

ESTABLISHING A COLONIAL SOCIETY:

THE MELBOURNE ADVERTISER AND THE PORT PHILLIP GAZETTE,

1838-51

ORIGIN

A PERSONAL CONVICTION LONG CHERISHED, combined with a strong neighbourhood pressure, persuaded John Pascoe Fawkner, a journeyman sawyer turned journalist, to establish the *Melbourne Advertiser* on 1 January 1838.¹ Lacking the essential printing equipment, Fawkner distributed his advertising news-sheet of about 1300 words in manuscript form gratuitously to property owners who partly defrayed its cost of production through advertising.² J P Fawkner's initiative was not a commercial speculation. He determined

to furnish to the Public an independent Journal, at the lowest price possible, without incurring loss-Profit not being considered or required.³

Indeed, by 31 December 1837, the new settlement supported only 984 males and 280 females in Port Phillip, and setting up a newspaper did not seem to be a propitious undertaking.

By 12 February 1838, one of the Van Dieman Land's early exports; 'A small [wooden hand printing] press, and a nearly useless set of type,'⁴ supplied by Lushington Goodwin of the *Launceston Chronicle* enabled Fawkner to realise his vision. Not himself possessing the technical skills of either a pressman or a compositor, Fawkner again distributed the 12 and 13 February 1838 issues of his mainly commercial intelligence in manuscript form until 5 March 1838.⁵

A private engagement when composition was to take place had denied Fawkner of the services of the compositor he had employed, and the responsibility of producing the first printed edition fell on

a Van Demonian youth of eighteen, and this lad only worked at this business about a year, from his tenth to his eleventh, 1830-31.⁶

Juvenile labour was commonplace in the colonies, and it was more than thirty-five years before the first attempt was made in Victoria, on 16 June 1873, to regulate it and the related question of apprenticeship.⁷ This eighteen-year-old boy, who started his apprenticeship, in the absence of any regulation, four years earlier than was customary in England at this time, was plagued by more than his own inexperience:

Next the honest printer from whom the type was bought, has swept up all his old waste letter and called it type, and we at present labour under many wants, we even have not as much as Pearl Ash to clean the dirty Type.⁸

Lack of experienced craftsmen was compounded by political problems. A repressively designed Act of Council enacted on 25 April 1827, during the governorship of Sir Ralph Darling, required newspaper entrepreneurs, printers and editors, to register their businesses by depositing with the Colonial Secretary in Sydney an authentic documentation of ownership, with an undertaking to 'pay any fines that might be imposed for blasphemous or seditious libel'.⁹ But Victoria's first newspaper proprietor set up office without first complying with this law. Before his arrival in Port Phillip, Fawcner had been a baker, and a timber merchant in Launceston, where he was also 'the [first] journalist'.¹⁰ Having published the *Launceston Advertiser* from 9 February 1829 to 27 June 1831, when he sold it to Henry Darling, Fawcner was most likely to be aware of the Act 8^o George IV, No.2 of 1827. This Act was Darling's attempt to suppress the *Australian* and Edward Smith Hall's *Sydney Monitor*, especially.¹¹ Perhaps partly because of post and road communication problems, Fawcner issued the *Melbourne Advertiser* illegally. Therefore, Governor George Gipps, who replaced Darling on 24 February 1838, instructed Fawcner through Police Magistrate William Lonsdale to cease publication until after he had fulfilled the legal requirements concerning his establishment. Consequently, Fawcner suspended the *Melbourne Advertiser* after the issue of 23 April 1838. On making an eloquent representation to the new governor, Fawcner was allowed to register his paper with the Police Magistrate in Melbourne and to resume publication on 6 February 1838.¹² During the intervening period, on 27 October 1838, the *Port Phillip Gazette* had been launched by George Arden, a young man of nineteen, and Thomas Strode, a former printer of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The persistent but erroneous claim of these former Sydney printers to priority as the fathers of the Victorian newspaper press, generated a bitter personal and commercial rivalry within the industry in subsequent years.¹³

INVESTMENT CAPITAL

The amount of investment capital required to operate a town or country colonial newspaper was not substantial. The assets of pioneering printers and publishers varied according to the size, make and sophistication of the printing press, the assorted range of text and jobbing typefaces and materials, office premises and salaries. By October 1839, George Arden, then sole proprietor of the *Gazette*, was expending £33 a week on rent, stationery and salaries.¹⁴ His recurrent weekly cash disbursement increased in 1841 to £50 per week or £650 per quarter.¹⁵ By November 1839, Arden possessed two lithographic presses. Although these presses do not seem to have been heavily utilized commercially until 17 August 1841, when Arden loaned them to Henry Douglas, a pioneering Melbourne lithographer, their acquisition by

Arden reveals him as a well-equipped colonial printer.¹⁶ In September 1841, bad debts accruing from credit facilities extended to his customers amounted to £1500.¹⁷ A little less than one year later, in August 1842, the shareholders of the *Gazette* valued the paper's 'total assets', including £3000 for copyright, at about £8000.¹⁸ On 16 February 1843, when the paper was in a 'precarious [financial] position',¹⁹ its creditors decided, at a shareholders' conference in the presence of the Chief Commissioner of Insolvent Court, to surrender the property to the Port Phillip Bank 'in satisfaction of a preferable claim possessed by that company'. Arden was reportedly interested in the printer, B C Jolly's offer of £850 for the plant of the *Gazette*. Toward the close of the next year, in October 1844, the *Gazette* was auctioned by Messrs Brodie and Cruikshank, passing to Thomas M'Combie for £80.²⁰ This ridiculously low price is partly explained by the fact that M'Combie and Thomas Strode were joint partners before the sale and also the only bidders for the plant of the *Gazette*.

CREATORS & BOOSTERS

Although a large number of the early settlers in Australia were banished there by transportation for various offences, many colonists were driven away from Europe, especially England and Ireland in the 1840s, by chronic unemployment and various forms of economic and political turbulence. Many others were lured by adventure to seek greener living pastures. On reaching the colonies, they determined to transform their new abode into a permanent and socially well-organised society. Therefore, many printers and publishers became boosters of their communities, extolling their manifold blessings and abundant natural resources. To many early settlers, the newspaper press was an indicator of socio-economic progress, an institution of advanced civilization. In attempting to fulfil this expectation many editors proclaimed vigilant attention to public justice in bombastic prospectuses. The editor was 'expected to be, for sooth, in politics, a perfect oracle ... in executive handicraft, in perspicuity, a Hermes, and an Apollo in vision and judgment'.²¹ In proving themselves to be creators of society, editors lost no opportunity for extravagant self-glorification. For instance, the Melbourne *Herald* was launched in 1839 by George Cavenagh, one time editor of the Sydney *Gazette* at a period when the *Port Phillip Gazette* had become unpopular with a 'jingle'²² from a 'THUNDERING long placard',²³ if without an accompanying trumpet and a brass band. Cavenagh was a self-styled reformer, who boasted to have established the *Herald* 'with the view of correcting the deplorable spirit of personality and scurrility, which had displayed itself in the management of the Melbourne Press, and rendered it a bye-word and reproach wherever it was known.'²⁴ In response, the *Port Phillip Gazette* claimed that it was neither

the slave of any faction [n] or the tool of any party, we have done our endeavours to obtain liberal institutions for our adopted land, and we

have ever maintained the true liberty of the press without its licentiousness.²⁵

One major preoccupation of pioneer editors was the attraction of immigrants to their territory from Europe and sister settlements. Early editors saw their society as unrivalled in its splendour as the best place to live, and quickly corrected misrepresentations of its fortunes while not hesitating to denigrate other settlements. Ridiculing the inhabitants of South Australia, in an editorial in 1839, the *Gazette* claimed that they had gone there 'unguided by the hand of experience. ... as nothing could possibly be gained by paying even the most unremitting attention to tracts of gum trees and opossums'.²⁶ Deploring the money-grabbing mentality of land speculators in that territory, the editorial continued:

Thus do one half of the population exist by preying upon each other; the remainder waste their time in the idle invectives and expenditure of money, when a few days journey would place them in a colony replete with resources - the colony of Australia Felix.

The *Gazette* also persuaded capitalist entrepreneurs that the Port Phillip settlement offered unsurpassed business opportunities for 'wealth has accumulated in the settlement to an amazing extent'.²⁷ Concluding one of its series of economic surveys of the new settlement, the paper advised farmers of the extraordinary agricultural potentialities of the region, and mechanics and other artisans were informed that, unless they were incurably lazy, instant prosperity awaited them in Port Phillip:

We will assert that health - the greatest blessing of life being their portion, artisans of whatever denomination, in this part of the world, must be either thoroughly idle, or irreclaimable drunkards not to prosper.²⁸

While competing with sister townsites and colonies for settlers to their territory, early editors preferred potentially useful citizens. Drunkenness and other forms of social impropriety were discouraged, especially among the uneducated labouring classes. In an obvious attempt to discourage people from visiting them, the *Patriot* variously characterized the four gambling houses which had been established in Melbourne by June 1844, and which were 'the nightly resort of young men ... [as] "hells" ... dens of ruin ... nest of vice'.²⁹ In 1840, the same paper called upon the London Colonisation Committee, which had organised emigration to the colonies from 1832, to

establish the strictest enquiry into the character of those bounty emigrants they may forward to us, as we have quite enough immorality and vice on our hands at present to be desirous of more.³⁰

