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North Carolina Newspapers during Ratification

Between 1787 and 1790 seven weekly newspapers were published in North Carolina—three in Edenton, two in New Bern, and one each in Fayetteville and Wilmington. Few extant issues remain. The *Edenton Intelligencer* was published by Maurice Murphy. Its masthead read: “Where LIBERTY dwells there is my COUNTRY.” Only the issues of 9 April and 4 June 1788 survive. The *Edenton North-Carolina Gazette* was established on 24 October 1787, but only the issue for 19 December 1787 survives. The *Edenton State Gazette of North-Carolina* originated in New Bern and was published by Abraham Hodge and Henry Wills. The earliest extant issue is 8 September 1788.

The *Fayetteville Gazette* was published by John Sibley and Caleb D. Howard beginning in 1789. By January 1790 the name changed to *The North-Carolina Chronicle, or Fayetteville Gazette*. With the issue of 17 September 1790 it went from a four-page folio edition to an eight-page quarto printed by George Roulstone for John Sibley & Co. With the issue of 11 October 1790 it was printed by Howard & Roulstone for John Sibley & Co. It was discontinued with the issue of 7 March 1791.

New Bern’s newspapers included the *North-Carolina Gazette* published throughout the ratification years by François X. Martin. Between the issues of 15 August 1787 and 1 April 1790, Martin’s name appeared in the title. The *State Gazette of North-Carolina* was published by Hodge and Wills. It moved to Edenton in the summer of 1788.

The *Wilmington Centinel, and General Advertiser* was published in 1788 by Daniel Bowen and Caleb D. Howard. Only the issue of 18 June 1788 survives. A brief report in the *New York Journal*, 17 March 1788, announced that the first issue of the *Wilmington Centinel* had arrived. It was said that the people were so pleased with the publication “that they immediately afforded it their general patronage, and in a few weeks upwards of 400 persons entered their names for the paper once a week at forty shillings per annum.”

More than 120 items from newspapers are printed in the two North Carolina volumes. Most of the newspaper items are single pieces. Only a few items are serialized, such as the five pieces signed by “Americanus” and the five “Marcus” essays written by James Iredell responding to George Mason’s objections to the Constitution.

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