Essays in Canadian Bibliography: Bibliographical Studies in Reprint

Douglas G. Lochhead

It is one hundred and fifty years since the Rebellion of Upper Canada and an appropriate time, therefore, to observe the role played in that abortive uprising by William Lyon Mackenzie – printer, in this, the third in a series of reprints of important papers on Canadian bibliography. As Patricia Lockhart Fleming has pointed out, Mackenzie's '... career as printer is so closely linked with his political activities ... that neither can be studied in isolation.'¹ Despite this truism he has received considerably more attention from political scientists and historians than from bibliographers.

One of the first scholars (an historian) to record information about Mackenzie's early printing and publishing career was Dr. J.J. Talman. It is his five-page article from the *Canadian Historical Review* (1937)² which is reprinted here. This new version contains a number of corrections made by the author after it first appeared. In addition to tracing the various presses used by Mackenzie and providing us with other bibliographical information based, in part, on a close examination of the *Colonial Advocate*, Dr. Talman's article reveals how active Mackenzie was in printing and publishing in both Canada and the United States. His exile in 1837 was not the first time he had travelled south of the border. One wonders how much of an 'exile' Mackenzie's years in the United States really was because of his already considerable familiarity with those States bordering Canada.

What Mackenzie did in the United States during his time there from 1837 until 1849 is revealed in part in Dr. Lillian F. Gates' very useful study '*Mackenzie's Gazette: An Aspect of W.L. Mackenzie's American Years*,'³ In it the author makes the point that we need to know more about Mackenzie's activities during his years in exile and to what extent he changed his role as reformer before his return to Canada. Dr. Gates deals with these matters with great sensitivity and interpretive skill.

One is continually aware, in any writings about Mackenzie, of his inner restlessness, of his seemingly frantic involvement in the give and take, the highs and lows, of politics and publishing. What a nuisance he must have been in the composing room as press time drew near. The more one reads about the 'firebrand' the more questions one tends to ask. Mackenzie does

lead one to speculate about him in all manner of situations. Was he a skilled printer? Did he know the difference between a frisket and a hellbox? I believe he did. As a result of his frenzied existence in nineteenth-century politics and publishing he has become a legend, a myth, a focus of folklore. How many so-called Mackenzie presses exist today, for example? More than any printer-publisher in early nineteenth-century Canada could ever have managed, even Mackenzie.

It is a promising sign in bibliographical research to see old studies revived and new ones launched in an effort to portray the many faces of W.L. Mackenzie, printer.

NOTES

- 1 For the most recent information about Mackenzie the printer, readers are referred to Dr. Fleming's splendid article 'William Lyon Mackenzie as Printer, 1824-1837,' in *The Devil's Artisan: A Journal of the Printing Arts* 5-6 (1981): 3-12, 3-19.
- 2 J.J. Talman, 'The Printing Presses of William Lyon Mackenzie, prior to 1837,' *Canadian Historical Review* 18, no. 4 (December 1937): 414-418.
- 3 Lillian F. Gates, 'Mackenzie's Gazette: An Aspect of W.L. Mackenzie's American Years,' *Canadian Historical Review* 46, no. 4 (December 1965): 323-345.

'The Printing Presses of
William Lyon Mackenzie,
prior to 1837'

James J. Talman

This year being the centennial of the Rebellions of 1837 there is a revival of interest in all matters relating to Mackenzie. His prominence in the political field is apt to obscure the fact that he was one of the leading printers of his day and did much, in spite of many difficulties, to improve the technique of printing in Upper Canada. A brief account of some of the presses used by Mackenzie may not be out of place.

Mackenzie issued the first number of the *Colonial advocate* on May 18, 1824. The date line gave the place of publication as Queenston.¹ The first two numbers were small sixteen-page papers. In the first Mackenzie announced that he was printing nine hundred copies but did not tell what press he was using. The earliest information regarding this was given in the fourth number, printed on June 10, when Mackenzie wrote: "For twelve weeks from the commencement, the *Advocate* press work is executed by contract, after which, it will be printed by the proprietor in this village." The phrase "in this village" implied that the *Colonial advocate* was not then being printed in Queenston.

On July 29, 1824 (issue number 9) Mackenzie reported that an election tour and the arrangements which he had made for the transfer of the office of his paper had delayed the paper for two weeks. He stated that he anticipated only one other delay, after number ten, by which time he hoped to have assistance which would enable him to publish the paper without interruption. That the paper was quite irregularly printed at this time is shown by the note on August 5: "our readers will perceive that a part of this paper was printed a week after its date."

