

LEESBURG 04: Republican Press

01: Republican Press (1810-1811)

The existence of the fourth newspaper issued in Leesburg is evinced only by three indirect references in contemporaneous sources. The identity of that paper's proprietor is even less manifest, although circumstances suggest he came from the Patawomeck people who lived in Stafford County.

John Newton (313) evidently began publishing the *Republican Press* at Leesburg in about March of 1810 as a challenger to *The Washingtonian* of Patrick McIntyre (289). That weekly was established in 1808, in part, to support Loudoun County's Federalist elite and was then advocating the election of William Noland and Charles Fenton Mercer to Virginia's House of Delegates. Reference to Newton's *Republican Press* is seen at that time in McIntyre's paper, wherein his highly-partisan editor took particular delight in skewering the new competitor's reports of widespread support for the Republican candidates in that election. Newton's efforts had little if any effect on the polls that spring, as the two Federalists quadrupled the votes cast for their Jeffersonian opponents. Despite that defeat, it appears that Newton had sufficient support to continue publishing his paper well into 1811. A May 1811 notice in the *Alexandria Gazette* asked Newton to reprint that item in his paper, so indicating that the *Republican Press* was then still in print.

However, neither that published request, nor the earlier satirical editorial identified Newton directly. That identification was made by printer-publisher Isaiah Thomas in his legendary *History of Printing in America*; an appendix therein lists "all" of the newspapers published in the U.S. in 1810, recording that the *Republican Press* was a weekly paper conducted by one John Newton. Loudoun County records suggest this paper's publisher was John Claiborne Newton, whose family had moved to Loudoun between 1790 and 1810, essentially moving away from their long-time Stafford County base, as well as from their tribal roots among the Patawomeck people there. Still, the lack of any other evidence supporting this suggestion makes such an identification tentative at best.

Hence, all that can be said definitively here is that someone named John Newton issued a Republican challenger to the established Federalist journal in Leesburg in early 1810, and that his weekly likely ceased publication in late spring 1811, a victim of the competence of *The Washingtonian* and the contrary political view of most of his potential subscribers in Loudoun County.

Sources: Brigham II: 1117; no copy known extant, so not listed by US Newspaper Project (Library of Congress); existence shown by sources noted above.