

Gales, Weston Raleigh ^[1]

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by Robert N. Elliott, 1986

28 Apr. 1802–23 July 1848

Weston Raleigh Gales, editor, was born in [Raleigh](#) ^[2], the youngest son of [Joseph](#) ^[3] and [Winifred Marshall Gales](#) ^[4]. He spent his youth in Raleigh where he attended the [Raleigh Academy](#) ^[5]. In 1820, to escape Raleigh's "young men of loose habits," of which he was apparently fond, he was sent by his parents to a private school in Connecticut to prepare for Yale College, and, as his mother wrote, "to acquire steady habits." This was to no avail, for, though he entered Yale in the fall of 1820, he was expelled the following January for engaging in a fistfight with another student. Returning to Raleigh, Weston was taken into business with his father, who had published the *Raleigh Register* and operated a printing establishment and bookshop since 1799. Here he was trained in the printing trade. In late 1821, Weston became a partner; the *Register* of 7 December bore the new firm name Gales & Son. He assumed full charge in 1833, when his father retired and moved to Washington, D.C.

On 21 Apr. 1825, Gales married Love S. Freeman. She died on 24 Jan. 1842 after a long illness. On 8 Jan. 1844, he married Mary Spies of New York City. Four years later, when returning from a vacation at Old Point Comfort, Va., Gales collapsed and died in Petersburg, Va. He was succeeded as editor of the *Register* by his son [Seaton](#) ^[6], who had just graduated from [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[7].

Weston Gales was conscious of the service that a newspaper owes to the community. He believed that to a great extent "the language of the newspaper was the public conversation of the country." Especially was he opposed to the publicity given crime. In his view if less notoriety were given news of this kind and if public executions and punishments were abolished, the crime rate would be greatly reduced. In 1843, Weston Gales was chosen mayor of Raleigh, a post his father had held for many years. Two years later he was elected to represent [Wake County](#) ^[8] in the state legislature. His death was a shock to the people of Raleigh. He was buried in the City Cemetery.

References:

Robert N. Elliott, Jr., *The Raleigh Register, 1799–1863* (1955).

[Joseph and Winifred Gales, Reminiscences](#) (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).^[9]

Gales Papers (North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh).

Tribute to Weston R. Gales (North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).

Additional Resources:

Briggs, Willis G. "Joseph Gales, Editor of Raleigh's First Newspaper." *The North Carolina Booklet* 8, no. 2 (October 1907). 125. <http://books.google.com/books?id=9ggYQAAMAAJ&pg=PA125#v=onepage&q&f=false> ^[10] (accessed August 12, 2013).

"Gales Family." N.C. Highway Historical Marker H-99, N.C. Office of Archives & History. <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?sp=Markers&k=Markers&sv=H-99> ^[11] (accessed August 12, 2013).

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Origin - location:

[Raleigh](#) ^[17]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#).^[18]

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Links

[1] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/gales-weston-raleigh> [2] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/raleigh> [3] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/gales-joseph> [4] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/gales-winfred-marshall> [5] <https://www.ncpedia.org/raleigh-academy> [6] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/gales-seaton> [7] <https://www.ncpedia.org/university-north-carolina-chapel-hi> [8] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/wake> [9] http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/g/Gales_Family.html [10] <http://books.google.com/books?id=9ggyAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA125#v=onepage&q&f=false> [11] <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?sp=Markers&k=Markers&sv=H-99> [12] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/biography-term> [13] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/newspapers> [14] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/public-officials> [15] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/writer> [16] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/authors/elliott-robert-n-0> [17] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmont-0> [18] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/dictionary-no>