rules of evidence, might otherwise be inadmissible. Second, he could plead ignorance of court procedure, but by the time the point could be debated and disposed of, Dupuch would have planted the idea he was trying to get across in the jurors' minds. A trained lawyer would never have made the errors Dupuch planned to make. To prepare themselves, the Dupuch brothers used the time between the

¹⁵⁸"Withdraws Candidacy," Nassau Tribune, 21 April 1942, p. 1.

¹⁵⁹Dupuch, Tribune Story, pp. 133-34.

¹⁶⁰"Libel Action Opens," Nassau Tribune, 16 November 1942, p. 1.

¹⁶¹"Tribune Wins Libel Action," Nassau Tribune, 19 November 1942, pp. 1-2.

¹⁶²"Apology to Readers," Nassau Tribune, 16 November 1942, p. 1.

initiation of the suit and its trial date developing their defense. With Higgs' help, they were able to anticipate the plaintiffs' plan of attack in court and meet the threat.

When the special jury list was announced, Dupuch and the plaintiffs' lawyers were allowed to challenge those selected for jury duty. Dupuch played ignorant and praised those whom he did not want on the jury and was critical of those whom he did want. The opposing lawyers fell for the ploy and rejected those whom Dupuch had praised--the ones he did not want on the jury. He knew the ones he rejected would be chosen. Ultimately, the twelve men chosen for the jury would vote as Dupuch expected--for acquittal.

For all his apparent lack of legal expertise, Dupuch knew his opponents. He managed to trap the plaintiffs' senior counsel into asking questions which Dupuch used to drop hints of things he wanted the jury to hear but were inadmissible. The chief justice finally commented, and it must have been with some amusement, that Dupuch had the chief counsel on the defensive so much that he and Dupuch should change places.

By the time a spy told Dupuch that the jury had heard enough and wanted to go home, Dupuch had already prepared his closing address to the jury. And so he notified the jury that he was ready to end his defense. The jury was pleased; the plaintiffs and their lawyers were stunned. The chief justice noted that although Dupuch, a non-lawyer, was ready, the professional lawyers were not, but should have been. He adjourned the court in order to give them time to prepare their closing statements.

When the court reconvened, the senior counsel for the plaintiffs addressed the jury with his closing arguments. Dupuch realized that the lawyer was off his form. What happened next unstrung the lawyer completely. The air raid siren went off. Although there had been periodic tests of the siren in the past, the proximity of the siren to the courtroom and its coincidental sounding at the height of the counsel's address forced him to suspend his argument. When the siren stopped, the counsel resumed his argument; once again, the siren sounded for the "all-clear" and the lawyer was again forced to suspend his address. By this time the jurors were giggling--one can only imagine what the rest of the court was doing--and it was impossible for the plaintiffs' lawyer to have any effect on the jury. The jury retired for its deliberations, but soon returned with its verdict--10-2 for acquittal. The two votes to convict, according to Dupuch, were cast by men connected with the Nassau Guardian.¹⁶³

The result of this court action gave Dupuch and his paper respect in the community.

I had faced the court ordeal only because of my desire to serve my people and my country, but I had learned a valuable lesson. I had learned that the men on Bay Street--the section of town from which the jury came--were fair when one could reach their minds. I also realized that all the divisions in the colony were kept alive by a small political group whose purposes this condition served.¹⁶⁴

Although Dupuch never identified who he thought was at the bottom of

¹⁶³Dupuch, Tribune Story, pp. 104-110.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 110-111.

his troubles, he apparently knew who it was. The cause, Dupuch alleged, was jealousy about his success as chairman of the very effective War Materials Committee and because his success might bring him some official recognition.¹⁶⁵ If the attacks on Dupuch were instigated in order to deny him the recognition his work had earned him, they failed. In 1949, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire and in 1965, after this study ends, he was awarded a knighthood.¹⁶⁶

Dupuch's fertile and imaginative brain always seemed to be working on some plan of action for the future betterment of his paper, his family and the Bahamas. Following the libel action in 1942, Dupuch proposed the organization of a social action group dedicated to the creation of a program to study the needs of a peasant economy, public health and education for the seven-year term of the legislature. In addition, the group would have a college-trained secretary to read proposed legislation and recommend to the "party" positions to be taken. Here is the first mention of political party organization in the Bahamas. Heretofore there had been only factions--principally "ins" and "outs"--in the Bahamas. Dupuch wrote that because most members of the House voted on instinct, or how someone else told them, this new procedure would allow party members to go into the House of Assembly with knowledge about a matter when it came before the legislature for consideration. Dupuch even offered to set up an editorial board for his paper so the party would have access to the Tribune's editorial page. The

¹⁶⁵"After Thirty-nine Years," Nassau Tribune, 28 November 1942, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 157.

editorials would be used to rouse public opinion on matters of health, education and the economy of the islands.¹⁶⁷

With some accuracy, Dupuch identified the problem afflicting the Bahamas as,

. . . a human problem because we have failed to keep the intellectual and spiritual side of our people abreast of what we call our progress--a progress that has completely ignored all human values which form the basis of stable life. The political institutions of Nassau have been run by a small clique for the benefit of themselves and their immediate associates. Less and less has this clique demanded intellect and character of its members, and consequently, more & [sic] more are they inclined arbitrarily to deny one not accepted in the clique any right to intelligence and character.¹⁶⁸

This problem, which Dupuch identified in 1942, had been recognized by the founders of the Freeman in the 1880s, and would haunt the Bahamas until the majority black population formed themselves into an effective and militant political party which could force the ruling clique out of positions of political power in the Colony.

During the decade of the 1940s, as previously noted, the Duke of Windsor provided little in the way of leadership during his tenure as governor that could or would bridge the growing dissatisfaction between the black and colored masses and the ruling whites. Governors who followed the Duke recognized the growing problem of racial tension, but were not in a position to change the existing attitudes and social institutions which perpetuated the problem. The black and colored leaders of the community provided the first effective articulation of the unrest and dissatisfaction with the status quo.

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

To understand the growing resentment of the majority, it is necessary to return to the period of World War I and its aftermath. Throughout England's Caribbean colonies and in the Bahamas, the colored colonial troops from World War I, who were beginning to become the community leaders of the 1930s and '40s, remembered both their deeds and the slights they suffered as "native" troops during the war. They had shared the horrors and rigors of duty in Egypt, "Mespot," as Mesopotamia was inelegantly known, and the fronts in Europe. They returned to the colonies wiser and more certain of their own self-worth as human beings. Age-old restrictions were galling, but it would take time to develop the leadership and skills to overcome the political and social disabilities that prescribed their places in colonial societies. Although Dupuch's experiences as a colonial soldier were probably similar to most, he was more articulate in expressing his feelings and he had an established forum in which to express them.¹⁶⁹

Black and colored community leaders in Nassau--Bert Cambridge, a musician; Claudius R. Walker, a doctor; Jack Lowe, a school teacher and Etienne Dupuch, himself--would all turn to journalism to represent the majority racial group in the Bahamas. Cambridge, Walker and Dupuch would also serve in the House of Assembly. A. F. Adderly, Godfrey Higgs and Eugene Dupuch would be called to the Bar and serve their Colony and people in the government of the islands. Because these men initiated change in the social order, a younger and more militant generation would complete the change by more radical means than those of the older, more

¹⁶⁹Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 27.

moderate generation. The younger men and women ultimately succeeded, but their story and the role of journalism in the struggle lie outside the scope of this study.

Following Dupuch's legal troubles of 1942, the Tribune and its editor settled down to deal with the problems of surviving the shortages of a wartime economy and the strains put on the existence of newspapers throughout the British Empire. In addition to the problems of providing his paper with the supplies and spare parts needed to stay in operation, Dupuch and his paper faced the basic hostility of the Duke of Windsor and the ruling class which dominated the economic and political life of the Bahamas.

On July 8, 1943, the burned and battered body of Sir Harry Oakes was found in his bedroom; and for the Bahamas, the trial of the century was on.¹⁷⁰ Sir Harry Oakes was an American by birth; but after prospecting for and finding gold in Canada, he became a British subject. When Canadian taxes became oppressive, Oakes settled in the Bahamas, then as now, a tax haven. Oakes ingratiated himself into the local society by being white, wealthy and generous; however, it did not protect him.

Immediately after the announcement of the murder, the Duke imposed censorship on the Press. He was too late. Dupuch, who had been scheduled to meet with Oakes the morning following the discovery of his body, had already learned of the murder and sent the news out.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰"Sir Harry Oakes Meets Tragic End," Nassau Tribune, 8 July 1943, p. 1.

¹⁷¹Michael Craton, A History of the Bahamas (London: Collins, 1962), p. 276.

The imposition of censorship prevented competent reporting of developments from leaving Nassau; it did not prevent word-of-mouth misinformation, rumor and falsehood from going out with each plane or shipload of travelers returning from Nassau to Miami. These garbled reports and fabrications were picked up by the news services--in lieu of truthful reporting--and sent throughout the United States and abroad. The Tribune pointed out the futility and folly of censorship inasmuch as daily communication with Florida prevented any sort of effective control of information in any case.¹⁷²

The Duke's imposition of censorship in the Oakes case was not an isolated occurrence. In summarizing the attempts of the Duke to impose controls on the Press, the Tribune noted that the paper could not run information about a memorial service for the Duke of Kent who had been killed in a military airplane crash. The BBC was carrying a live broadcast of the service throughout the Empire, including the Bahamas, but newspapers in the Colony were told they could not run the story. Dupuch, of course, was outraged.

In the Bahamas officials authorized to censor information not only take it upon themselves to reverse the decisions of censors in England but stretch their power to embrace occurrences that have not the remotest connection with this war or any other war.¹⁷³

Dupuch would get the last shot at the Duke of Windsor in this war

¹⁷²"Sir Harry Oakes Meets Tragic End," Nassau Tribune, 8 July 1943, p. 1.

¹⁷³"Officials And The Press," Nassau Tribune, 9 July 1943, p. 1.

of controlled information. As the war came to an end and the Duke's tenure as governor of the Colony expired, he attempted to hold up the news of his departure from Nassau as a war measure. Dupuch, realizing what was going on but wanting confirmation, asked the acting colonial secretary why the news was being held up. The official said he thought it was because the Duke did not want to be bothered by reporters when he got to Miami. Angered by the Duke's action, Dupuch resolved to have the final round in this war of wits in which the Duke was evidently severely disadvantaged.

Dupuch's description of his revenge is delightful reading.

Had the Duke asked me not to report his movements I would have co-operated. . . . But I resented this abuse of power and I concentrated all my faculties on trying to find a way to beat the rap. Suddenly I got an idea. It was a long shot but it might work. And so I phoned Mr. Bethel [the acting colonial secretary]. "This is an awful thing the Duke is doing," I told him, "the Associated Press in Miami has heard somehow that he is leaving the colony tomorrow and their editor has asked me to report whether he is arriving by plane. There might be quite a stir when A.P. hears later on that the Duke would not let me answer a question. There is no excuse for this restriction. The war is over. Will you give him this message for me?"

He said he would and a few minutes later he phoned me back to say that the Duke agreed that I should be able to answer a question but that the message must be sent to him for approval. I drafted the message carefully. It read something like this: "In reply to your query, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor will not be arriving by plane in Miami at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning." The telegram was approved and sent off.¹⁷⁴

The message arrived in Miami and alerted the Associated Press bureau that something was happening that could not be revealed. Because the A.P. had not asked Dupuch for the information concerning the Duke's

¹⁷⁴Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 93.

plans, they realized that Dupuch's unsolicited telegram was letting them know that the Duke would arrive in Miami the next morning at ten. Moreover, because Dupuch had said the Duke would not arrive by plane, there was only one alternative. Reporters were on hand the next morning when the Duke's steamer from Nassau pulled into the pier at Miami.¹⁷⁵

Dupuch's parting shot had scored.

Just to keep a paper going during the war was a major problem for newspaper editors in the Bahamas. Wartime rationing made supplies of newsprint, equipment and spare parts difficult. Only the intervention of the Duke of Windsor secured an allotment of newsprint for the Bahamas and saved the papers from suspending operation in 1943.¹⁷⁶

At the celebration of the Guardian's centennial in 1944, the Tribune reported that,

During the last war, when supply problems were most acute, these two newspapers were able to publish regularly only because of a spirit of most friendly co-operation.

During the present war, the same is true. For the next week The Guardian will be printed on paper loaned it by The Tribune--its supplies have not arrived on time. One of the machines which was necessary to the production of today's Tribune--and many more Tribunes to come--is able to operate because of a part borrowed from The Guardian until a new part can be obtained from the factory.¹⁷⁷

Cooperation and a spirit of make-do helped both papers survive.

Supplies would continue to be a major problem for the newspapers following the war. In June 1946, Dupuch appealed for understanding on

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶"Newsprint," Nassau Tribune, 13 October 1943, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷"Tribune Passes Another Mile Stone," Nassau Tribune, 25 November 1944, p. 1.

the part of advertisers concerning the shortage of space.¹⁷⁸ By the end of the month, he announced that although circulation was increasing and the demand for space was at record levels, the spiraling price of newsprint and the difficulty of obtaining spare parts might cause the paper to take drastic actions to conserve supplies and equipment. Among the measures proposed were rationing advertising space, halting the increase of new subscribers and increasing rates for both advertising and subscriptions.¹⁷⁹ Early in July, Dupuch reported that he had found an additional small supply of paper at three times what he had been paying. The result was a halfpenny increase in the daily rate¹⁸⁰ with similar increases for long-term subscribers.¹⁸¹

By September, supplies were again so critical that the Tribune was forced to print on linen paper which cost 20 times more than pulp paper and was more difficult to print on.¹⁸² By the end of the month, trouble with a motor delayed publication of the paper for one day and it was still being printed on the bond, or linen, paper.¹⁸³ By mid-October, the Tribune was still using bond paper.¹⁸⁴ A month later the

¹⁷⁸"Emergency," Nassau Tribune, 4 June 1946, p. 1.

¹⁷⁹"Too Much Business and No Tools," Nassau Tribune, 29 June 1946, p. 1.

¹⁸⁰"Attention Tribune Subscribers," Nassau Tribune, 3 July 1946, p. 1.

¹⁸¹"Too Our Subscribers," Nassau Tribune, 13 July 1946, p. 1.

¹⁸²"Special Attention," Nassau Tribune, 17 September 1947, p. 1.

¹⁸³"Motor Trouble Delays Publication," Nassau Tribune, 28 September 1947, p. 1.

¹⁸⁴"Twenty Times As Much," Nassau Tribune, 11 October 1947, p. 1.

Tribune announced yet another increase in the monthly subscription as well as an increase in casual advertising.¹⁸⁵

In spite of these difficulties, Dupuch was able to complete a reorganization of the paper and expand its physical plant which he announced in mid-1947; there was a further hint of even greater things to come.¹⁸⁶ A few days later, mysterious aerials were being erected on the Tribune's office building.¹⁸⁷ On Saturday, August 16, 1947, the Tribune announced that not only was the paper being printed on a new press, but that the paper was now a full member of the Associated Press. The aerials being installed were for the wireless equipment which would link the Tribune to Associated Press headquarters in New York for both word and picture service.¹⁸⁸ The first Associated Press wirephotos reached the Tribune on August 27, 1947,¹⁸⁹ and shortly thereafter began to appear regularly in the paper.

Newsprint, that continuing tribulation of post-war editors throughout the world, was not available in adequate supply for the Tribune's new press and Dupuch had to improvise. From the Miami Herald Dupuch managed to acquire some rolls of newsprint that would fit the new press.

¹⁸⁵"Sorry Friends!," Nassau Tribune, 16 November 1947, p. 1.

¹⁸⁶"Reorganization," Nassau Tribune, 9 August 1947, p. 1.

¹⁸⁷"Erection of The Nassau Daily Tribune's New Newspaper Press Has Now Been Completed and Trial Runs Will Be Made During The Next Three Days," Nassau Tribune, 14 August 1947, p. 4.

¹⁸⁸"The Nassau Daily Tribune Announces Its Plans For The Future," Nassau Tribune, 16 August 1947, p. 5.

¹⁸⁹"Tribune's Wireless Receivers Installed," Nassau Tribune, 23 August 1947, p. 1.

The paper had been made in pre-war Poland, sold to a paper in Shanghai, China; it was re-routed to New York, then to Miami and from there to Nassau.¹⁹⁰ By the end of September, Dupuch reported another increase in the price of newsprint and another increase in the subscription rate of the Tribune. The daily rate moved to 3d. (three pence), double the price of 14 months earlier.¹⁹¹

Mechanical problems continued to plague the Tribune. Machines, used long past their prime with insufficient maintenance, began to fail. Only assistance from the Mergenthaler Company, makers of the Linotype machine, could keep the paper's Linotypes operating. Dupuch noted that there had not been a day without a problem of some sort.¹⁹² Six months later, the Tribune reported that a minor break in the paper's press had forced the publication of a single page bulletin.¹⁹³ The result of this breakdown was the employment of Nigel Minns as General Superintendent of Works,¹⁹⁴ and the practice of hiring qualified employees and paying them the highest wages possible.

If hiring a trained engineer as the superintendent helped with the immediate problems of publishing the paper efficiently and economically, long-term plans were to be the salvation of the paper:

¹⁹⁰"Just Kept Rolling Along," Nassau Tribune, 19 September 1947, p. 1.

¹⁹¹"Important Announcement," Nassau Tribune, 29 September 1947, p. 1.

¹⁹²"Here and There So . . . What?," Nassau Tribune, 3 January 1948, p. 1.

¹⁹³"These Things Happen," Nassau Tribune, 12 July 1948, p. 1.

¹⁹⁴"There's Always a Bright Side," Nassau Tribune, 17 July 1948, p. 1.

. . . four younger members of the family are now being specially trained in the U.S. and England to take over The Tribune on its 50th anniversary in 1953. Two more will go abroad shortly for training towards this end, so that in time we hope to develop a team of specialists in every department of the publishing business--and this team will constitute a future Board of Editors for this publication.¹⁹⁵

By 1948, the eight-page press installed two years earlier had become inadequate, but Dupuch was again making plans to expand his printing plant. New buildings and equipment, including a new printing press and a new stereotyping machine, were planned for the facility.¹⁹⁶ Dupuch invited the leadership of the Colony's government to the dedication of the new Tribune plant, and with his usual flair for involving the public in the life of his paper, he invited every resident in Nassau to the festivities.

In going over the list of prospective guests for this occasion, we realized that there was no point at which we could stop because of the fact that The Tribune is the people's [sic] paper and, as such, the humblest citizen in the land would be as much entitled to an invitation as the highest . . . any member of the public who might desire to be present will be equally welcomed.¹⁹⁷

Following the expansion of the Tribune's plant, Dupuch brought out a Sunday supplement which was delivered with the Saturday issue of the paper. The supplement included features, fashions and comics. It was

¹⁹⁵"Tribune Passes Another Mile Stone," Nassau Tribune, 20 November 1948, p. 1.

¹⁹⁶"Tribune Dedicates New Buildings," Nassau Tribune, 16 March 1949, p. 1.

¹⁹⁷"Inspection of Tribune Building," Nassau Tribune, 12 March 1949, p. 1.

free to subscribers, but sold for threepence in street sales.¹⁹⁸

By mid-summer 1950, Dupuch was busily adding new photo-engraving and Linotype equipment as part of his expansion plans for the Tribune.¹⁹⁹ Newsprint, however, continued to be a major problem and it was impossible to expand the paper to meet the demand for advertising space.²⁰⁰ Part of the newsprint problem was that, had supplies been plentiful, the Tribune's Nassau plant lacked adequate storage space for keeping large amounts of the vital commodity on hand.

In 1951, Dupuch brought the neighboring property which gave the paper about a third of the entire block upon which the plant stood.²⁰¹ High-speed teletype circuits were established with the Associated Press in the spring of 1952;²⁰² and, as Dupuch proudly announced, the Tribune also established links with Reuters, the major British news service, and with the Beaverbrook papers in London.²⁰³ Later in the summer, the Tribune began to receive the Associated Press' Caribbean and Latin American Service.²⁰⁴ The expansion evidently began to pay off as the

¹⁹⁸"Free to Subscribers, Sold on Streets," Nassau Tribune, 17 June 1949, p. 1.

¹⁹⁹"Expansion," Nassau Tribune, 24 August 1950, p. 1.

²⁰⁰"Short of Newsprint," Nassau Tribune, 1 November 1950, p. 1.

²⁰¹"Tribune Acquires Corner Site," Nassau Tribune, 30 June 1951, p. 1.

²⁰²"Tribune Installs 'Latest Marvel In Communications,'" Nassau Tribune, 10 May 1952, p. 1.

²⁰³Etienne Dupuch, "Tribune Forges International Press Tie Up," Nassau Tribune, 10 May 1952, p. 1.

²⁰⁴"Tribune on A.P. Teletype," Nassau Tribune, 5 August 1952, p. 1.

paper proudly proclaimed that its circulation had reached 5,138. Moreover, it was planning to increase its newsprint order by 50 percent in 1953.²⁰⁵ This would help cushion the paper's periodic difficulties in getting paper.

On the paper's forty-ninth anniversary in 1952, Dupuch outlined his plan for the Tribune and for his children who would, he intended, take over the operation of the paper on its next anniversary. He planned to "fade into the background" and leave the operation of the paper to his children so they could begin to develop their own styles of leadership. Dupuch also planned to award a university scholarship to the child of a Tribune staff member on the paper's anniversary. He announced that he would continue to carry on the payroll a young man who was going to receive a scholarship but would still need help to finance his studies. In addition to assisting his staff, Dupuch proposed to establish a social services department to provide social and medical services to the young people in the community.²⁰⁶

A year later, on the golden anniversary of the paper's establishment, Dupuch touched on how and why the paper had survived and grown in influence in the community.

The Tribune is of the people and for the people of the whole Colony. It sees with the people's [sic] eyes as well as with its own. It understands them and their needs, their defects and their good points, their joys and their sorrows, their hopes and their disappointments, their aspirations and

²⁰⁵"Just Another Step," Nassau Tribune, 16 August 1952, p. 1.

²⁰⁶Etienne Dupuch, "Tribune Entering Last Lap In Its First Half Century," Nassau Tribune, 22 November 1952, p. 1.

their discouragement. And because of its own great and sustained struggle, its heart reaches out to the humblest citizen in perfect understanding and mutual sympathy.

The Tribune was born of the conviction in its founder's mind that the Colony needed an energetic, independent and progressive newspaper, and he gave the best years of his life to laying sure and enduring foundations.²⁰⁷

Two incidents in 1953 would have far-reaching effects on the Tribune and the Bahamas. The first of these incidents took place early in the year when Dupuch criticized the management of Hobby Horse Hill, Nassau's horse racing track. The immediate result was that Tribune reporters were barred from the track. This was followed by an investigation by the Inter-American Press Association which resulted in the restoration of the Tribune's access to the track and information. The management of the track also apologized to Dupuch.²⁰⁸ While a relatively minor incident, the threat to freedom of the Press was substantial, and Dupuch was vigilant and resourceful in winning his point to preserve the right of the Press to have access to information and to criticize without fear of being subjected to retribution.

A second incident, and one with far greater impact on the Colony, involved the Tribune in an incident of racial discrimination. Ultimately, the event may be seen as a turning point in the relationship between the white ruling minority and the black masses of the Colony who were without political organization or effective power in the House of Assembly.

²⁰⁷"After Fifty Years," Nassau Tribune, 21 November 1953, p. 1.

²⁰⁸"Freedom Of Nassau Press Brought Up By I. A. P. A., " Nassau Tribune, 1 July 1953, p. 1.

The incident, typical of Bahamian racial discrimination at mid-century, seemed minor on its face--a black man was refused accommodations in Nassau--but it was to become the focal point of the attack on discrimination. It began with engine failure on an airplane bound for London. The emergency forced a landing at Nassau, and there the racial trouble began. A number of respected and influential men were aboard the plane, including Sir Alexander Saunders, a director of the London School of Economics; Anthony Haler, Chief Press Officer of the Colonial Office; and Hugh Springer, Registrar of the University of the West Indies. Springer, a Barbadian, was black, and therein lay the problem.

Expecting a short layover, arrangements for meals were made in Nassau, but Springer was politely but firmly offered accommodation only at the airport cafeteria. Springer had bought a copy of the Tribune and noted that Dupuch, whom he had met earlier in the year at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, was editor of the paper. At this point, Springer telephoned Dupuch who, along with his wife, took Springer to dinner. On returning to the airport, Springer discovered that the flight was further delayed. Springer was refused a room at a white-only tourist hotel in Nassau, and again, Dupuch offered the hospitality of his home at Camperdown, near Nassau, to Springer, who accepted. The following day, Dupuch related the story to his readers.

This is just another of these incidents that should give thoughtful people in the community cause for serious pause. Surely any intelligent Bahamian must realize the urgency of

finding a solution for these embarrassing situations that occur far too often in this island.²⁰⁹

Lord Beaverbrook, owner of the London Evening Standard and other papers throughout the Empire, who was then living in Nassau, relayed the story to his paper in London.²¹⁰ The story appeared in the Kingston, Jamaica, Daily Gleaner, and Dupuch carried an extract from that paper which called for change throughout the British West Indies.

The time has come when the whole question of discrimination in these islands must either be faced intelligently or leaders of the people who live under this benign tyranny will be obliged to consider what means should be taken to bring about a change.²¹¹

Change was in the air, and the Progressive Liberal Party was already at work, although it would be a number of years before it gained influence and power in the Colony. Late in 1954, Dupuch, in reviewing the Tribune's year, reported an incident which would have important repercussions for himself and the Bahamas.

Some months ago David Stirling, a well-known Englishman, who is Founder and President of the Capricorn Society of Africa, visited Nassau during a world tour in the interests of his Society which is dedicated to bringing European, African and Indian races together over a wide stretch of the Dark Continent in a spirit of goodwill and cooperation.

For some reason he had singled me out in this community

²⁰⁹"Another Unpleasant Incident At Oakes Field In Nassau," Nassau Tribune, 3 December 1953, p. 3.

²¹⁰"Beaverbrook Paper Takes Up Springer Indignity in Nassau," Nassau Tribune, 5 December 1953, p. 1.

²¹¹Etienne Dupuch, "This Intolerable Nonsense," Nassau Tribune, 8 December 1953, pp. 1 and 3.

for affiliation with the African movement. Soon after returning to Africa he wrote asking me to form a branch of the society here.

I have had this proposal under consideration for some time. Because of the terrible blunders in human relations and disruptive new forces [the militant Progressive Liberal Party] that are rising up in the community, I have decided to go forward with this plan as soon as I have completed the present undertaking for expanding The Tribune.²¹²

Clearly, Dupuch was rebuking the ruling class for its racial insensitivity and the PLP (Progressive Liberal Party) for its radical social program. It was Dupuch's intention to start his own organization to provide what he considered a moderate approach to resolving matters between the white minority and the black majority. The ruling minority would fight him in the Guardian and in the House of Assembly. The PLP would give cooperation to Dupuch in the short run, but turn on him after the elections in 1956.

A series of meetings early 1955 resulted in the formation of the Bahamas Democratic League--the BDL. Dupuch, who started the BDL, told his readers that it was not a political party because it was not designed to present a political program. Neither was it to elect members to the House of Assembly to support the BDL. The BDL identified race relations as a matter of concern, along with the economic structure of the Colony. For the next 18 months, Dupuch led the BDL in its effort to provide a voice of moderation, based on the United National Declaration of Human Rights, in the Bahamas.²¹³

²¹² Etienne Dupuch, "And It All Came To Pass," Nassau Tribune, 20 November 1954, pp. 1 and 4.

²¹³ Etienne Dupuch, "No Cause For Alarm," Nassau Tribune, 28 January 1955, p. 1.

The Bay Street Boys, still in control of the Colony's economy and government, found their grasp being threatened by influences they could not control. The basic threat to their hegemony was the growing dissatisfaction of the majority element of the population with the economic, political and social status quo. Visible and often violent changes were taking place in the British Empire and other colonial or imperialistic societies, as well as in the United States. These served as models for the hitherto complacent and apathetic masses, showing that they could control their own destinies.

The Springer incident served to focus Dupuch's interest on racial equality and the preservation of what he considered the best interests of all Bahamians. The Capricorn Society provided an organizational framework for the Bahamas Democratic League, and events abroad provided inspiration for Dupuch and his fellow BDL supporters. A political and philosophical moderate thought that,

. . . if men and women of intellect and high character could be brought together in the same room for a common purpose, the whole problem of racial prejudices and suspicions could be solved in this community without conflict.²¹⁴

On September 16, 1955, Dupuch announced that the Bahamas Democratic League had taken the "long step" from being an advisory group to a political party.²¹⁵ Both the reactionary Guardian, whose columnist,

²¹⁴"B. D. L. Goes Into Action," Nassau Tribune, 9 April 1955, pp. 1 and 7.

²¹⁵Etienne Dupuch, "This Is A Beginning," Nassau Tribune, 16 September 1955, p. 1.

"Dinghy Joe," called the BDL the "Bailout Dupuch League,"²¹⁶ and the radical Herald considered Dupuch's organization a political party--as did a majority of the BDL's members--before Dupuch himself announced the change.

In attacking the ruling minority and the PLP, Dupuch called the ruling class arrogant and "mid-Victorian" in political and social philosophy. He called the PLP the "natural" child of the ruling class, charging that the PLP was ". . . composed of people of very limited means who want to tear down the whole present structure and dismember it limb by limb."²¹⁷ Thus Dupuch saw his organization's role as the firm middle ground where the past could be modernized and a radical future prevented. He was too late; political polarity had already developed, even as the moderate BDL decided to challenge in the 1956 elections.²¹⁸

The year 1956, the last year of this study, was to be an important one for Dupuch, the Tribune in its relations with a revitalized Guardian and for the Colony. Early in the campaign, Dupuch returned to the subject of racial discrimination with a vengeance. In New Zealand, while on a press tour of the Empire, the managing editor of the Kingston, Jamaica, Daily Gleaner told Dupuch of another racial incident in Nassau. The incident involved a Jamaican couple, thus the Gleaner editor's

²¹⁶Dinghy Joe [pseud.], "'Dinghy Joe' Writes About the Bahamas 'D' League," Nassau Guardian, 28-29 May 1955, p. 4-A.

²¹⁷Dupuch, op. cit.

