

Spirit of the Age

The *Spirit of the Age*^[3] was a temperance newspaper established in 1849 in Raleigh^[3] by Alexander M. Gorman^[4], who earlier had served as the foreman of the *Raleigh Register's* office. It began as the organ for the North Carolina chapter of the Sons of Temperance^[5]. Initially a small paper, it gradually enlarged and eventually became one of the most popular four-page newspapers in North Carolina. The addition of a power press in the early 1850s permitted Gorman to expand the paper's physical layout. By 1860 the *Spirit of the Age* boasted the largest circulation of any newspaper in the state.

The evils of using alcohol dominated its pages. Stories often focused on how it harmed families, describing in heartbreaking detail the tribulations of abused and shamed wives, children who lacked food and clothing, and husbands who had lost all sense of pride. The *Spirit of the Age* also carried literary ⁽⁶⁾ features (mostly dealing with family-oriented themes) from some of the better-known North Carolina writers ⁽⁹⁾ of the time.

Gorman's paper was a financial success until the beginning of the [Civil War](#) ^[10], when the temperance issue took a backseat to secession and military matters. The result was a rapid loss of patronage. During the conflict Gorman sold the paper's office and presses to John G. Williams and became the associate editor of another Raleigh journal. Williams continued to print the *Spirit of the Age* until almost the end of the war, when he finally closed shop. In 1871 the Raleigh [printing](#) ^[11] company Edwards and Broughton attempted to resurrect the newspaper but gave it up after a couple of years.

George Washington Paschal, *A History of Printing in North Carolina* (1946).

R. H. Whitaker, *Whitaker's Reminiscences, Incidents and Anecdotes*^[12] (1905).

E.R.E. "A.M. Gorman, Esquire: Grand Scribe of North Carolina." *The Family fire-side book: or, monuments of temperance, containing temperance tales, biography, sketches, poetry, essays -- pleasing, instructive and amusing*. Philadelphia: Leary & Getz. 1853. p. 742-745. <http://books.google.com/books?id=TGBGAAAAAJ&pg=PA742#v=onepage&q&f=false> ^[13] (accessed August 17, 2012).

Thomas, Amy M. "Literature in Newsprint: Antebellum Family Newspapers and the Uses of Reading." *Reading Books: Essays on the Material Text and Literature in America*. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press. 1996. p.101-116. <http://books.google.com/books?id=XPCkFXvfdqMC&pg=PP1&pg=PA101#v=onepage&q&f=false> ^[14] (accessed August 17, 2012).

Stewart, Bruce E. *Moonshiners and Prohibitionists: The Battle over Alcohol in Southern Appalachia* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011. <http://books.google.com/books?id=KYUdow4OEwXc&pg=PT73&ots=f7qs8APsc&dq=%22Alexander%20Gorman%22%20%22Spiri%20of%20the%20Age%22&pg=PT73#v=onepage&q=%22Alexander%20Gorman%22%20%22Sp>
[15] (accessed August 17, 2012).

Antebellum (1820-1861) [16]

Businesses [17]

Civil War (1861-1865) [18]

Newspapers and magazines [19]

Political movements and parties [20]

Reconstruction (1865-1876) [21]

Authors:

McGee, David [22]

From:

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.[23]

1 January 2006 | McGee, David

Source URL:<https://www.ncpedia.org/spirit-age>

Links

[1] <https://www.ncpedia.org/spirit-age> [2] <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/10495384> [3] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/raleigh> [4] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/weathereill-mary> [5] <https://www.ncpedia.org/temperance-movement> [6] <https://www.ncpedia.org/beer-and-breweries> [7] <https://www.ncpedia.org/wine-and-wine-making> [8] <https://www.ncpedia.org/literature> [9] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/writer> [10] <https://www.ncpedia.org/history/cw-1900/civil-war> [11] <https://www.ncpedia.org/printing> [12] <https://archive.org/stream/whitakersminis00whit/page/n7-mode/2up> [13] <http://books.google.com/books?id=TBGAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA742#v=onepage&q&asf=false> [14] <http://books.google.com/books?id=XPCFKVxdgMqC&pg=PP1&asf=false> [15] <http://books.google.com/books?id=KYuDowd4EXwC&pg=PT73&asf=false> [16] <http://books.google.com/books?id=q22Alexander%20Gorman%22%20of%20the%20Age%22&asf=false> [17] <http://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/violwar> [18] <http://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/political-movemen> [19] <http://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/reconstruction> [20] <http://www.ncpedia.org/category/authors/mcgee-david> [21] <http://www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia>