

071 CALDWELL, JAMES

Printer & Publisher

Winchester, Warrenton

Printer of Winchester's *Republican Constellation* (1810-16) for Jonathan Foster (168) and publisher of Warrenton's *Palladium of Liberty* (1817-21) with an unnamed McKennie (291) as his partner (1818-19); also the brother of Joseph F. Caldwell (073).

The Caldwell name was a common one on the southern bank of the Potomac River in 1800, thanks to the late-colonial-era influx of both Scots-Irish arriving from Ulster and Quakers migrating from Pennsylvania; James Caldwell was termed "a Quaker" by contemporaries late in his life, so his family apparently came from the Quaker Caldwells who settled in the northern Shenandoah Valley in the 1730s & 1740s, and not the Scots-Irish ones who settled northwest of there. His father, Joseph was born in Frederick County in 1760, but that place could have been the part of Frederick along the river that became Berkeley and Jefferson.

This Caldwell evidently trained in the printing-trade in Winchester, joining the job-printing office of Jonathan Foster, a schoolmaster recently arrived from Alexandria, in about 1808; when Foster first issued his *Republican Constellation* in January 1810, Caldwell was probably his shop foreman, assisted by his master's son, Thomas (169). Their affiliation was lengthy enough for Caldwell to be regularly coupled with Foster in nineteenth-century histories of Winchester; yet his name never appeared on any of Foster's imprints. Interestingly, the proprietor likely also trained and employed Caldwell's younger brother, Joseph Franklin, as he also became a proprietor himself in Winchester in April 1819, with Foster's retirement from journalism and transfer of the *Constellation* to George McGlassin (287).

The first journal that James Caldwell issued, however, required him to move away from his hometown two years before Foster parted with his paper. In early 1817, he moved across the Blue Ridge to Warrenton, the seat of Fauquier County, to establish a job-printing office and newspaper. His *Palladium of Liberty*, a Jeffersonian weekly, issued in March of that year and continued without interruption until at least June 1822, and perhaps beyond.

After its first year, Caldwell took on a financial (and perhaps editorial) partner, an enigmatic figure identified only as "McKennie." During his time with Foster, he trained an apprentice named John Harris McKennie (293), who absconded from Foster's employ in mid-October 1817. Given that association, and the apprentice's known skills, this unnamed partner here was most likely Caldwell's former trainee. Still, other family members may have been that partner as well, or the family collectively; his mother may have invested some of his late father's extensive assets in Caldwell's paper as a way to provide for still-minor-son Beverley Randolph, perhaps as an apprentice; it may also be that Caldwell's partner was the printer's younger brother Clement P. McKennie (292), as he has been identified by some authorities as the printer in the McKennie brothers' ensuing venture: Charlottesville's first weekly, *The Central Gazette*, which first issued in January 1820. As the Caldwell & McKennie partnership lasted just a year, the McKennie involved was certainly one of the Charlottesville pair, as the sale of that interest in the *Palladium of Liberty* in March 1819 would have readily provided the means to start a new weekly elsewhere the following winter.

Still, what is most interesting about this association is that one of the McKennie brothers' neighbors was James Monroe, the president who approved law-printing licenses like that granted Caldwell in 1819, one that had been removed from Foster's journal. Such licenses were given to three publishers in each state to print in their newspaper the laws passed in each congressional session at the regular advertising rates, a sizeable subsidy for any paper then. Caldwell held the license for western Virginia, even after parting with the unidentified McKennie, until it was reassigned in late 1821, just before 17th Congress met.

Still, it is unclear just how long the *Palladium of Liberty* continued in print; the number that Caldwell issued on June 7, 1822, slightly more than six months after the loss of his lucrative license, is the latest one now known. Yet, a combination of recent assertions with the scarce imprint evidence implies that the paper continued until the end of 1825, when Caldwell sold the weekly to Thomas G. Bradford (048). Bradford was a native of Fauquier County who had trained as a printer in the press offices of Washington; by 1807, he had moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where his weekly *Clarion* chronicled the military and political career of Andrew Jackson; in mid-1820, Bradford returned to Fauquier following the death of his wife. After 1821, a Warrenton journal is often cited in newspapers elsewhere, but under the title of the *Warrenton Gazette*. As Bradford is known to have started publishing a *Virginia Gazette* in the town in January 1826, it appears that he invested in Caldwell's *Palladium* on his return to Fauquier, and that sometime after June 1822, the paper adopted the title of *Warrenton Gazette*; then at the end of 1825, Bradford acquired Caldwell's interest in the paper outright and became its sole proprietor under the title *Virginia Gazette*.

Despite his journalistic travails, Caldwell's job-printing work continued uninterrupted, and was evidently profitable. Even after the loss of the law-printing concession, he had sufficient revenue to invest in local real estate. And in 1831, Caldwell built a sizable and prominent house in the town center, one of the few buildings in Warrenton today that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was in that residence that Caldwell passed away unexpectedly the following year, just forty years old. His business died with him.

His son, Lycurgus Washington Caldwell, embodies a footnote in American history in his own right; he was employed by Samuel F.B. Morse in building the first telegraph line – between Washington and Baltimore – and keyed the first message sent over that line ("what has God wrought") in May 1844.

Personal Data

Born:	In	1792	Frederick County, Virginia
Married:	Dec. 18	1818	Frances Pattie @ Fauquier County, Virginia
Died:	July 30	1832	Fauquier County, Virginia
Children:	Francis M. (b. 1819), Lucy Ann (b. 1822), Lycurgus W. (b. 1823)		

Sources: Imprints; Brigham; Cappon; Morton, *Winchester*; *Bicentennial History of Fauquier County*; Woods, *Albemarle County*; Papers of Dept. of Sec. of State (National Archives RG 59.2); genealogical data from Caldwell and McKennie family charts posted on Ancestry.com (August 2012).