²¹⁸"BDL To Challenge '56 Elections," Nassau Tribune, 16 September 1955, p. 1.

interest in the incident. Dupuch was chagrined. After returning to Nassau, Dupuch fired off the opening broadside in his attack on segregation in the Bahamas.

The time has come when discrimination in all licensed public places in this British Colony will no longer be tolerated by the people at whom this indignity is levelled. Our people have been patient under years of crushing insult. Their patience is now at the breaking point.²¹⁹

From these incidents of racial bigotry and the ill-treatment Dupuch had received at the hands of the ruling class in Nassau over the years, one can only surmise the effects they had on the course he was to follow. They did, at least, cause him to come to grips with discrimination on the basis of race. On January 17, 1956, he announced that he would move an anti-discrimination resolution in the House of Assembly where he represented the eastern district of New Providence Island. He intended to request that a Commission of Enquiry be established to investigate.²²⁰

This was a shrewd political request on Dupuch's part; one what would severely discomfort the ruling majority in the House. Under the rules of the House, a Commission of Enquiry would outlast the legislative session in which it was created. With the elections at hand, Dupuch wanted an investigatory body which could continue its work beyond the end of the legislative session and the changes resulting from

²¹⁹ Etienne Dupuch, "Discrimination in Nassau Hotels," Nassau Tribune, 3 January 1956, pp. 1 and 3.

²²⁰ "Dupuch To Move Anti-Discrimination Resolution In House," Nassau Tribune, 17 January 1956, p. 1.

the election. The alternative to the commission, if an alternative could be arranged, was a Committee of the House which would expire at the end of the legislative term. Committees of the House were a convenient way for the reactionary leadership of the House to shunt aside requests that would upset the congenial flow of government in their interests.

Dupuch was not successful in his motion for a Committee of Enquiry; it lost, 11-9.²²¹ While Dupuch was speaking, the usual procedure in these matters unfolded.

. . . Mr. Frank Christie left his seat and went to the Speaker's chair, where he had a conference. I had seen this happen so often in the past that I knew exactly what to expect. I knew a motion would be made for a committee, and this way it was planned to kill the movement. As I anticipated, Mr. Christie made this motion. The motion for a committee [rather than the more effective commission] prevailed, and when the Speaker appointed Frank Christie its chairman something inside me cracked. I had promised Jerry Fletcher [the managing editor of the Daily Gleaner in Jamaica] in New Zealand that, if necessary, I would die in the attempt. I knew the time had now come to throw discretion to the winds, I stood up, stepped back from my seat, and made the bitterest speech of my life.²²²

The Speaker of the House of Assembly, Asa Pritchard, perhaps one of the most reactionary Bahamians, appointed the Committee of Enquiry rather than a Commission. As usual, the reactionary majority outnumbered the progressive minority assigned to the committee by Pritchard. When the announcement of the members of the committee was made,

²²¹"Dupuch Moves Anti-Segregation Measure In House," Nassau Tribune, 24 January 1956, pp. 1, 2 and 4.

²²²Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 149.

pandemonium erupted in the House. The Tribune's report catches some of the excitement of the moment.

"I protest," said Mr. Dupuch, springing to his feet to lodge his disapproval of the Committee appointed by the Speaker.

"What do you protest?" asked Speaker Pritchard.

"The manner of appointing your Committee," Mr. Dupuch said.

"You have no right to protest . . . sit down," the Speaker ordered.

"I refuse to sit down and I still lodge my protest," Mr. Dupuch declared, pounding the table.

"Then I shall have to call the constable to remove you," threatened the Speaker.

"You can call the whole Police Force," said Mr. Dupuch, "but I shall lodge my protest," pounding still harder.

"What do you protest?" the Speaker again asked.

"What you have done," Mr. Dupuch declared, "is the worst form of discrimination, it is a disgrace to the Chair you occupy and I refuse. . . ."

At this point the Speaker again threatened to call "the constable."

It was then that Mr. Dupuch declared: "You may call the whole Police Force, you may call the whole British Army . . . I will go to gaol [jail] tonight, but I refuse to sit down and I am ready to resign and go back to the people."²²³

The results of Dupuch historic action were immediate and dramatic. A streamer headline in the Tribune on January 26, 1956, said it all: "Nassau Hotels Open To Everyone."²²⁴ All the previously restrictive hotels, and some restaurants, fell into line over the next few days, noting that they had, for the most part, always welcomed "good Bahamians" or would, in the future, admit anyone who was properly dressed and

²²³"House Adjourns When Dupuch Presses Protest," Nassau Tribune, 24 January 1956, pp. 1 and 3.

²²⁴"Nassau Hotels Open To Everyone," Nassau Tribune, 26 January 1956, p. 1.

well behaved.²²⁵ Dupuch, without the committee, without legislative action, had forced the issue and won. Segregation was at an end in the Bahamas.

It is difficult to know who or what was among the influences that brought about the change. Not all agree that it was Dupuch alone who brought down discrimination in the Colony. Years later, Doris Johnson would write:

Editor Stevenson wrote in the Herald on July 26, 1958: "It was not Dupuch who broke down the barriers of discrimination and segregation. It was the PLP and its agencies that wakened the people to their responsibilities, and that awakening was forcefully demonstrated at the time Dupuch moved his resolution in the House."

Weeks before this, according to the Herald, the Bahamas Hotel Association had met and agreed that discrimination in hotels should be discontinued. When Dupuch moved, it was the PLP who backed him in the House, and were ready for a showdown there and then.

The PLP believes they achieved the breakdown through years of hard work and consistent agitating. The party warned the people to beware of Dupuch's red herrings and false propaganda and urged that they be ready to resist them with all their power.²²⁶

It must be noted that the PLP had certainly worked hard in attempting to gain equality and power for black Bahamians. Dupuch, however, was the leading proponent for equality and the sharing of power among all groups in the Bahamas. Long before the establishment of the PLP, Dupuch had position in the House of Assembly and his newspaper, which he used effectively to bring about change. This is not to say that the PLP failed to have an effect in the event, but Dupuch, on the other

²²⁵Ibid.

²²⁶Johnson, The Quiet Revolution, p. 38.

hand, had two positions of influence--the House of Assembly and his daily newspaper. In addition, he enjoyed connections throughout the world via the Associated Press, Reuters and the Beaverbrook papers. His position at the center of events, and his international connections, allowed him to bring more influence and pressure for change to bear than could the parochial PLP.

Ultimately, the aftermath of Dupuch's resolution in the House of Assembly would bring equality for the black majority and independence for the Colony. Dupuch's personal aftermath of the 1956 elections was total defeat. He lost his seat in the House of Assembly and his BDL ended political life with the near total defeat of its candidates. By the time independence was granted, Dupuch and the Bahamas Democratic League were no longer significant factors in the Colony.

Twentieth Century: Press War

Much of the opposition to Dupuch and his paper at mid-century came about by the final sale of the Guardian. The first hint of change in the ownership of the Guardian was noted early in 1949, when the Tribune reported the sale of the old Guardian to Bahamian and Canadian interests.²²⁷ Among the Canadians involved was Roy Thomson, whose publishing empire would eventually rival the Beaverbrook holdings throughout the world. Although Thomson was to be the principal shareholder in the Guardian, Miss Moseley was to continue as editor.

In addition to his interest in the Guardian, Thomson also tried to

²²⁷"Nassau Guardian Sold," Nassau Tribune, 11 February 1949, p. 1.

gain control of ZNS, the government-owned and operated radio station. The House of Assembly went so far as to pass a resolution favoring the sale of ZNS to Thomson,²²⁸ but public opinion prevented the sale of the station.²²⁹ Thomson also tried to run Dupuch out of business, or, as Dupuch described it, tried to buy him out with an immediate cash offer. Dupuch wrote that he found Thomson seated in his chair in the Tribune editorial office waiting for him, checkbook at the ready. Dupuch refused to sell, ordering Thomson out of his chair and out of the Tribune building. Eventually, Thomson tired of his Nassau property and sold his shares of the Guardian to the other members of the investment group.²³⁰

The second sale of the Guardian, late in 1951, gave control of the paper to a group of Englishmen who made Nassau their home for part of the year, and a group of Nassau businessmen who were members of the Executive Council and the House of Assembly.²³¹ The owners of the company organized a new corporation and early in 1952 took over the operation of the Guardian. Burton Lewis, a Canadian with experience in provincial newspapers in western Canada, was appointed editor.²³²

²²⁸"ZNS Passed Without Debate," Nassau Tribune, 20 May 1949, p. 1.

²²⁹Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 119.

²³⁰*Ibid.*

²³¹"Newspaper Sale Reported," Nassau Tribune, 8 December 1951, p. 1.

²³²"New Guardian Set-Up," Nassau Tribune, 2 February 1952, p. 1.

If the previous relationship between the Tribune and the Guardian had been one of respect by the former toward the latter, and condescension by the latter toward the former, the sale of the Guardian brought about a fundamental change in the relationship. The innermost leadership of the ruling class had at last a forum of its own, free of restraint created by three generations of the Moseley editors. The reactionary party had a paper with the respect of age and the vitality of a youthful editor to attempt to destroy Dupuch and his paper. The results of the change in ownership of the Guardian were to be far-reaching for the Tribune, for Dupuch and for the Bahamas. After a six-month period of reequipping and revitalizing the Guardian, the paper's new leaders went on the attack.²³³ Their intent, according to Dupuch, was to destroy the Tribune and its editor.²³⁴

For the next four and a half years, the battles in the columns of the two papers were bitter, vitriolic and reciprocal. By mid-1952, the Guardian was on the attack following a Tribune editorial questioning the Development Board's stewardship of £300,000 of public money. Dupuch charged that the Board had not hired an accountant until questions were raised about the Board's management. Dupuch wrote:

The matter won't be dropped because I find people everywhere--and in all walks of life--want the information, and there is general resentment to the fact that the Board apparently feels that it has to account to no one. All the Board does is to put out periodically figures on "booming"

²³³"How The Guardian Sets The Pace In Nassau Newspapering," Nassau Guardian, 2 May 1951, p. 1.

²³⁴Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 127.

travel to Nassau but the fact still remains that . . . the house count in the hotels does not reflect the figures given by the Board, and the question naturally arises . . . where are the people?²³⁵

These were harsh words for a Board which included shareholders in the Guardian and the ruling class which that paper represented.

The Guardian, defending its friends and the Board, immediately pressed its own attack. "Dishonest in content and motive,"²³⁶ was the opening paragraph in the first verbal salvo fired by the Guardian. A day later, a front page editorial titled "Here Are Some Answers to Tribune Falsity," provided some rebuttal to Dupuch's charges.²³⁷ In a companion editorial titled "Deliberate Falsehoods," the Guardian termed Dupuch's allegations as "insidious insinuations" and said his purpose was ". . . to impair and undermine confidence in the strongest force bolstering the economy of the Bahamas."²³⁸

At this distance, it is difficult to determine Dupuch's motives in asking his questions about the Development Board's management of public money. He was often critical of the ways in which the ruling oligarchy operated. Although the Guardian replied with what appeared to be irrefutable evidence pointing out that the Board did have an

²³⁵Etienne Dupuch, "The Editor's Column," Nassau Tribune, 17 June 1952, p. 1.

²³⁶"Article Friday Due To Answer Tribune Falsity," Nassau Guardian, 20 June 1952, p. 1.

²³⁷The Editors of The Guardian, "Here Are Some Answers To Tribune Falsity," Nassau Guardian, 20 June 1952, p. 6.

²³⁸"Deliberate Falsehoods," Nassau Guardian, 20 June 1952, p. 2.

accountant,²³⁹ the stridency of the paper's replies and defenses might lead one to believe that Dupuch's editorial questions had touched a very sensitive nerve.

The year 1952 was a significant year for both papers. The Tribune continued its expansion program of its physical plant, news sources and circulation. The Guardian's new owners also expanded and modernized its plant. They also changed its publication from evening to morning and its size from broadsheet to tabloid.²⁴⁰ In noting these changes, Dupuch wrote:

In their very first issue after gaining control of this newspaper [the Guardian], the new owners made it clear that it would become a political instrument, and so they immediately launched a campaign against responsible elements in the community that stood in the way of their creed.

Their principal targets were the Governor and The Tribune. The group they represent openly said that the Governor must go in three months. And they tried to undermine this newspaper by a vicious attack on the reputation of its editor which failed because the public knew that the suggestions were both malicious and unfounded. Now they are actually claiming some of the credit for the spectacular growth of this newspaper during this period. What they don't understand--but will learn in time--is that they happened to come into the picture just at the moment when we were ready to launch plans for which we have been preparing young staff for over 20 years. What we have done this year is only a beginning of bigger things to come.

May the soul of the "old" Guardian rest in peace. For most of its life it had a fine reputation. But, alas, it had been a miserable creature when it gave up the evening "ghost" to embrace the morning "baby."

This community needs two good, responsible newspapers.

The "new" Guardian should try to be one of them.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Etienne Dupuch, "Rest The Old Bones . . . Bless The "New" Baby,,,,," Nassau Tribune, 13 December 1952, p. 1.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

The war of words continued between the editor of the Tribune and a succession of editors at the Guardian. The invective did not soften; early in January 1953, the Guardian wrote of Dupuch:

The absurd posturing of the editor of the Tribune and his continued adoption of a "holier-than-thou" attitude reached newer heights of comedy in his column Tuesday night.²⁴²

In April, Dupuch was accused of juggling facts to discredit the Guardian.²⁴³ In September, the Guardian reported that it was a nuisance to correct Tribune errors. The writer was responding to a Tribune article critical of the Guardian's harsh words for the governor in the handling of an invitation by the Jamaican government for a Bahamian delegation to visit during the Queen's tour of Jamaica.²⁴⁴

The war of words was a continuing fact of life in Bahamian journalism, and it soon turned into a war of numbers when the Tribune reported its circulation figures. Using what he called "audited figures," Dupuch reported the figures (percentages have been added)²⁴⁵ shown in Table VII. The Tribune's daily circulation increased 1,975 copies between 1951 and 1953--a 58 percent increase. Weekend figures jumped 2,385 copies over the same period to show an equal growth rate.

The Guardian, apparently in an attempt to reply with something to

²⁴²"When Is A Rumour Not A Rumour?," Nassau Guardian, 2 January 1953, p. 6.

²⁴³"Who Is Really Hysterical?," Nassau Guardian, 7 April 1953, p. 6.

²⁴⁴"Again! No!," Nassau Guardian, 19 September 1953, p. 4.

²⁴⁵"Audited 'Tribune' Circulation Shows Spectacular Growth," Nassau Tribune, 16 February 1954, p. 1.

TABLE VII
TRIBUNE CIRCULATION FIGURES

Year	Daily Average (Monday-Friday)			Saturday Average		
	Date	Total	Change	Date	Total	Change
1951	2/19-23	3,400	--	2/17	3,125	--
1952	4/20-24	4,000	+21%	4/25	4,930	+19.5%
1953	2/15-20	5,375	+31%	2/21	6,510	+32.0%

Dupuch's claim for circulation leadership, reported its advertising lineage for the first two months of the year and compared them to the Tribune's lineage. Table VIII, Guardian Lineage Figures, provides the comparison.²⁴⁶

During the fall, the Guardian published three similar two-page advertisements offering three separate £500 rewards if anyone could prove the Guardian figures wrong.²⁴⁷ Apparently nobody could, or would, take up the paper's challenge. Except Dupuch, who replied to both the charges about advertising lineage and circulation figures claimed by the Guardian. Using his own measurements and the Guardian's definition of advertising, Dupuch claimed total advertising leadership during the summer months by about 1,000 lines of all forms of advertising.²⁴⁸ If the

²⁴⁶Nassau Guardian, 13 March 1954, p. 13B.

²⁴⁷"We Invite You to Make £500," Nassau Guardian, 29 October 1954, p. 1.

²⁴⁸Etienne Dupuch, "'Tribune' Answers 'Guardian,'" Nassau Tribune, 22 November 1953, pp. 1 and 3.

TABLE VIII
GUARDIAN LINEAGE FIGURES

Newspaper	January 1954	February 1954
Local lineage in the <u>Guardian</u>	188,860	201,054
Local lineage in the other paper	<u>148,946</u>	<u>148,876</u>
<u>Guardian</u> lineage lead	39,914	52,178
Total lineage of all advertising in the <u>Guardian</u>	216,566	236,389
Total lineage of all advertising in the other paper	<u>193,102</u>	<u>201,607</u>
Guardian lineage lead	23,464	34,607

claims and counter-claims are confusing at this distance, they must have both confused and entertained the residents of Nassau who were witnesses to the fighting between the editors.

Confusion notwithstanding, Dupuch had a telling argument in his reply, and one point stands out in reading the microfilm--captive advertising. Dupuch pointed out that when the Guardian was sold, the new owners were careful to include among the shareholders owners of businesses in Nassau. The obvious disparity, even to the most casual of readers, is that of display advertising for movies. There are issues of the Guardian which contain a full page of one column by six-inch advertisements for movies showing in Nassau, or coming to Nassau. All the theatres in Nassau were owned by Theatrical Enterprises, whose owners were also shareholders in the Guardian. Dupuch reported that

during the summer months, Theatrical Enterprises placed 3,512.25 column inches of movie advertising in the Guardian, and only 628.25 column inches in the Tribune. On the other hand, the Tribune reported carrying 3,235.5 column inches of display advertising from grocers. The Guardian could claim only 207 column inches of advertising from the same source.²⁴⁹

Circulation figures were also called into question by Dupuch--not those of his paper, but the manner in which the Guardian advertised its circulation growth. One can imagine the glee with which Dupuch could have written the following description of what happened.

In a page advertisement in its issue of Tuesday, December 15, 1953, The Guardian declared that sales of the week-end Guardian totalled "Over 5,000 copies."

In Editor and Publisher International Yearbook 1954--"the Encyclopedia of the Newspaper Industry," The Guardian's circulation for its Week-End issue is given as 11,000. The information given in the Year Book, which is a reference work by [for?] foreign advertisers, is supplied by the newspapers. To get this information in Editor and Publisher for 1954, The Guardian would have had to submit their figures before December 1953.

So that during 1953, "The fastest growing newspaper in Nassau" had apparently made a spectacular drop from 11,000 to "over 5,000."

Let us now see what is happening on August 20, 1954. On this date S. S. Koppe & Co., New York advertising representatives of The Guardian sent out a circular to advertising agents in its territory. In this circular Koppe claimed a Week-End circulation of 6,000 for The Guardian.

It would appear, therefore, that from the date on which the figure was given to Editor and Publisher, the circulation of The Guardian Week-End edition dropped from 11,000 to 5,000 and then climbed to 6,000.

Now let us see what is happening on October 26, 1954. On that date The Guardian boasted; "The Guardian is smashing all October newspaper sales records for the Bahamas. On Saturday

²⁴⁹Ibid.

afternoon we ran an October record 5,000 copies of The Week-End Guardian on our presses--and every copy was sold."

Let us go over those figures once more.

Before December 1953: 11,000 copies

December 1953: over 5,000 copies

August 1954: 6,000 copies.

October 1954: It broke all October newspaper records for the Bahamas with 5,000!

These figures leave me a little confused.

Is this Wonder Baby of Bahamian journalism growing up or growing down?²⁵⁰

Dupuch was correct; the figures are confusing, and one is left with wondering which figure, if any, is correct.

During this period, Dupuch was under attack from many directions. He had the usual problems of running a colonial newspaper in a highly competitive setting; defending against Guardian attacks and, at the same time, keeping up his offense against the rival paper; fending off, successfully, a takeover attempt by Roy Thomson, and arranging protective financing for the Tribune.

Lord Beaverbrook, one of Dupuch's strongest supporters, offered to loan Dupuch sufficient money to pay off his various creditors and consolidate his indebtedness under one friendly creditor. Dupuch accepted and Robert Symonette, President of The Nassau Guardian (1844), Ltd., rushed into print with a story accusing Dupuch of selling his paper to Lord Beaverbrook for £12,000 with a lease back agreement at what Symonette called ". . . favorable terms of ONE SHILLING [Symonette's emphasis] a year."²⁵¹ Symonette was in high form because Dupuch had

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Robert H. Symonette, "Sale of Tribune Property To Beaverbrook Revealed, "Nassau Guardian, 11 March 1954, p. 1.

always opposed selling Bahamian businesses and resources to foreign interests.

Dupuch was in print the same evening to inform his readers that the paper had not been sold, that Beaverbrook did not have a financial interest in the paper and that the transaction was, in effect, an ordinary mortgage.²⁵² Beaverbrook's terms were £3,000 interest over five years on a £12,000 note. Dupuch asked for a ten-year repayment period, but Beaverbrook explained that he might not live ten years and did not want to burden either his family or Dupuch with any problems. Beaverbrook lived past the loan period and offered to extend the note, but Dupuch was prepared to pay it off and did.²⁵³

Battles with the Guardian were a regular feature of 1955, following the establishment of the Bahamas Democratic League, and through the election in June 1956. The BDL managed to hold only one seat after the election, and that the seat held by Eugene Dupuch for the Crooked Island district--a seat the younger Dupuch had held for a number of years.²⁵⁴ The elder Dupuch's sage, and as it turned out, prophetic, advice to would-be leaders was ". . . if you want to change the pattern of society tie up with the poor or the very rich."²⁵⁵ His Bahamas Democratic League, tied to neither group, did not survive the defeats sustained at the polls in the 1956 elections.

²⁵²"No Part of Tribune Business Sold," Nassau Tribune, 11 March 1954, p. 1.

²⁵³Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 120.

²⁵⁴Ibid., p. 141.

²⁵⁵Ibid., p. 25.

It appears that throughout the period from 1951 until 1956, Dupuch, Burtón Lewis and Charles P. Arnot, who became editor of the Guardian in August 1954,²⁵⁶ were locked in a desperate and vicious newspaper war to dominate the fields of journalism and politics in the Colony. Newspaper reports from the period make it fairly obvious that the major shareholders, as represented by Robert Symonette and the editors of the Guardian, were actively seeking to destroy the Tribune and its editor.

The antecedents for this bitter rivalry lie in the social structure of the Bahamas, which had developed along the same lines as the southern United States. Many of the leading Bahamian families traced their roots to American Loyalists from the area, while many of the black Bahamians were descended from the slaves brought to the Bahamas by the Loyalists. The resentments of nearly two centuries of subjugation were near the surface and would soon flare into potentially violent confrontation.

Dupuch's racial heritage and financial acumen placed him in the black or colored middle class of the Bahamas. With his innate talents as a writer and as the owner of a journal in which he could make his opinions available to all, he was a serious threat to the white oligarchy of the Colony. His financial strength, protected as it was by Lord Beaverbrook's interest and assistance, kept Dupuch and his paper free of economic or financial attack by the reactionary element of the community. Yet for all his strength and position, Dupuch did not attempt to conduct or to lead a revolutionary political movement at a time when

²⁵⁶"A Change in the Team," Nassau Guardian, 22 August 1954, p. 4.

tensions among racial groups were beginning to run high. Dupuch's political philosophy remained basically one of fair play and equality for all.

The strength of the Tribune, buttressed as it was by the consolidation of its debts in the hands of a friendly creditor, put Dupuch in an unassailable position in which the usual economic pressures employed by the white ruling class could not damage him or his paper. Socially, his position as editor of the Tribune, and as a journalist of international reputation, gave him entrée, grudgingly at times, to the halls of power within the Colony--and without, for that matter.

The black community, although not a serious or recognized threat to the status quo until after the 1956 elections, was beginning to develop a sense of group identity, partially through the efforts of papers like the Herald and the Voice--two papers which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter--in addition to Dupuch's efforts in the Tribune.

For more than 50 years, the Tribune had been the only journal consistently to advocate the rights of the Colony's black community--not so much as a separate black community, but rather as part and parcel of Bahamian society. Even though his advocacy was not always appreciated by either group, and frequently resented by them, Dupuch had a consistent philosophy of political moderation and the independence to voice it in his paper.

For all his access to power, imagined and real, Dupuch used considerable restraint in the exercise of what was at his disposal. In many ways he was the conscience of the community as well as a gadfly--

and, in the estimation of some, a menace. For the most part, Dupuch was sounding a warning to the reactionary elements of Bahamian society that its fear of change would ultimately force even greater change.

The black community was developing an active and vocal political life that was beginning to challenge the Bay Street Boys' domination of the life of the Colony. While journalism in the Colony became more strident, the actions of the people involved did not reach the point of violence or subversion, but the possibilities of it were not far below the surface. Elsewhere, the bonds of Empire were dissolving, to be replaced by independent nationhood within the British Commonwealth. India was gone, having gained independence in 1948 after years of violent and non-violent struggle against British rule. African colonies were gaining their independence, or were experiencing guerrilla warfare by native organizations which attempted to overthrow British rule. In East Africa, the Mau Mau organization was conducting a frightful campaign of terror against European settlers and the natives who cooperated with them. In the United States, segregation and age-old racial discrimination practices were under attack by law and by changing attitudes and customs.

Information about the changes swirling throughout the Empire and the nearby United States entered the life of the Bahamas through the mass media--newspapers, radio and television from Miami--and newspapers and radio from Nassau--and through individual contacts with the world beyond the seas. Newspapers in the Colony now had greater and faster access to news and information through news services and their own connections abroad. The electronic media were able to provide information

at a rate that was truly overwhelming. And local radio, which will be discussed in the next chapter, brought the news of Nassau and the world to Out Islanders with immediacy on a station that was uniquely Bahamian and helped give the islanders a sense of community which could not be provided by the uncertain delivery of expensive newspapers from Nassau.

Over the 107 years the Guardian was owned and operated by the Moseley family, the paper was in touch with the sentiments of the class it represented. It reflected the biases and tastes of the small, but dominant, white oligarchy in the Colony. The paper's longevity gave it a cachet which permitted it to lead opinion in the community rather than follow it. As the leading paper of the Colony until some years after the establishment of the Tribune, it stoutly defended its place in the business and political life of the Colony. Not until Etienne Dupuch had been editor of the Tribune for a number of years was the Guardian seriously threatened and finally dominated by another paper in the Colony.

The one factor that stands out in the success of these two papers is that of family. To date, in two centuries of journalism in the Bahamas, only these two papers, which were the products of determined, self-made men and women, have survived. Only the commitment to a family-operated enterprise employing the unpaid or underpaid labor of family members kept these institutions viable in the small community of Nassau. In the twentieth century, only the strong-willed Mary Moseley and Etienne Dupuch could keep the papers alive and functioning during the stresses of war and economic depression. The Guardian, now a corporate entity, survives in a subdued role as the morning paper in the

independent Bahamas. The Tribune, still owned by the Dupuch family and operated by Etienne Dupuch's eldest child, Eileen Dupuch Carron, continues its independent path through the new realities of Bahamian political life, now dominated by the Progressive Liberal Party.

The Minor Journals: Nassau

The 56 years of the twentieth century included in this study have been rich in journalistic endeavors in the Bahamas. There is evidence, although frequently scanty, that at least 24 journals of some description have been in publication at various locations in the islands. Twenty-two of these journals can be defined as minor journals on the basis of short publication periods and the lack of physical remains in the Nassau Public Library's collection of newspapers. For several of these minor journals, there may be some questions as to whether they were ever actually issued. In any event, each journal identified, whether published or not, is included here as part of the history of journalism in the islands.

For many of the early journals listed in this chapter, the Nassau Guardian and the Nassau Tribune are the only sources of information. Information about some journals is as brief as a single sentence. Several of these publications do not meet the definition of a journal as stated in the second chapter of this study. They are included here because they at least appear to have intended to publish on a regular basis. One publication billed itself as a magazine, but was later referred to as a newspaper. Two publications were issued as Royal Air Force base newspapers at the airfield on New Providence Island.

In this section, each journal identified will be discussed to the extent that information about it has been found. Some issues of these publications may exist in the Bahamas or elsewhere, but for any number of reasons they do not exist in the microfilm record of the Nassau Public Library's newspaper collection which serves as the basis for this study.

The Watchman. The first newspaper to appear in the Bahamas in the twentieth century was the Watchman. It first appeared as a full-sized broadsheet on the evening of November 5, 1901, and was edited by Leon E. H. Dupuch.²⁵⁷ Dupuch would later found the previously discussed Nassau Tribune, which is still operated by his descendants. Dupuch had been persuaded by a group of disgruntled Bahamians to join with them in setting up a new newspaper in reaction to the exclusivity of the Guardian, which opened its columns only to the Government House set. Dupuch, whose attitude toward public access to the newspaper's columns was more egalitarian than his shareholders, was soon at odds with them.

As the most knowledgeable of the Watchman's owners, Dupuch was sent to New York to buy the necessary equipment for the paper. Once the paper was established, it developed a reputation for being well-edited and printed.²⁵⁸ The Guardian observed that the Watchman's first Christmas issue contained ". . . eight pages of matter, with illustrations, being very nicely printed and arranged."²⁵⁹ The New Year's

²⁵⁷ Carron, op. cit.

²⁵⁸ Dupuch, "The Story of The Tribune."

²⁵⁹ Nassau Guardian, 24 December 1901.

edition the Guardian reported as being ". . . very neatly designed and printed in two colours, and reflects credit on the office."²⁶⁰

At the end of October 1903, Dupuch resigned as editor of the Watchman, apparently in protest of the paper's growing tendency to close its columns to any but its own "set" of adherents.²⁶¹ He was evidently replaced as editor by W. E. Pritchard, who is first mentioned as editor of the paper a year later on October 26, 1904.²⁶²

In a letter to the editor of the Guardian, a correspondent noted that the editor of the Watchman had written that he was proud of the fact that the paper had passed its third birthday and was looking forward to its centenary in 2001. The Watchman's editor also bemoaned the lack of financial support, a fact which might force him to suspend his paper. The Guardian's correspondent suggested that the Watchman's editor should make his,

. . . sacrifice on the altar of historic patriotism! Let him make an honourable exit . . . in a burst of flame and glory, along with those copies of his paper he is apparently unable to sell. . . .²⁶³

The Watchman finally disappeared in 1906.²⁶⁴

The Searchlight. The second paper to be established in the twentieth century was titled The Searchlight and made its appearance early

²⁶⁰Nassau Guardian, 31 December 1901.

²⁶¹Carron, op. cit.

²⁶²Nassau Guardian, 26 October 1904.

²⁶³Nassau Guardian, 3 December 1904.

²⁶⁴[Mary Moseley], op. cit.

in 1902. In fact, there were two Searchlights issued that year, one of which drew the wrath of Alfred Moseley in no uncertain terms. His reaction to the anonymously published first Searchlight indicted the offending publication and the city of New York as well.

