

The Authorship of the Newspaper on Parry's First Arctic Expedition, 1819-20

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ABSTRACT. A newspaper, *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle*, was published during the wintering-over, 1819-20, of Parry's first arctic expedition. The authors of the contributions were anonymous. In a presentation copy of the London edition of the *Gazette*, now in the Research Library of the U.S. Air Force Geophysics Laboratory, Parry had pencilled in the names of most of the contributors. These notations are here published.

Key words: Parry Expedition, 1819; *North Georgia Gazette*; *Winter Chronicle*; Northwest Passage

RÉSUMÉ. Un journal, *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle*, fut publié lors de l'hivernage 1819-20 de la première expédition arctique de Parry. Bien que les auteurs des articles n'y étaient pas nommés, Parry avait écrit au crayon les noms de la plupart des collaborateurs dans l'exemplaire de présentation de l'édition de Londres de la *Gazette* qui repose aujourd'hui à la bibliothèque du U.S. Air Force Geophysics Laboratory. Ces notations sont publiées dans le présent article.

Mots clés: expédition de Parry, 1819; *North Georgia Gazette*; *Winter Chronicle*; passage du nord-ouest

Traduit pour le journal par Maurice Guibord.

INTRODUCTION: *THE NORTH GEORGIA GAZETTE AND WINTER CHRONICLE*

Following the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars, the British government, having a stock of seasoned career naval officers on hand, resumed the search for the Northwest Passage (Crouse, 1934; Neatby, 1958). The goal was to find a navigable sea route through the arctic regions of North America that would allow for passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The first such expedition (1818) was under the command of Captain John Ross, with Lieutenant William Parry as second in command. The second expedition (1819) was put under the command of Parry, with Captain Edward Sabine, as in the first expedition, in charge of scientific observations. In late September the two ships of the expedition, *Hecla* and *Griper*, berthed in Winter Harbor, Melville Island. It was the first time that British men-of-war had wintered in the Arctic.

Parry, concerned with the possible effect of tedium on the morale of the men, instituted two measures: the staging of plays (see Claustre, 1982, for a discussion of this measure) and the publication of a weekly newspaper, *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle*. Parry's objective was "... to promote good-humour among ourselves, as well as to furnish amusing occupation, during the hours of constant darkness ..." (Parry, 1821:106; also see Parry, 1963:60). At least one officer, the surgeon Alexander Fisher, had misgivings about this venture, feeling that contributors would eventually resort to jokes and reflections upon each other, so that the paper, "instead of being the source of amusement and instruction, [would become] the vehicle of sarcasms and bitter reflections" (Fisher, 1821:journal entry for 2 November 1819). Parry, aware of these objections, nevertheless felt that "... the discretion, as well as the excellent dispositions ..." of his officers would prevent any unpleasant consequences (Parry, 1821:106).

Parry persuaded Sabine, because of his discretion and good sense, to assume the editorship. Sabine was promised original contributions from the officers of the two ships. To preserve

anonymity a box in which contributions could be put was placed on the *Hecla*'s capstan, with Sabine in possession of the key (Anon., 1821:viii). Fisher did not feel that anonymity could be preserved, since personalities became too well known in such close quarters. He did feel, however, that "... there is reason to hope, from the character of the person who is to conduct it, that it will afford amusement, and perhaps useful instruction ..." (Fisher, 1821: journal entry for November 2, 1819). In keeping with the concern for anonymity, all contributions were signed with pseudonyms.

The men published 21 numbers of the *Gazette* between 1 November 1819 and 20 March 1820. Altogether 121 items were included, covering a variety of topics. On their return to England these were collected and printed in 1821 for those who had participated in the voyage and for such of the public as might find it of interest. That Parry had anticipated such publication is shown by his comment in the first issue: "... I cannot help looking forward to the time when a paragraph of the *Winter Chronicle*, read aloud around some cheerful fire-side, may draw a tear of pride and pleasure from the eye of an aged parent, an affectionate wife, or a beloved sister." The sentiment was echoed by Wakeham in a later issue (*Gazette*:8 November 1819).