On August 23, Mackenzie signed an agreement with Hiram Leaven-

¹'The Printing Presses of William Lyon Mackenzie, prior to 1837' was first printed in the *Canadian Historical Review* vol. 18, no. 4 (December 1937) pp. 414-418 and was then issued as an offprint with an Addendum by Dr. Talman. This reprint reproduces the text of the offprint and includes three corrections to note 5 later added by Dr. Talman by hand. The reprint appears with the kind permission of Dr. James J. Talman and the University of Toronto Press.

worth, who was described as a printer of Rochester, New York, although he does not appear to have had a press in Rochester but in Waterloo, New York, where he published the *Waterloo gazette*.² Leavenworth agreed to carry on a printing business in Queenston for Mackenzie, for six months, and to bring his "establishment of Press, types, and printing materials from Rochester to Queenston." Leavenworth also agreed to provide a substitute should he be prevented by illness from continuing his work.³

This agreement was evidently carried out, for in the *Colonial advocate* of August 26 Mackenzie announced that his printing materials and press had arrived at Queenston and that in a few days he would be ready to execute orders. Leavenworth could not have returned to Rochester, or Waterloo, packed up his equipment, and returned to Queenston between August 23 and 26. But as the issue of the *Colonial advocate* dated August 26 contained news as late as the thirty-first, Leavenworth probably had ample time. Less than two years later Mackenzie stated that Leavenworth had for some time been foreman in the *Colonial advocate* office.⁴

Mackenzie did not use his new press until he printed number 15 (dated September 30 on the front page and October 7 on the inside). On the second page he wrote: "We believe this *Advocate* to be as rare a curiosity as any newspaper that ever was printed in the world. The first side was printed in the American Republick, and this in the Colonial Dominions of King George 4th. We do not know that any one newspaper other than this number, has been printed in two different countries, since the art of type-setting was first invented. Our friends may rest assured that both sides of the *Advocate* will from henceforth be printed on this side [of] the Niagara." As the outside pages of this issue were almost identical with the outside pages of all issues from number three on, it is clear that all were printed in the United States. As the first twelve numbers were printed by contract, it is probable that the first two, although of a different format, were also printed there.⁵

The *Colonial advocate* for October 14 (number 16) was quite different from previous issues. The outside was similar to the Canadian section of the previous number while the inside contained many of the advertisements which had previously appeared in the American issues, re-set in different type. This issue had an obviously makeshift appearance and was clearly the first printed entirely in Queenston. The following issues, from October 21, 1824, to June 16, 1825, inclusive, were printed from the same type but had a much more finished appearance. On November 18, 1824, the paper (number 20) contained the announcement that Mackenzie intended to move the office of the *Colonial advocate* from Queenston, and postmasters were instructed to forward all mail to York. This issue con-

tained a postscript dated York, November 25. Thus Mackenzie printed four complete and two partial issues in Queenston.

The last issue of the *Colonial advocate* printed on the Leavenworth press (number 51) was dated June 16, 1825. The succeeding number did not appear until December 8, when Mackenzie announced the safe arrival of an extensive and well-chosen supply of new and beautiful type from the New York foundries and also a "Patent Printing Press, constituted on a new and much approved principle, combining elegance in design with neatness and despatch in execution." This was evidently the press which was partially destroyed in the riot of June 8, 1826. Describing this event Lindsey states: "Three pages of the paper in type on the composing stones, with a 'form' of the Journals of the House, were broken up, and the face of the letter battered. Some of the type was then thrown into the bay, to which the printing-office was contiguous; some of it was scattered on the floor of the office; more of it in the yard and in the adjacent garden of Mr. George Munro. The composing-stone was thrown on the floor. A new cast-iron patent lever-press was broken."⁶ Following the damaging of his press, Mackenzie did not bring out another number until December 7, 1826. In this number he explained that he had bought some second-hand type "on the frontier" near Queenston, but there is nothing to show whether he was using a new press or the damaged one repaired.

It is possible that the press which Mackenzie had used up to June 16, 1825, was taken by Hiram Leavenworth, who had once owned it, to St. Catharines, where he began publishing the *Farmers' journal and Welland canal intelligencer* on February 1, 1826. Comparison of the *Farmers' journal* of April 11, 1827, the earliest available copy, with the *Colonial advocate*, however, does not reveal any great similarity.