We have seen a leaflet entitled "The Searchlight" which has been put into circulation in this city through the Post. It has apparently been printed in America, probably in New York, (where anything can be got done for dollars), and is undoubtedly the offspring of some irresponsible, unprincipled scribbler. It consists of mendacious, malicious attacks on the administration of Justice in the Supreme Court of the Colony. . . . Any disappointed litigant, any convicted criminal, any cowardly back-stabber who can beg, borrow, or steal a pound or two can have venomous, lying reports printed in America and put into circulation here.²⁶⁵

Moseley was obviously not one to mince words; in this case he was probably safe from any libel prosecution. No information can be found about this publication other than Moseley's vituperative reaction to its first and, perhaps, only, appearance in Nassau.

Unless its publisher had a change of heart, or if Ernest A. Dyall liked the name, a second Searchlight began publication on Saturday, November 22, 1902. Dyall was its editor and proposed to report police, court, local and foreign news.²⁶⁶ Again, beyond a single reference which included the name of its editor, this paper does not appear in any of the summaries of Bahamian journals published occasionally by the Guardian.

²⁶⁵ Nassau Guardian, 19 February 1902.

²⁶⁶ Nassau Guardian, 26 November 1902.

The Daily Witness. On October 14, 1908, Guardian noted the publication of the first issue of The Daily Witness, owned and edited by Charles S. Rae.²⁶⁷ Whether the paper actually maintained a daily publication schedule cannot be determined, but it apparently published for several weeks; the last reference to the Daily Witness appeared on November 11, 1908.²⁶⁸ It then disappears from the Guardian's columns. It probably ceased publication soon after the November 11 issue of the Guardian. Miss Moseley's summary of Bahamian journalism in the Guardian's centenary issue stated laconically, "The Witness appeared for a few weeks in 1908."²⁶⁹

The Observer. From 1908 until after the First World War, no newspapers are known to have been established at Nassau. The exigencies of war and recovery further retarded the expansion of journalism in the Colony until 1922. On May 6, 1922, the Observer appeared in Nassau. It was published by Uriah H. Knowles and edited by L. Livingston Lunn.²⁷⁰ Lunn and Etienne Dupuch, the editor of the Nassau Tribune, were apparently well disposed toward one another inasmuch as Lunn let Dupuch print an edition of the Tribune on the Observer's press following the 1926 hurricane which wrecked the Tribune's printing plant.²⁷¹ On November 12,

²⁶⁷Nassau Guardian, 14 October 1908.

²⁶⁸Nassau Guardian, 11 November 1908.

²⁶⁹[Mary Moseley], op. cit.

²⁷⁰"A New Paper," Nassau Guardian, 6 May 1922.

²⁷¹"After The Hurricane," Nassau Tribune, 31 July 1926.

1927, the editor of the Tribune congratulated the editor of the Observer on the birth of a son.²⁷²

The Observer survived until 1930, when D. L. W. Johnson and A. P. Rogers took over the operation of the paper during Lunn's final illness.²⁷³ His obituary, which appeared in the Tribune of May 24, 1930, noted that he died at age 31 after having operated the paper since its founding eight years earlier.²⁷⁴ The paper did not long survive its editor; less than a month after Lunn's death, the Observer's own obituary appeared in the Tribune.²⁷⁵

The Nassau Leader. In the fall of the following year, the Nassau Leader succeeded the Observer as a four-page weekly published at the former office of the Observer. Interestingly, it was published by a Mrs. Gerassimos, who used the nom de plum, "Miss Marjorie Peacock." Following her assumption of the editorial direction of the new paper, the Tribune commented:

. . . that journalism, a very masculine profession, has taken a decidedly feminine turn in the Bahamas. A woman edits the Guardian and her assistant is a woman. The genius behind The Business Men's Weekly is an "editress," and now The Nassau Leader edited by a woman.²⁷⁶

There is no indication that this paper, the Nassau Leader, was in

²⁷²Nassau Tribune, 12 November 1927.

²⁷³"Here and There," Nassau Tribune, 19 March 1930.

²⁷⁴"Obituary," Nassau Tribune, 24 May 1930, p. 1.

²⁷⁵Nassau Tribune, 18 June 1930.

²⁷⁶Nassau Tribune, 3 October 1931, p. 4.

in publication very long; there are no further references to it in either the Guardian or the Tribune.

The Business Men's Weekly. Although no date is given for the start of the Business Men's Weekly, it apparently began publication no later than October 1931. That it is mentioned before the Nassau Leader in the Tribune's comment on women editors seems to indicate that the Business Men's Weekly may have been in print before 1931, and at least prior to the advent of the Nassau Leader. The Business Men's Weekly was owned by Elias G. Dupuch and edited by Edith G. Dupuch. Their relationship to the Dupuch's of the Tribune is not clear, but Elias may have been descended from the progenitor of the family, Elias Dupuch (1794-1870), through his eldest son, Joseph, who was Etienne Dupuch's great-uncle.

Little is known of this paper; the only extensive notice of it is in connection with a libel action taken against it by Commander Charles J. Alexander, a resident of Nassau. His complaint alleged that an extract taken from a Miami, Florida, newspaper falsely charged that he had been in a mysterious accident on Bay Street in Nassau. He sued the paper for £100. The case was settled, however, for simply an apology, no additional damages or costs being asked by the plaintiff.²⁷⁷ The apology appeared in the Tribune on April 17, 1937, and ran in all papers then being published in Nassau. In the apology, the proprietor and editor of the Business Men's Weekly were required to,

²⁷⁷"Libel," Nassau Tribune, 14 April 1937, p. 1.

. . . confess that such paragraph [in a Miami paper of February 27] was published under an entire misapprehension as to the facts. We hereby unreservedly withdraw every word in that paragraph which in anyway reflects on your character. We admit that there was never any foundation for any of the charges made and we tender you our sincere apologies therefor.

In accordance with the terms of the settlement recorded against us in The Supreme Court we consent to you publishing this apology in all the newspapers of this Colony at our expense.²⁷⁸

There is no indication in the surviving newspapers that this publication outlived its legal problems and public embarrassment. It may have disappeared soon after the publication of the libel, or lingered on to pass from the scene unnoticed and unlamented except, perhaps, by its owner and editor. From the scant record, the paper may have been in print about five and one-half years--late 1931 through early 1937--although the record is uncertain and its publication could have been longer.

The Saturday Morning. In 1929, Uriah Knowles, who ran a commercial printery and published the Observer, printed a hand-set newspaper called the Saturday Morning for an expatriate Englishman, Captain Ellis-Wade. Beyond one brief mention in the Nassau Guardian in 1956, there are no other references to this journal.²⁷⁹ It was apparently the personal journal of its editor, because it seems to have little or no affect on the life of the Colony. There is also uncertainty in

²⁷⁸"Notice," Nassau Tribune, 17 April 1937, p. 2.

²⁷⁹"Cecil H. Fox Has Been Employed By Guardian For Quarter-Century," Nassau Guardian, 15 September 1956, p. 2.

chronology about the establishment of this paper, as well as the Nassau Leader and the Business Men's Weekly. It is not a matter of great importance.

The Bahamas News. Sometime during the early to mid-thirties, another short-lived paper, the Bahamas News, was established in Nassau. Its editor, Commander John Scaife, was an interesting individual beyond his efforts to establish this paper. Although English, he had been born in Constantinople in the Ottoman Empire, and during the First World War had served aboard a submarine which had been captured during the Dardenelles campaign in 1915. He was a prisoner until the end of the war.²⁸⁰

After arriving in the Bahamas to manage a development project, Scaife drifted to Nassau where he operated a grocery store until becoming the editor of the newspaper. He was listed as a journalist as early as 1934, when his name appears in the jury list under that occupational heading.²⁸¹ The list probably would have been drawn up late in 1933, so there is the possibility that Scaife was working at that profession some time before the earliest start-up date given for his paper. Miss Moseley wrote in 1944 that the paper ". . . was issued for a short time in 1935,"²⁸² but she is incorrect.

²⁸⁰A. Talbot Bethell, The Early Settlers of the Bahamas and Colon- of North America (Holt, Norfolk, England: Rounce & Wortley, 1937), p. 211.

²⁸¹"Called To The Colours," Nassau Tribune, 1 October 1938, p. 1.

²⁸²"Jury List," Nassau Guardian, 20 January 1934, p. 2.

Early in 1938, the Tribune reported,

A "Tribune" delivery boy saw a blaze outside the "Bahamas News" building last night and put out the fire. Police found a small bottle containing gasoline in the yard against the eastern side of the building. Only a few boards were singed.²⁸³

The Tribune does not say if the fire was arson, nor does it, or any other paper, indicate that Scaife's paper was upsetting the community and thus be a target for vandals. In October 1938, the Tribune reported that Scaife had been called back to the colors--it would prove a premature recall--for active duty with the Royal Navy. Scaife had sold his printing plant to the Guardian, having suspended his paper some months earlier.²⁸⁴ It would seem, then, that Scaife began his paper sometime in the early to mid-thirties and brought it to an end in 1937 or 1938, possibly the victim of the economic difficulties of the period. Scaife will reappear in this study in his role as an air personality in the early days of radio broadcasting in the Bahamas.

The Mirror. One additional and obscure paper is mentioned as having been in publication between 1938 and 1940. The paper, the Mirror, was edited by Cyril Stevenson who will reappear in Bahamian journalism. The paper, according to Miss Moseley, was purchased by the Guardian in 1940.²⁸⁵ No other information could be found about this paper in either the Guardian or the Tribune.

²⁸³"Fire," Nassau Tribune, 15 January 1938, p. 1.

²⁸⁴"Called To The Colours," Nassau Tribune, 1 October 1938, p. 1.

²⁸⁵[Mary Moseley], op. cit.

The Herald. One newspaper established during the 1930s survived, despite numerous lapses in publication, until the early 1960s. The new paper, the Herald, was established with Holly W. Brown as publisher and J. Stanley "Jack" Lowe as editor, and began publication on May 1, 1937.²⁸⁶ Lowe was a contentious individual; Dupuch was to say of him later:

. . . Stanley Lowe, a schoolmaster who taught me at the Boys' Central School and who published a weekly newspaper . . . criticized me in almost every issue of his paper and then privately apologized that if he didn't do this he couldn't stay in business. "Man," he said, "this is the only thing that sells my paper." He also received handouts from some of my enemies.²⁸⁷

The Herald's appearance was met with mixed feelings in the little world of island journalism. The Tribune paid it only scant mention, merely recognizing its existence.²⁸⁸ The Guardian, on the other hand, commented that the new journal was unnecessary because the field of journalism in the Colony was already overcrowded.²⁸⁹ Another segment of the population was convinced that a Communist journal was menacing the Colony.²⁹⁰

The Herald ceased publication for the first time in late 1938 or early 1939 when, according to a news item in the Tribune, Commander

²⁸⁶Lowe, op. cit.

²⁸⁷Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 124.

²⁸⁸"New Weekly," Nassau Tribune, 1 May 1937, p. 1.

²⁸⁹"New Publication," Nassau Guardian, 1 May 1937, p. 1.

²⁹⁰Lowe, op. cit.

Scaife, who had been renting the Bahamas News printing press to Lowe, closed his shop and sold it to the Guardian.²⁹¹ Dupuch again picks up the story:

She [Miss Moseley] bought the press from its owner [Scaife] with the idea of closing down The Herald. I printed the paper for Mr. Lowe free of charge until he could arrange for another press, and then he proceeded to put more hell on me than ever.²⁹²

Dupuch was always willing to help a fellow editor, even one who gave him "hell," when he was down on his luck.

The Herald was out of print until mid-August 1939, and even then had trouble raising the £100 bond the recently passed Newspaper Security Act required of all newspapers printed in the Colony. Not until two merchants in Nassau, Milo Putler and Ronald Albury, posted Lowe's bond did the paper reappear.²⁹³

As an editor, Lowe was far from timid in attacking people and institutions in Nassau. His manner was abrasive and created no small number of enemies, a fact which might account for his paper's absence in the Nassau Public Library's newspaper collection. Late in 1944, for example, Lowe took on Etienne Dupuch and the Tribune for their support of election reform. Dupuch reprinted Lowe's offending article in the Tribune, and then followed it with his reply. The article appeared in the Herald on December ninth and Dupuch replied two days later.

²⁹¹"Newspaper Bond," Nassau Tribune, 14 August 1939, p. 1.

²⁹²Dupuch, Tribune Story, p. 125.

²⁹³"Bondsmen Accepted for Herald," Nassau Tribune, 15 August 1939, p. 1.

It should be remembered that Dupuch had only recently survived a libel action in the Supreme Court and if Dupuch's charge that Lowe took handouts from his, Dupuch's, enemies, Lowe may have been "placing hell" on Dupuch for some faction in local politics. In any event, Lowe's comments reveal something about his no-holds-barred writing style.

People who have watched the two-year old reform policy of The Tribune would be pleased to see some of the viciousness taken out of it. For now that the Tribune's change of heart has come, however belatedly, and for whatever reason, the change is welcome.

But is the Tribune's new policy one of sincerity? Friends of reform have for quite some time been doubting it and it is now being argued that neither ballot nor dissolution would satisfy the Tribune unless, of course, the editor can get back into the House again and thereby vomit up some of the "sour grapes" he has eaten.

Right while the House is considering giving favourable treatment to the ballot question, The Tribune is trying to see if it can be annoying enough to induce the House to refuse the ballot again. . . .

If we can interpret The Tribune's tactics aright, that paper wants neither ballot, a good House, nor a bad House. Dissolution will not do unless the House is dissolved for all time. Then the Tribune might get by appointment in government that it cannot hope to get from the electorate--a place for its editor in the lawmaking of the colony.

There is no use for the Tribune to cry and take the part of one beaten unfairly in the election game at Inagua. The open ballot at Inagua was as bad there as it has been anywhere else.²⁹⁴

Dupuch gave as good as he got, only with somewhat less colorful language and imagery.

Every once in a while someone tells us that The Herald has taken a swipe at the Editor of The Tribune.

²⁹⁴ Jack Lowe, "Sore Because Licked," Herald, Nassau, 9 December 1944, quoted in Etienne Dupuch, "Another Attack On Tribune," Nassau Tribune, 11 December 1944, p. 1.

We have never read any of the criticism because we must confess that we are rather intolerant of the type person who operates The Herald. We have always felt that he is so well known in the community by the people who really matter that condemnation from him is always a boost for us among the type of person whose good opinion we might desire.

That is why when he tries to praise the work we were doing in connection with the War Materials Committee sometime ago, we carried some sharp criticism of The Herald immediately after, and this has produced the reaction we desired and hope to maintain.

On Saturday The Herald took another swipe at The Tribune, and someone wanted us to see it so badly that a clipping was mailed to us today.

This is the kind of thing that has been going on for some time whenever we have tried to bring about certain long overdue reforms in the life of the community. It is the kind of tactic that has been employed to try to head off the reforms we have been advancing, and where there is no argument, abuse is always employed.²⁹⁵

There were apparently continuing arguments between the various editors of the Herald and Dupuch, ranging from the ballot reform question of 1944, through who claimed responsibility for the elimination of discrimination in Nassau's hotels in 1956.

Lowe was something of an investigative reporter as well as a crusading editor. On July 12, 1944, Lowe sent a letter to the Speaker of the House of Assembly, charging two members of the House with using their positions to obtain favors. One member of the House, desiring to obtain a lucrative post in the Colony's government, offered to sign a note for £50 to a colleague if he could obtain the post. Although the incident was reported in the Tribune,²⁹⁶ it quickly disappeared from

²⁹⁵ Etienne Dupuch, "Another Attack On Tribune," Nassau Tribune, 11 December 1944, p. 1.

²⁹⁶ "House Told of Scandalous Reports," Nassau Tribune, 13 July 1944, p. 1.

its pages, and nothing more was heard of the charge in either of Nassau's daily newspapers.

But if Lowe's crusades made interesting reading, he was not immune from legal prosecutions. Lowe was the subject of a libel action brought by an Out Island Commissioner, William G. Mackay. Mackay, suing for £1,000, charged Lowe with libelous comments in an article in the Herald, which accused the commissioner of incompetency as an Out Island administrator. Mackay charged that the article injured him in his work and exposed him to general hatred, contempt and ridicule; moreover, the charges were so severe that he had to be reassigned from Grand Bahama Island, where the incidents of alleged incompetency occurred, to another post from which he later resigned.²⁹⁷ Again, the local dailies dropped the story and no more was heard about it.

Following the sale of the Guardian in 1952, Lowe, continuing as editor of the Herald, also became the chief columnist for the new Guardian. There is no indication as to what negotiating may have taken place to arrange this "marriage," but Lowe provided some information in his column when he wrote, "I am not mealy-mouthed enough to fail to recognize the opportunity it creates for the larger expression of free thought."²⁹⁸ Although this may provide some basis for understanding why Lowe joined the Guardian, it is indeed a strange marriage of a radical reformer with what was then a reactionary newspaper devoted to

²⁹⁷"Libel Suit Against Editor of 'Herald,'" Nassau Guardian, 1 May 1952, p. 1.

²⁹⁸Jack Lowe, "One Man's Opinion: Some Herald History," Nassau Guardian, 1 May 1952.

preserving the status quo and protecting the interests of the white-dominated society. Lowe's association with the Guardian lasted scarcely a year. His sudden death early in 1953 ended the relationship.

Lowe's background undoubtedly led him to champion a more radical approach to solving the problems and inequalities he recognized in Bahamian society. In his young manhood, Lowe said, that to educate himself, he made an 1100-mile walk from Charleston, South Carolina, through the Shenandoah Valley and Blue Ridge Mountains to Philadelphia. The seven weeks he took to make the trip led him to scrap his old values acquired in the Bahamas.

. . . in a narrow Bahamian circle where wealth was the only criterion for measuring manhood and where love of country was understood to mean not the country where I was born, but a country thousands of miles away.²⁹⁹

In this, Lowe was identifying a major problem in Bahamian society--the continued allegiance to England as home rather than the Bahamas where many, black and white alike, were born, lived and died without ever leaving the island of their birth. Until the residents of the Bahamas began to recognize themselves as Bahamians instead of colonial Englishmen, there could not be development of political or social equality in the Colony. Lowe's experience in the United States evidently had a far-reaching effect in developing his own independence. In the United States, Lowe said, "I saw in the oneness of men a chance to live a free and uncrippled life."³⁰⁰ This view, coupled with his experience and

²⁹⁹"Hundreds Pay Tribute to Jack Lowe Following His Sudden Death Sunday," Nassau Guardian, 12 January 1953, p. 16.

³⁰⁰Ibid.

duty as an Out Island Commissioner dealing with the problems of health, education and economic survival faced by Out Islanders, could easily create feelings of anger toward the men and institutions he felt oppressed the masses.

Much of Lowe's background in journalism apparently came from several years of reporting for Commander Scaife's Bahama News. True to his newspaper calling, Lowe was out delivering the Herald a few hours before his death. Pallbearers at his funeral were members of the local news media, including Etienne Dupuch, Jr., representing Lowe's nemesis, the Nassau Tribune.³⁰¹

Although the Herald was essentially a personal journal, if the traces found in the existing journals are correct, it did not die with its editor. A week after Lowe's death, his eldest son, Sherman, was planning to form a new company to bring out the paper as a weekly, rather than the semi-weekly it had been under Lowe's editorship.³⁰² The new paper came out in mid-March under the title, the Nassau Herald, with Holly W. Brown as editor. It was dedicated to ". . . the memory of the former indomitable editor of the Herald, a friend of the common people and a champion of the underdog, the late Jack Lowe."³⁰³

The Tribune withheld its judgment of the new paper until the end of April 1953, when it commented that, although it had disagreed with

³⁰¹ "'Jack' Lowe Passes Suddenly," Nassau Tribune, 12 January 1953, p. 1.

³⁰² "New Printing Company To Publish The Herald," Nassau Guardian, 19 January 1953, p. 16.

³⁰³ "'Nassau Herald' Pays Tribute to Jack Lowe," Nassau Guardian, 16 March 1953, p. 16.

the new paper on some points, the new paper had reached, in the Tribune's view, a high level of honest and accurate reporting and that the new paper was worth the public's attention.³⁰⁴ Within the year Brown gave up his position as editor and sold his interest in the Herald to William B. Cartwright and Urban Knowles, who was serving as the paper's editor.³⁰⁵ Three days later, the Tribune reported that Cyril St. John Stevenson had left the Nassau Guardian to edit the Nassau Herald as the Progressive Liberal Party's political paper.³⁰⁶ Stevenson objected to the Tribune's headline, "To Edit Party Paper," and responded with a letter to the editor informing him that the Herald was not a party paper and would be just another good newspaper. Dupuch's editor's note following Stevenson's letter stated, "Sorry--we didn't realize that there was anything dishonest about editing a party newspaper."³⁰⁷

The Bay Street Boys and like-minded Bahamians could be hard to the point of meanness and outright cruelty, if popular accounts are credible. Apparently, by the end of 1954--the actual date cannot be pinpointed--the ruling group came to the conclusion that their interests would best be served by the elimination of the PLP and its agent, The Nassau Herald. Doris Johnson has written:

³⁰⁴Etienne Dupuch, "'Honour' Should Mean Responsibility," Nassau Tribune, 27 April 1953, p. 1.

³⁰⁵"Brown Sells Interest in 'Herald,'" Nassau Tribune, 29 January 1954, p. 1.

³⁰⁶"To Edit Party Paper," Nassau Tribune, 1 February 1954, p. 4.

³⁰⁷Cyril Stevenson, "Letter to the Editor," Nassau Tribune, 2 February 1954, p. 3.

The ruling class began a course of threats, bribery, and intimidation of frightening proportions. Many blacks who had openly been supporting the PLP were made to reject the Party openly.

Membership in the PLP would bring ugly reprisals in the form of mortgage foreclosures, endless firings from jobs, license refusals or revocations, and other outright and subtle forms of pressure.³⁰⁸

Whether this is overstatement of the case by Johnson or not, the fight was bitter and prolonged. Among the PLP stalwarts who fell victim to the attacks was the Nassau Herald's co-owner, William Cartwright. He also published a local magazine--the Bahamian Review--and was a real estate agent.

At some point during this period, Cartwright lost \$80,000, although how he lost it is not clear, and he was jailed for two years on a real estate fraud conviction. As a result, Cartwright was bankrupt; he lost both the publishing and the real estate businesses. Stevenson continued to edit the paper and managed to stay afloat by selling shares in the paper.³⁰⁹

By early November 1955, Stevenson was forced to suspend the Nassau Herald when his printer and partner, Ruban Knowles, informed him that the paper could no longer be printed in his print shop. Knowles, in announcing his severance with the paper, informed the public that henceforth his shop would do only commercial printing. Further, he, Knowles, was no longer associated with any political party.³¹⁰ While no evidence

³⁰⁸ Johnson, The Quiet Revolution, pp. 32-33.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

³¹⁰ "Herald Closes Down; Awaits New Equipment," Nassau Tribune, 14 November 1955, p. 3.

exists to prove a connection between Knowles' PLP affiliation and the harrassment alleged to have been employed by members of the merchant government, the announcement was in keeping with the intimidation used to destroy the PLP and retard the advancement of black Bahamians.

Late in December, the Guardian reported that the Nassau Herald would not reappear until 1956, and then as the Bahamas Opinion, not, as earlier reported in Nassau, under the name of the Bahamas Herald. Further, despite what Knowles had said in his announcement severing his connection with the PLP's Nassau Herald and getting out of the newspaper printing business, Knowles was to print the new paper with Cartwright and himself as publishers.³¹¹ This may have been wishful hoping on their part because there is nothing in the record to indicate that the paper resumed publication under either name.

Meanwhile, Stevenson, who had made arrangements for new printing equipment when Knowles quit printing the Nassau Herald, managed to get the paper back into print in mid-January 1956.³¹² Thus Stevenson and the PLP were still in possession of the lineal descendant of Lowe's original Herald. These are few references to the Herald in either the Guardian or the Tribune during the election year of 1956. This may have been a conscious omission by the papers inasmuch as the Guardian represented the white minority opinion and Dupuch's Tribune supported its editor and the BDL. The Herald did, according to Johnson, take an

³¹¹ "Publication's Revival Delayed Until 1956," Nassau Guardian, 26 December 1955, p. 7.

³¹² "'Herald' Publishing Saturday," Nassau Tribune, 16 January 1956, p. 3.

active role in the election campaign of 1956 and continued to support the PLP until 1964 when the paper's office was destroyed by fire.³¹³

The importance of the Herald in its various mutations cannot be minimized. At its birth in 1937, the paper was feared as a Communist organization; by the time it was taken over by the PLP, it was feared and hated by much of the white ruling class as a threat to its economic and political survival in the Colony. By the time of its death in 1964, the paper, in all its permutations, had served to educate a generation of black Bahamians about their strength to determine their own destiny and that of the Colony. The Herald provided a forum for the leadership of the PLP to instruct, cajole and lead a poorly organized and under-educated mass to a degree of dignity and hope never before possible for the majority of Bahamians. Whether hated or applauded, the Herald played a pivotal role in the development of black political consciousness in the Bahamas and holds an important place in the history of journalism in the islands.

The Voice. Although Nassau is the population center of both the Bahamas and New Providence Island, a sizable population lives outside the corporate limits of Nassau in settlements dating from before emancipation in 1834. The communities, over the years, had developed their own identities and institutions independently of Nassau. In the closing months of World War II, a group of black and colored business and professional men from the southern district--the southern part of New Providence Island--organized a company to publish a new weekly journal.

³¹³Johnson, The Quiet Revolution in the Bahamas, p. 32.

The Tribune, in commenting on the new paper, said that the people in the district,

. . . have made many amazing strides in recent years. They have always had an organizing complex. In the past this trait has found expression in church, social and burying organizations which have been of great benefit to the people themselves and a great relief to the public Treasury.³¹⁴

The new paper, titled the Voice, made its debut on April 7, 1945, with Mr. Bert A. Cambridge and Dr. Claudius R. Walker as its principals. The Tribune's announcement of the new paper's planned debut also reveals a great deal about the state of journalism in the Colony as the war drew to a close.

This newspaper [the Voice] is being printed on its own machinery which has been recently installed--a very wise move on the part of the promoters--and it is starting in a larger way and with better financial backing than any newspaper started in the Colony in our memory, with the exception, perhaps, of the late "Watchman." It is being started at a period of great prosperity in the Colony and it should, therefore, be spared the growing pains of similar enterprises in the past.

The newspaper business has never been considered an easy business in this country and, as a result, few have survived with any degree of permanency. This form of enterprise has never succeeded as a company in this small community because, actually, a newspaper--if its directing force really catches the spirit of journalism--it is not primarily a business. But, whether this enterprise succeeds as a company or not, we have no doubt about the permanency of the movement in the district because such a paper should be able to fill a place in the life of the people that other newspapers, which aim at a broader scope of activity, are unable to undertake.³¹⁵

³¹⁴"'Voice' To Be Heard Tomorrow," Nassau Tribune, 6 April 1945, p. 1.

³¹⁵Ibid.

Like many of the short-lived newspapers published in the Bahamas, there are no copies of the Voice in the microfilm record. What can be found about this journal is in the pages of the Nassau Tribune. From this source it can be determined that the Voice was edited and published by two leaders of the community, both of whom served in the House of Assembly.³¹⁶ Cambridge will reappear in this study as an early performer on radio station ZNS and as a politician. Dr. Walker will also return as a physician-turned-editor-turned-politician. In a profile of Dr. Walker in 1955, the Guardian reported that he had edited the the tabloid Voice for eight years.³¹⁷

The paper had its teething pains, as the Tribune pointed out, when the Voice complained that it had not been invited to a fundraising event for a local charity. The Tribune took note that it had first heard of the affair when the announcement appeared in the Guardian, and that it had cost the paper "plenty" to get in the gates. The Tribune went on to give the Voice advice.

The Tribune hasn't got on in this community because groups in authority wanted it to succeed. In fact, there was a time when everything possible was done to hamstring it. But it simply has never had an inferiority complex and it has always believed that it could write itself into the front lines--hence its commanding lead in circulation over all other papers published in the Colony, and circulation among the best people in the Colony too.

What the Voice must realize, if it is to serve the best interests of the people it claims to be interested in, is that

³¹⁶"Dupuch Moves Anti-Segregation Measure in House," Nassau Tribune, 24 January 1956, p. 4.

³¹⁷"Today's Personality," Nassau Guardian, 21 January 1955, p. 10.

a small town newspaper is a personality--it is either weak to the point where it lacks character or it has sufficient individuality to command attention and respect. Or it is just simply a nasty character which appeals to nasty minds like itself.³¹⁸

In August, the Voice's manager and editor ran afoul of Bahamian law which forbade the publication of information about any legal action still pending before a magistrate or judge. The paper had commented on a court case and been summoned before the magistrate in whose court the action was still pending. The offenders were found in contempt of court, but were let go after a stern warning from the magistrate.³¹⁹

There was no further reference to the Voice until early 1953, when the editors of Nassau's three "respectable" papers--the Herald was still not considered respectable--were called in by the Colonial Secretary and told to select one of their number to represent the Colony's newspapers at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth.³²⁰ Ultimately, the Tribune's editor would represent the newspapers of the Bahamas at the coronation, but not as one of the 25 colonial journalists who were being invited to witness the event. Dupuch's connections in London--possibly through his wartime service or through Lord Beaverbrook's intervention--enabled him to get an even better view of the solemnities than the seats provided for the journalists.

³¹⁸"Look Up 'Voice,'" Nassau Tribune, 18 February 1946, p. 1.

³¹⁹"'Voice' Cautioned By Magistrate," Nassau Tribune, 8 August 1946, p. 1.

³²⁰"Press Men Meet," Nassau Tribune, 20 February 1953, p. 20.

The behind-the-scenes machinations were intense in Nassau for the right to represent the Colony's papers at the event. Two years after the coronation, Dupuch wrote a column concerning the House of Assembly and the events surrounding the selection of the Bahamian journalist to represent the Colony. The Guardian, wrote Dupuch:

. . . wanted Benson McDermott [the Guardian's editor]. We selected Dr. Walker because we felt that these opportunities should be spread around. Both The Tribune and Guardian had already had a chance. The vote was 2-1 in favor of Dr. Walker.