The newspaper preserved the anonymity of the authors. The manuscript edition produced on the expedition is in the archives of the Scott Polar Institute and does not include the names of the authors (Clive Holland, pers. comm. 1983). As far as I can determine this public anonymity has remained to the present time.

THE AUTHORS OF THE *GAZETTE*

The Research Library of the U.S. Air Force Geophysics Laboratory, Hanscom Field, Bedford, Massachusetts, includes a copy of the first published edition of the *Gazette*, the title page of which is shown in Figure 1. The copy is one presented and inscribed to a Mrs. Henry Garrett by Captain Parry himself (Fig. 2). In an unknown hand on a blank page preceding the

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title pages there is the notation: "Cpt Parry has filled in (in pencil) most of the anonymous contributors' names." A photograph of the first page of the table of contents with the pencilled notations is shown in Figure 3.

While most of the notations can be readily made out, in some the pencil lines are faint. To read these a two power magnifier was combined with a dark red filter. The copy was then illuminated with polarized light and the names viewed through a polarizer in conjunction with the filter and magnifier combination.

Appendix A shows the pen names used by each contributor and the pages in the original edition on which their contributions appear. Nineteen men officered the expedition (Appendix B). Of these, twelve contributed to the *Gazette*. Eight of them — Liddon, Beechey, Edwards, Bushnan, Nias, Fisher, Ross and Hoppner — each contributed only one item. The greatest number of contributions, 27, came from Parry. Wakeham, who does appear to have satisfied an inner need for expression, contributed some 25 items. Of the remainder 12 were from Hooper. Sabine, in addition to writing several items as editor, produced 6 under the pen name of Scepticus. A disproportionate number of contributors, nine out of twelve officers, came from the ship under Parry's direct command, the *Hecla*, as compared to three contributors out of seven officers on the *Griper*. This may have been a result of the difficulty of communication from one ship to the other or possibly to the more direct influence of Parry on those in his immediate vicinity.

Some contributors remain unidentified since Parry did not annotate all of the entries. One of these, Trim, is probably

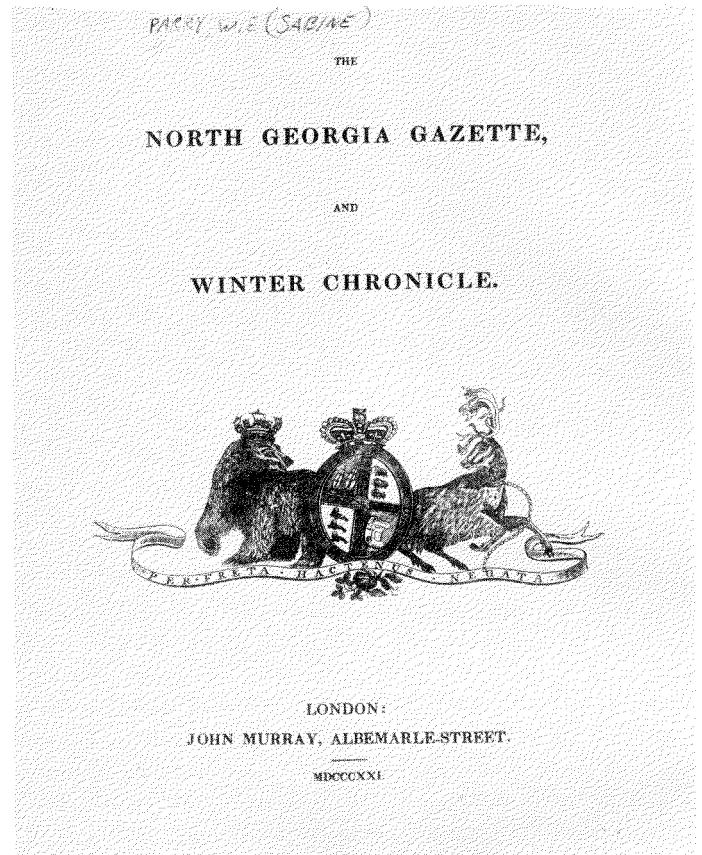


FIG. 2. Inscription on the presentation copy.

