

406 STRANGE, T. E – [TUBAL EARLY STRANGE]

Printer

Lynchburg

Publisher of *The Echo* at Lynchburg (1817-18), as well as of a small religious pamphlet for its author (1817) and of a set of Baptist association minutes the following summer (1818).

Strange was a Virginia-trained printer who later published journals in Missouri, Kentucky, and North Carolina, while practicing law and serving in government in each of those places.

Born in 1795, the printer was the second son of Robert Strange (1768-1817) and Elizabeth Early (1772-1846) of Campbell County, Virginia, and so a nephew of Methodist bishop John Early (1786-1873). Named after a maternal uncle, his given forename – spelled with a T but spoken as a J – would reemerge more famously in a cousin who served as a Confederate general during the Civil War. With his father being one of four sons and his mother one of thirteen children, the best future prospects for most of the eight children in his immediate family would be found beyond their childhood home, where their ancestors had settled in the 1740s in that part of Bedford County that then became Campbell in 1782. So his siblings dispersed in three directions: one part remained near Lynchburg, one removed to south-central Kentucky, while the third settled in north-central North Carolina. T. E. Strange would live and work in each of those locales.

Strange first appeared in the American print trade in Lynchburg. Most authorities simply note a fourteen-page pamphlet he printed there in July 1817: *The Birth and Life of Joel T. Adams* for its author, Joel Terrell Adams (1775-1847) of Pittsylvania County. The work was a brief auto-biographical account of his redemption from a life of drunkenness and dissipation after meeting the Baptist minister Griffith Dickerson (1757-1843), also of Pittsylvania; this small imprint marked the start of his career in the Baptist ministry, as he was licensed to preach in Pittsylvania in 1820 and continued doing so until his death.

Those same authorities suggest that Strange published that small work as an independent production from the press of his unnamed employer, and surmise that he worked in the office of the *Lynchburg Press* of Jacob Haas (196) and Samuel Bransford (050), thought to be the only printing office operating in the town at that time. However, a notice in the *National Intelligencer* dated May 1, 1818, shows that Strange was proprietor of Lynchburg's twice-weekly *Echo*, and was offering his press for sale, "being desirous of quitting the Printing Business." That journal was first issued in June 1816 under the guidance of printers William Waller Gray (193) and Russel Dawson (130); the following month, they brought in Gerard Banks (019), a well-known Jeffersonian writer, to edit their new paper during the election campaign that fall; but his association with the *Echo* was brief, as he was compelled to return to his Fredericksburg home after the death of his wife within a month of his taking up the editorial pen here. Dawson & Gray apparently continued without Banks until the next summer, when Gray returned to Richmond to join his friend and long-time associate, Thomas Burling (066), in publishing a new weekly called *The Spirit of Union*. In this fluid setting, it seems Strange gained control of their press and continued publishing the *Echo* to about mid-June 1818. Indeed, the timing of the known events indicates that the journal was issued by the firm of Dawson & Gray from June 1816 to June 1817, and then by Strange

from June 1817 to June 1818, a chronology that would have carried the *Echo* through two full volumes before it was closed, though no numbers of his paper survive.

Strange evidently left Lynchburg shortly after the sale notice, passing through Charleston, South Carolina early that fall, where mail sent to him was advertised that November as waiting delivery to him. He next appeared in the print trade as proprietor of newspaper that also supported Republican candidates in southeast Missouri; on June 25, 1819, Strange began publishing the first journal to be issued in the Missouri Territory outside of St. Louis, the *Missouri Herald*, at Jackson, county seat of Cape Girardeau County. His weekly held a license granted by the Monroe administration to publish the laws of Congress in its pages at its set advertising rates, a substantial subsidy for Strange's new operation. In his first issue, he tied himself directly to the so-called Virginia dynasty, noting that

"...he declares himself a **REPUBLICAN**. Born and educated in a State that stands high in the American constellation for patriotism and republican principles, he will, in all cases, make those principles the basis of his columns."

However, the license that sustained his effort was transferred at the end of that winter's Congressional session, compelling Strange to close the *Herald*, about April 1820, for lack of advertising and subscription revenue. He then sold his office to one Stephen Remington and returned east, probably to Virginia. Remington resurrected the weekly that November as the *Independent Patriot*, continuing as its proprietor until 1827.

Strange next appeared as a journalist in North Carolina five years later. Sometime before this, his older brother Nathaniel had relocated to the Guilford County and Tubal now joined him there, likely arriving in mid-or-late 1824. By April 1825, he had acquired the press and subscriber list of the weekly *Carolina Patriot*, the town's first newspaper, then just months, if not just weeks old; indeed, it was so transitory that no issues of the paper survive, and the only record of its existence is found in local histories. Dropping the geographic identifier, Strange first issued *The Patriot* on April 24, 1826, and adopted a tone like that seen at the outset of the *Missouri Herald*, declaring that his new weekly would

"...support the Democratic cause, not as blind partisans, but from a sincere conviction that what is termed the Democratic cause, is the cause of the people; for to speak emphatically, **THEIRS ALONE** is the cause we mean to support."

His tenure in Greensboro was much longer than his previous one, conducting the *Patriot* for a full four years, and adding the sub-title *Greensborough Palladium* at the end of his first volume. Yet Strange sold the journal to William Swaim at the end of the fourth volume in 1829, who continued the *Patriot* until his death in 1835. That sale was likely triggered by a shift in occupational focus for Strange. The state legislature had enacted a new charter for the town the year before, and Strange was appointed in late April 1829, days after the sale, as secretary to the new board of town commissioners. That assignment suggests that in the period between his Jackson and Greensboro ventures, Strange studied law and was now a practicing attorney as well as a journalist. And for the rest of his life, it appears that he pursued both professions.

In 1830, Tubal and Nathaniel Strange pulled out of Greensboro – leaving a recently married

sister behind – to join a paternal uncle in Monroe County, Kentucky; eventually the brothers moved into the two counties immediately to the north of Monroe: Nathaniel to Glasgow in Barren County, and Tubal to Bowling Green in Warren County. In both Monroe and Warren counties, Strange continued to his legal practice, being made a justice of the peace in each locale. In 1843, Strange became a journalist once again, editing a new *Bowling Green Press*; once again, no issues of this paper have survived, nor is there any record of its existence outside of local histories from the nineteenth century; even so, an 1847 guide to Warren county and an 1886 collection of Kentucky biographies both record Strange's journal and his role as its editor. In the absence of copies, his purpose in returning to the print trade after fourteen years away cannot be discerned, nor can the duration of his involvement; but the timing suggests that Strange was then anticipating the 1844 campaign to unseat the Whigs controlling Washington as a supporter of "the Democratic cause." This assignment was his last as a journalist; he died in Bowling Green in September 1848.

NB: Strange used varying combinations of given names and initials (T. Early Strange, Tubal E. Strange, T. E. Strange, Tubal Early Strange); header above is style seen in his Virginia work.

Personal Data

Born: Feb. 4 1795 Campbell County, Virginia.
Married: Jan. 10 1828 Mary Ann Dotson @ Greensboro, North Carolina.
Died: Sept. 1848 Bowling Green, Kentucky.
Children: No record of children found; wife remarried, but no offspring there.

Sources: Imprints (S39922); Gregory; US Newspaper Directory, Library of Congress; Semple, *Virginia Baptists*; Early, *Campbell Chronicles*; Douglass, *History of Southeast Missouri*; Albright, *Greensboro, 1808-1904*; *Kentucky Genealogy and Biography* (1886).