But the opposition in political quarters to Dr. Walker was so strong that the matter was left in suspense for a time. We were determined that McDermott wouldn't go on this mission--and since the behind-the-scenes opposition to Dr. Walker was so strong we undertook to represent the Colony on the condition that we would pay all our own expenses and not be tied down by any official routine in London. The proposal was sent to London--and approved.

But why all this opposition to Dr. Walker?

Nearly every newspaperman from other parts of the Empire on this mission looked exactly like Dr. Walker--and most of the rest of them wore turbans.³²¹

The Nassau Guardian faction, representing the white-dominated government and legislature of the Colony, could well have resented Walker's selection for a variety of reasons. First, Walker, as a black, would offend local racial attitudes. Second, Walker's political activity in the Colony, as well as his being a member of the minority element of the House of Assembly, would have put him in position to offend leaders of the Colony. A third, and perhaps less obvious reason, could have been resentment when Dupuch's vote for Walker left McDermott with only one vote--his own. Dupuch's offer to represent the Colony at the

³²¹ Etienne Dupuch, "Stop Bluffing...Start Doing...", Nassau Tribune, 17 June 1955, p. 4.

coronation--at his own expense--may have offered a way out of an embarrassing impasse. At the same time, it would appeal to the financial cupidity of the local government which would be spared the expense of sending an official representative. Walker did not attend the coronation.

Following this affair of the coronation representative, the Voice disappeared from the pages of the Tribune until the spring of 1954. It should be remembered that for much of this time--1953 and 1954--Dupuch was busy with expansion of his paper and the continuing war with the Guardian. Early in 1954, Walker announced his intention to resign as editor of the Voice. The same report stated that the Caribbean Cooperation Company, listed as the owner of the Voice, was planning to sell the paper.³²² With that article, the Voice disappeared as a topic of discussion in the Tribune. It is likely that the paper did not long survive Dr. Walker's resignation. The story of this paper is so brief that it is not possible to gauge its impact on the black population of Nassau, other than it was an object of some pride for residents of the southern district.

The Long Island Forum. In 1949, a new publication appeared in Nassau, but carrying an Out Island title. Its full title, The Long Island Forum with Ragged Island Supplement, was designed to appeal to the Bahamians from these islands who lived in Nassau. Such a paper would be a useful political tool for a candidate campaigning to

³²²"'Voice' Editor Resigns," Nassau Tribune, 14 April 1955, p. 1.

represent a particular district in the House of Assembly. The paper's editor, H. M. Taylor, was indeed a candidate for the Long Island seat in the legislature. In announcing the new paper, its editor was quoted by the Tribune as saying the aim of the publication was,

. . . to bring to the reading public more and more information of Long Island and Ragged Island and to the people of those islands more information on the news and happenings that may affect their future, politically, socially or otherwise.³²³

The paper was mimeographed rather than printed and the Tribune said it was a ". . . bright, newsy six-pager, an ambitious and progressive step that deserves the encouragement and support of the public."³²⁴

There is no indication that this journal survived more than one issue. Taylor eventually became the PLP's representative for the eastern district of New Providence in 1960. He lost his seat two years later following boundary gerrymandering engineered by the Bay Street Boys.³²⁵ Taylor's career as a journalist appears to have been neither extended nor effective.

Other papers. At least three other journals appear to have been in print between 1951 and 1956, although little can be found about them. The first of these appeared as a News Letter to be published by the Citizens Committee. The news item containing this information appeared in the Tribune in January 1951, but the article did not indicate what

³²³"New Weekly," Nassau Tribune, 28 May 1949, p. 1.

³²⁴Ibid.

³²⁵Johnson, The Quiet Revolution in the Bahamas, p. 67.

the committee's function was, who comprised the committee, who was to edit the proposed news letter or what its publication schedule was to be.³²⁶ There are no further references to this publication in the record. It can be assumed that this publication never assumed the role of a public journal, and had little or no impact on the life of the Colony.

The official government report for 1954 and 1955 listed two additional papers as being in print. The two papers--the Whip and the Unity News--were identified only as subsidiary newspapers in the report, but it did not indicate any information about publication location or frequency. The report did not name editors, publishers or principals.³²⁷ Other newspapers were published after 1956, but they fall outside the terminal date for this study and are not identified in this report.

It is apparent that Nassau and New Providence Island were well-supplied with newspapers of all descriptions and quality during the years of the twentieth century covered by this study. But in the present century, more than in the previous, the Out Islands were also served by newspapers. They still are. The major development of Out Island newspapers is at Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, and the publication dates for the two newspapers now published there fall outside the dates established for this study.

³²⁶"News Letter," Nassau Tribune, 10 January 1950, p. 1.

³²⁷Colonial Reports: Bahamas, 1954 and 1955 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1955), p. 41.

The Minor Journals: The Out Islands

Although 18 of the Bahama Islands have been, or are populated, newspapers have appeared only at Mathew Town, Inagua; Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera; and at Alice Town, Bimini, during the period of this study. Most of the publication of Out Island newspapers occurred at Inagua during the period between 1907 and 1913. The appearance of newspapers at Mathew Town may have reflected the increased trade between Inagua and the other islands of the northern Caribbean and the employment of Inaguans on construction projects in Mexico and Panama.

The earliest printing at Inagua took place in the 1860s, when T. G. Alexander--possibly the son of the co-owner of the Royal Gazette who died in 1820--saved a printing press from a wreck and used it to print notices. A kind of leaflet was issued by Charles Chipman around 1870, although these were probably printed in Nassau. A. H. Meallet began a printing operation in Mathew Town in 1898, and ten years later began issuing the Inagua Record.³²⁸ That publication continued until sometime in July 1913, when its proprietor left Inagua.³²⁹ He eventually became associated with the Nassau Guardian and spent three decades working for Miss Moseley.³³⁰

Early in 1907, Lewis Duvallier (the name is sometimes spelled Duvalier) began issuing a "Local Advertiser"--much like contemporary throwaway shoppers--which included an occasional news item and was

³²⁸Nassau Guardian, 30 October 1909.

³²⁹Nassau Guardian, 3 August 1913.

³³⁰"Ave Atque Vale," Nassau Guardian, 1 February 1947, p. 4.

distributed free. On July 23, 1907, Duvallier began issuing the Searchlight twice a week with some success. He continued his paper until June 1, 1908, when he abandoned it and went to Jamaica. As will be shown, he may have had reason to flee to Jamaica.

During the period of Duvallier's Searchlight, Inagua was an important source of unskilled labor in Mexico and Central America and as stevedores for the Hamburg-America Line steamers sailing between Europe and the Caribbean. Duvallier, who was black, espoused the cause of the laborers. In an April 1908 article, Duvallier exposed the story of the conditions under which the stevedores worked. A writer, probably the editor, interviewed laborers on the ships and discovered that they plundered the non-British cargoes in order to support their families and satisfy their creditors at home. Routinely, the men could make 10 to 40 dollars from the plunder of each voyage. Anything less than 15 dollars was considered a poor trip.

W. W. Richardson, an agent for the Hamburg-American Steamship Line, challenged Duvallier's assertions, stating that the latter's information was absurd ". . . in the highest degree, and based on a rotten foundation; and can only be the moonlight gossip held on the corners of Matthew [sic] Town. . . ." ³³¹ Richardson went on to deny that the laborers had to agree to spend half their wages in agents' stores in order to get a job on one of the company ships. Richardson,

³³¹"The Inagua Labor Question," Nassau Guardian, 15 April 1908.

as a final gesture, instructed the editor to remove his name as a subscriber to the Searchlight.³³²

Richardson was not alone in his anger at the editor of the Searchlight. In April 1908, although the report did not appear in Nassau until August, Jose Maura, another agent for the German steamship company and for the Panama Railway Company at Long Cay, Fortune Island, sued Duvallier for libel. The alleged libel had appeared in the September 17, 1907, issue of the paper. Among the libelous statements that offended Maura was allegation that he, Maura, and the resident justice on the island were in league to "pervert the administration of justice."³³³ The suit sought £500 damages.³³⁴ The case originally was to be heard at the April session of the Supreme Court, but was carried over until the July session. The case was ultimately heard on August 10, 1908, and the plaintiff was awarded the full amount of the claim.³³⁵ This probably ended the Searchlight and, as suggested earlier, sent

³³²Ibid.

³³³"In The Supreme Court," Nassau Guardian, 15 August 1908.

³³⁴Duvallier's allegations have a ring of truth to them regardless of Maura's statement to the contrary and the Supreme Court's findings. Bahamian sponge fishers were said to have signed articles for voyages on sponging vessels in which half the proceeds of the catch went to the ships' owners and the rest shared among the crew. In addition to the often meagre returns, spongers were, in effect, forced to buy provisions for their families' use during their absence. Frequently, the supplies had to be bought at a store owned by the individual who also owned the sponging vessel. The sponger was doubly at the mercy of the merchant who, often as not, sold inferior goods at premium prices.

³³⁵Ibid.

Duvallier to Jamacia. Duvallier reappeared in Bahamian journalism as an employee of the Nassau Tribune in 1924.³³⁶

Evidently, the situation of the people at Inagua was becoming desperate. The Guardian, in its announcement of having received the first two numbers of A. H. Meallet's new Inagua Record, reported that more than 100 people were receiving aid from the government in November 1908.³³⁷ By June of the next year, the Inagua Record was quoted in the Guardian that the lack of work and a continuing drought were creating hardships that prompted some 300 islanders to request the district commissioner to act on their behalf for relief.³³⁸ But by 1910, the outlook for Inagua laborers was improving: 200 men were going to Mexico to work on the railroad;³³⁹ and nine months later, in 1911, 100 were sent to Colon to work on the Panama Railroad, with 500 more needed as quickly as possible.³⁴⁰ Over the next few years, there was little of note about the Inagua Record in the Guardian. Among the final news items to be extracted from the paper for inclusion in the Guardian was a reference to the shock of an earthquake felt in Mathew Town on September 6, 1912,³⁴¹ and a brief report of the governor's visit in July 1913.³⁴²

³³⁶"Early Days Of Struggle," Nassau Tribune, 21 November 1978, p. 15.

³³⁷Nassau Guardian, 11 November 1908.

³³⁸Nassau Guardian, 4 August 1909.

³³⁹Nassau Guardian, 21 September 1910.

³⁴⁰Nassau Guardian, 19 August 1911.

³⁴¹Nassau Guardian, 28 September 1912.

³⁴²Nassau Guardian, 30 July 1913.

The Inagua Record ceased publication in August 1913, after being in print for five years. The Guardian's writer noted the passing of the Record with a brief comment, telling its readers that the Record had been well-conducted and had served a useful purpose,

. . . but the scope for journalistic enterprise is limited in the Bahamas and it is surprising that sufficient inducement has been found for keeping an out-island [sic] paper going so long.³⁴³

The passing of the Inagua Record ended all attempts at publishing a newspaper in this, the southernmost of the Bahama Islands. Other than perhaps offering a brief moment of controversy and an outlet for commentary on the precarious existence of the common laborer in Inagua, these papers made no permanent changes in the island's social and political life.

Two more Out Island papers appeared in the Bahamas, but it is not clear whether one of these papers was indeed issued in the twentieth century. The other clearly was, and was published on two separate occasions. The first of these papers, the Eleuthera Palm, was published at Governor's Harbour sometime before 1925.³⁴⁴ Except for a single reference in the Guardian, no information can be learned about its existence. The name of the paper seems to indicate a more contemporary publication date, that is, sometime in this century. Before 1900, with few exceptions, Bahamian newspapers held to such traditional names as "Gazette," "Observer," "Guardian" and the like.

³⁴³Nassau Guardian, 3 August 1913.

³⁴⁴Nassau Guardian, 31 December 1924.

The Bimini Bugle, on the other hand, was a curious little paper printed for the sports fishermen who regularly visited the Bimini Islands. The paper was founded by Roderick Rollins at Alice Town, North Bimini Island, in 1937. Although the Tribune noted in May 1938 that the paper had celebrated its first anniversary,³⁴⁵ two months later the Tribune said the Bugle had reached its eleventh month.³⁴⁶ Regardless of the confusion, the paper was set up sometime in 1937, and remained in print until the following year. Rollins suspended the paper after he realized that the provisions of the Newspaper Surety Act, setting up a bond requirement for newspaper editors in the event of a libel, applied to an Out Island paper as well as those in Nassau.³⁴⁷ Later, Rollins apparently managed to find the necessary security and was able to begin the publication of the Bugle once more.

Oddly, much of the story of the Bugle appeared first in an American paper and was later reprinted in Nassau. While on a visit to Knoxville, Tennessee, Rollins was interviewed by the News-Sentinel about his paper. Dupuch somehow obtained the story and ran it in the Tribune. Rollins explained in the interview that his paper measured four by five inches, making it the smallest paper in the world. The paper had a circulation of 700,³⁴⁸ including subscribers in the United States, Australia, New

³⁴⁵"Bimini Bugle Passes First Milestone," Nassau Tribune, 16 May 1938, p. 1.

³⁴⁶Nassau Tribune, 16 July 1938, p. 2.

³⁴⁷Ibid.

³⁴⁸"Bimini Editor in U.S. Newspaper," Nassau Tribune, 1 August 1939, p. 1.

Zealand and even the Fiji Islands.³⁴⁹ Although Rollins' paper had a fairly large circulation, it was not preserved in the Nassau Public Library's newspaper collection and thus there are no examples of this paper available. As a kind of "fish camp journal," the Bugle may have been heavy with fish stories and supported by subscription rather than advertising. Certainly Alice Town and the rest of the Bimini Islands could not have supplied enough advertising revenue to keep the paper in print.

Following the outbreak of war in 1939, Rollins reported that two-thirds of Bimini's residents had started farming because stringent war-time visa regulations had seriously curtailed big game fishing.³⁵⁰ That activity was the traditional mainstay of the islands' economy and the substance of the Bugle's reporting.

Rollins did not survive the war; he was lost at sea from the deck of the auxillary cruiser he had built from plans in a yachting magazine. The Guardian, in reporting his death, noted that he had been a carpenter before he began editing and publishing the Bimini Bugle.³⁵¹

The Bugle ceased publication with Rollins' death, but was revived in 1950. Arthur Rollins, Roderick's youngest brother, began issuing the paper again.³⁵² Like the first Bugle, no examples of the paper are in

³⁴⁹"Death of 'Bimini Bugle' Editor," Nassau Guardian, 17 May 1941, p. 2.

³⁵⁰"Bimini Goes Back to the Soil," Nassau Tribune, 18 September 1939, p. 1.

³⁵¹"Death of 'Bimini Bugle' Editor," Nassau Guardian, 17 May 1941, p. 2.

³⁵²"Smallest Newspaper," Nassau Tribune, 14 January 1950, p. 1.

the Nassau Public Library's collection, thus there is no physical description of the new Bugle. It may be assumed that big game fishing, which revived in the Biminis after the war, was the major content of the paper. There is at least one reference to a new event reported in the Bugle and reprinted in the Guardian. The Bimini paper reported complaints of a surprise visit by the governor, the Earl of Ranfurly, that did not give residents of Bimini the opportunity to greet the King's representative properly. The custom called for members of local organizations and societies to dress in their regalia to meet the governor or other dignitary. They felt they had been slighted when the governor refused to allow them the opportunity to dress up in their finery. The Guardian quoted the Bugle's editorial question: "Are the days of conscientious administration passed?" The Guardian, no friend of the governor at this point, replied: "The Bugle's editorial seems to answer itself."³⁵³ There are no further references to this paper in either of Nassau's daily papers; consequently, the second Bimini Bugle probably expired not long after the governor's visit and certainly not later than 1956, because there are no references to the paper in regard to the 1956 election at Bimini.

Even though the Out Island newspapers provided some relief from boredom on Inagua, Eleuthera and Bimini, the papers tended to be short-lived as a result of underfinancing or political problems resulting from the papers' editorials or reporting. Business was too uncertain to provide advertising revenue; populations were too illiterate in most

³⁵³"Another Viewpoint," Nassau Guardian, 9 May 1953, p. 6.

cases to benefit from a newspaper. Political/judicial interferences, as in the case of the Inagua Searchlight, also helped to terminate the publication of an Out Island journal. These brief journals offer a curious reminder of how enterprising and optimistic men attempted to improve their lot in what were then some of the most remote and isolated areas of the Bahamas.

The Minor Journals: Specialized

Three additional journals, one of which is questionable as a newspaper, were published in Nassau during the two world wars. The first of these may have been more akin to The National Lampoon or Mad Magazine and their imitators. This publication, the Laugh and Grow Fat Magazine, appeared in Nassau late in 1915, with its editor given as "The Subterranean Barber" in an advertisement in the Tribune.³⁵⁴ Although there are no issues of this journal in the record, there is one long, 25-stanza poem entitled "Victory," by the "Subterranean Barber" in the Tribune of November 30, 1915,³⁵⁵ a month before the first issue of the magazine. A letter to the editor, dated November 16, appeared in the same issue as the poem and provides information about the genesis of the editor's sobriquet.

"Come to the subterranean barber, he shaves for a penny," was the amusing playcard we are told with which Richard Arkwright once amused the Londoners and increased his gain.

The interest of the story has given it such familiarity as to rob it of novelty. Why a man posing as a critic in Nassau chose the name Subterranean Barber is a question to

³⁵⁴ Nassau Tribune, 23 December 1915, p. 3.

³⁵⁵ Nassau Tribune, 30 November 1915, p. 1.

the thoughtful mind. Its use shows Arkwright's wit and originality. . . . He was really a barber and many barbers in large cities live underground, but its assumption in the present case lacks reality, originality, novelty and is profitless. Our critic, whatever he may lack, is not lacking in assumption, recklessness and abuse.³⁵⁶

An advertisement for the publication appeared for the last time in the Tribune for January 30, 1916.³⁵⁷ It appears that the publication maintained a monthly publishing schedule. No further advertisements appear in the Tribune for 1916 and the Tribune's files for 1917-1920 are missing. The Laugh and Grow Fat Magazine's humor must have shaved close; the establishment Guardian does not mention the existence of the magazine in any of its issues between late 1915 and the end of the war. Years later, however, during the discussion of the Newspaper Surety Act of 1938, the Guardian reported Kenneth Solomon's comments about this publication and they reveal something of the impact this publication had on the community. It should be remembered, too, that Solomon's remarks were made nearly 20 years after the Laugh and Grow Fat Magazine had appeared, hence the confusion in his identification of the publication's title and its format.

Some years ago there was in this community a paper called the Subterranean Barber. That paper was published for a number of years and overstepped the mark over and over again. It was no use for anyone to take action against it, but as time went on the proprietor and editor of that paper committed criminal libel and he was prosecuted and sent to prison.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶Nassau Tribune, 20 January 1916, p. 1.

³⁵⁷Nassau Tribune, 30 January 1916.

³⁵⁸"House of Assembly," Nassau Guardian, 11 January 1938, p. 1.

Two things are clear from Solomon's comments in the House of Assembly: first, he confused the nom de plume of the editor with the name of the paper; second, he may have been confused about the nature of the publication. Was it a magazine, as the name indicates, or was it a newspaper as Solomon said? The scanty evidence contemporary with its publication seems to establish conclusively that it was a magazine. What is left unresolved is the length of time it was in publication. Solomon's comments indicate that it was published longer than the late 1915 and 1916 period established by advertisements in the Tribune. This is certainly a likely possibility inasmuch as the Tribune's files are missing from 1917 through 1920, and the Guardian apparently studiously avoided mentioning the offending publication.

Although Solomon did not mention the name of the editor of the Laugh and Grow Fat Magazine, we do know his fate--jail--and it would have been none too pleasant in the tropical climate of the Bahamas. The magazine must have been a scurrilous publication if its editor ended his journalistic career in prison. There are no reports in either the Guardian or the Tribune concerning legal action for libel between the wars. This does not preclude such an action between 1917 and 1920, because the Tribune's files are missing. The Guardian's files do not mention such legal proceedings until the actions taken against Dupuch during World War II.

The final two journals to be published in Nassau in this category during the twentieth century were two Royal Air Force publications which served as base newspapers for the military establishment at Nassau during World War II. Although there is nothing in the Nassau newspapers

beyond the name of the first paper (Caribbean Wings) which would have been published before mid-1944, more is known about the second publication, the Liberator. Its editorial board consisted of one officer, Flight Lieutenant Sheppard, five enlisted men and a civilian. It was printed by the Nassau Guardian, whose editor commented that it was "bright and breezy" and hoped it would have a long and successful run.³⁵⁹

When the war in Europe ended in May 1945, the Liberator closed down after completing 50 issues. The Guardian marked the closing of paper with considerable praise.

Throughout the past hundred years the Guardian printing works have produced many small newspapers and magazines, but the Liberator has been by far the most interesting venture with which we have been associated. Our only regret has been that in these difficult times for all newspaper plants, we have been unable, because of the shortage of staff and machine parts, to produce a paper more worthy of the editorial matter which the talent of the R. A. F. turned out week by week. . . . In taking leave of the Liberator and its most capable staff we should like to record the very great pleasure that it has given the Guardian and its printing staff to assist in this happy and successful enterprise of which they will cherish the most pleasant memories.³⁶⁰

With the closing of the military operations at the New Providence base, the Liberator ceased publications as the number of personnel diminished and the staff of the paper was shipped to other duties or returned home for demobilization. Like virtually all of the minor newspapers printed in the Bahamas, no copies of this paper exist in the files of the Nassau Public Library.

³⁵⁹"The Liberator," Nassau Guardian, 12 August 1944, p. 4.

³⁶⁰"The Liberator," Nassau Guardian, 31 July 1945, p. 2.

Except for the Herald, none of these minor newspapers, produced over a half-century and virtually covering the geographic extremities of the Bahamas, had any lasting impact on the Colony. They entertained and informed their subscribers of the moment, provided some occasional work for the legal fraternity and slipped back into the anonymity from which they arose, leaving little for modern researchers to trace. They are, however, a tantalizing bit of journalism history worth more detailed search and study than can be provided in this study of Bahamian mass media.

CHAPTER V

CABLE, WIRELESS AND RADIO

Throughout the history of the Bahama Islands, there has been an obvious and critical need for rapid and inexpensive communications between Nassau and the Out Islands and with the rest of the world. This need could not be met through the uncertain distribution of the hand-printed newspapers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The sailing ships and steamers the editors depended upon were handicapped by uncertainties of weather, navigation and the need to make a profit--all highly unpredictable in the Bahamas. Not until communication systems based on electrical power became available could rapid and relatively inexpensive communication be established to meet the Colony's internal and external needs. The first of these systems appeared in the waning years of the nineteenth century.

Cable: 1892-1930

Although the electric telegraph, the telephone and dependable electricity generation had been in place to support information transfer in other parts of the world for decades, not until the installation of the submarine telegraph cable in 1892 did the Bahamas take the first step in significantly improving communications in the Colony. The cable was followed by the first dependable telephone system in 1906;¹ electrical service for Nassau began in 1909; wireless (radio telegraphy) was

¹Nassau Guardian, 6 October 1906.

established in 1913;² and broadcasting was introduced in 1930, then permanently established in 1937.³

For purpose of discussion in this study, the term "wireless" will be used only for radio telegraphy, although British usage extends the term to include radio broadcasting. The terms "radio" and "broadcasting" will be used in the American sense of voice and music transmission available to anyone with the necessary receiving equipment. Although radio, in the American sense of the term, is used for point-to-point communication in the Bahamas, it is a specialized program service and not a commercial service such as telephone or telegraph.

The telegraph cable was a faster means of acquiring news. Bahamian editors had never known such speed in obtaining news, but there were some serious drawbacks in the cable service. First, the editors were provided news summaries by the Colony's government which owned and controlled the cable. Second, the summaries were compiled by telegraphers in the United States, usually at Jupiter, Florida, from whatever newspapers were at hand. This often resulted in stories of little consequence or interest to readers in a British colony.

There were, in addition, technical problems to be considered in the operation and maintenance of the cable. Ships' anchors would

²Michael Craton, A History of The Bahamas (London: Collins, 1962), p. 250.

³In previous studies, the year 1936 has been given as the date for the start of broadcasting in the Bahamas. The microfilmed newspapers, however, reveal that radio began on an experimental basis in 1930 and was permanently established in 1937. This discrepancy is explained later in this chapter.

occasionally snag the cable and break it.⁴ These breaks occurred in shallow water near shore during storms when ships would drift, even with storm anchors out. It might take repair crews days to find and fix the break. As the cable reached the end of its 20-year life expectancy, problems became more frequent. Leaks began to occur which would short out the cable, or otherwise disrupt the signal.⁵ Fortunately, by the time the cable finally failed in 1914, an alternative--wireless--was in place.⁶

Throughout World War I, and beyond, the Colony depended upon the primitive wireless service, but it was not adequate. Dependence on wireless communication was a major concern of Miss Moseley's pen after she returned from Europe following the war. Her object was to get a new cable laid to replace the 1892 Henley cable. From 1922 through 1930, she published at least 13 editorials or commentaries advocating cable communication as a supplement for the wireless system.

A further consideration for Miss Moseley's agitation for a cable, based on wartime experience, was that the new one should be an "all-red"--or British--cable. A new cable, she maintained, should not be dependent on a connection through the United States or Cuba, but rather through Bermuda to Nova Scotia and then on to London. As an alternative, the cable should run southeast through the Bahamas to Turks Island and then on to Jamaica for the connection to London. Either way, the cable

⁴Nassau Guardian, 3 February 1912.

⁵Nassau Guardian, 13 December 1913.

⁶Nassau Guardian, 9 May 1914.

would be under British or colonial control.⁷ Miss Moseley's hope, should a cable link with either Bermuda or Jamaica fail to materialize, was to secure improved wireless service from Nassau to one of these two colonies. Further improvements at the wireless stations in Bermuda or Jamaica would result in better service for the Bahamas.⁸

In the spring of 1926, the Guardian again reported that the need for a new cable was urgent. A few nights before the Guardian's editorial, 90 telegrams were unable to be dispatched because atmospheric conditions prevented operation of the Nassau wireless station.⁹ Following a hurricane in August, the Guardian's editorial writer noted that Nassau's growing dependence on electricity, not only as a household and business necessity, but also for powering the wireless transmitters, should be taken as a warning. After the storm, Nassau was cut off from the outside world for four days as a result of power failure and the destruction of the wireless towers and aerial. This, the editorial said, would not have been the case with a more secure undersea cable.¹⁰

The Guardian was not alone in urging installation of a new cable.

Never a day passes but the necessity for a cable is talked about in Bay Street. There seems to be little doubt in the minds of any business men [sic] that a cable is essential and will have to be put in but years have been wasted in talking about it. Apart from the increased business which the wireless

⁷ Nassau Guardian, 7 July 1923.

⁸ "Press News From England," Nassau Guardian, 3 March 1925.

⁹ Nassau Guardian, 17 April 1926.

¹⁰ "The Necessity For a Cable," Nassau Guardian, 26 August 1926.

station is not able to cope with at times, the value of the station to incoming or passing ships is entirely lost.¹¹

Although Bay Street businessmen agreed on the need for a new cable, they apparently could never agree on taxing themselves to raise the money required to lay a new cable. Historically, the "Bay Street Boys" resisted tax increases for public projects. Most of the merchants were either in the legislature or were related to someone in the legislature and they would vote only reluctantly for higher taxes on themselves. The merchants represented the only class with property and wealth that could be taxed to raise the funds for a new cable.

Three years elapsed before serious consideration of a new cable again took place in the House of Assembly. A select committee reported that a telephonic and telegraphic cable with Miami was in the best interest of the Colony. The need was great, all agreed, but the details of implementing a program to have a cable installed was another matter. The committee suggested that the government investigate the comparative values between a government-owned and a government-licensed but privately operated system, then choose the better for the Colony.¹²

Nothing more was reported in the Guardian until four months later in the late summer of 1929. Then, in another editorial, the Guardian pointed out that there were only 15 weeks until the start of the winter tourist season--a season which made greater demands on the wireless system--yet nothing had been done. The discussions of the House of

¹¹"Notes and Comments," Nassau Guardian, 24 November 1926.

¹²"Cable Communication," Nassau Guardian, 4 May 1929, p. 4.

Assembly were sent to the authorities "at home"--London--but, the editorial explained, the local authorities would have to follow through on the matter.¹³

But still nothing happened and five months later the Guardian was back to the same theme. In another long editorial, the paper reviewed its support for a cable, along with improvements in wireless technology and the House of Assembly's reluctance to decide on either a new cable or improving the wireless system. As the Guardian's editorial cautioned, there was no need to spend large sums of money for a system which might become obsolete or be replaced by something new. In fact, improvements in wireless led the Guardian to reconsider its support for a new cable. In modifying its position, the paper noted that a cable allowed only one-way exchange between two points; wireless, given several relatively inexpensive transmitters and receivers, permitted simultaneous exchange of information between several points. In concluding the argument, the paper said that speeding up the process through the use of more transmitters would relieve the congestion and delays, thus reducing the telegraph rates for its users.¹⁴

Apparently, improvements in the technology of wireless--cheaper equipment, increased reliability and expanded service--coupled with local inertia in deciding on a new cable led Miss Moseley to modify her position in support of a new cable. Improving her paper depended,

¹³"What About The Cable?" Nassau Guardian, 7 September 1929, p. 4.

¹⁴"Progress of Wireless," Nassau Guardian, 22 January 1930.

in good measure, on reliable news service from abroad and unless the local wireless station was improved, or a cable laid, the Guardian would be hampered by the lack of timely foreign and Empire news. Thus Miss Moseley had a major stake in the decision to improve communication service to the Bahamas.

In retrospect, the cable introduced rapid transfer of news and information to the Colony for the use of newspaper editors and commercial interests. Although there were shortcomings in the material received by the editors, it was a significantly improved service, given the slow interchange of news and information via ships. Further, the dependence upon cable by commercial interests insured that electrical communication would not be abandoned when the cable reached the end of its life. Fortunately for the Colony, a new medium was at hand when the cable failed.

Wireless: 1902-1930

As early as 1902, Governor Sir Gilbert T. Carter asked the House of Assembly for £200 to establish ". . . telegraphic communication by Marconi's system between Abaco and New Providence, and possibly between other islands of this Government."¹⁵ Less than a month later, a writer for the Guardian noted ". . . that a Signal Station would more than pay its way."¹⁶ But for all its desirability, wireless telegraphy would not be established in the Bahamas for more than a decade.

The Guardian long urged adoption of wireless for the Colony and

¹⁵ Nassau Guardian, 22 March 1902.