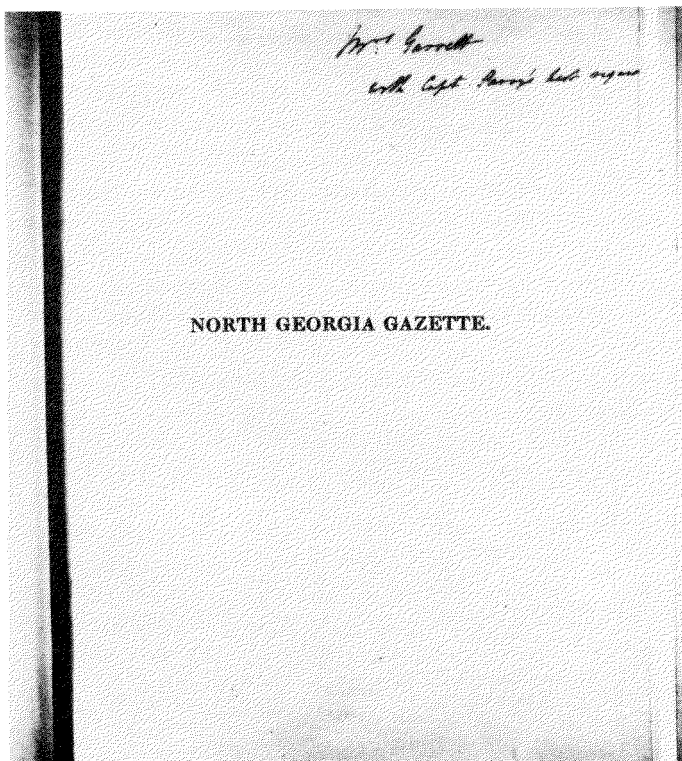


FIG. 1. Title page of the *Gazette*.

CONTENTS.	
No. I. NOVEMBER 1, 1819.	
Address by the Editor	1
On the establishment of the Winter Chronicle. By PHILO-COMUS	1
On the effects of an Arctic Winter. By FROSTICUS	3
Arctic Miseries. By OLD COMICAL	4
Lines on the commencement of the Winter Chronicle. By ALBERT	4
Lines by Q.	6
Announcement of the Opening of the North Georgia Theatre	6
Notice to Correspondents	6
No. II. November 8.	
Note by the Editor	7
Letter of a PLAIN MATTER-OF-FACT MAN	8
Theatrical Report	8
Address Spoken at the Opening of the North Georgia Theatre	11
Enigma, by ALBERT	11
To Correspondents	11
No. III. November 15.	
Letter from PHILOSOPHICUS	13
Speech of Counsellor Puzzlewell, in the Cause EDITOR v. NON-CONTRIBUTORS	14
A Vision. By PHILO-SOPHUS	16
Theatrical Report	16
Lines by Q.	17
To Correspondents	18
No. IV. November 22.	
Remarks on the North Georgia Theatricals. By PETER TALL	19
Answer to ALBERT'S Enigma.	20
Theatrical Announcement	20
Songs, written by Mr. WARHAM, for the Theatre	21, 22

FIG. 3. First page of table of contents showing pencilled notations by Parry.