The *Colonial advocate* continued with little change until December, 1833, when the name was changed to the *Advocate*. On December 9, 1830, James Baxter was stated to be the printer and publisher in the place of Mackenzie who continued as proprietor. James Baxter died on March 26, 1832, and Peter Baxter took his place. Peter Baxter continued until January 11, 1834, when Mackenzie was again described as publisher. On April 10, 1834, the *Advocate* contained a notice that Mackenzie's responsibility as editor, printer, and publisher and all his political connection with the paper had ceased. The new editors, printers, and publishers were Daniel Bancroft and Peter Baxter. Mackenzie evidently continued to have an interest in the paper for it was he who signed the farewell editorial when the *Advocate* was combined with the *Canadian correspondent*, in the same year. The last number of the *Advocate* was November 4 and the first of the *Correspondent and advocate* was November 13. The proprietor of

the *Correspondent* was the Rev. W.J. O'Grady and the printer, who continued as printer of the combined papers, was J. Reynolds.

During the years from 1826 to 1834 Mackenzie probably used more than one press, but changes are not indicated. The newspaper did not vary in appearance when printers and publishers were changed. Occasionally the headings were set in different and obviously new type. On June 3, 1830, Mackenzie announced the receipt of his "annual" supply of new and elegant type. It is, of course, not certain that the type was replaced annually. When he sold his paper the presses and type were not included. Advertisements show that at that time, Mackenzie possessed an iron imperial press, a second-hand ramage press, and a large and powerful standing press, as well as a small job press. This, according to Mackenzie, was an extensive establishment for Upper Canada. Altogether, with type, *etc.*, it had, he claimed, cost him £750.

The three numbers of the *Welland canal* published by Mackenzie, on December 16, 23, and 30, 1835, were printed by M. Reynolds, who had succeeded J. Reynolds as printer of the *Correspondent and advocate*.

Early in July, 1836, Mackenzie began to publish the *Constitution*. The paper was printed on a large sheet and had narrower columns than the *Advocate*. It was attractive and was obviously printed from new type. The press probably was new also, although Mackenzie may conceivably have been using one of his old presses, if he had not sold it. Certainly in 1837 he had a new press, for on April 19 he reported that he had purchased in New York "new iron presses" of the newest construction. He later claimed that at that time he had "on Yonge Street, the finest, largest, newest printing establishment in the colonies." This establishment was broken up, and, according to Mackenzie, destroyed, in 1837 after the rebellion.⁷

ADDENDUM

Dr. C.W. Jefferys has drawn my attention to a reference in Dent which states that on Nov. 24, 1837, when Mackenzie set out on a journey north from Toronto, he took with him "some type, paper, and a small printing-press, by means of which he was enabled to strike off and distribute a handbill."⁸ Further evidence of the existence of this additional press is found in the *St. Catharines journal*, of December 7, 1837, which reported that "a small portable printing press" belonging to Mackenzie, which he used "for the purpose of issuing bulletins" was seized with his papers at Montgomery's tavern.

NOTES

- 1 I am indebted to Mr. W.S. Wallace for permission to use the file of the *Colonial advocate* preserved in the University of Toronto Library.
- 2 Frederick Follett *History of the press of western New York* (Rochester, 1847), 69.
- 3 Niagara Historical Society, no. 30 (Welland, 1917), 45-7.
- 4 *Colonial advocate*, Feb. 16, 1826.
- 5 Mr. Louis Blake Duff, of Welland, has supplied the following information with reference to the place where the *Colonial advocate* was printed, in the United States. The first newspaper in Lewiston was the *Niagara democrat*, established by Bartemus Ferguson in 1821. The year following it moved to Lockport, and the name changed to the *Lockport observatory*. The second paper at Lewiston was the *Lewiston sentinel*, founded in 1823, by James D. Daly. It, too, was moved to Lockport on being purchased by Oliver Grace. Printing began in Buffalo in 1811. It was clearly in one of these three centres that the *Colonial advocate* was produced. Mr. Duff compared the *Colonial advocate* of June 10, 1824 (vol. 1, no. 4), in his possession, with the *Lewiston sentinel*, of April 18, 1823 (vol. 1, no. 31), in the possession of Mr. Edward T. Williams, of Niagara Falls, New York, and found the following similarities: both heads were in the equivalent of 48 point caps, same type; the sub-head and *Journal of agriculture, etc.*, of the *Colonial advocate* and the *Sentinel* at the masthead were in 24 point old English, same type; the bodies of both were in 8 point, same type; and the page sizes were the same. As the *Colonial advocate* had no advertisements, the comparison could be pursued no further. There seems no reason to doubt that both newspapers came from the same press.
- 6 Charles Lindsey *The life and times of Wm. Lyon Mackenzie* (Toronto, 1862), 1, 78.
- 7 *Mackenzie's weekly message*, Dec. 25, 1852, Dec. 7, 1855.
- 8 J.C. Dent *The story of the Upper Canadian rebellion* (Toronto, 1885), II, 18.