El Misisipi.

Miercoles 12 de Octubre de 1808.

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History

El Misisipi relied heavily on news reports taken from other newspapers, a common practice at that time, and reports of sea captives and sailors arriving from foreign ports. Among the articles in the surviving issue of the newspaper in the United States, publicized on October 12, 1808, are articles from the Boston Chronicle and a newspaper identified as the Diario de New York (New York Daily). Because the Boston newspaper's name was not translated to the Spanish word Cronica and used the Spanish word Diario in the New Y... reference, there is some speculation that the Diario de New York... have also been a Spanish-language newspaper. However, no list of a newspaper called the Diario de New York or the New York Di... are found in the accepted newspaper references for New York at t... time, although there was a newspaper named the New York Di... Advertiser published in 1808.

The front page of the October 12, 1808, edition carries the report of the Madrid uprising in all of its three columns, adding only a bri... notice of its publication schedule (Wednesdays and Saturday subscription rates (8 dollars a year, half payable in advance), a language policy (“in both languages or in the one wanted”), an bilingual advertisement for Don Juan Rodriguez, Abogado (lawyer with a Spanish version on top of an English translation of the sai... message. Rodriguez took the advertising space “to inform his frien... public in general that from this date he will reside at the planta... better than a league below the city,” but added that would “still continue to keep his office in town, in the house of Doct... Deveze, No. 16 Main Street, where he will execute any business the line of his profession from ten o'clock a.m. till four p.m.”

Inside the paper, the second page offered the report “of a correspond... on the problem of separating facts from the official new private reports, and rumors emanating out of war-torn Europe. Mis... summarized what its editors felt were the latest facts...
information, naming the Bayonne Gazette as the source and calling that periodical "an official organ of the usurpers of the thrones of France and Spain." The newspaper then engaged in some of its own interpretation of the news:

Madrid has long been in the possession of the French and the patriots of Spain are not to be duped by the mockeries of Bonaparte, however solemnized by a recreant minister of religion.

Citing victories against the French in Spain and Portugal, El Missisipi continued:

We think therefore that nothing has yet appeared to discourage the friends of freedom. To hold their own ground is much for the patriots at the commencement of the struggle. Their armies will increase and improve in a far greater degree than those of the enemy.⁸

The fourth page was devoted entirely to advertising, almost all in a bilingual format in which the Spanish copy ran in a space above the English text. Everything from ships, to hardwood, to supplies for sailors was advertised in the bilingual format. The advertising reveals something of the commerce and trade taking place in the sea and river port of New Orleans, which had been acquired by the United States from France only 5 years earlier and had briefly been part of the Spanish empire. One company, A. & J. M'Ilvain, Grocers, No. 43, on the Levee, offered sugar, coffee, tea, and a "general assortment of groceries" along with "2500 lbs. James River Chewing Tobacco, 1000 bushels Indian Corn, 2000 feet Walnut plank." The firm advised ship's captains preparing to sail: "SEA STORES Put up at the shortest notice." Another advertisement advised readers that "Five or six gentlemen may be accommodated with Gentle Boarding in a private family, at the rate of 20 Dollars per month."

The largest advertisements, taking up nearly all of the second and third columns, were for Mrs. Zacharie, who offered "a handsome assortment of DRY GOODS" and La Rionda, apparently a dealer offering for sale two brigantines, the Sophia and the Minerve, each "with all her tackle," two houses on St. Phillip Street, and a long list of goods such as 800 tons of Campeachy Logwood, 40 bales of sarsaparilla, and 22 trunks of "Callicoes."

History

Even though it was the first Latino newspaper in the United States, El Missisipi exhibited many of the characteristics that were found in the other Latino publications that were to follow it. For it was apparently directed toward a Spanish-speaking audience that had come to the United States because of warfare and political turmoil in their homeland, a consistent theme in immigration to Latin America and the Caribbean. Second, it was bilingual, recognizing the importance of both the English and Spanish languages in the Latino community. Third, its news content was heavily influenced by events happening elsewhere, just as much of the content of Latino media over the years has been dependent on news from Latin America. And, fourth, like many of the Latino publications that were to follow, it apparently was operated as a business, devoting one fourth of its space to advertising in both Spanish and English.

The First Black Newspaper:
Freedom's Journal (1827)

A different kind of crisis triggered the founding of Freedom's Journal on March 16, 1827, by the Reverend Samuel E. Cornish and Brown Russwurm. The crisis was slavery, which kept Black property in much of the United States. White Abolitionists favored the ending of slavery and had campaigned against it in the press. The printing accounts of slavery written by freed Black slaves. After the New York Quaker, Cornish and Russwurm (who was the second Black person to graduate from a college in the United States) decided it was time to start their own weekly newspaper. In the first edition of the four-page newspaper the editors eloquently stated their reasons:

We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentation in this which concern us dearly, though in the estimation of some mere trifles for although there are many in society who exercise toward us benevolent feelings, still (with some sorrow we confess it) there are others who enlarge upon that which tends to discredit any person of color.
Area, multiculturalism, and the media.

Freedom's Journal was often described as an aggressive newspaper that agitated forcefully against slavery and for the rights of free Blacks in the North. But the newspaper was not only an abolitionist: It also built a sense of Black consciousness and community identity among Blacks throughout the United States. It was able to do this because the newspaper reflected the broad interests of Blacks, some of which continue to the present time: addition to news and hard-hitting editorials, the newspaper offered information, features, culture, and entertainment to its Black readers. Its first issue reflected the broad interests of its editors and readers. The first part of a series on Captain Paul Cuffee, a Black Boston shipper; a poem entitled "The African Chief"; and advertising for the B.F. Hughes' School Colored Children of Both Sexes. Throughout its years, Freedom's Journal ran regular columns titled "Foreign News," "Domestic News," and "Summary." These columns, which were based on news taken from other newspapers, were highly sensational. The "Summary" column was especially noted for its exploitation of the staples of sensational reporting: blood and sex.10

The newspaper was virulent in its opposition to slavery and in advocacy of the rights of freed Blacks, however. Its editors also did not hesitate to attack the mainstream media to reinforce the importance of the alternative viewpoint that Freedom's Journal presented on these issues. Walter C. Daniel wrote of Freedom's Journal in his guide to the Black press:

The editor of the New York Enquirer was attacked in a subsequent issue as one "whose object is to keep alive the prejudice of the whites against the coloured communities of New York City." Other articles disagreed with the platform of the American Colonization Society which advocated returning Afro-Americans to Africa and reported on lynchings. Russwurm believed in universal education as a critical need for Blacks who would be respected by White Americans.11

Russwurm left the newspaper in 1828 to become an editor at an official in Liberia, a part of Africa that the Abolitionist movement had established to return freed slaves to Africa. The newspaper continued to be published by Cornish under the title Rights of Man until it apparently folded in 1829. Lionel C. Barrow, Jr. noted that...