Parry. In the text (*Gazette*:26-28) the Law Report is signed Trim, while the Theatrical Report immediately following is unsigned. The table of contents, however, probably as a result of typographical error, puts Trim as the author of the Theatrical Report. Parry's annotation lists himself as the author of the Law Report, so that the identification of Trim as Parry is probable. Support for Parry's authorship is also found in A. Parry's biography, where Parry is credited with the composition of at least a portion of the Law Report (Parry, 1963:60-61). There is also an inconsistency in that N.C. is identified as Bushnan on p. 64 and as Parry on p. 73. The item following this on p. 73, by Veritas, is not identified by Parry, so it is possible that he meant the preceding identification for this item.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must express my great appreciation for the unstinting and courteous help given by Mr. John Armstrong, acquisitions librarian of the U.S. Air Force Geophysics Research Library. I am also most appreciative of the help given by Mr. Harold Alpaugh of the Itek Corporation, who devised and applied the polarization technique to the lightly pencilled notations of Parry.

APPENDIX A

The Authors: Pen Names and Page Number of Contributions

Parry:

Pen names: Abigail Handicraft, Amicus, Hilary High-Flyer, N, Peeping Tom, Peter Plainway, Peter Pry-About, Peter Trial, Philo Comus, Pitiful Punster, Richard Roam-About, Simon Set-Right, Stephen Stopwell, T, Timothy Quill-Splitter, Z. Trim, on pages 28 and 32, is probably also a Parry pen name. Contributions by Peeping Tom and T, unannotated by Parry, also occur on pages 107 and 128. Pages: 1, 19, 26, 28, 33, 35, 39, 44, 54, 67, 71, 73, 77, 79, 80, 88, 93, 95, 99, 100, 105, 111, 118, 119, 125, 127, 128.

Wakeham:

Pen names: A, Albert, A Scribbler, Castigator, Frosticus, Henry Harmless, Old Comical, Philo-Somnus, Philosophicus, Pincher, Puzzle Well, Quintilian Querulous. Pages: 3, 4, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 34, 37, 45, 47, 53, 58, 62, 78, 83, 89, 90, 96, 97, 108, 109, 110, 115, 129. Note: Songs and a farewell address, all directly ascribed to Wakeham, are on pages 21, 22, 52, 121, 122, 130.

Hooper:

Pen names: Little-Brain Lack-Wit, Looker-On, Q, Slender Brain, Smell Rat Smoke'em, Tom Peeped-At, Young Beginner. Pages: 6, 17, 35, 45, 62, 70, 81, 85, 102, 111, 114, 120.

Sabine:

Pen name: Scepticus. Pages: 1, 8, 32, 51, 86, 87.

Hoppner:

Pen names: A Contributor, Anne Anti-Scalp. Pages: 82, 86.

Liddon:

Pen name: Peter Fume. Page: 25.

Beechey:

Pen name: Meredith Makeshift. Page: 102.

Edwards:

Pen name: Philanthropus. Page: 50.

Bushnan:

Pen name: N.C. Page: 64.

Nias:

Pen name: Josephus Not-Far-Off. Page: 69.

Fisher:

Page: 65 (no name).

Ross:

Pen name: J. Page: 82.

Pen names not identified by Parry: Snip Quill-Drive (p. 52), A Constant Reader (p. 63), Veritas (p. 74), Philo-Caloric (p. 80), Nathan Long-Bow (p. 113). In addition items such as advertisements and theatrical announcements are generally not identified.

Note: Page numbers refer to the original 1821 edition.

APPENDIX B

The Officers of the Expedition

On board the Hecla:

Lieutenant and Commander: William Edward Parry; Astronomer: Captain Edward Sabine, R.A.; Lieutenant Frederick William Beechey; Surgeon: John Edwards; Purser: William Harvey Hooper; Assistant Surgeon: Alexander Fisher; Midshipmen: Joseph Nias, William J. Dealey, Charles Palmer, James Clarke Ross, John Bushnan; Clerk: James Hulse.

On board the Griper:

Lieutenant and Commander: Matthew Liddon; Lieutenant Henry Parkyns Hopper; Assistant surgeon: Charles James Beverly; Midshipmen: Andrew Reid, A.M. Skene, William Nelson Griffiths; Clerk: Cyrus Wakeham. (Parry, 1821:ii.)

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