¹⁶ Nassau Guardian, 12 April 1902.

particularly for a link with Inagua Island at the southern end of the island chain.¹⁷ The wireless link was of particular interest to Miss Moseley as her brother Daniel represented Inagua in the House of Assembly. Miss Moseley was also adept at illustrating the usefulness of wireless to her readers. On one occasion, the Guardian reported news of the Mexican Revolution the same day those events occurred. This feat was made possible through the cooperation of the captain of the S. S. Vigilancia who used his ship's wireless to pick up the broadcast from the American naval installation at Key West.¹⁸

The first permanent wireless installation was finally authorized for the Bahamas late in 1912, when the Anglo-French Wireless Company was given an order by the government in London to build a radio-telegraph station at Nassau. The station was to operate with five kilowatts of power and have a range of 400 miles during the day and up to 1,800 miles at night. The antenna was to be supported by two 165-foot steel towers topped with wooden spars to raise the masts to 200 feet. The station was to be located at Fort Charlotte, then the western limit of Nassau. The Crown Agents, representing the Colony in London, were to pay £1,875 for the erection of the towers and equipment; the government of the Bahamas was to pay for the buildings and provide the unskilled labor for their construction.¹⁹

The station, with its 400-mile operating range, could reach Jupiter,

¹⁷Nassau Guardian, 30 November 1907.

¹⁸Nassau Guardian, 23 November 1910.

¹⁹"Wireless For The Bahamas," Nassau Guardian, 9 November 1912.

Key West, Tampa and St. Augustine in Florida, and Havana and Guantanamo in Cuba.²⁰ The Nassau wireless station was officially opened by Governor George Haddon-Smith on August 28, 1913.²¹ Ultimately, the timing was fortuitous. At the outbreak of World War I the following August, wireless was the Colony's only link with the rest of the world.

By late 1913, the cable between Nassau and Jupiter became so unreliable that nearly all the messages between the Bahamas and the United States were handled by the new wireless system.²² Although the new wireless station was helpful, the editors still used the cable and the tri-weekly mail service from Miami for news. Like all the early wireless equipment, the signal was frequently rendered unintelligible by atmospheric conditions, particularly in the summer months. In order to cope with telegraphic needs during the short winter tourist season, the government hired a temporary telegraph operator. When he left the Colony at the end of the season, there was no night service and very little news service available to newspaper editors in Nassau.²³

On May 9, 1914, the Guardian reported that to replace ten miles of damaged cable near Jupiter, Florida, would cost nearly £4,000 and take six months to complete. Replacement of the entire cable to Miami, which was not in existence when the first cable was laid in 1892, would cost £30,000 and take a year to install. Negotiations for its construction would have to take place in London and the Bahamian government

²⁰ Nassau Guardian, 3 May 1913.

²¹ Nassau Guardian, 27 August 1913.

²² Nassau Guardian, 17 December 1913.

²³ Nassau Guardian, 15 April 1914.

would have no role in the decision. The wireless station, however, could be improved for £450.²⁴

Within days of the outbreak of the war, the Guardian announced that American censors had been placed at all radio-telegraph stations in the United States to insure that American neutrality was not violated. Although the war news could not be sent by telegraph from the United States, American newspapers were a source--somewhat late--of the news denied by the American government's censorship policy.²⁵ And just as censorship denied information to Nassau, the lack of a wireless station at Inagua denied Nassau a telegraphic connection with a British operated wireless station in Jamaica. This connection would have provided an all-British system which would have permitted news of the outbreak of the war to reach the southern Bahamas immediately, rather than the two weeks an inter-island schooner required to take the news from Acklin's Island to Inagua.²⁶

Although the bound volumes of the Guardian and the Tribune for the war years are incomplete or missing, there is nothing to indicate that any major changes were made in either the cable system or the wireless system. Early in 1918, however, the House of Assembly appointed a committee to consider the expenditure of £350 to build a wireless station at Governor's Harbour.²⁷ Nothing came of the proposal. In 1920, the

²⁴Nassau Guardian, 9 May 1914.

²⁵Nassau Guardian, 12 October 1914.

²⁶Nassau Guardian, 17 March 1917.

²⁷Nassau Guardian, 20 February 1918.

House again appointed a committee to consider the establishment of a station at the same location,²⁸ and the station finally went on the air early in December.²⁹ A few months before, the Bimini Rod and Gun Club announced plans for its private wireless station.³⁰ Eventually, most of the settlements in the Out Islands had their own wireless stations.

But if the system improved, the content of it did not in the eyes of the Colony's journalists. The problem was not new; it had existed even during the days of the cable. As early as 1909 the Guardian complained of the quality of news material provided by the government.

An instance of the disconnected and generally unsatisfactory nature of the cable news supplied from Florida and paid for by our Government is furnished by the telegrams of yesterday and to-day. One received yesterday contained a bulletin giving information of the condition of Mr. Gaynor, the Mayor of New York City, but it apparently was not thought necessary to mention the cause of his illness, and it was not until to-day that we are informed, quite casually, that the Mayor had been shot by a dissatisfied employee--an item of far greater interest than the great majority of those selected for transmission.³¹

The paper would return to this theme, for both cable and wireless service, over the next quarter-century.

The Guardian's complaints continued. The failing cable and the primitive wireless drew critical comment, as did the quantity and quality of telegraphic news available in Nassau. The paper's complaint also details the arrangements made for obtaining news.

²⁸Nassau Guardian, 3 March 1920.

²⁹Nassau Guardian, 1 December 1920.

³⁰Nassau Guardian, 17 March 1920.

³¹Nassau Guardian, 13 August 1909.

There has of late been cause for considerable dissatisfaction as regards the dearth of telegraphic news received here. . . . We readily admit that this is far from being the fault of our Telegraph Department which under the energetic and efficient leadership of its Superintendent is doing excellent work. . . . The whole fault lies in our arrangements for obtaining telegraphic news. . . . We have been content to pay a very small sum to the operator on the other side, to select and despatch to us, what he thinks would be of interest. For the amount paid we cannot expect more.³²

There is no indication that the telegraphist at Jupiter was paid, but the quality of the material provided left much to be desired.

In the fall of 1922, following Miss Moseley's return to Nassau, the Guardian returned to the subject of getting useful news via the Telegraph Department's wireless service. Apparently, the department had slipped in her esteem and she was angry.

That a Government Department, and a busy one at that should waste time typing such utter rubbish as was sent to us yesterday is a matter for remark, but that it should be publicly posted is more surprising. From yesterday's flimsy we learnt of the death of Lord Mayor MacSwiney³³ and the King of Greece--both interesting items of news even though the latter paragraph was almost unintelligible. . . . And this when there is so much more news of importance that we are aching to hear! We hesitate to complain, knowing present conditions we feel compelled to appeal to those who "pick up" the news to use some discretion and not collect drivel of this sort.³⁴

In getting news, the Guardian complained, the Bahamas had the

³²Nassau Guardian, 15 July 1914.

³³MacSwiney was the Lord Mayor of Cork, Ireland. He died as the result of a hunger strike in protest of Britain's policy toward Ireland.

³⁴"The Government Press News," Nassau Guardian, 27 October 1920.

worst wireless service in all the British Caribbean colonies.³⁵ Atmospheric conditions posed a constant problem for the wireless system.³⁶ Breakdowns at Miami,³⁷ where wireless relays had originated since 1913, and in the station at Nassau,³⁸ caused delays in getting news for the papers. In such cases, the papers resorted to the ancient technique used by the Colony's earliest editors--they clipped and reprinted stories from foreign papers.³⁹

Although Miss Moseley complained about the news service and urged the installation of a new cable, in 1930 she reversed her position and supported an improved wireless system for the Colony. The paper again cited the advantages of wireless and ". . . hoped the Legislature, which is about to meet, will lose no time in taking up this all-important question of communication with the outside world."⁴⁰ The legislature, however, faced a three-way choice: a wireless system to be operated by Imperial and International Communications, Ltd., which had been studying communications between England and the Bahamas; improving the existing wireless station; or installing a new cable at a cost of about £40,000. The latter suggestion appealed to one proponent

³⁵Nassau Guardian, 23 November 1922.

³⁶Nassau Guardian, 24 June 1922.

³⁷"Press News," Nassau Guardian, 22 January 1919.

³⁸"Telegraphic and Electrical Communication," Nassau Guardian, 28 July 1926.

³⁹Nassau Guardian, 27 November 1918.

⁴⁰"Wireless or Cable," Nassau Guardian, 5 March 1930.

of the cable, who pointed out that such a system would return 10 percent on the investment in its first year.⁴¹

A different recommendation came from a wireless engineer, Mr. R. A. Weagant. As reported in the Guardian early in May 1930, he recommended wireless in the shortwave band. He also advocated establishing a connection with New York City as soon as possible.⁴² A week later, the Guardian reported the decision of the House of Assembly's select committee on telegraphs. It recommended in favor of improving the existing wireless system at a cost of £5,000, but against allowing Imperial and International Communications to operate the system. The committee also voted against spending £40,000 to lay a new cable.⁴³

Improving the existing wireless system would save £35,000 and keep its revenue in the Colony, rather than share it with Imperial Communications, which would send most of the revenue out of the Colony. And the idea of not spending £40,000 when a solution was at hand for an eighth of the cost of the new cable, was something that appealed to the cupidity of the merchant princes of Bay Street.

The plan for improving the wireless system called for the replacement of the old spark transmitter at Nassau with a new shortwave transmitter and replacement of equipment at some of the Out Island stations. In addition, facilities were to be expanded at the Nassau

⁴¹"The Legislature," Nassau Guardian, 26 March 1930.

⁴²"Wireless Engineer a Visitor to Nassau," Nassau Guardian, 3 May 1930.

⁴³"Notes and Comments," Nassau Guardian, 10 May 1930, p. 4.

station. The station would get new steel towers and an emergency power generator. All this was to be bought in the United States, inasmuch as delivery would be faster and the equipment cheaper.⁴⁴

Although the Bay Street Boys were pleased with their decision, authorities in England were not. The Secretary of State for the Colonies telegraphed the governor of the Colony to inform him that the decision did not fit with Imperial plans: "Imperial interests should be best served by a concession being granted to Imperial and International Communications, Limited."⁴⁵ The immediate result of this message was that the select committee's recommendation was withdrawn for the time being. The Guardian reported that Imperial policy had long held up the laying of a new cable between Nassau and Florida. Authorities in England wanted to establish a British-controlled communications system among all British colonies; thus a cable, or an independent wireless not operated by Imperial Communications, would not be in the interests of the Empire.⁴⁶

In an editorial later in the year, the Guardian patriotically commented:

It was quite obvious that those who opposed the offer of the Imperial and International Communications, Ltd., to take over the Bahamas station were not fully cognizant of the status of the company and its obligations to the Government Advisory Committee, and did not take into consideration the importance of

⁴⁴"The Legislature," Nassau Guardian, 10 May 1930, p. 4.

⁴⁵Nassau Guardian, 14 May 1930.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

unified telegraphic communications to Empire interests. In short, they did not think Imperially.⁴⁷

But the "nay" sayers were thinking in terms of pounds and pence, as the paper further chastised them.

The arguments advanced by those opposing this offer on the grounds that the Colony by relinquishing its own system would lose revenue of a few thousand pounds a year were not only unpatriotic but unsound. The opposition appeared to have lost sight entirely of the fact that the Colony would not only be reducing considerably its permanent expenditure and its liability to periodical heavy expenditure caused by storm damages and improvements of machinery but stood to gain far more--some of it indirectly perhaps--by the establishment of an up-to-date system--which must of necessity be kept up-to-date by the company installing it--and the increased business which would necessarily follow. . . . It is possible, that the Bahamas Legislature which talked of spending, but happily could not vote, the insignificant sum of £6,000 this year on improving the existing station could ever keep pace in improvements with companies whose resources allow them to spend millions on research alone? The possibilities of wireless are almost limitless and it would be worse than child's play for this Colony to throw away more money, which it can ill afford now, on trifling with an obsolete system.⁴⁸

Concern for the improvement of the wireless service receded from the paper's editorial columns for the next few years. In 1933, readers of the Guardian were told that the local wireless station could carry on simultaneous communications with ". . . ships on the long, medium and short wave channels, point-to-point with Miami, Jamaica, the Out Island stations and aeroplanes of Pan American Airways, Inc."⁴⁹

⁴⁷"Empire Communications," Nassau Guardian, 13 September 1930, p. 2.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹"The Colony's Improved Telegraphic System," Nassau Guardian, 3 May 1933, p. 4.

Apparently, the concerns of an "all-red" system, Imperial Communications, Ltd., and "thinking Imperially" had fallen by the way. Although there is no explanation in either of the papers why the issue was dropped, economic conditions in the 1930s were such that opportunities for expansion and acquisition by third parties were reduced. At some point, the local station had been improved without the help of a third party or with regard to the wishes of London.

The adoption of wireless introduced rapid and sustained communication between Nassau and the rest of the world, an improvement over the multiple handling of messages sent via cable. Following the First World War, an insular wireless system was introduced and extended communication within the Colony so that virtually every settlement could be reached. Experience with cable and wireless telegraphy in the Colony and the development of broadcast radio abroad were to be important factors in the ultimate adoption of radio by the Colony.

Broadcast Radio: 1923-1937

Although the post-war period brought an expansion of radiotelegraphy, the influence of broadcast radio from the nearby United States was unmistakable. One of the first radio receivers in Nassau was owned by Allan Stuart, who was reported as having picked up a speech by Lloyd George, England's wartime Prime Minister, over KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Stuart also reported listening to stations in New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky and Cuba.⁵⁰

⁵⁰"Listening In," Nassau Guardian, 27 October 1923, p. 4.

In 1924, the Nassau Tribune reported that ". . . radio is probably the greatest of modern discoveries producing the greatest good to the largest number of people."⁵¹ This glowing account of the wonders of radio appeared in the news columns of the paper, but it was a thinly disguised advertisement for a local merchant selling receivers. Later in the year, the Tribune reported that a Mr. E. Parker of Sandringham, England, has presented a priest at Cat Island a receiver for his parish.⁵² This was the first mention of radio in any of the Out Islands. By mid-1925, there were an estimated 25 receivers in the Colony and a writer for the Guardian prophesied:

. . . that the time is not far distant when Nassau will have its own broadcasting apparatus and that programmes of sufficient merit to justify its existence could be arranged. Pryor's Band in Miami is heard nightly in Nassau during the tourist season, and why should not our Friday night Band concert be heard in Miami? Radio broadcasting could be made an attractive feature of the new Waterloo Hotel scheme, as it would be of considerable advertising value, and many listeners in Nassau and the Out Islands could enjoy the concerts and dance music which are to be among the attractions selected for its guests. We should be glad to hear from Radiophone owners what they think of the broadcasting idea now suggested for the first time by the Guardian.⁵³

By early October 1925, the Guardian was reporting 40 receivers in Nassau and New Providence Island.⁵⁴ A year later, the paper began to publish

⁵¹"Here and There," Nassau Tribune, 19 January 1924.

⁵²"Here and There," Nassau Tribune, 25 October 1924.

⁵³"Radio in the Bahamas," Nassau Guardian, 4 June 1925.

⁵⁴Nassau Guardian, 1 October 1925.

radio schedules from Canada and the United States, but not on any regular basis for any particular station.⁵⁵

The importance of broadcasting for the Colony was becoming obvious to those who were concerned with the welfare and safety of the islanders. The Guardian reported that the telegraph operator assigned to the wireless station on San Salvador took a radio receiver with him and each night,

. . . a crowd sat entranced listening to these concerts from the air. Anyone who wishes to brighten the lives of the Out Islanders could not do better than provide radio sets for the various settlements so that the people, tired of the monotony of their own affairs, could listen to the world.⁵⁶

Radio was making an impression in the Bahamas and leaders of the community were beginning to press for radio broadcasting for the Colony. Following the lead of Great Britain, the Bahamas assessed owners of receivers five shillings each year to support government-provided broadcasting service.⁵⁷ The tax was a continuing source of irritation for radio owners because the fee was collected for years before the Colony had its own broadcasting service.

The effect of the Colony's wireless, as well as radio broadcasts from the United States, was to whet Bahamian appetites for a broadcast radio station to serve the islands. Wireless introduced Bahamians to timely news and information which could be used in the Colony's commercial

⁵⁵Nassau Guardian, 18 March 1926.

⁵⁶"Notes and Comments," Nassau Guardian, 19 May 1926.

⁵⁷"Notes and Comments," Nassau Guardian, 12 June 1926.

activities. Wireless also provided an improved method of warning the Out Islands about hurricanes and tropical storms. In this regard, wireless was vital in the summer of 1926, when the Bahamas were ravaged by three major hurricanes. Wireless was used to notify Nassau about conditions in the Out Islands and to coordinate relief operations.⁵⁸

Radio, on the other hand, provided its listeners in the islands with entrée to culture and entertainment previously denied residents of Nassau and, to an even greater degree, residents of the Out Islands. The effectiveness of radio as an advertising medium in the United States may have stirred the cupidity of an element of Bahamian commerce as a method of reaching large numbers of listeners in North America as potential visitors to Nassau.

Although the first serious discussion of broadcast radio for the Colony occurred in 1927, it would be a decade before Nassau acquired a permanent radio station. In 1927, the House of Assembly discussed using £1,000 of the Development Board's £5,000 advertising budget to establish a broadcasting station. The Development Board itself had discussed the matter in October or November of the previous year, following the series of hurricanes.⁵⁹ But not all Bahamians were in favor of radio broadcasting, even when it was a useful method of warning the Out Islands. One member of the legislature--and certainly not the only legislator ever to question broadcasting--was quoted as saying, ". . .

⁵⁸"Notes and Comments," Nassau Guardian, 29 September 1926.

⁵⁹"Broadcasting Station For Nassau," Nassau Guardian, 9 February 1927.

that before he voted for a waste of money--for to his mind it would be a waste--he would like some enlightenment as to what it was proposed to broadcast."⁶⁰ Because there was obviously divided opinion on the proposal for building a radio station in Nassau, nothing happened. There is no further mention of funding for a local radio station until late in 1936, when money was approved for the construction of a local broadcasting station. Even though the legislature's interest in broadcasting declined, especially as the economic effects of the Great Depression and repeal of the Volstead Act ending prohibition in the United States began to be felt in the Bahamas, public interest in broadcasting continued to increase.

Throughout the early days of radio reception in the Bahamas, interference, particularly by the primitive equipment of the Nassau wireless station, was a serious problem for radio listeners in Nassau. The Tribune, in an article summarizing the importance of radio as an educational and entertainment medium, suggested that a study be undertaken to find out if changes in the operation of the wireless station would end the problem. Interference was particularly bad when the Nassau station "worked," or communicated with, Out Island stations or ships at sea. There were no problems when the station was transmitting to Miami.⁶¹ Miami, west of Nassau, required that the antenna was radiating away from the populated areas; communication to the Out

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ "The Radio in Nassau," Nassau Tribune, 13 February 1929.

Islands, most of which are east and south of Nassau, resulted in the station's signal virtually blanking out reception in the city.

One irate radio owner, who signed himself "Ear-Ache," wrote to the Tribune to suggest that the government of the Bahamas be classified with Jesse James and Captain Kidd for its effrontery in extracting money from the public. The writer noted that the government collected a 5 per-cent import duty on receivers, imposed a five shilling annual license fee and collected for the electrical current used to power them. All this, "Ear-Ache" said, in addition to creating interference which blanked out all radio reception in Nassau.⁶²

In the spring of 1930, a committee of the House of Assembly recommended £5,000 be spent to modernize the wireless station in Nassau. The old spark transmitter was to be replaced with a modern shortwave transmitter and, it was hoped, that would eliminate most of the man-made radio interference in Nassau.⁶³

That same year, 1930, was to become an important year in the history of broadcasting for the Bahamas--and for the British Caribbean. The literature of broadcasting in the region, and there has been little written, has been in error. Lent reports that radio broadcasting in the British Caribbean began with a broadcast of a cricket match in British Guiana in 1934, and the starting date for radio in the Bahamas as 1936.⁶⁴ In both cases, as will be shown, he was in error.

⁶²"Ear-Ache" [pseud.], "Radio Interference," Nassau Tribune, 14 March 1930.

⁶³"The Legislature," Nassau Guardian, 10 May 1930, p. 4.

⁶⁴John A. Lent, Third World Mass Media and Their Search for Modernity (Cranberry, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1977), p. 63.

In virtually all the literature about broadcasting in the Bahamas, May 26, 1936, is given as the startup date for ZNS, the government-owned radio service for the Colony. As noted, Lent uses that date; the Nassau Tribune's seventy-fifth anniversary issue repeats the date.⁶⁵ This writer's interview with Harcourt Bethel, former manager of ZNS, resulted in the same date,⁶⁶ and Don Bohning, the Miami Herald's Latin American writer, uses the same year.⁶⁷

It is the opinion of this writer that the error occurs because the same original source has been used--a brief history of the station written by Bethel, or in interviews with him. In this writer's interview with Bethel, he put his hands behind his head, put his feet on his desk at the Tribune, where he was working as advertising manager, and duly recited: "Broadcasting began in the Bahamas on May 26, 1936, . . ." for what must have seemed to him one more unnecessary repetition of the information.⁶⁸

Although the weight of evidence--the various citations mentioned and Bethel's statement--would seem to establish 1936 as the correct date, none rang true. In searching for information about broadcasting in the Bahamas, this writer found a Colonial Report for the Bahamas

⁶⁵"Broadcasting Began in 1936," Nassau Tribune, 24 November 1978, p. 24.

⁶⁶Personal interview with Harcourt Bethel, Nassau Tribune, 4 September 1980.

⁶⁷Don Bohning, "Radio Is Tie Binding Bahamas," Miami Herald, 14 May 1974, p. 16-A.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

dated 1938, which, in reviewing activities in the Colony for the previous year, reported:

Broadcasting Station.--The local Broadcasting Station Z. N. S. was opened in May [1937]. It radiates on a frequency of 540 Kilocycles and has a range of 150 miles. The station has operated very satisfactorily, having created interest and provided entertainment and news items for both local and Out Island listeners. It is invaluable for storm warnings to the Out Islands.⁶⁹

Because this appears to contradict other printed sources, it raised a very important question: Which is the correct date?

On the assumption that May 26, 1936, was the correct date, the writer reviewed microfilm of both Nassau daily newspaper for the years 1935-1937. Given that some time would elapse between the House of Assembly's assent and the station's sign-on, late in 1935 would have been a logical time for the necessary appropriation to have been made. Despite a review of the newspapers for all of 1935, this writer found no reports of any legislative action for a broadcasting station. A further search in the record of the following year produced no mention of the opening of a radio station on or about May 26, 1936.

It seemed highly unlikely, in view of the colonial report, that an event of this importance would have been ignored by the daily newspapers, inasmuch as both had been champions of broadcasting since the mid-20s. In the continuing search, the newspapers for 1936 were read for any information concerning legislative action. In mid-November the announcement of an appropriation for £750 to establish a broadcasting station

⁶⁹ Annual Report of the Social and Economic Process of the People of the Bahamas, 1937 (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1938), p. 29.

appeared.⁷⁰ The small amount of money was sufficient for a low-power transmitter and modest studio. Within six months, ZNS radio signed on.⁷¹ The newspaper coverage of the events surrounding the opening of ZNS rivaled the coverage of the coronation of King George VI, which took place the same week ZNS signed on the air.

Even though ZNS is the first continuously operating station in the Bahamas, it was not the first station, as had been mentioned. Late in 1930, the local papers reported the arrival of C. Ravenhill-Smith, an Englishman from Avon Park, Florida, who had brought with him his experimental 50-watt radio transmitter.⁷² Smith and Harold Chipman of Nassau, proposed to operate the station in the new Lucayan Baths Hotel for two weeks. The station was assigned a temporary call sign of VLBAX for a two-week period and it signed on the air for the first time with recorded music on Saturday night, December 13, 1930. After two nights of experimentation with recorded music, the station began its first night of live broadcasting from Nassau on December 15, 1930.⁷³

The broadcast began at seven with an hour of recorded music, followed by two hours of music performed by local residents--the Reverend Arthur Senior and Mrs. H. B. Brownrigg played Beethoven's "Fifth Symphony." They were followed by Art Meallet and His Serenaders who

⁷⁰"Legislative Congestion," Nassau Guardian, 17 November 1936, p. 2.

⁷¹"Broadcasting to Begin Tuesday," Nassau Tribune, 7 May 1937, p. 1.

⁷²"Station VLBAX," Nassau Tribune, 17 December 1930, p. 1.

⁷³*Ibid.*

performed until midnight. The station continued with a request show until one in the morning. For the following nights, local performers, choirs and orchestras entertained the community on the station. Toward the end of the first week, newscasts were added to the station's offerings.⁷⁴

The station experimented with a number of program topics. On December 19, Chipman broadcast the first play-by-play broadcast of a sporting event--a football match, probably rugby. Chipman broadcast the game from the verandah of Kenneth Solomon's house on the Eastern Parade, using Solomon's telephone line to complete the link to the station's temporary studio.⁷⁵ Governor Charles Orr broadcast a Christmas message to the islands on December 25, and there were other Christmas programs broadcast for local churches.⁷⁶ On the last day of the year, the Tribune headlined a one-week extension of the station's temporary license.⁷⁷

The newspapers continued to report about the station's broadcasts during the first three months of 1931, but none of the reports matched the detailed accounts of the first two weeks of broadcasts. Further, there are no reports in the papers of government action to continue the

⁷⁴"Nassau's First Broadcasting Apparatus Station VIBAX," Nassau Guardian, 17 December 1930, p. 4.

⁷⁵"Nassau Football Game Broadcast By Harold Chipman," Nassau Tribune, 20 December 1930, p. 1.

⁷⁶"Christmas and New Year Messages Broadcast by His Excellency the Governor," Nassau Guardian, 27 December 1930, p. 1.

⁷⁷"One More Week Of Local Radio Programmes," Nassau Tribune, 20 December 1930, p. 1.

station's temporary license, although some government action must have been taken. The last reference to the station to appear in the papers was a report of the Fort Montagu Beach Hotel's St. Patrick's Day broadcast by the Jungle Club Orchestra.⁷⁸ There are no reports in either of the major papers to indicate when VIBAX ended its broadcasts in the Bahamas. It is certain, however, that neither Chipman nor Smith was granted a license for any further broadcasting in the Colony.

The potential value of radio broadcasting in and for the Bahamas was recognized by the Tribune during the first week of VIBAX's broadcasts. The paper reported that the station, or a government-owned high power station, could not only meet the demand for entertainment and information, but could also reach potential visitors in the United States and Canada, thus developing Nassau's tourist trade. The writer--probably Dupuch--went on to say that radio broadcasting in the Colony should be controlled by British interests. The colony, he said, had had bitter experience with foreign business firms. Chipman and Smith, both British subjects, were hoping to establish a permanent, high-powered station in Nassau. The paper urged that the two entrepreneurs be given support in their enterprise.⁷⁹

Between the VIBAX experiments and various other broadcasts arranged for the Colony, the need and utility of broadcast radio were shown to both community leaders and casual listeners throughout the Colony.

⁷⁸"Jungle Club Orchestra Broadcasts Over VIBAX," Nassau Tribune, 21 March 1931, p. 1.

⁷⁹"Broadcasting," Nassau Tribune, 24 December 1930.

Thus the VLBAX broadcasts were the first broadcasts in a British West Indian colony, predating British Guiana's 1934 broadcasts. The opportunity for broadcasting leadership in the area was lost when the Colony's government failed to act either to establish VLBAX as the official broadcasting station of the Colony, or to follow immediately with its own broadcasting service. In any event, radio broadcasting was delayed until 1937.

Unfortunately, no reports in the Nassau papers disclose why the two were denied a license to build and operate a more powerful station in Nassau. The Colony's government was then involved in a bitter dispute with the Colonial Office in London concerning whether the Colony would own and operate the wireless station, or whether it would be sold to British interests as a commercial enterprise. It is probable that the concern with wireless matters kept the Bahamian legislature from dealing with the request for a permanent broadcast station.

The colonial government did move into wireless communication in a substantial way, but broadcasting was slower to develop. In 1931, the first of several shortwave broadcasts were made over station VPN,⁸⁰ and by early 1935, the government operated seven transmitters using 24 different frequencies.⁸¹ Although a permanent broadcast operation did not immediately follow from the VLBAX broadcasts in 1930-1931, there were a number of broadcasts made to and from the Bahamas. In the spring of 1932, the government sponsored a series of religious broadcasts from

⁸⁰"Many Northern Stations Pick Up VPN," Nassau Guardian, 5 December 1931, p. 1.

⁸¹"Radio Interference," Nassau Tribune, 23 February 1935, p. 7.

the First Christian Church of Miami;⁸² and early in 1933, William S. Paley of the Columbia Broadcasting System in the United States arranged for a half-hour broadcast from Nassau on the CBS radio network.⁸³ The colonial government also began to broadcast storm warnings over its VP2NF frequency each morning and evening.⁸⁴ In the same year, David Salter, Superintendent of Telegraphs for the Colony, conducted a broadcast for an "Advertise the Bahamas" campaign from the Montagu Beach Hotel on VP7NF, a medium wave frequency, and on shortwave station ZFS.⁸⁵

The post-war poverty of the Colony--returning World War I servicemen were given a bonus of only £5--was relieved only by the interlude of rum-running prosperity in the 1920s. With repeal and the loss of the liquor trade, poverty returned, made worse by the depression.⁸⁶ Poverty, insensitivity to public needs by community leaders and the late adoption of electricity-based communication technology delayed broadcasting far longer than many Bahamians would have liked. There was active, vocal support for broadcasting by the mid-20s. The Colony was the first West Indian British possession to establish radio, albeit an experimental service. The wireless telegraphy installed by the

⁸²"Government Sponsors Radio Services," Nassau Guardian, 30 April 1932, p. 2.

⁸³"Nassau Broadcast," Nassau Guardian, 25 January 1933, p. 4.

⁸⁴"Notes and Comments," Nassau Guardian, 28 June 1933, p. 2.

⁸⁵"Nassau Broadcast From Fort Montagu Hotel," Nassau Tribune, 13 November 1933, p. 1.

⁸⁶Craton, pp. 264-69.

government demonstrated the importance of electrical communication to the residents of the Colony. The proximity of American radio stations in south Florida, as well as clear channel stations in the United States and Canada, helped create a consumer market for broadcast radio programming.