The Californian gold rush of the late 1840s provided a particularly gratifying occasion to celebrate the departure of the ship *William Watson* and its gold-

seeking passengers as 'the greatest blessing that could have befallen this community'.³¹ The rush to California, was also an opportune moment for the *Gazette* to

congratulate the community upon the flattering prospect held out to us for a speedy riddance of all the rogues and vagabonds in this colony, who are resolved upon trying their fortunes at the mines ... The community will also get rid of a number of the 'ne'er do weel' kind, who cannot pay their debts, so that tradesmen had better look out.³²

Pioneer editors were well aware that the society could only thrive on the labour of virile and able-bodied citizens. Good health was essential. No life should be lost carelessly. When a settler was struck by lightning while taking refuge from the rain under a tree, the *Patriot* admonished 'all persons not be take shelter during a thunderstorm under a tree'.³³ Many early traders were unscrupulous in their business dealings. While some vendors offered adulterated commodities to their customers, other swindled unsuspecting investors. Complaining in January 1840 about the alarming increase in the price of bread, the *Patriot* advised housewives to protect themselves against the adulteration of wheat flour with rice.³⁴ Similarly, in trying to protect its community against unscrupulous businessmen, the *Gazette* urged all families to purchase scales to check the cheating perpetrated by some traders.³⁵

Creative initiative and industry were promoted. While the *Patriot* cautioned pig and goat breeders 'to pen them up carefully'³⁶ to avoid the wrath of the law, the police were themselves praised and severely criticised when desirable. In June 1840, the *Patriot* chastised the corrupt members of the constabulary for the 'tyrannical and disgraceful acts'³⁷ for which some of them were reprimanded. Mr Carrington, the Crown Prosecutor in Melbourne in 1839, was criticised for his scandalous 'habits of receiving fees to conduct the defence of various parties in the Police Office'.³⁸ In February 1840, the *Patriot* alleged that 'in nine cases out of ten they are *peace breakers*',³⁹ not peace officers. But the *Gazette* commended the same forces a few years later, for ridding Melbourne of the health hazards and other 'intolerable nuisances [sic]'⁴⁰ with which stable keepers and butchers littered the streets of the town. The police were not the only public institution that came under severe criticism. In February 1840, the *Patriot* culled from Hobart Town papers the case of a man sentenced to death on the unsubstantiated evidence of a lone witness, and was led to speculate on the

danger to the community of establishing such precedent ... for half a crown ... a witness might be procured to swear anything in the world. If this man is suffered to die by the hands of the executioner, we may consider the life and character of every man in the colony at the mercy of any vagabond who for money or malice, would take a false oath!!⁴¹

R Therry, who was before his appointment as the Resident Judge in Melbourne in 1845, a judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, was

not a popular man. He was 'not celebrated for *very* profound erudition on any point of *law* he is pre-eminently superficial, or rather, supremely ignorant'.⁴² Almost every public officer was faulted by the press. Governor George Gipp's administration of the postal services in the country districts was described by the *Patriot* as an extension of 'his favourite scheme, the plunder of Port Phillip'.⁴³ Given the non-existence of good roads and similar infrastructural facilities during the period, it would appear that some early editors were rather harsh in their criticism of public officers. Nevertheless, some public officers received praise for their hard work and even recommendation for higher salary. When, in late 1848, it was decided that the Town Clerk's salary should be increased progressively from £240 to £300 per annum, the *Melbourne Daily News* argued that he deserved an additional £100 per annum.⁴⁴

Several weeks before C J La Trobe arrived on 1 October 1839, to assume office as the Superintendent of Port Phillip, to the 'salute of nine guns'⁴⁵ and other forms of public celebrations, speculation was rife in the Melbourne press about his personal qualities and the nature of his office. The *Gazette*, which hailed his appointment as a useful administrative machinery for representing the settlement's needs to the colonial office, shortly afterwards stigmatized him as a colonial 'land spy'.⁴⁶ This charge infuriated the *Patriot*, which saw no justification for such 'a false, malicious, and (as far as the public yet know), a groundless libel of our respected Governor'.⁴⁷ Equally, and without justification, the *Patriot* recommended Lt. Governor's salary for La Trobe, who was then a Superintendent.⁴⁸ When, later in his career and hampered by the legal requirements of his position, La Trobe began to transfer excess revenue to Sydney instead of investing it (as was generally expected) in the development of the territory's economy, he met with strong public opposition. The *Patriot*, like its contemporaries, became critical of La Trobe's administration. Fawcner was also dissatisfied with La Trobe for similar and other reasons. In an open letter to La Trobe, dated 18 July 1848, Fawcner specifically alleged that La Trobe 'openly patronizes [Police Magistrates Major St John] a man notorious for receiving bribes',⁴⁹ a libel for which Fawcner was fined £100. Previous to this, La Trobe's opposition to the settlement's separation from New South Wales, among other things, had encouraged the Town Council to pass a vote of no confidence in his administration - a decision ignored by the British government, which subsequently appointed La Trobe as the first governor of the State of Victoria, in 1851.⁵⁰

