

052 BRITTON, ALEXANDER

Publisher

Clarksburg

Founding publisher of the first newspaper issued in Clarksburg (1810-15) with his brother Forbes Britton (053).

Alexander Britton is an enigmatic figure in comparison to his brother Forbes; the only traces he has left on historical and bibliographic record are those of his association with Forbes. He was born in Philadelphia where his father, Thomas, was a prosperous lumber merchant. He may have trained in the printing trade there, given his later occupation, though no record of such has been found. In 1810, Britton moved to Clarksburg to join his brother in publishing their new weekly journal, *The Bye Stander*, in July of that year. As was common for papers in western Virginia, this new journal was beset by supply problems, problems heightened by the disruptions on the War of 1812. Forbes served in a local militia regiment during the war, leaving their journal in Alexander's hands alone for much of 1815. But by mid-1815, the brothers were reluctantly forced to close their paper in light of mounting fiscal distress.

During the war, Alexander had married a local widow with Ohio connections – Charlotte Marsh, née Newell. When the paper ceased publication, both husband and wife quickly disappear from local records, suggesting their ensuing departure from Clarksburg. Britton evidently never published again, as he is not seen again in the bibliographic record either.

Personal Data

Born:	---	1780s	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Married:	Aug. 18	1814	Charlotte Newell Marsh, widow, @ Clarksburg, Harrison County, VA/WV

Sources: Imprints; Brigham; Norona & Shetler; Haymond, *Harrison County*; dates established by Pennsylvania and Virginia vital records posted on Ancestry.com (August 2012).