Only the farsightedness of Governor Bede Clifford and support by the editors of Nassau's daily newspapers forced the issue of the establishment of a government-owned broadcasting service for the Bahamas. In whatever direction broadcasting was to grow, it was set in motion by events outside the Colony and by the wisdom and support by women and men who saw in the primitive broadcasting apparatus an innovation which could, and did, improve and enrich the lives of all Bahamians--not just the favored few of Bay Street and Nassau.

Public Service Radio: ZNS, 1937-1956

The topic of a government-owned radio station virtually disappeared as editorial comment for Nassau's daily newspapers from 1934 until the fall of 1936. But radio was not a dead issue with Bahamians. In 1935, 597 annual licenses were sold;⁸⁷ and, if future complaints about unlicensed receivers are any indication, there were a good many unlicensed sets in operation as well. Most of the sets were in Nassau by virtue of the concentration of population and wealth in the city. The Out Island settlements tended to be too poor to have many who could afford the expense of maintaining a battery-powered radio receiver.

⁸⁷"Notes and Comments," Nassau Guardian, 14 December 1935, p. 4.

Slowly, a base of radio users was developing and the colonial administrators were beginning to realize both the need for the service and the growing demand for it. In November 1936, the governor, in his opening address to the House of Assembly, broached the topic of funding for a government-operated broadcasting station. Governor Clifford asked for an appropriation of £750 to build and equip a station and £500 for its annual operation. He pointed out that such a station could rebroadcast BBC transmissions and record and broadcast local programs. Following the BBC's practice, the Bahamian station would be noncommercial and supported, in part, by the annual license fee collected for each receiver.⁸⁸

By the middle of November, the legislature unanimously passed the bill to authorize the establishment of a broadcasting station.⁸⁹ The bill was sent to the governor for his assent at the end of the month.⁹⁰ By the following February, material for the station was on order, but a location for the station was lacking.⁹¹ Within a month, however, most of the problems were solved and there was hope for an April first sign-on.⁹² A location had been found for the station in what had been

⁸⁸"Opening of the Legislature by the Governor," Nassau Guardian, 4 November 1936, p. 1.

⁸⁹"Legislative Congestion," Nassau Guardian, 17 November 1936, p. 2.

⁹⁰"Resolution," Nassau Guardian, 21 November 1936, p. 2.

⁹¹"Broadcasting Station," Nassau Guardian, 19 February 1937, p. 2.

⁹²"Broadcasting Station," Nassau Guardian, 11 March 1937, p. 2.

the Snappy Hat Shop,⁹³ but the delay in finding a location pushed the sign-on date back to May 11, 1937,⁹⁴ just in time to broadcast the coronation of King George VI.⁹⁵

There were numerous technical and administrative problems to be settled before the station went on the air. There were many more during the experimental broadcasts. Because there were only 19 licensed receivers outside Nassau and New Providence Island, efforts were made to increase the number of radios in the Out Islands by installing community receivers. The need to provide Out Islanders with information about affairs in Nassau and the Empire, along with the more mundane topics of hygiene, agriculture and weather, formed a nucleus for the station's broadcast activities. The early broadcasts were expected to rely on recorded material until local talent could be identified, encouraged to participate and be rehearsed for on-air performance. Twelve men had already been chosen to serve as volunteer announcers when the station began broadcasting. The station's advisory committee, in anticipation of difficulties, asked for the public's indulgence of and comments about the programs. The individual broadcasts were to be only an hour long and utilize the frequency assigned to the government's station VP7NF (618 kilohertz (kHz)) which had been on the air with weather reports since 1934.⁹⁶

⁹³"Broadcasting Began in 1936," Nassau Tribune, 24 November 1978, p. 24.

⁹⁴"Broadcasting," Nassau Guardian, 1 May 1937, p. 4.

⁹⁵"Broadcast," Nassau Guardian, 11 May 1937, p. 4.

⁹⁶"Broadcasting To Begin Tuesday," Nassau Tribune, 7 May 1937, pp. 1 and 2.

The official dedication of the station took place at 8:30 on the evening of May 11, 1937--the eve of the coronation. The station returned to the air at 4:15 the following morning with a live relay of the broadcast from Westminster Abbey provided by the BBC shortwave service. Services from Christ Church in Nassau--the first remote broadcast for the station--followed the coronation at 10:30. The evening program at 8:30 was a rebroadcast of the coronation.⁹⁷

The importance of a link such as radio to the community was summarized by the Guardian, which said, in part, that,

. . . another link will be forged between Nassau and the outer world. . . . A link, too, with the Out Islands which may be more far reaching in its effects than any other phase of the project . . . but daily messages from Nassau will mean much to Bahamians who are only accustomed to infrequent communications by mail and little news even then of what is going on in their own colony. . . . The communicational possibilities are unbounded, not only in a narrow academic sense, but in the sense of making broader and fuller the lives of a hitherto isolated people.⁹⁸

These observations at the outset of local broadcasting in the Bahamas were prophetic because the role of radio in the islands, as we shall see, became a major force in creating a nation.

Physically, the station was a modest affair. The little building on Shirley Street was divided into two rooms. The front room served as a control room and the rear room as the studio. Soundproofing was achieved by using fiber board over sponge clippings which were easily

⁹⁷"Coronation Activities in Nassau," Nassau Tribune, 8 May 1937, p. 1.

⁹⁸"Broadcasting From Nassau," Nassau Guardian, 7 May 1937, p. 2.

obtainable at the sponge exchange. The station was equipped with four microphones for different types of broadcasts, although the writer did not specify either the kinds of microphones or the types of broadcasts they would be used for. There were also four disc recording machines, one of which was a 16-inch machine which could record up to 15 minutes of program material on one side of either a wax or aluminum disc. The station had experimented with both wax and metal discs and found that the metal disc was more satisfactory.⁹⁹ Given the warm temperatures of Nassau, aluminum would certainly have been a more dependable material.

The inaugural broadcast planned for May 11 over station ZNS--the new station's call letters--was to be an hour long. It began at 8:30 p.m. with a weather report and a ten-minute speech by J. H. Jarret, the head of government in the governor's absence. Music was to be performed by Bert Cambridge's Orchestra at 8:45, followed by the first newscast at 9:00. Two more speeches were to follow, along with the closing announcements and a recording of "God Save the King" at 9:30.¹⁰⁰

Reaction to the station's first week of broadcasting was generally favorable. The Guardian commented that although there were some technical problems, the broadcasts suffered a lack of smoothness only when compared to broadcasts from "more experienced" stations. The writer also wanted the announcers, whose names were not used on the air, identified because people liked to know who was talking.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹"Nassau Broadcasting Station," Nassau Tribune, 8 May 1937, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰"Coronation Activities in Nassau," Nassau Tribune, 8 May 1937, p. 1.

¹⁰¹"The Broadcasting Station," Nassau Guardian, 15 May 1937, p. 2.

There was considerable interest in the range of the new station. Its broadcasts were reported as having been picked up in Toronto, Canada, and Jacksonville, Florida, in mid-May,¹⁰² and by the end of the month, reports of reception in Montreal, Canada, and Chicago, Illinois, had been received.¹⁰³ Following a change in frequency, Out Island reception was improved so that the signal received at The Bight on Cat Island was reported as good as that from WGAM¹⁰⁴ in Hollywood, Florida.

Local talent was a mainstay of the station's broadcasts and there was a continuing search for what was called "latent talent" in Nassau to supply the station with musical programming and various kinds of public service programs. News reports were to become a standard feature of Sunday night programming with the two daily newspapers alternating in producing material for these broadcasts.¹⁰⁵

In mid-July, the station increased its programming with a 15-minute broadcast of weather information at 1:45 in the afternoon, and included some news and music items as well. These broadcasts were planned to continue throughout the hurricane season.¹⁰⁶ A month later, the station announced that it would broadcast storm warnings twice a day when there

¹⁰²"Broadcasting Range," Nassau Guardian, 28 May 1937, p. 2.

¹⁰³"ZNS Frequency Changed," Nassau Tribune, 1 June 1937, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴"Frequency Change Improves ZNS Reception," Nassau Tribune, 5 June 1937, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵"Local News To Be Broadcast," Nassau Tribune, 25 June 1937, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶"Daily Weather Broadcasts," Nassau Tribune, 15 July 1937, p. 1.

was a possibility a storm might hit the islands. Once a storm was within Bahamian waters, the station would broadcast storm information about every three hours. When Nassau was threatened, the station would broadcast hourly as the situation required.¹⁰⁷

A major problem in providing the Out Islands with radio service was the lack of receivers and electrical power for them. Because the Out Island settlements rarely had electrical service, receivers had to be battery powered. This necessitated sending batteries to Nassau by mail boat to have them recharged. The whole process could take a week or more, depending on the location of the settlement and weather conditions. To eliminate the problem, the government began to experiment with windmills for recharging batteries in the local settlement. One of the first windmill recharging systems was installed at an Andros Island settlement.¹⁰⁸

The relatively high cost of radios and batteries prevented many in the Out Islands from obtaining the benefits of the broadcasts from Nassau. As a result, the government began to install community receivers in public buildings in Out Island settlements. These receivers were designed to pick up either short or medium wave signals in the event reception was poor on one or the other frequency. The first community set was installed at Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera.¹⁰⁹ Radios were also

¹⁰⁷"Weather Bureau For Storm Periods," Nassau Tribune, 24 August 1937, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸"Davenport Cuts Out ZNS, Windmills For Out Islands," Nassau Tribune, 5 July 1937, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹"Radios For Out Islands," Nassau Tribune, 6 July 1937, p. 1.

scheduled for Hope Town, Cat Island.¹¹⁰ ZNS also planned to begin simultaneous shortwave broadcasts in order to reach listeners along the Atlantic seaboard of the United States and in England.¹¹¹

At the same time, the colonial government was attempting to expand the utilization of ZNS in the Out Islands, there was dissatisfaction with the station. The Tribune reported receiving a letter from an Out Island listener who wrote:

I think the Nassau evening broadcasts excepting Sunday are really painful, especially the news which is given so haltingly and with such affectation as to make it unintelligible, while the 1:30 broadcast is farcical.¹¹²

Criticism was not limited to Out Islanders who did not like the station's programming, but also to listeners who could not receive the station or whose settlements had been left out of the scheme to distribute community receiving sets.¹¹³

In Nassau itself there was a movement to close the station. This, according to a Tribune editorial, came from a group which felt that because the local station could not compete with the standards of American programs, the money being spent was wasted because ZNS would not be listened to by potential tourists. Apparently, Out Island needs

¹¹⁰"Broadcasts During Hurricane Months," Nassau Tribune, 7 July 1937, p. 1.

¹¹¹"ZNS To Go On Short Wave," Nassau Tribune, 29 June 1937, p. 1.

¹¹²Clarence C. Wichombe, "Out Island Reaction to CNS [sic]," Nassau Tribune, 17 November 1937, p. 2.

¹¹³"ZNS Not Heard At Grand Bahama," Nassau Tribune, 17 November 1937, p. 1.

were subordinate to the profits of Nassau. The editorial also revealed the original intent of the proposal to establish the station.

Some months before the proposal for the establishment of a station was made public, Governor Clifford told us about his plans and asked our opinion. Of course we stated straight-away that at no time could this station hope to put on programmes that would interest the outside world. It was then that he stated that the station would be designed primarily for the entertainment of people in the Out Islands and as a means of conveying them information on current events in Nassau, about storms and as a means of instructing them in Out Island activities.

There can be no gain saying that the Out Islands are entitled to this small measure of consideration from a community that has no interest beyond the particular advancement of Nassau along tourist lines.¹¹⁴

In reaction to the Tribune's editorial, a correspondent who signed himself "Observer" wrote to suggest scheduled broadcasts at night on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday and at noon on the other days of the week. He also asked if those who wanted to close the station would buy the radios which were becoming numerous in the Out Islands. In addition, he suggested a monthly review of activities at the Exchange so Out Island farmers could learn about the needs of the local market. In closing, "Observer" went on to say, "Let whoever is responsible think less of self and Nassau and give consideration to the islands and they will be doing their duty."¹¹⁵

Bert Cambridge, who had long been active in musical activities and broadcasting (as far back as VLBAX in 1930), took the Tribune to task

¹¹⁴"Islands," Nassau Tribune, 27 October 1937, p. 2.

¹¹⁵"Observer" [pseud.], "Consider The Islands," Nassau Tribune, 28 October 1937, p. 2.

for suggesting that there was a lack of talent in the Bahamas. Cambridge said that if the right person were sent out to find, prepare and present new talent, the station's offerings could be improved. There was also the hint of racism in the station's use, or non-use, of black Bahamians on the air. Cambridge wrote:

God did not give heed to race, colour or creed when He distributed talents. There is not anything so destructive as selfishness. Let me say that that is why better programmes are not heard over Station ZNS.¹¹⁶

Although Governor Clifford's intentions are clear in the establishment of ZNS, it is apparent that there were two areas of conflict regarding the governor's philosophy of broadcasting. The first, and perhaps the most obvious and immediate, conflict was economic. The second, and harder to discern, was the matter of racism to which Cambridge referred.

There was, as the Tribune pointed out, an element within the business community which would have used the station in order to present advertising promoting Nassau, not the Bahamas, to American and Canadian tourists. In 1937, as in the previous years, tourism in the Bahamas meant visitors to Nassau. Merchants in Nassau did not want increased tourism in the Out Islands to deprive them of reaping the benefits--all the benefits--of the tourist trade in the islands. If the station could not be used to encourage tourism in Nassau, then the cost of the station was not justified; this seemed to be the wisdom current within this part of the business community.

¹¹⁶Bert Cambridge, "Broadcasting the Facts," Nassau Tribune, 28 October 1937, p. 2.

Over a longer period, however, a matter of racism was implied in this economic philosophy of broadcasting. Because the Out Islands were populated primarily with the descendants of Africans who offered little of importance to the economic prosperity of Nassau, few services, including broadcasting, needed to be provided for these Bahamians. Bert Cambridge, in his previously cited letter, wrote:

There are certain conditions existing in this community which are undoubtedly foreign to British customs and traditions, and which cause one at times to wonder as to whether we are British subjects or under the jurisdiction of the Southern States of America. Foreigners are allowed to operate restaurants catering to one and not the other [race]. Theatre owners dictating to you telling you which theatre you go in. Then, Sir, our Government falling in line with them. The Nassau Broadcasting Station is a Government concern. The People is [sic] the Government.¹¹⁷

Cambridge's concern with the station's policies was valid because its personnel tended to be pro-British and pro-white, instead of Bahamian and black. Programming also followed the same orientation. Positions of responsibility went to white Bahamians or to British expatriates. For all practical purposes, the station's first permanent manager was Kenneth Brown, an Englishman via Canada, who was replaced as manager following the war by Harcourt Bethel, a white Bahamian from Abaco.¹¹⁸ Not until after Bethel's retirement in 1972, did ZNS have a black Bahamian as general manager.

Brown's employment at ZNS created some controversy in the House of

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ "Voice of ZNS' Changes Air," Nassau Tribune, 17 November 1945, p. 1.

Assembly. When Kenneth Solomon was asked why a non-Bahamian was hired, and why the salary had been increased from £52 per year to £138, Solomon replied that there had been no qualified Bahamian to fill the post. The increase in salary resulted from combining the manager's salary with that of the chief announcer in order to attract a candidate.¹¹⁹ The position of chief announcer was evidently worth more at £86 per year than that of the manager, or "secretary" as he was called, at £52.

Apparently, however, Solomon was incorrect in saying there had been no qualified Bahamian applicant for the position. H. Ellis-Wild, identifying himself as a Bahamian,¹²⁰ applied for the position through the chairman of the Broadcasting Advisory Committee. But, as Ellis-Wild told a legislative inquiry in 1938, he had not heard from the chairman concerning his application. He wrote that a statement made in the House of Assembly had said that there had been no Bahamian applicant for the post and that one person who wanted the job refused it at the salary offered; furthermore, he said, because he had not been offered the job, he could not have refused it at any salary.¹²¹ In fact, the

¹¹⁹"Answers by Mr. A. K. Solomon," Nassau Tribune, 11 February 1938, p. 1.

¹²⁰H. Ellis-Wild was probably the editor of the Saturday Morning, a weekly newspaper which was in print in 1929. He was identified by the Nassau Guardian in 1956 as an expatriate Englishman living in Nassau. As Englishmen settled throughout the Empire, they sometimes began to think of themselves as "natives" of the colony in which they lived. Thus Ellis-Wild could have considered himself a Bahamian Englishman and felt that he was indeed a Bahamian applying for the position. Further, his experience as a newspaper editor probably gave him the opinion that he could manage a radio station. The Advisory Committee evidently did not share his opinion.

¹²¹H. Ellis-Wild, "More on the Secretary-Announcer," Nassau Tribune, 12 February 1938, p. 4.

first manager of the station was a Bahamian--the Guardian did not identify him--who had been paid the basic £52 salary, but had resigned shortly after taking the position on the grounds that the work was too hard.¹²²

Irrespective of whether the work was too hard or whether the Bahamian was unqualified, Brown was hired and served with some distinction during the war years. In spite of the problems the station faced during this period, ZNS grew, and by early 1938, it had moved to new facilities in the newly built Telecommunications Building on East Street.

The new facility was dedicated on January 26, 1938, by Governor Charles Dundas who had recently replaced Clifford in that position. Both daily newspapers, over the course of several days following the dedication, reported the speeches and comments about the ceremony. The station, it was reported, had been reequipped with a 1,000-watt transmitter, the gift of the Tropical Radio Corporation. The new transmitter, along with other improvements, increased the efficiency, reliability and range of the station for providing hurricane and weather information to the Out Islands. Dundas also expressed the hope that the new station would ". . . stimulate and bring to light hidden talent"¹²³--the latent talent so hoped for in keeping the station supplied with fresh program material.

J. Stanley Lowe, editor of the radical Herald, wrote to the editor of the Tribune to voice critical and unpleasant remarks for the elite of Nassau.

¹²²"The House of Assembly," Nassau Guardian, 11 February 1938, p. 2.

¹²³"H. E. Opens New Broadcasting Station," Nassau Tribune, 27 January 1939, p. 1.

Looking over the names of those who were in attendance at the inaugural ceremonies and the opening programme, one is sadly disappointed to find missing many of those who have remained in touch with the old station through thick and thin in the past so as to keep that station interesting (if it has been).

The type commonly known as the "high brows" were in full attendance which seemed to give this public a look in on what we might expect of this station in the future.

If those in charge of this station do not know that they cannot afford to neglect the rank and file of its citizens when public functions are the order of the day, they will learn to know it later at a bitter cost and in this station's losing the support of much of that local talent as has been willing to give of its time and energy to keep the station functioning at a time when "talent" appeared scarce.¹²⁴

Another listener wrote to comment on the lack of the regular performers from the old station being included on the inaugural program. "Nassau," the writer said, "ran true to form and the committee went 'social.'"¹²⁵ Once again the community's elite social group dominated what many considered a function for the entire community.

The Director of Telecommunications, Mr. H. S. Harper, reiterated the mission of ZNS radio in his speech--Out Island broadcasting and advertising for tourism. Harper proposed to utilize the standard broadcast service band to bring entertainment and educational programs to the Out Islands and to convert the old transmitter to shortwave to provide the advertising of Nassau and the Bahamas as a tourist mecca.¹²⁶

This arrangement appeared to be something of a compromise in that

¹²⁴J. Stanley Lowe, "Correspondents Criticize Broadcasting Station Opening," Nassau Tribune, 28 January 1939, p. 4.

¹²⁵"Listener" [pseud.], Nassau Tribune, 28 January 1939, p. 4.

¹²⁶"Speeches At Opening of Broadcasting Station," Nassau Tribune, 31 January 1939, p. 2.

the Out Islanders would secure the programming that would make their lives safer and more enjoyable. The merchants of Nassau would benefit from the advertising medium they desired in order to entice more visitors to Nassau. The converted transmitter had some success in reaching listeners abroad; the Guardian reported letters from listeners in Birmingham, England, and from an unidentified location in the western Canadian province of Saskatchewan.¹²⁷

The move to the new location provided improved studio and technical facilities that were assumed to meet the needs of ZNS for years to come. Although the outbreak of war between Great Britain and Germany in September created difficulties in obtaining essential supplies of food and fuel, ZNS was able to obtain supplies and equipment to expand during the war. In mid-1942, ZNS, through the Director of Telecommunications, asked the Legislature for nearly £11,000 to relocate the station, improve the telephone circuit with Miami, provide for new equipment and repair of existing equipment, and increase the station's power. The need to improve the technical performance of the station resulted from interference which prevented some of the Out Islands from receiving the signal. Kenneth Solomon, who as a member of the House of Assembly had long supported ZNS, again endorsed the station's request for the appropriation. Solomon commented that £11,000 was a lot of money, but it would be better to spend it at this point rather than to

¹²⁷"ZNS Reception," Nassau Guardian, 6 April 1939, p. 2.

wait. Later, the improvements would cost more and the equipment might not be obtainable.¹²⁸

For all the controversy, the bill ultimately passed the House of Assembly without discussion and with only one dissenting vote. The Guardian's editorial writer pointed out that the vote followed a long discussion of a steamship subsidy of £100,000 or £200,000, a topic which probably dulled their senses by the length of time it was discussed. Further, in view of the large steamship subsidy, the seemingly paltry sum for ZNS was dwarfed to insignificance and passed easily. The writer also expressed the hope that the funding would provide for the station's needs for some time to come and that attention would be turned to improving the quality of the station's programming.¹²⁹

Plans for the facility, announced early the following year, included emergency power generation equipment and the staff planned to build a new transmitter for \$4,200 instead of buying one in the United States for \$425,000.¹³⁰ The new station also increased its power to five kilowatts--five times its then current power--and, once again, changed its frequency from 790 kHz to 640 kHz. The Telecommunications Department hoped to reach an agreement with the United States that would preclude any co-channel stations closer than Los Angeles, where KFI at 50,000 watts shared the 640 kHz frequency. The change meant

¹²⁸"Overseas Telephone Communication and Broadcasting," Nassau Guardian, 21 June 1941, pp. 1 and 2.

¹²⁹"Telecommunications," Nassau Guardian, 9 July 1941, p. 2.

¹³⁰"New Building for Telecommunications," Nassau Tribune, 20 January 1942, p. 1.

community radios needed to be adjusted for the new frequency, but that was considered a minor inconvenience in return for interference-free broadcasting to the Out Islands.¹³¹

Throughout the war years, as indeed before the war, local programming was considered amateur and less than satisfactory. However, the station offered a means of reaching the population of the Colony quickly, efficiently and, regardless of the complaints about the costs of operation, cost-effectively. Programs, when measured against BBC transmissions and American offerings, were not as well done; but they were Bahamian and they were designed to meet at least some of the Colony's needs. It was a creditable service, given the difficulties of finding and developing suitable local talent to volunteer time and effort to the station.

The expanded broadcast service of ZNS provided the Colony with more than 850 hours of programming in 1939; the station rebroadcast more than 500 hours of BBC short wave programming, 25 hours of local news and announcements, 80 hours of music, 100 hours of remote programs including music, sports and religion and 60 hours of talk programs.¹³² Increased hours of service during the war and post-war periods would make these totals miniscule by comparison.

Granted the war years were difficult, but they were rewarding for ZNS. There was a growing dependence on the station's programs by Out

¹³¹"Station ZNS Nassau," Nassau Guardian, 17 April 1942, p. 2.

¹³²"Broadcasting Notes," Nassau Guardian, 27 January 1940, p. 4.

Islanders, who frequently had nothing to rely upon other than their community radios for their only contact with the rest of the Colony and the outside world. Unlike the Colony's newspapers, which were forced to ration space and circulation growth, radio could and did increase its service to the community. Local programming for the Bahamas during the war can be categorized into three major groups: first, messages broadcast by the Governor or his representative concerning issues affecting the Colony; second, educational and informational programs for the Out Islands and, third, entertainment programs of music, religion and drama for the entire Colony.

Following the declaration of war, Acting-Governor J. H. Jarrett broadcast a warning to the islanders to expect economic hardships as a result of increased food prices and shortages, decreased employment opportunities and less money in circulation. He also urged the islanders to plant food crops wherever possible throughout the Colony. The Agriculture Board would supply seed and information.¹³³ In this war, at least, the Bahamas would not experience the food shortages of the previous conflict with Germany when flour and bread were virtually nonexistent at one point.¹³⁴ A week after Jarrett's broadcast, Governor Dundas, on his return from a hastily ended vacation in England, added his warning that Bahamians could expect a long and grim struggle until the victory was finally won.¹³⁵ In any event, the Bahamas were

¹³³"This Time of Trial," Nassau Guardian, 6 September 1937, pp. 1 and 2.

¹³⁴Craton, pp. 162-63.

¹³⁵"Broadcast by the Governor," Nassau Guardian, 13 September 1939, p. 2.

as prepared for war as any part of the British Empire, and a good deal less threatened. Dundas, however, would not complete his full term as Governor of the Bahamas; on August 17, 1940, he was reassigned to an African colony to make way for the Duke of Windsor.¹³⁶ The Duke was being placed out of harm's way for the duration of the war. His mildly pro-Axis sentiments and his marriage to an American divorcee had kept him out of England since his abdication in 1936. The Bahamas were remote enough to be a haven for the controversial ex-King.

At the end of September 1940, ZNS expanded its broadcast service by signing on at 5:45 in the afternoon to relay news bulletins and talk shows from the BBC. Sign-off continued to be at 9:00 p.m.¹³⁷ This was a considerable expansion of the station's service compared to the one-hour broadcasts before the war. The increased programming included public health broadcasts which began in November 1941. The first of these programs, concerning the safety of piped drinking water, included an on-air call-in question and answer segment.¹³⁸

In 1942, the governor broadcast to the Colony his plans for improving the station's offerings during the war. In his remarks, the Duke revealed more about the attitudes of the white ruling elite than he might have intended.

¹³⁶"War is Declared!," Nassau Tribune, 21 November 1978, p. 30.

¹³⁷"Broadcasting Notes," Nassau Guardian, 30 September 1940, p. 2.

¹³⁸"Public Health Broadcast," Nassau Guardian, 6 November 1941, p. 2.

Briefly, the idea of the revised programme is this: For example, new schemes for the public benefit are sometimes misrepresented to the community, and local prejudice is thus created against them before they are properly understood; and an informative broadcast on the subject would often go a long way towards explaining the real meaning of such proposals, and allaying such apprehensions the public may have as to their true significance. Then, these broadcasts could be the means of inculcating a greater spirit of civic pride which I find sadly lacking, not so much from indifference, as the lack of understanding, both in Nassau and the Out Island settlements. Further, these broadcasts could develop a more informed, receptive and progressive audience, which in time should demand a higher standard of representative government.¹³⁹

The governor was ascribing more power to the station's broadcasts than they would actually have over the short run. It is interesting to note, that while the governor's comments cannot be identified as a causal agent, many of the points he made would become reality over the next few decades.

ZNS, over the years, would help to create a sense of community and nationhood among most of the residents of the Colony. The station also became a source of civic pride, an element the Duke had found lacking in the community. Through its broadcasts, the station would help educate Bahamians about responsible government, inform them about their existing government and lead to changes in the Colony's government and its relationship to Great Britain.

The use of radio broadcasting during emergencies had been one of the important arguments supporting the adoption of the medium by the Colony's government. Until the war, it had not been challenged by any emergency. Even the outbreak of the war was a remote event, and

¹³⁹"H. R. H. the Governor Broadcast to People of the Bahamas," Nassau Guardian, 26 May 1942, p. 1.

brought little real danger to the Colony. The calm, however, was broken.

On June 1, 1942, rioting broke out in Nassau. The riot, basically over a wage differential paid to American workers on a military airfield near Nassau, led to looting and violence. The Duke hurriedly returned to Nassau from Washington, D.C., where he had gone to confer with American naval authorities about defense plans for the islands. On his return, the Duke broadcast a summary of the actions taken to secure public order and insure a peaceful return to work.¹⁴⁰ Five days later, he returned to ZNS to announce the lifting of the curfew, to continue the ban on public meetings and to assure workers that their wages would be raised and that a noon meal would be provided by the contractor. The Guardian's coverage of the speech included a photograph of the Duke, speech in hand, standing at a ZNS microphone.¹⁴¹

The Duke, in his role as governor, continued to broadcast speeches and programs over ZNS, but none would reach the importance of those made in the aftermath of the riots. His final broadcast to the Colony occurred on April 30, 1945, as he and his Duchess prepared to leave the Bahamas.¹⁴²

The governor was involved in remote broadcasts from his office concerning Out Island problems of agriculture and employment.¹⁴³ Early

¹⁴⁰"The Governor's Broadcast," Nassau Guardian, 4 June 1942, p. 2.

¹⁴¹"The Governor's Broadcast," Nassau Guardian, 9 June 1942, pp. 1 and 2.

¹⁴²"Farewell Broadcast By H. R. H. The Governor and the Duchess of Windsor," Nassau Guardian, 30 April 1945, p. 2.

¹⁴³"Governor to Take Part in Broadcast Discussion," Nassau Guardian, 8 December 1942, p. 2.

in 1943, ZNS began broadcasting the program "Market Notes" which gave the daily prices of produce sold at the Produce Exchange in Nassau.¹⁴⁴ In April, the Duke took to the air again, appealing for 5,000 workers for farm labor in Florida with the proviso that at least 2,000 men would also be needed in Nassau to work on the "project," as the air-field on New Providence was called.¹⁴⁵

A series of Out Island educational programs began in August 1943,¹⁴⁶ and the Tribune reported in October one of these--the nightly program "Calling the Out Islands"--was well received. The paper quoted Harcourt Bethel, head of Out Island broadcasting, as stating that the people of Andros Island were enthusiastic about the broadcasts.¹⁴⁷

"Calling the Out Islands" provided an important element for ZNS community service programming. It offered low-cost point-to-point communication from Nassau to the Out Islands. In a relatively poor society like the Bahamas, communication among the islands has always been expensive. ZNS did, and still does, provide a low-cost service for the residents of the islands which allows them to send messages from Nassau to the Out Island settlements. In 1974, for example, emergency and important family announcements such as births, marriage, health and

¹⁴⁴"ZNS To Broadcast Produce Prices," Nassau Guardian, 25 January 1943, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵"H. R. H. The Governor Broadcasts on Labour Recruitment for Florida," Nassau Guardian, 5 April 1943, pp. 1 and 2.

¹⁴⁶"Out Island Broadcasts," Nassau Guardian, 10 August 1943, p. 2.

¹⁴⁷"Out Island Broadcast Popular," Nassau Tribune, 8 October 1943, p. 1.

death notices, cost only \$3 for each broadcast.¹⁴⁸ These programs have always been the nation's bulletin board and they draw an audience.

In Out Island settlements, it is not unusual for all activity to cease during the broadcast.¹⁴⁹ Acceptance of ZNS programs has always been high, if letters to the station are any measure of approval. In 1944, Bethel reported that as many as 83 requests for musical numbers had arrived on a single day. Other letters attesting to the station's popularity arrived from throughout the islands. The lighthouse keepers at the Great Issacs light in the Northwest Providence Channel thanked the station for its broadcasts of a group named the "Gospel Singers." The letter writer characterized the service as ". . . a Godsend to the lightkeepers and their families."¹⁵⁰

Acceptance of ZNS programming in Nassau at this time, however, was another matter. The station came in for considerable criticism by the more sophisticated audience in Nassau. The station's defenders were quickly in print with editorials and letters. The Tribune reminded its readers that the station had been established to serve the Out Islands, not just Nassau. Residents of Nassau, the paper pointed out, could tune to other stations, whereas Out Islanders could get ZNS only on their community radios.¹⁵¹ A writer to the Tribune reminded the paper's readers that residents of Nassau had alternative entertainments--movies,

¹⁴⁸Bohning, op. cit.

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰"Out Islanders Show Increasing Interest in ZNS Programmes," Nassau Guardian, 16 February 1944, p. 2.

¹⁵¹"Purpose of ZNS," Nassau Tribune, 20 March 1944, p. 1.

socials, dances and the like--whereas the Out Islanders were not so fortunate. The writer went on to say how impressed he had been to see Out Islanders grouped around a community radio listening to ZNS.¹⁵²

Music, news from England or the United States, and other entertainment was instituted by ZNS for military personnel serving at the airfield outside Nassau as early as 1942.¹⁵³ These broadcasts took place on an irregular basis, but the next year a program titled "Services Calling" was a regular broadcast service of ZNS.¹⁵⁴ Like Out Island programming, shows for the military were criticized by some and defended by others. One letter writer commented:

. . . the Forces stationed at Nassau ask repeatedly for music of the kind now put on the air by ZNS. After all, it is they who require entertainment. The civilian population of Nassau have amusements in their own town. They are on the spot, and as such can go to a show, dance, or hold a party in the evenings. I should like them to picture a group of airmen in their hut. Miles from town, they turn to the only form of entertainment offered--the radio.¹⁵⁵

By the end of the war, ZNS had expanded its broadcasting facilities, increased its hours of service and variety of its offerings. In addition, it developed programs for the Out Islands and improved the quality of existing programs. There was, however, a problem with electrical interference by Cuban radio stations which had plagued ZNS during

¹⁵²'Sympathetic,' "ZNS Fans Defend Station," Nassau Tribune, 20 March 1944, p. 1.

¹⁵³"Broadcasting Notes," Nassau Guardian, 30 August 1943, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴"New Services Programme on ZNS," Nassau Guardian, 30 August 1943, p. 2.

¹⁵⁵'Forces Friend' [pseud.], "ZNS Fans Defend Station," Nassau Tribune, 20 March 1944, p. 1.

the war years. During the war, A. D. Hodgson, Director of Telecommunications, visited Cuba in an effort to solve the problem. On his return, he told a Guardian reporter that if the Colony was going to improve its position regarding radio broadcasting, it would have to agree to abide by the Inter-American Convention and the North American Regional Broadcasting Agreement.¹⁵⁶ These agreements, administered by the Federal Communications Commission in the United States, provided a basic organization and control of frequency allocations and assignments to prevent interference and frequency grabbing. The problems were made worse for the Bahamas because the colonial government had not signed the broadcasting agreements.

By the end of the war it was becoming obvious that changes were going to have to be made in the operation of ZNS. The month-long Second North American Regional Broadcasting Conference, held in Washington in February 1946, resulted in Cuba reasserting its claim to the 640 kHz allocation used by ZNS in Nassau and KFI in Los Angeles. Because the Bahamas were late in establishing a broadcasting entity and had not adhered to the regional agreements, the Colony had little standing in pressing its claim for the frequency.

The lack of protection of the frequency used by ZNS was not a new problem for the station. It had been a problem since the station went on the air. The first frequency selected for the station was 618 kHz,¹⁵⁷ but within a month of its sign-on, ZNS changed to 610 kHz to protect a

¹⁵⁶"Station Interference to be Cleared," Nassau Guardian, 23 November 1942, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷"Broadcast," Nassau Guardian, 11 May 1937, p. 4.

station in Clearwater, Florida.¹⁵⁸ That frequency was ultimately vacated in favor of WIOD in Miami¹⁵⁹ before the end of the year.¹⁶⁰ ZNS then transmitted on 790 kHz until April 1942, when it began broadcasting on 640 kHz.¹⁶¹

Hodgson, who represented the Bahamas at the Second North American Regional Broadcasting Conference, reviewed the background of broadcasting problems for the Nassau Guardian in 1946. He said that the Bahamas had not opted for representation in the previous conferences because Bahamian authorities thought the Colony was only "playing around" with broadcasting and did not need to be represented. As a result, frequencies were assigned to the United States, Canada and Cuba without regard to the Bahamas. After the North American radio frequency changes went into effect in 1941, ZNS moved to the shared 640 kHz frequency. Cuba, annoyed that the United States shared the frequency with the Bahamas, renewed its claim to the assignment and refused to sign any agreement which did not give them the 640 kHz frequency.¹⁶²

The conference deadlocked and Cuba walked out. The impasse was finally resolved when Cuba offered its 1540 kHz assignment to the Bahamas. The American delegation urged the Bahamas to accept the

¹⁵⁸"ZNS Frequency Change," Nassau Tribune, 1 June 1937, p. 1.

¹⁵⁹"The Wavelength For Nassau Station," Nassau Tribune, 5 October 1937, p. 1.

¹⁶⁰"WIOD Engineer Adjust ZNS Equipment," Nassau Tribune, 30 November 1937, p. 1.

¹⁶¹"Station ZNS Nassau," Nassau Guardian, 17 April 1942, p. 2.

¹⁶²"ZNS To Go On New Frequency August 1st," Nassau Guardian, 18 March 1946, p. 1.

compromise because it would result in a clear channel assignment to the Bahamas. In view of Cuba's unilateral decision to begin broadcasting on the 640 kHz assignment on March 30, 1946, the Bahamas were faced with an immediate and severe problem. The Colony relied on standard broadcast band (AM) service for both regular and emergency broadcasts to fixed-frequency receivers in the Out Islands. As Hodgson pointed out, the problems of the change were compounded because Cuba's plan would give the Colony barely a month to make the necessary changes in the Out Islands.¹⁶³

To sweeten the proposal, Cuba offered the Bahamas, on 24-hour notice, a 1540 kHz transmitter and technicians to install it.¹⁶⁴ Hodgson announced that the offer to change frequencies had been accepted, and that the change would be completed by August first.¹⁶⁵ The delay in making the exchange would give the Bahamas' Telecommunications Department time to make the required changes in the community receivers in the Out Islands. The actual change of frequencies was made by July 28, 1946.¹⁶⁶

Even though the change of frequency solved the station's major problem of obtaining a recognized and protected assignment, it also

¹⁶³"Isolation Policy Rebounds on Bahamas," Nassau Tribune, 18 March 1946, pp. 1 and 2.

¹⁶⁴"Bahamas May Lose Broadcasting Frequency," Nassau Tribune, 1 March 1946, p. 1.

¹⁶⁵"ZNS To Go On New Frequency August 1st," Nassau Guardian, 18 March 1946, p. 1.

¹⁶⁶"ZNS to Broadcast on New Frequency," Nassau Guardian, 24 July 1946, p. 2.

brought into sharp focus the longstanding problem of underutilization of the station. Continued inadequate use of the clear channel assignment was a very real threat to the Colony's claim to the frequency at the next North American Regional Broadcasting Conference scheduled for 1949. It was estimated that nearly £5,000 would be needed for additional equipment and personnel to expand the station's schedule to prevent the loss of the assignment.

At the same time the station's needs and hours of operation were being discussed in the House of Assembly, Governor Sir William Murphy proposed that the station be converted to commercial operation. The Guardian's writer reported that there was a considerable body of opinion in favor of such a change. ZNS, the writer said, could choose the best practices of commercial broadcasting and at the same time continue to provide tasteful programming for the Bahamas.¹⁶⁷ In the discussion in the House of Assembly, Donald McKinney, a member of the Broadcasting Committee, termed the station an "abject failure," and offered three alternatives. First, the government could appropriate the money to upgrade the station to meet the requirements of maintaining its clear channel status. This, he claimed, would require about nine hours of daily broadcast service. Second, the station could be leased to local or outside interests to operate for the government. Third, the station could be sold. McKinney suggested that ZNS as a commercial service could provide British advertisers with a method of reaching American markets from a British-ruled territory. McKinney also warned that if

¹⁶⁷"The Future of Station ZNS," Nassau Guardian, 30 November 1948, p. 2.

ZNS were to become a commercial operation, there would have to be safeguards for programming and fixed times for Out Island broadcasts. Alvin Braynen, representing Eleuthera in the House, said there was no alternative except commercialization; the station was too important to the Out Islands to be given over to a private operator.¹⁶⁸

As the debate over the future of ZNS continued, Roy Thomson, whose communications holdings included newspapers and radio stations in British colonies and the United States, took an interest in acquiring ZNS in addition to his participation in the purchase of the Guardian from Mary Moseley.¹⁶⁹ Etienne Dupuch, whose Tribune followed the course of the Thomson takeover attempt--the Guardian was discreetly silent on the affair--made his position clear. He was against both the sale of the station and its commercialization.¹⁷⁰ He also warned of the pitfalls of selling the Colony's "mediums [sic] of expression" to foreign operators. "What amazes me more," he said, "is the kind of people who are selling out this country!!"¹⁷¹ At least some portion of the public held the same opinion as Dupuch; a petition against the sale of ZNS was in circulation by mid-February 1949.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸"The Broadcasting Station," Nassau Guardian, 8 December 1948, p. 2.

¹⁶⁹Etienne Dupuch, Tribune Story (London: Ernest Benn, 1967), p. 119.

¹⁷⁰Etienne Dupuch, "Political Back-Chat," Nassau Tribune, 22 February 1949, p. 1.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²"Very Good News," Nassau Tribune, 18 February 1949, p. 1.

A select committee of the legislature was unanimous that the government should not sell or lease the station to a private operator. However, as a compromise, the committee proposed that a company be formed to operate the station with Roy Thomson as its chief executive officer. This would avoid the sale or lease of the station, and provide better management of the station and better service to the Colony. It would also fit with Thomson's desire to own and operate ZNS in tandem with the Nassau Guardian. The House of Assembly gave only grudging assent. The prospect of losing revenue and spending £15,000 per year to operate the station on a nine-hour daily schedule to protect the frequency assignment did not appeal to their fiscal conservatism, either.

The details of the proposal included the Colony's government paying the proposed company £1,500 per year as an operating fee and reimbursing operating losses at the rate of 100 percent of the first £2,500; 75 percent of the next £1,000 and 50 percent of the next £1,000 during the first year of operation. During the second and third years of the contract, the rates would be changed slightly.¹⁷³ The House of Assembly approved a resolution urging the adoption of the plan and sent it to the governor. This action sidestepped the Legislative Council, which normally would have been the next legislative process. The Tribune considered this move a ". . . high-handed piece of business."¹⁷⁴

At this point, mid-May, the station's problems disappear from the papers only to return as a topic of some emergency in mid-summer. By

¹⁷³"House Members Adopt Report of ZNS Committee," Nassau Guardian, 20 May 1949, pp. 1 and 6.

¹⁷⁴"Council Side-stepped," Nassau Tribune, 23 May 1949, p. 1.

the end of July, with a possible change of frequency looming near, the Colony was faced with the loss of the clear channel protection of the 1540 kHz assignment. Its loss would create hardships for the Out Islanders who depended on the station for storm warnings and other vital information. At the same time, the acting governor announced that the proposed Thomson-led takeover of the station had been withdrawn. (Thomson also sold his shares of the Guardian and severed his ties to the Colony's media.) Thus the Colony was faced with the immediate need to broadcast at least nine hours each day to protect the clear channel status of ZNS.¹⁷⁵

With Thomson's pullout following the withdrawal of the proposal, the Colony had less than a 50-50 chance of holding on to the frequency which was coveted by American broadcasting interests. To bring the station up to acceptable standards, the government was faced with the outlay of £10,000 to £12,000 per year. Bert Cambridge, representing the southern district of New Providence in the House of Assembly, commented that although the government was interested in keeping the station on the air, it was reluctant to provide the means to do so. He said the station had only a bad piano and some old records. Part of the recommendation to keep ZNS on the air was to hire a foreigner to manage the station. Cambridge's acid comment was that they should get something to manage before they brought in a manager.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵"Broadcast Station ZNS," Nassau Guardian, 23 July 1949, p. 3.

¹⁷⁶"House Discusses Future of Broadcasting Station," Nassau Guardian, 26 July 1949, pp. 1 and 3.

The interplay of personalities and philosophies on the subject of the Thomson ZNS-Guardian takeover is complex and interesting. Alvin Braynen told the House of Assembly:

A certain "very powerful and learned influence" had prevented the proposed manager of the station from working in the Colony, and the Canadian concern withdrew its offer because it was not interested in the deal unless it could run the newspaper and the station together. This person had applied for permission to work in the Colony, and the Government had drawn every red-herring across the question of admitting him. In disgust he had withdrawn, leaving the Fourth Estate of the Colony poorer. And God knew, he said, that if ever the Colony needed a Press this was the time. The Government did not want this section of the Press to carry on [the Guardian]. It was a shame, he added, because at least that paper published the remarks of members [of the House of Assembly] correctly and did not jump from sentence to sentence leaving out what they chose. The Canadian concern had, in disgust, folded their tents like the Arabs, and as silently stolen away.¹⁷⁷

Much of Braynen's sarcasm was aimed at Dupuch who had been opposed to Thomson's intrusion into the local media. Perhaps some of Braynen's rancor was the animosity left over from his libel action against Dupuch from 1942.

In his memoirs, Dupuch revealed the missing specifics in Braynen's attack.

While this was happening [Thomson's attempted takeover of ZNS and the Guardian] I found an unexpected ally. Godfrey Higgs was raising hell in the Executive Council about this foreign invasion of our agencies of propaganda and George Roberts was backing him to the hilt. . . . He fought this proposal to a standstill and he didn't stop until the Immigration Department told Mr. Davies, who was to be the new editor of the Guardian, to leave the colony.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Dupuch, Tribune Story, pp. 119-20.

In reaction to the failure of Thomson's takeover, Robert L. Sands, a leading figure in the Colony's political and economic life, said the station would have been better off with the proposal guaranteeing losses because,

. . . it is going to cost double or treble the previous amount to preserve the wave-length now, because His Majesty's Immigration Committee of the Executive Council had refused permission to the manager to work in the Colony. First it had rumoured that he was a Jew, and when that didn't work they said he was a Communist. They had written to the High Commissioner in Canada to find out who this man was, although they knew that his father was a Senator in the Canadian Parliament--and a Tory at that.¹⁷⁹

Another member, Dr. Raymond Sawyer, professed shock at the allegations made by Braynen and Sands and said that he was not going to vote any money until the House found out what happened.¹⁸⁰ Thus, old wounds--Braynen's libel case--and new philosophies--Dupuch's antipathy toward admitting foreigners into the mass media of the Colony--resulted in a serious threat to the survival of ZNS. If the House could not agree on funding and operating philosophy, the station was dangerously close to being lost.

The day before the session of the House of Assembly which revealed the seriousness of the threat to ZNS, Kenneth Ingraham, Director of Telecommunications, sent a letter to the Colonial Secretary outlining a plan to save the station. The proposal called for the immediate expansion of the ZNS broadcast schedule to nine hours per day at cost of

¹⁷⁹"House Discusses Future of Broadcasting Station," Nassau Guardian.

¹⁸⁰Ibid.

£3,318 for the period August 1-December 31, 1949. The change would cost £812 in salaries, £506 for records and library services, £800 for studio renovations, £800 for new musical instruments and £400 for artists' fees and incidentals.

The second part of the document provided estimates for the continued operation of ZNS nine hours per day as a noncommercial operation in 1950. The proposal reveals in detail the structure and organization of ZNS and its cost of operation prior to its change to a commercial broadcasting station (see Table IX).

TABLE IX
ZNS COST OF OPERATION, 1950

Expenses	Amount
<u>Personnal</u>	
Temporary Station Manager	£ 900
Assistant Station Manager	516
Two Announcers @ £364 each	728
Two Clerks @ £252 each	504
One News Gatherer	364
One Technician	310
One Messenger	100
	<u>£3,422</u>
<u>Operations</u>	
Electricity	£1,100
Maintenance	800
Records, etc.	500
Subscriptions to Libraries	1,000
Out Island Travel, etc.	500
Performing Rights Society Fee	200
Artistes' Fees	1,000
	<u>£5,100</u>
Total Expenses	£8,522

Ingraham also pointed out that if the station became a commercial operation, it could expect about £5,000 in advertising revenue, but would require an additional £1,000 in salaries for more personnel. On a commercial operation basis the station would cost the Colony about £4,500; if it continued as non-commercial, the cost would be about £8,500.¹⁸¹

Ultimately, the Development Board provided £2,900 so that ZNS could finish the year on a nine-hour-per-day schedule. In the editorial announcing the Board's support, the Guardian noted that providing news and hurricane information to the Out Islands was reason enough to provide the money for the station.¹⁸² ZNS increased its five-hour-per-day schedule by expanding each of its three daily transmissions. The new schedule, which went into effect August 16, 1949, began with the morning transmission from 7:00 until 10:00; the mid-day broadcast from 12:30 until 2:00 and the evening services from 5:30 to 10:00.¹⁸³ Three new positions--announcer, reporter and secretary--were filled by the first of September to augment the staff and meet the needs of the increased hours of operation.¹⁸⁴

Planning for the change to commercial operation continued during the rest of 1949 and through the summer of 1950. In July 1950, John S.

¹⁸¹"ZNS Proposal Outlined," Nassau Tribune, 25 July 1949, p. 3.

¹⁸²"Station ZNS," Nassau Guardian, 4 August 1949, p. 3.

¹⁸³"New ZNS Schedule," Nassau Guardian, 12 August 1949, p. 2.

¹⁸⁴"ZNS Calling," Nassau Guardian, 3 September 1949, p. 2.

Carlile, an American broadcaster, was hired for six months to supervise and reorganize ZNS as a commercial radio station. The change, which was not unexpected, was announced for 7:00 a.m., August 1, 1950.¹⁸⁵ Management hoped to extend the station's schedule to 18 hours per day. Advertising rates were not announced, however, because they had not yet been established.¹⁸⁶

Although complaints were still heard about the commercialization of ZNS, on the whole, people responded favorably by increased listening. This, in turn, produced additional advertising sales and revenue. Although Bethel replaced Carlile in early January 1951, he was not confirmed as station manager until mid-August of the same year. Bethel had joined the Telecommunications Department in 1938, and became Secretary, or head, of Out Island broadcasting in 1943. In 1945, following Kenneth Brown's departure, he became Secretary of Broadcasting and Assistant Station Manager in 1949. During Carlile's appointment, Bethel served as Acting Station Manager.¹⁸⁷ Both daily newspapers praised Bethel's efforts in the early days of broadcasting in the Bahamas. The Guardian revealed that at one point,

. . . Mr. Bethel combined the roles of announcer, programme-arranger and secretary, and in this manner kept the station alive when a less energetic person, faced with the many

¹⁸⁵"Mr. John S. Carlile To Make ZMS Change-Over," Nassau Guardian, 3 July 1950, p. 2.

¹⁸⁶"ZNS To Be Commercialized," Nassau Tribune, 15 July 1950, p. 4.

¹⁸⁷"Mr. H. R. Bethel Confirmed In Post," Nassau Guardian, 18 August 1951, p. 2.

problems which the station encountered in its early days, might have thrown in the sponge.¹⁸⁸

The Tribune noted that he had ". . . merited this reward for his efficient and faithful service to the Department."¹⁸⁹

Under its new management as a commercial station, the Tribune reported, ZNS would keep advertising money in the Colony rather than sending it off to buy air time on south Florida radio stations. The paper also reported that the station would suspend commercial broadcasts during emergency periods like hurricanes and tropical storms. But what the paper gave in one line, it took away in another. It pointed out that radio could never provide the detailed news coverage possible in a newspaper.¹⁹⁰ The Tribune's assessment of the station's capability to cover news was probably quite accurate, given the station's small staff and the nature of broadcasting equipment at mid-century.

Following Carlile's six months as station manager while ZNS was reorganized, Harcourt Bethel assumed the duties of general manager. He had been the assistant manager during Carlile's tenure.¹⁹¹ Carlile and Bethel did well in turning the station into a potentially profitable operation. In the four months for which figures are available--August through November 1951--the station showed considerable growth in the revenue generated through time sales (see Table X).

¹⁸⁸Ibid.

¹⁸⁹"Manager of ZNS," Nassau Tribune, 18 August 1951, p. 1.

¹⁹⁰"ZNS To Be Commercialized," Nassau Tribune, 15 July 1950, p. 4.

¹⁹¹"Farewell Party," Nassau Tribune, 6 January 1951, p. 1.

TABLE X
ZNS ADVERTISING SALES, 1950

Month	£	s.	d.
August	356	14	6
September	474	6	6
October	641	2	0
November	<u>636</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	2,108	11	0

By the time these figures were reported at the end of February 1951, the station had generated more than £6,000 in advertising sales from 50 active accounts that had produced 102 contracts. Thus the station had sold an additional £4,000 in advertising since the first of December, 1950. The report estimated that sales for the station's first year of commercial operation would exceed £7,000. As a result, only a little more than £1,000 of the original £8,522 appropriation would be used to subsidize the station's operation.¹⁹²

The same report also provided estimates for salaries and operating expenses for the 1951 fiscal year. Again, these estimates reveal considerable information about the projected growth of the station and its organization. The report indicated that there would be 14 employees, excluding engineering technicians, who were paid by the Telecommunications budget. The station's budget was estimated to be £9,275,

¹⁹²"Plans For Nassau's ZNS," Nassau Tribune, 26 February 1951, pp. 3 and 4.

approximately £950 more than 1950, and £275 more than the anticipated advertising revenue of £9,000. While the 1951 budget was close to the previous year's, the new budget included an additional £3,338 in cost of living and devaluation allowances.¹⁹³ These allowances should be added to the estimates, bringing the budget up to £12,613--more than £3,600 greater than the estimated advertising revenue. The budget also made no provision for capital improvements (see Table XI).

At the time the budget was submitted, the Telecommunications Department operated 24 transmitters and 40 antennae for its various wireless, shortwave and broadcasting activities. All this equipment was located at the department's Perpal Swamp Compound. The interference created was a real problem for ZNS. To correct the problem, Ingraham proposed spending £5,800 to move the ZNS operation from the Perpal Swamp site to a location nearer the ocean because over-water propagation of the signal would result in a stronger field strength for the station and better reception throughout the Colony.

The requested money would provide for a new transmitter building and a 165-foot antenna placed 100 feet from the shore. This, Ingraham said, would be cheaper than increasing the transmitter's power at the existing site. Increasing the staff and moving the transmitter location were so interrelated that Ingraham reported that it was not possible to do one without the other. The Broadcasting Advisory Council supported the proposal.¹⁹⁴ Thus the total expenditure, minus technical services,

¹⁹³Ibid.

¹⁹⁴"ZNS Begins Second Year As Commercial Station," Nassau Guardian, 1 August 1951, p. 2.

TABLE XI
ZNS SALARY AND OPERATING BUDGET, 1951

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<u>Position</u>	<u>Salary</u>
Station Manager	£ 525
Assistant Manager	475
Announcers 2 @ £400	800
Announcers 2 @ £375	750
Traffic Supervisor	375
Continuity/Script Supervisor	375
News Gatherer	375
Office Assistants 3 @ £240	720
Apprentice	120
One Commercial Agent £200 plus 4% of sales	200
Commission on estimated sales of £9,000	300
	<u>£5,075</u>
Cost of Living Allowances	£2,551
Devaluation Allowances	787
	<u>£3,338</u>
<u>Operations</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
Electricity	£ 900
Maintenance	1,000
Records	400
Subscriptions to Record Libraries	1,000
Miscellaneous	500
Performing Rights Society Fees	200
Contingency Fee for Artists	200
	<u>£4,200 + £3,338=</u>
Total	<u>£12,613</u>

would be £18,413--considerably more than the amount projected in the budget.

Programming for ZNS as a commercial operation was based on quarter-hour blocks of news and music, each with a title identifying either the star of the program or its content. The sign-on music show ran for an hour, as did an educational program each morning at 9:15. The Board of Education broadcast another half-hour program in the afternoon. Sponsored programs began at 7:15 in the evening with local news sponsored by the Bahamas Gas and Fuel Company. The John S. George Electric Company sponsored a half-hour of popular music and Pepsodent provided a quarter-hour of "Strange As It Seems." More music followed until the evening devotional, "Chapel by the Side of the Road," at 9:45.¹⁹⁵

Except for an occasional letter to one of the papers praising or condemning the station's programs or performers, ZNS avoided major criticism until the summer of 1954. The station's policy was to disallow the discussion of controversial subjects in its broadcasts. A problem arose when the Reverend R. P. Dyer, the headmaster of Queen's College, preached an anti-gambling sermon on the weekly radio sermon. A proposed gambling casino, part of the development scheme for Grand Bahama Island, had stirred passions in the community for some time. The technician on duty at the station checked with station management and was authorized to cut off the broadcasts, which he did. The Guardian, in reporting the incident, said the clergyman's remarks

¹⁹⁵"ZNS Programmes," Nassau Guardian, 3 December 1951, p. 1.

against the casino proposal were a discussion of a controversial subject and that the station had been correct in shutting off the broadcast.¹⁹⁶

The Guardian's editorial on radio censorship pointed out that if the station maintained a policy forbidding all controversial programs, that policy would result in the broadcast of,

. . . only those things it is sure will offend no person-- will draw the disagreement of no person--it assuredly will arrive soon at the point where its programmes will interest no person.

A radio station that cuts itself off from all controversy-- from all expressions of opinions, and even from reports upon those things that shape opinion on controversial matters--is cutting itself off from life itself.

It is hard to see how a radio station which shuts itself off in a vacuum can come at all close to performing what should be its primary function, which is to broadcast.¹⁹⁷

The station reiterated its position on broadcasting controversial matters and the discussion faded from the papers.¹⁹⁸ Not until the election campaigns of 1956, when candidates were given the opportunity to broadcast campaign messages, did controversy reach the air with the official sanction of the station.¹⁹⁹

In 1955, the governor, the Earl of Ranfurly, asked the House of Assembly to establish a Broadcasting Commission, thus separating ZNS from the Telecommunications Department. The proposed five-man board

¹⁹⁶"Censorship On The Air," Nassau Guardian, 29 June 1954, p. 4.

¹⁹⁷Ibid.

¹⁹⁸"Director Makes Statement on Rev. Dyer ZNS Case," Nassau Tribune, 30 June 1954, p. 1.

¹⁹⁹"Political Broadcasts Over Z. N. S.," Nassau Tribune, 13 June 1956, p. 1.

would be responsible for all electronic broadcast transmission in the Colony. The proposal indicated that the station should not be turned over to private enterprise, and that the ZNS relationship with the Telecommunications Department was an unspecified handicap to the development of the station. As one of the number of wireless and radio services, ZNS shared resources and management attention--to its detriment. The proposed broadcasting commission was to be set up for a five-year trial period and the governor would appoint the commission's members. It would be vested with the assets of the broadcasting branch of the Telecommunications Department, which would continue to provide operating services for which the broadcasting authority would pay. The studios would also be rented from the Telecommunications Department.

To finance the new broadcasting board, the special tax on radio and television sets would be paid to the commission on a quarterly basis and the annual grant given to the station would be brought up to £10,000. The commission would also be empowered to borrow up to £50,000 for capital expenditures during the five-year trial period. The broadcasting authority would receive all advertising revenue and would be responsible for all salaries. The commission would also have the exclusive franchise for radio and television broadcasting in the Colony, and the franchise could not be sold or leased without the approval of the legislature.²⁰⁰

The discussion that followed in the House of Assembly resulted in some changes in the proposal. The major change, which would be

²⁰⁰"House Urged to Make ZNS Separate From Telecomms," Nassau Guardian, 3 June 1955, pp. 1 and 11.

modified even further by a select committee, involved the appointment of the commission's Board of Governors. The House wanted to appoint two members of the proposed board and insure that all its members were British subjects. This was a significant change in the governor's proposal that he should appoint all the members of the board. The House also called for salary parity between ZNS and the Telecommunications Department.

Bert Cambridge, who served on both the Telecommunications Board and the Broadcasting Advisory Committee, said that the station was ". . . a mature man that now needs supervising by an outside body." Cambridge also noted that the station was earning more than £18,000 annually, and under the new arrangement, he felt the station could double its income within a year or two.²⁰¹

There is no indication in either the Guardian or the Tribune that the growth of the station's advertising revenue was at their expense. Apparently, the growth of the Colony's economy and, possibly, the radio advertising money previously spent in Florida was now being kept in the Colony, provided a sufficient pool of revenue which each paper and ZNS could share.

Clearly, ZNS had reached a point where the complexity of its operations and the unique character of its purpose required its separation from the Telecommunications Department. By the 1950s, the station had won acceptance by listeners, advertisers and, perhaps grudgingly, by the politicians. The station's increased hours of operation had established protection of its claim to the clear channel assignment of

²⁰¹"Bethell Voices Strong Objection Against ZNS-Telecoms 'Divorce,'" Nassau Guardian, 7 June 1955, pp. 2 and 5.

1540 kHz. ZNS had also proven its economic viability by increasing its annual revenue. From an approximate £7,000 income in its first year of commercial operation, the station's revenue increased to more than £18,000 five years later.

It was indeed time for the separation of broadcasting and telecommunications. The House of Assembly was not long in arranging matters to its liking. By mid-December 1955, the House accepted the governor's proposal for the separation of the two departments. The only major change proposed by the House was to require that three, rather than two, members of the proposed Broadcasting Commission be appointed by the House. The net result would be that the five-man commission would be dominated by the House rather than the governor.

