

186 GRANTLAND, SEATON

Printer & Publisher

Richmond

Printer in the press office of Meriwether Jones (242); Richmond job-press owner (1804-09), at times with John L. Cook (105); publisher of *The American Gleaner and Virginia Magazine* (1807) in Richmond; printer of *The Virginian* (1808) for Gerard Banks (019) and others; also brother of Fleming Grantland (185).

Seaton Grantland is still best known for his years as a Democratic-Republican political leader in Georgia, but that career was built upon an earlier one as a newspaper publisher. Born in New Kent County, he was trained as a printer in the office of either John Dixon Jr. (141) or Samuel Pleasants (331), as he appears initially as a journeyman in Richmond in late 1799; at that time he was part of the newly-founded Republican press office founded by Meriwether Jones after the May 1799 dissolution of his partnership with Dixon, meaning that Grantland was either a hold-over from the preceding Jones & Dixon shop or a new hire from that of the Jeffersonian publisher Pleasants. In these years, he helped produce the twice-weekly, semi-official *Examiner* for Jones, then printer to the Commonwealth; he may also have been part of the printing combine employed by James Lyon (274) in late 1799 and early 1800 to produce imprints that supported Jefferson's campaign that year, including his short-lived Richmond weekly *Press* and his partisan *National Magazine*. Grantland continued with the controversial Jones, probably still printing the *Examiner* after it was transferred to Skelton Jones (243), Meriwether's brother, in August 1803.

When Jones left the printing trade in January 1804, Grantland was still in the office. He used that retirement to strike out on his own, forming a job-printing firm with John L. Cook, the foreman in the new *Richmond Enquirer* office of editor Thomas Ritchie (360) and journeyman printer William W. Worsley (242), who had acquired the *Examiner* press. (This association seems the basis for family lore that says he was trained by Ritchie, but the historical record indicates that he was already at work in Richmond before Ritchie's arrival in 1804). That spring, the pair also began soliciting subscriptions for a non-partisan literary journal: the *Lady's Museum and Weekly Magazine*. They seemingly hoped to fill a niche that had formerly been filled by the *Recorder* of Henry Pace (319); that weekly had been handed over to James T. Callender (075) in January 1802, who politicized its content and so limited its distribution; Pace was forced to close the paper shortly after his former editor's death in July 1803. However, offering a weekly from which "party politics and personal altercation will be entirely excluded," as Cook & Grantland intended, did not find support in a city with three journals that laid claim to the right, center, and left of the contemporary political spectrum – it was never issued. Still, the firm produced substantial job-printing for the remainder of 1804.

Yet in January 1805, Cook left the city to set up a new press office in the growing port of Baltimore. Without Cook, Grantland largely restricted his activities to job-printing and bookselling until January 1807. His only other employment was as the Richmond agent for the new Battersea Paper Mill in Petersburg, founded by John Daly Burk (063) and other Republicans there as an exemplar of worthy domestic manufacturing. It also appears that

he may have been training his younger brother Fleming in this period; Fleming appears in the trade in January 1807 as the engraver in Seaton's next publishing project, *The American Gleaner and Virginia Magazine*; the biweekly periodical was first issued then and continued for most of that year, republishing items from other U.S. magazines – its gleanings – that Seaton believed of interest to his peers. But after eighteen numbers, he closed his *Gleaner* because, in the words of Samuel Mordecai, "there were no rich fields to glean from then. Literature was cultivated, but not authorship." The closure may also have been the result of Grantland being provided more profitable employment; on January 1, 1808, he began printing a new twice-weekly campaign newspaper, *The Virginian*, edited by Gerard Banks, a Republican writer from Culpeper County and backed by state party leaders loyal to James Monroe. Still he only committed to the project for three months; after March 1808, the *Virginian* was printed by Thomas Pescud Manson (278), who also apparently committed to the journal for just three months; with James Madison's election that fall, Banks's Richmond paper ended its run.

