

Statesville Record and Landmark ^[1]

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by Chester Paul Middlesworth, 2006

The *Statesville Record and Landmark*, among the oldest daily [newspapers](#) ^[2] in North Carolina, began as the *Landmark*, a weekly, on 19 June 1874. John B. Hussey, a native of [Duplin County](#) ^[3], was the first editor and publisher. In early 1877 he sold the paper to J. S. Ramsey but remained its editor. Three years later Ramsey sold out, and a new, dynamic editor, [Joseph Pearson Caldwell](#) ^[4], took over. During the next 12 years Caldwell turned the *Landmark* into what many contemporaries called "the best newspaper in North Carolina, weekly or daily." The *Landmark* became a kind of "news Bible" for Piedmont North Carolinians, maintaining a [progressive](#) ^[5] editorial policy coupled with a fiscally conservative [Democratic](#) ^[6] stance.

Through the *Landmark*, Caldwell, a Statesville native, promoted progress in the area. As a result of his influence, Statesville was one of the first small cities in North Carolina to have an [electric light plant](#) ^[7]. Caldwell also promoted manufacturing as a "way of life for the Piedmont and economic salvation for Statesville." In January 1892, in partnership with D. A. Tompkins, he took over the *Charlotte Chronicle*, changing the name back to the *Observer* ^[8]. Caldwell sold a half interest in the *Landmark* to Rufus Reid Clark, a Mooresville native who had been on the staff for almost a decade. As editor, Clark continued the progressive editorials and industrial promotion that had marked Caldwell's tenure. In 1895 he changed the weekly *Landmark* to a semiweekly, printing issues every Monday and Thursday. In 1908, after buying Caldwell's remaining half interest in the paper, Clark increased the paper's size to eight pages, putting local news on page one instead of the third page.

In 1907 Pegram A. Bryant joined the *Landmark* staff as a local editor but soon became business manager. In 1918 he bought the paper from Clark and continued as publisher until 1953. Instead of turning the semiweekly into a daily, Bryant began a new publication on 1 Sept. 1920 called the *Statesville Daily* while continuing to publish the Monday and Thursday issues of the *Landmark*.

Beginning in 1931, Bryant experienced competition from a new semiweekly, the *Statesville Record*. This paper had several owners until 1938, when Chester E. Middlesworth, a newspaper publisher from Shamokin, Pa., bought it and rapidly expanded its readership, making it a daily in early 1941 and changing its name to the *Statesville Daily Record*. Middlesworth died unexpectedly in 1946, and his widow brought in J. P. Huskins of [Greensboro](#) ^[9] to serve as editor and general manager with an ownership interest. Huskins, a strong Democrat and brilliant editorial writer who also served in the North Carolina House of Representatives, moved the newspaper forward in both readership and technology. In 1949 the *Statesville Daily Record* became the first newspaper in the state to utilize the new Fairchild scanning engraving system. This permitted a photo engraving to be readied for printing within minutes, whereas the established zinc metal engravings took hours.

Local competition ended in 1953, when the *Landmark* and the *Statesville Daily* were purchased by the *Statesville Daily Record* and merged into one daily afternoon publication, the *Statesville Record and Landmark*. In September 1979 Park Communications, a large media conglomerate, bought the *Record and Landmark*, which became a "flagship publication" among more than 132 newspapers in the Park group. [Media General](#) ^[10], a major communications company, acquired Park Communications in early 1997.

Reference:

Homer Kever, *100th Anniversary-The Landmark* (1974).

Additional Resources:

The *Statesville Record and Landmark* official website: <http://www2.statesville.com/> ^[11]

"Statesville - The Landmark." *The E.S.C. Quarterly* 9. No. 1-2. Winter-Spring 1951. p.32.
<https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/e.s.c.-quarterly-1951-winter-spring-v.9-no.1-2/4239121> ^[12] (accessed September 10, 2012).

"Davie County." *Reminiscences and memoirs of North Carolina and eminent North Carolinians* Columbus, Ohio: Columbus Printing Works. 1884. p. 156-157. <https://archive.org/stream/reminiscencesmemwhee#page/156/mode/2up> ^[13]

Subjects:

[Newspapers and magazines](#) ^[14]

Authors:

[Middlesworth, Chester Paul](#) ^[15]

Origin - location:

Statesville ^[16]

From:

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.^[17]

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