Alvin Braynen, commenting on the change, said it was a reaction to a previous colonial secretary--who functioned as acting governor in the governor's absence--taking the government away from the House. "That," said Braynen, "was the reason for the three members of the Board of Governors."²⁰² The final form of the measure, however, reverted to the original proposal of two members of the new commission being appointed by the House of Assembly.²⁰³ The measure passed the House on May 1, 1956, and was sent to the Executive Council for its deliberations on May 10.²⁰⁴ The measure was approved and went into effect January 1,

²⁰²"Commission to Operate ZNS Wins Favor With Assembly," Nassau Guardian, 13 December 1955, p. 6.

²⁰³"Commission for Broadcasting and TV Approved by House," Nassau Guardian, 10 May 1956, p. 1.

²⁰⁴"Radio and TV Commission Bill May Be Considered by Council," Nassau Guardian, 10 May 1956, p. 1.

1957. With subsequent modifications, that act continues as the basic broadcasting law of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.²⁰⁵

Summary

By adopting communications systems developed over decades of use in other parts of the world, the Bahamas had finally obtained in broadcasting a communications system that could meet the Colony's needs for fast, economical communications. The submarine telegraph cable connected Nassau with Florida to bring the Bahamas into rapid and sustained communication with the rest of the world. The cable was replaced by wireless telegraphy which continued the contacts with the world and provided the long-sought rapid communication needed among the islands of the Colony. After a brief test of radio in the early 1930s, radio broadcasting began on a permanent basis in 1937. By mid-century, the Colony's station, ZNS, was operating as a commercial enterprise.

Over the years, radio became an important cultural institution in the Bahamas. From its earliest days, ZNS provided a link between Nassau and the Out Islands, a link which could not be matched by any other form of mass communication for speed, effectiveness and cost in reaching an attentive audience. Broadcasting gave Nassau an immediate, albeit one-way, communication connection with the Out Island settlements. Radio brought all Bahamians education, information, news and entertainment which helped to create a sense of identity with other communities throughout the islands. Now nearing a half-century of

²⁰⁵"Broadcasting Corporation of the Bahamas," an information sheet prepared by the Corporation, n. d.

service, ZNS has become an important agency in creating a sense of nationhood among all Bahamaians.

Broadcasting, as no other medium could, ended the isolation of the Out Islands because it could overcome the permanent barrier of geography, remove the uncertainty of the unpredictable barrier of weather and modify the psychological barriers of isolation and xenophobia by educating the populace. Radio is truly, as Bohning said, ". . . the tie binding the Bahamas."

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Like most of the institutions of modern civilization, the mass media were introduced to colonial possessions from without, and the Bahamas were no exception. Both newspapers and radio broadcasting developed abroad and were fairly widely diffused throughout the world before they were introduced and adopted in the Bahamas. Although a considerable British influence on the mass media resulted from Great Britain's suzerainty over the Bahamas, the actual introduction of mass media was from the United States. The proximity of the dominant economic and cultural society in the Western Hemisphere has been a constant influence in the life of the Bahamas, including the mass media. The influence of the United States has been gladly accepted at times; at other times, however, it has been heartily resented.

Themes

Throughout the period covered in this study, the history of the mass media in the Bahamas reveals a number of themes. Generally, these themes fall into two major categories: physical and social. Within each, a number of sub-themes may be discerned, although they are all considerably intertwined and do not exist in isolation. The physical sub-themes include geography, demography and technology; the social sub-themes include politics, economics, education, race and family.

Geography. The archipelagic nature of Bahamian geography has exerted a profound effect on the development of Bahamian society and the mass media as a part of that society. The isolated position of the Bahamas, for most of the period studied, kept them out of the mainstream of British colonial affairs and communications. Within the Colony itself, the Out Islands settlements were as isolated from the center of the Colony's affairs and communications as the Colony was from the Empire. Isolation delayed the introduction of improved communication technology for both news gathering and dissemination long after much of the British Empire and developing nations of the world had acquired them. The poor communications and transportation in the Colony militated against the extension of newspapers beyond Nassau. Technology did not provide a method of overcoming the geographic barriers of the islands until well into the twentieth century.

Demography. Throughout the history of the Bahamas, the population of the islands has been concentrated in Nassau and New Providence Island with only small settlements scattered in the Out Islands. The concentration of population on New Providence has permitted the concentration of a population sufficient to provide economic support for the development of the mass media. The concentration of population and wealth in Nassau, along with the geographic isolation of other settlements, has retarded significant or permanent development of mass media institutions outside Nassau and New Providence. Until recent development of Freeport on Grand Bahama Island, Out Island settlements have generally been too small, too poor and too isolated for mass media enterprises to succeed and survive. Not until the inception of radio

was a mass medium capable of bridging the isolation of Out Island settlements and social classes in the Colony.

Technology. Advancements in the technologies of communications, when they finally arrived in the Bahamas, brought about fundamental changes in the mass media and in Bahamian society. Although the submarine telegraph cable had been in place in other parts of the Empire for decades, the Bahamas were not connected to the developing system of cables until the last decade of the nineteenth century. The cable improved the economic climate of the Colony by providing a nearly instantaneous connection with markets beyond the seas. In addition, the cable provided a connection of news and information that had been previously denied. The cost of cable operation prevented Bahamian media enterprises from enjoying continuous service, but the Colony's government was able to provide a meager supply of news from abroad. Even these often inadequate news summaries were an improvement over the erratic exchange of newspapers via the uncertain intercolonial shipping of the times.

When the cable was supplanted and ultimately replaced by wireless radio early in the twentieth century, it was possible to continue the advantages of cable at lower cost, and to extend the system to Out Island settlements through the use of low-cost and low-powered transmitting and receiving equipment. The new technology provided the long-desired method of overcoming the geographic and economic barriers to reaching sources of news and extending the benefits of mass media to the remote Out Island settlements.

While cable and wireless were giving editors access to foreign and Out Island news, other technologies were being developed at the end of the nineteenth century. These technologies, when introduced to the Bahamas, would improve the production of newspapers so that they became truly mass media. Before the introduction of electricity-based technologies--telephone, lighting, powered presses and powered type-setting equipment--the production of newspapers was a labor-intensive handicraft that was slow and expensive. The product of such an operation was limited in quantity, and its cost limited its circulation to a relatively affluent segment of the population. Poor transportation further limited the circulation of the newspapers. Automobiles improved delivery of newspapers in and around Nassau, but not until powered shipping and aircraft--both expensive modes of transportation in the Bahamas--could papers be disseminated with any rapidity. Improved production and dissemination of newspapers, however, did lower the cost and permit greater circulation of papers to an expanding population. Radio, when finally established in the Bahamas on a permanent basis, provided the ultimate economical link that transcended the problems of publication and dissemination of news and information faced by colonial newspaper editors. As a medium of instantaneous dissemination, able to overcome the barriers of time and space, radio became the first truly mass medium in the Colony. Further, radio was able to overcome many of the social barriers which had long afflicted the Colony.

Politics. From the days of John Wells and the American Loyalists to the struggle of Bahamian blacks for self-determination, political life in the Bahamas has always been intense. In the colonial Bahamas,

family and social standing were equated in terms of economic strength and domination of the colonial legislature. Therefore, the ruling class dealt harshly with any threat to their commercial or political domination and privilege. Newspapers generally survived only if they supported the colonial government and the ruling class. This support usually resulted in their obtaining government printing contracts and ruling class commercial advertising. To attack the dominant institutions was to risk economic disaster. Only one paper, the Tribune, was able to survive in opposition to the government and the ruling class. Appealing wit and political acumen permitted Etienne Dupuch and his paper to survive and become the dominant newspaper in the Bahamas.

Political life has always been a constant in both free enterprise journalism and broadcasting. Throughout the period of print mass media and, since mid-century, broadcasting, the mass media have depended heavily on generating revenue through advertising sales.

Economics. As an adjunct to politics, economics has played a significant role in the survival of the mass media in the Bahamas. Although every newspaper in the Colony suffered through economic hardships imposed through the denial of access to government printing contracts, or the usual economic depressions endemic to the Bahamas, the Nassau Guardian and the Nassau Tribune have survived. As creations of the government, radio and (more recently) television, are less dependent on advertising revenue, although the extent to which the stations could expect government support in a severe economic depression is a moot point. Until radio was established as a commercial enterprise at

mid-twentieth century, it was supported by small legislative appropriations and, to some extent, through the purchase of mandatory receiver licenses. Until the general prosperity of the post-World War II period, mass media in the Bahamas existed in a precarious balance vis-a-vis local political and economic conditions and realities.

Education. A major impediment to the expansion of mass media in the Bahamas has been the relatively low level of education of the black and colored majority. Most Bahamians since colonial times have been uneducated, or poorly educated, and thus not capable of using or affording newspapers. Improved educational opportunities for black Bahamians, along with improvement in their economic status, have joined improvements in mass media technologies to put the mass media within the reach of most Bahamians to obtain and to use.

Broadcast radio, however, has always been within the reach of the masses. Installation of community receivers in the Out Island settlements and the constantly declining costs of owning radio receivers were two important reasons. Even more important, radio did not depend on education, social standing or political affiliation to succeed as a mass medium. As an aural medium, it was uniquely successful in appealing to a class which had been long dependent on an oral tradition.

Race. Perhaps the most dominating theme apparent in this study is that of race. First, domination of the whites as slave owners and as leaders of the government, commerce and society in the Bahamas, kept control of the mass media in the hands of the small ruling class until well into the present century. For a century, until the abortive

attempt of the Freeman to establish a medium of expression for black Bahamians, the majority racial class of the Colony lacked any voice to speak out on its behalf. Following the turn of the century, first in the Watchman and then in the Tribune, black and colored Bahamians found outlets for their concerns as well as ardent champions of their causes. Although many journalists, politicians and newspapers played their parts in bringing social equality to blacks, the significant role in the struggle was played by Etienne Dupuch and the Nassau Tribune. Throughout his editorship of the Tribune, he was the champion of equal rights for all Bahamians.

It is apparent from Dupuch's writings that he was influenced by his father, Leon Dupuch, who founded the paper, and who encouraged his three sons to work for justice and dignity for all Bahamians, black and white. Dupuch was also influenced by the racial discrimination he saw as a "native troop" in the British Army during World War I. An astute judge of events and people around him, he saw that the short-sightedness of racial discrimination in the Bahamas exerted a detrimental effect on the Colony. At mid-century, racial revolution and evolution throughout the world influenced Dupuch and a generation of young black Bahamians who would eventually lead the Bahamas to independence.

Other black newspapers--the Herald, the Voice and other short-lived newspapers--expressed a wide spectrum of public and editorial opinion regarding the subject of race and social justice in the Colony. Throughout the world, organizations founded and led by blacks, or by whites concerned with equality for blacks, led to the establishment of political parties in the Bahamas. In this regard, Dupuch, as journalist and

politician, used his paper to create and lead the Bahamas Democratic League. Its political agenda was more moderate than that of the Progressive Liberal Party, which was supported by the Herald. The Progressive Liberal Party ultimately gained the allegiance of the majority and has remained in power since independence of the Bahamas in 1973.

The century-old Nassau Guardian, as always a bastion of white reaction to social change, defended the prerogatives of the white ruling elite long past the time that their domination of the Colony actually ended. Its editors, with their eyes firmly focused on Etienne Dupuch as the greatest threat to white domination of the government and economy of the Bahamas, missed the obvious: that the Progressive Liberal Party had gained the allegiance and respect of the majority. The white oligarchy's reaction and Dupuch's moderation were minority positions in the new scheme of Bahamian realities by 1956.

Family. Perhaps the single most significant factor in the survival of free enterprise mass media institutions in the Bahamas has been that of family. Family members, as unpaid or underpaid sources of labor, inculcated with love for and dedication to the family enterprise, provided the staff to keep the papers operating during the periods of economic difficulties that regularly visited the Colony and its papers. Three generations of the Moseley family kept the Guardian alive through more than a century of the Colony's greatest economic and social stresses until it was sold to a consortium of Bahamian, Canadian and English businessmen at mid-century.

Like the Moseley family and its Guardian, the Dupuch family has kept the Tribune alive and influential for three generations.

Significantly, Etienne Dupuch sent his children to the United States and Great Britain for education and training in journalism, printing and law in an effort to insure the survival of the Nassau Tribune as a competitive, intensely independent, family-owned and operated enterprise. It has survived more than 80 years and is now the only family-owned paper in publication in the Bahamas.

Although the Herald was operated for a short while by its founder's son, the paper had not been set up as a family enterprise. Jack Lowe and Uriah Knowles were in partnership, thus there was no total family control of the paper. When Lowe died, his son was not able to maintain control of the paper and it passed through a number of owners until it finally disappeared in the 1960s.

Conclusions

The importance of mass media to the people of the Bahama Islands from 1784 to 1956 cannot be underestimated. From the earliest days, and throughout the period of this study, Bahamian newspapers provided a vital link between the Imperial government in London and the colonial government in Nassau for residents of the Bahamas. As part of this link, the papers provided information about legislation, laws and policies affecting the islanders. The papers also provided elements of culture and entertainment in addition to news and information. Given the service of colonial editors in the House of Assembly, the influence of newspapers on local legislation was often direct and persuasive.

Throughout the period studied, newspapers served as focal points for social and political factions within the community. John Wells'

Bahama Gazette provided American Loyalists with both a forum and a direction in their efforts to gain position in the life of eighteenth century Nassau. In the following decades, many newspapers continued the same pattern, culminating in the polarization of the society as the Bahamas faced the transition from white to black leadership at the end of colonialism at mid-twentieth century.

Until supplanted by radio late in the 1930s, the newspapers provided information about widely separated families and ameliorated anxieties caused by natural disasters such as storms, epidemics and personal tragedies. The advent of radio shifted some, but not all, of the information dissemination to the electronic medium. Broadcast radio has been used for sending point-to-point messages throughout the islands as a low-cost alternative to expensive inter-island telephony. This broadcast programming service has become an important part of the station's service. For residents of the Bahamas, and particularly for Out Islanders, the broadcast of messages is a social phenomenon comparable to gossiping over a backyard fence.

Survival of mass media institutions depended on how well a particular paper served its subscribers by reflecting their opinions and giving them a focal point for expressing shared concerns. The papers which did survive were those which recognized the needs of their supporters and had a set of goals to follow. Editors who modernized their plants as resources and technological advances became available, kept their journals alive and growing, even in the periods of economic depression and government hostility.

Beyond the traditional services of reporting the affairs of the

day, the newspapers and radio of the Bahamas have been virtually the only mass methods of transmitting culture other than expensive books and the popular pulpit. Newspapers offered an ideal channel for transmitting prose, poetry, philosophy and the correspondence of subscribers who, often as not, were thoughtful readers and writers. Despite the uncertainty of colonial journalism, Bahamians were kept informed of the shifts in thought and literature; so were most British colonials, whose chief concerns were economic survival and social advancement.

Although the early newspapers were expensive--but less so than books--they were the least costly means of providing culture to the literate segment of the population. As the population became increasingly literate and more people subscribed to the various journals, the papers shifted from elitist to popular publications. However, not until the permanent establishment of radio was there a medium in place which could reach all classes and settlements without regard to economic status or literacy. Broadcasting could, and did, provide varieties of cultural experiences previously denied or restricted. The wealthy, who could afford magazines, books and the primitive phonographs of the day, now had drama, cultural events and the news of the world at their fingertips. For the poor, culture and entertainment outside the church and home became available. Radio, as no other medium could, gave all Bahamians the opportunity to share experiences and tie them together as a community with common problems and aspirations.

In a colony like the Bahamas, where centers of population are widely scattered and separated by miles of ocean, news broadcasts combined with regular newspaper service in Nassau to keep most Bahamians

relatively well-informed about changes in the Colony, its government and society. Such information was important at a time when the Bahamas were undergoing fundamental social and political restructuring. Because of its relative low cost, immediacy and widespread use, radio was the most effective medium of creating a sense of community among the residents of the Colony. Certainly the slow movement of newspapers from Nassau to the Out Island settlements could not compete with the immediacy for radio, nor could print match the novelty of words and music plucked from the air.

The newspapers gave Bahamian society the impetus and intellectual bases for restructuring the government and social order of the Colony. Radio brought to all citizens, regardless of where they were scattered in the islands, regardless of wealth or education, the feeling that they were all part of the Bahamas. Moreover, although not with the personal directness of Etienne Dupuch and his Tribune, Mary Moseley and her Guardian, or the Progressive Liberal Party's Herald, radio reached all with the same messages and the same sense of connection to the Bahamas as a nation.

Given the inherent problems of geography, the Bahamas were significantly assisted in their social, political and economic development by the mass media and their ability to overcome time and the physical barriers of geography and weather. The mass media also gave focus and direction to efforts both to retard and advance change in the Colony. In all, the mass media have been affected by the social and physical constraints of the archipelagic nature of the Bahamas. The media themselves have provided the vehicle by and through which the Bahamas have developed into a prosperous and stable modern state.

Suggestions For Further Research

At the outset of this research, the scope of the subject appeared to be rather narrowly based on the few known Bahamian newspapers surviving in the files of the Nassau Public Library. Initially, the relevant literature cited identified only 26 newspapers as having been in print in the Bahamas during the 172-year period of this study. After reading the local news and commentaries in the eight surviving Bahamian papers--some 30,000 to 50,000 separate issues--this researcher identified 44 newspapers or news sheets as having been in, or planned for, publication in the Bahamas. In addition, serendipitously, his research has found the existence of a single issue of another early Bahamian paper in the Public Records Office in London to bring to a total of nine Bahamian newspapers for which there is some physical evidence. The present research also reports the existence of broadcasting in the Colony prior to the generally accepted but incorrect date for the start of both broadcasting and of the establishment of the government-owned radio stations.

The most obvious research activities to pursue regarding Bahamian mass media is to attempt to find examples of the missing journals for microfilming. In addition, preservation of the bound volumes should be undertaken, because they are kept under less than ideal conditions in the Nassau Public Library. As an adjunct to the printed record of Bahamian mass media, oral histories of editors, broadcasters and journalists should be undertaken while these men and women are still available to the researcher.

The newspapers, which are more permanent records than are the ephemeral broadcasts of ZNS, are, of course, open to any number of content or comparative analysis and interpretation on virtually any subject the researcher could care to choose. Because the Bahamian newspapers are relatively well-preserved and cover such a long period--only one fairly large gap, from 1837 to 1849, exists--these papers offer a good source of information about many Caribbean-area British colonial newspapers that may not be preserved in any form anywhere else in the former British West Indian colonies.

Creating a bibliographic record and index of Bahamian and other British colonial papers would be of considerable value to researchers studying the mass media of any of the British Caribbean colonies. Comparative analyses of the various colonial newspapers, both in the Bahamas and other British colonies, would be fruitful areas of investigation. Significant comparisons could also be made with French, Spanish and Dutch colonial newspapers on virtually any topic from newspaper history and development through the coverage of independence movements or any area of interest a researcher might choose.

The history of broadcasting in the Bahamas, and in the British Caribbean colonies, must also be reconsidered in light of information found in research for this study. The history of broadcasting in this area may be greater and more detailed than previously thought. With the advent of television in the Bahamas and other former colonies, field studies could be undertaken to examine the diffusion of television in areas where it has only recently become available. The growth

of video tape clubs in the Caribbean is also an area of important study opportunities.

Certainly the study of print and broadcast journalism in the Bahamas after 1956 would be worthwhile. The development of newspapers in the Bahamas and the Caribbean, many of them strongly tied to labor and political movements, is important to study in relation to the political and revolutionary movements in the area. Tracing the development of the mass media of this area would be an important contribution to the understanding of these colonies-turned-nations. These mini-states have been ignored in the past, but recent events in the area serve as reminders that more attention should be paid to the region.

The possibilities for research in the mass media of the Bahamas and the West Indies are as great as the researcher can conceive. The Bahamian record, even though it consists of only a few newspapers, is fairly complete and thus an important source for studying West Indian mass media. Recall, too, that Bahamian editors depended on exchange newspapers for many news items long after other colonies obtained direct steamship and telegraphic communications. This procedure may have preserved something of other West Indian colonial journals in Bahamian newspapers. Thus it may be possible to create some fragmentary record of other West Indian papers from Bahamian sources. The record of Bahamian mass media is accessible through microfilm, and the proximity of the Bahamas to the United States makes retrospective and field studies relatively affordable.

The tropical setting of the Bahamas and the other Caribbean colonies is reward in itself for the researcher who can conduct on-site

investigations. For those who may have to be content with the microfilm record, the opportunities for research are both fascinating and rewarding.

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APPENDIX

TIME LINE: LOYALIST PERIOD

1784 '90 '00 '10 '20 '30 1840

Bahama Gazette
1784-1801;
1810-1815;
1819

Royal Lucayan
Gazette
1789

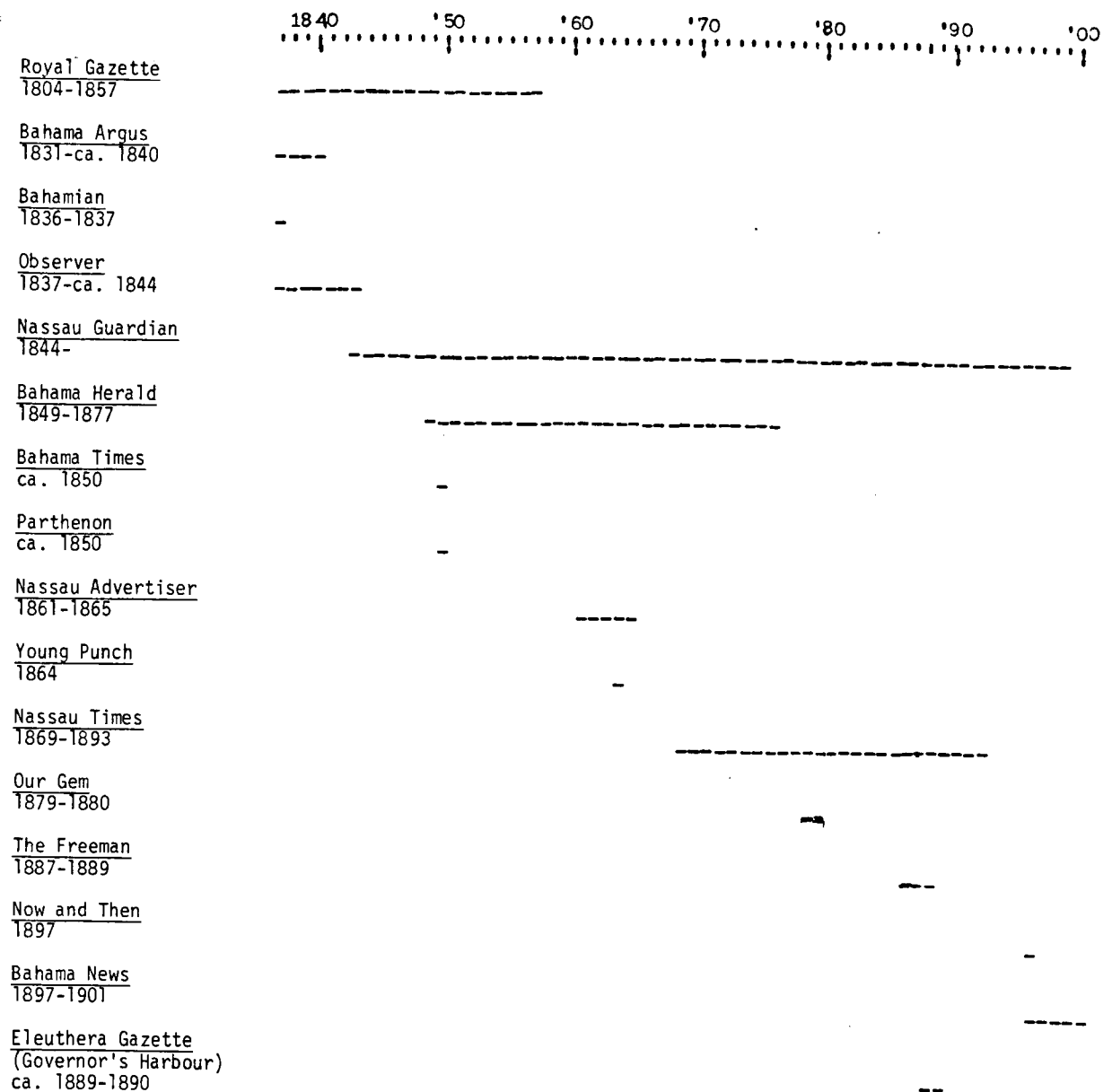
Royal Gazette
1804-1857

Bahama Argus
1831-ca. 1840

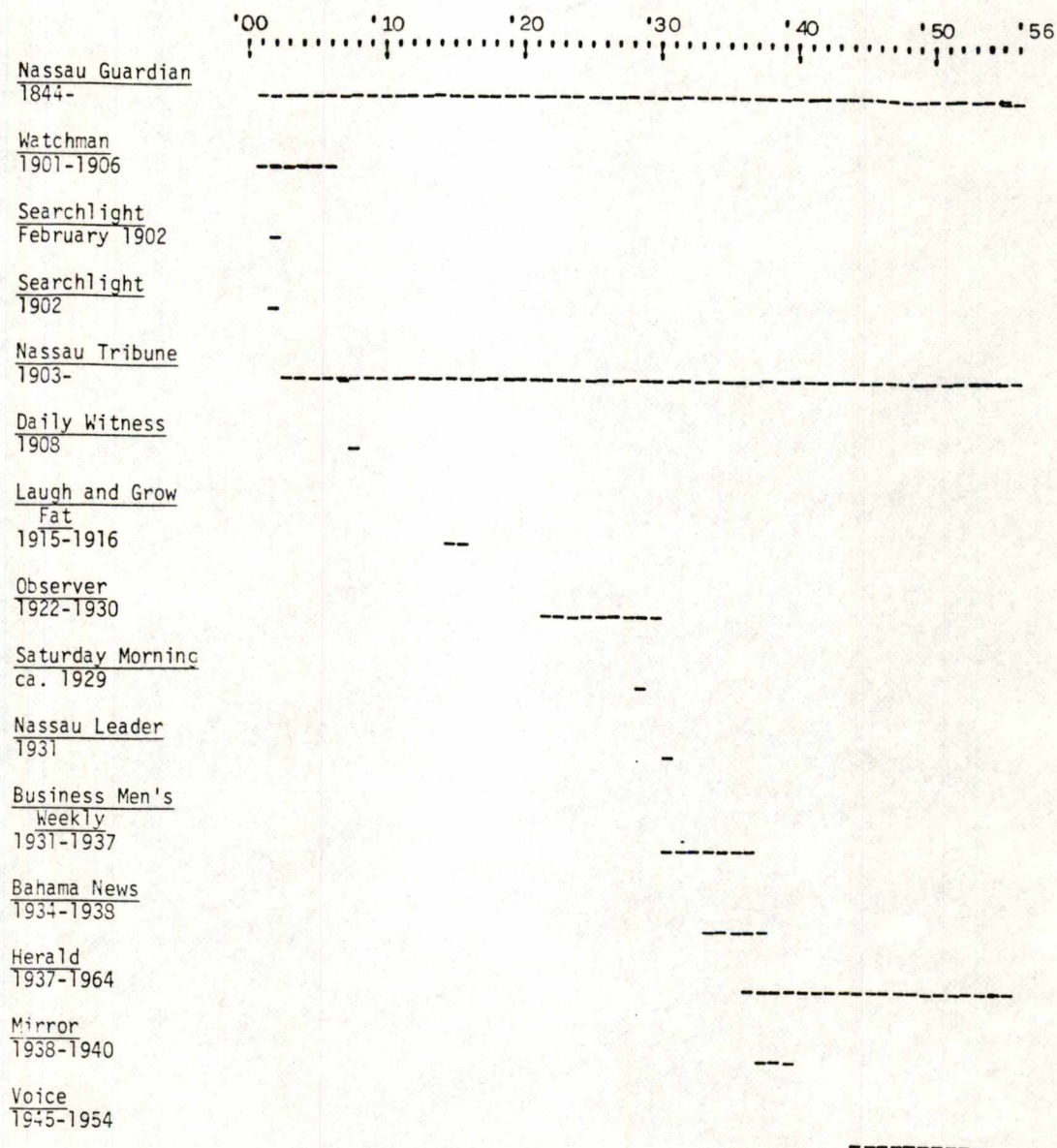
Bahamian
1836-1837

Observer
1837-ca. 1844

TIME LINE: VICTORIAN PERIOD



TIME LINE: TWENTIETH CENTURY



TIME LINE: TWENTIETH CENTURY (continued)

	'00	'10	'20	'30	'40	'50	'56
<u>Long Island Forum</u> with Ragged Is- land Supplement 1950						-	
"Newsletter" 1951						-	
<u>Whip</u> ca. 1954						-	
<u>Unity News</u> ca. 1954						-	
<u>Bahamas Opinion</u> 1955						-	
"Local Advertiser" (Mathew Town, Inagua) 1907		-					
<u>Searchlight</u> (Mathew Town, Inagua) 1907-1908		--					
<u>Inagua Record</u> (Mathew Town) 1908-1913		-----					
<u>Eleuthera Palm</u> (Governor's Harbour) before 1925				??			
<u>Bimini Bugle</u> (Alice Town) 1939-1941 1950-1953					---	---	
<u>Caribbean Wings</u> (Royal Air Force) ca. 1944					-		
<u>Liberator</u> (Royal Air Force) 1944-1945					--		

VITA

Howard Sidney Pactor was born in Harrisburg, Illinois, on October 25, 1940. He attended the public schools of Evansville, Indiana, and was graduated from Bosse High School in June 1958. He received an Associate of Science degree from Broward Community College in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and graduated from The University of Florida with a Bachelor of Science degree in Broadcasting with Honors in April 1967.

After a two-year tour of duty with the United States Air Force, he entered the Graduate School of The University of Florida in September 1969. He completed the Master of Arts in Journalism and Communications in 1971, after joining the faculty of the College of Journalism and Communications at The University of Florida in 1970.

He entered the Graduate School of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in September 1976. He received the Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in broadcasting in March 1985.

The author is a member of Alpha Epsilon Rho, the International Radio and Television Society and the Broadcast Education Association. Mr. Pactor is an assistant professor at The University of Florida.

He is married to the former Barbara Ann Bynum of Walnut Grove, Alabama, and they have two children, Elizabeth and David.