With the dawn of 1809 and the installation of the new president, both Grantland brothers sought new opportunities outside of Richmond. In the spring, Fleming left Seaton's employ to found his own Republican newspaper in Lynchburg, the long-lived *Lynchburg Press*. That summer, Seaton was enticed to bring his press to Milledgeville, Georgia, then that state's capital. The town was founded on the site of a frontier fort in 1803 after the Creek treaty cessions of 1802 added much of the northern and western territory now within the state's boundaries; in 1807, it was designated as the state capital because of its central location in the new geography. The weekly then published there, the *Georgia Argus*, was unfriendly to Madison, and his supporters in Georgia wanted a journal in the capital that favored the new President. Grantland's affiliation with Richmond's Republican leaders made him a suitable choice. In September, he issued the first number of his *Georgia Journal* at Milledgeville, and immediately became an influential political figure in the state. That sudden success also increased his business to the point where he needed reliable assistance; in the spring of 1810, he convinced his brother to sell his Lynchburg office and paper in order to join him in Georgia; Fleming sold his *Lynchburg Press* to William Waller Gray (193), nephew of the legal scholar and clerk William Waller Hening (213), also a leader among Virginia's Republicans.

With his brother's arrival in Milledgeville, Grantland could expand his horizons; he evidently had read for the law throughout his trade years and so soon opened a legal practice in the capital. He also built a political alliance with George M. Troup, representing north Georgians and those of Virginia origin, against John Clark, a Revolutionary militia general representing south Georgians and those of North Carolina origins. Troup and Grantland embodied and advanced the democratization of the state's government and laws in the face of the old colonial elite, eventually making both major Jacksonian figures. When Fleming died in January 1819, Seaton retired (temporarily as it turned out) from journalism; he sold his interest in the *Journal* to John B. Hines, publisher of the *Reflector* in Milledgeville, who then merged the two under the *Journal* masthead. But Grantland was soon dissatisfied with the resulting paper; he acquired the new-born and then-struggling *Georgia Republican* in league with Richard McAllister Orme, his former editor, recast the paper as the *Southern Recorder*, and used it to check Clark's ambitions. At the end of 1821, Grantland again retired from

journalism, this time permanently; Orme took on sole ownership of the *Recorder* and used the paper, with Grantland's guidance, to defeat Clark in the 1825 gubernatorial election, so inducing his departure to Florida. Orme also used the paper in support of Grantland's own political ambitions. The now practicing lawyer was elected to Congress as a Jacksonian in late 1834 and as a Democrat in 1836, so serving from 1835 to 1839. At that point, he turned away from President Martin Van Buren, plainly concerned with the New Yorker's emerging antislavery views; hence Grantland was an elector for the Whig ticket in 1840, one that brought an old Virginia acquaintance, John Tyler, to Washington.

The 1840 election marks the end of Grantland's political career. He retired to his plantation south of Milledgeville, called Woodville. He had bought the estate from nemesis John Clark when the former governor left Georgia in 1825. The nearly 3000 acre property became his primary focus in the last quarter century of his eventful life. There the staunch "states' rights" advocate died in 1864, just a month before William Tecumseh Sherman marched his army through the capital, burning its military facilities, on his long march to the sea.

Personal Data

Born:	June 8	1782	New Kent County, Virginia
Married [1]:	Nov. 8	1818	Nancy Anne Tinsley @ Hanover County, Virginia,
Married [2]:	Oct. 28	1835	Catherine M. Dabney @ New York.
Died:	Oct. 18	1864	Woodville Plantation, Baldwin County, Georgia,
Children:	All by Nancy: Fleming Tinsley (b. 1819); Mary Susan (b. 1821); Ann Virginia (d. 1823).		

Sources: Imprints; Brigham; Hubbard on Richmond; Brannan, *Grantland Family*; *Biographical Directory of Congress*; Martin, *Georgia Bicentennial History*; Trudeau, *Southern storm: Sherman's March to the Sea*.