

CHARLESTOWN 02: Farmers' Register

01: Farmers' Register (1804-1805)

The second newspaper published in Charlestown is a title with even more enigmatic origins than had the first one. The *Farmers' Register* is known from a single, mutilated issue extant in 1939, but now lost. And unlike its predecessor, there are no recorded references to it in papers elsewhere in the country. So only suppositions can be made about the journal.

The *Farmers' Register* was assigned a date of 1804 from internal evidence in the only known issue in a 1939 bibliography of West Virginia imprints; the compilers of a subsequent 1953 bibliography were unable to locate that issue, and since then it has not been recorded in a modern digital catalogue. As the latest known issue of the preceding *Charlestown Patriot* is that for November 12, 1804, the *Register* was manifestly published after that date, quite possibly as a simple renaming of that earlier paper. Yet, absent evidence for a succession between the *Patriot* and the *Register*, each title needs to be listed separately in this Index.

In 1804, the only press office operating in Jefferson County was owned by William Brown (058), who evidently printed the *Charlestown Patriot* as well. That journal was conducted by an unnamed Republican editor who employed the Federalist Brown to produce it for him. Such also seems to be the case here, as the title *Farmers' Register* was one often adopted by Jeffersonian papers of the day, most notably by an influential contemporary in Troy, New York; it was also the name Edmund Ruffin used for his agricultural journal in the 1840s.

Given that the *Farmers' Register* likely issued in late 1804, it is almost certain that the paper continued into 1805, though for how long is unknowable. The next newspaper published in Charlestown did not issue until April 1808, so the *Register* could have continued for quite some time. But as with all small county papers then, the modest quantity of each number issued makes long-term survival problematic, as seems to the case with this journal.

Sources: Davis & Johnston, "Bibliography of West Virginia." Norona & Shetler 1186; Not in Library of Congress records or other sources.