Commending the Town Council's action, in an editorial, as 'a national service which deserves a plenary absolution for all past and prospective errors',⁵¹ the *Patriot* characterised La Trobe's administration as 'a system of treachery, falsehood, and espionage' and speculated that the 'political aversion in which His Honour is held by the people, extended to *personal* dislike'. Therefore, when La Trobe was appointed governor, the *Melbourne Daily News* brazenly remarked:

The national *insult* of his appointment ought to elicit the unanimous and reverberating reprobation of every Colonist who has any respect for himself, or his adopted Country.⁵²

BUSINESS AND PERSONAL ANTAGONISM

The colonial newspaper business was intensely competitive. Settler communities were small and newspaper clients were few. The introduction of a new journal was enthusiastically welcomed, especially if it posed no direct threat to the existing venture. Former business associates were encouraged to set up office. In March 1842, the *Gazette* announced the plans of its former assistant editor, John Stephens, to publish a new paper.⁵³ Occasionally, an olive branch was fully extended to the new enterprise by an old contemporary. Generally, however, the newcomer is viewed with apprehension. Forecasting (with a veiled cynicism directed at the *Gazette*) the boost that the establishment of the *Herald* in 1839 would give to newspaper development in Port Phillip, the *Patriot* remarked that

In this gentleman [George Cavenagh] we hail a talented and worthy competitor, a man of some knowledge and experience, not a mass of ignorant assumption and vile obscenity. We from our heart wish him every success and shall be ready to render him every assistance in our humble power.⁵⁴

In signalling its hostility to the *Herald*, the *Gazette* unfavourably reviewed the new paper's introductory issue, in part, as follows:

Its general contents are entirely wanting in that variety, liveliness and energy which give a character to newspaper articles ... the domestic intelligence is of the usual mediocre stamp which characterizes the Sydney Journals; while its arrangement in print betrays a similar colonial taste for meaningless display. Its greatest fault appears to me to be a want of energy and decision, which gives a character of extreme tameness to the whole production.⁵⁵

In most cases, the existing paper sought to dissuade the prospective investor from setting up office. When, in May 1846, the *Gazette* learnt that Goodwin, of the *Cornwall Chronicle*, was planning to establish a new paper in Melbourne, it hoped

for its own sake, as well as that of the other papers established, that the report is without foundation. There is not room for more papers in Melbourne, and when more than three have been in the field all have alike lost. It is not known, but it is true, that the business does not increase with the papers, but the exact reverse, for many find it too expensive to subscribe to and support all, and do not like to favor any.⁵⁶

Though all editors invariably disavowed scurrility, they traded verbal blows with one another. The *Gazette* derided the 'determined mischief-making character of the *Patriot*'⁵⁷ and dismissed the *Corio Chronicle's* review of the first edition of the *Australia Felix Magazine* as 'stark nonsense'.⁵⁸ According to the *Gazette*, George Boursiquot, editor of the *Melbourne Daily News* was 'a dangerous man to be connected with a public journal',⁵⁹ and the editor of the *Argus* was a 'petty fogging creature'.⁶⁰ When, in September 1840, the *Argus* mistook a seal for a fish, the *Gazette* commented:

Well done, *Argus*, this is the *ne plus ultra* of erudition, and would undoubtedly entitle you *nolens volens* to a niche in that most renowned galaxy, 'Pope's Dunciad'.⁶¹

The *Gazette* boasted that it was the only paper intellectually capable of discussing the socio-economic impact on Melbourne of the Californian gold rush, the other editors being 'too incompetent and too wedded to scurrility to grapple with such a subject'⁶² - certainly not the *Corio Chronicle*, which the *Gazette* referred to in a sub-leader as 'an innocent juvenile destitute of any pretensions in the field of journalism' for claiming wrongly, to be the first to announce the discovery of coal in Loutit Bay. In response, the *Patriot* made a capital issue of George Arden's youth, by describing the *Gazette's* editor as 'an inexperienced, wilful, pettish, proud, penny-a-liner'.⁶³ Arden, the 'literary infant',⁶⁴ had nothing to offer and the *Patriot's* management had long since stopped reading his journal. The *Patriot* called the *Melbourne Times* a 'dirty rag'⁶⁵ and its editor 'one of the silliest ignoramuses that ever wasted paper in the furtive attempt to instruct persons wiser and abler than himself'.⁶⁶ Such was the antagonism among these editors that the *Melbourne Argus* was scornfully described as the *Argoose*.

Editorial rivalry extended beyond personality issues to the sphere of English usage and etymology and of business practice. When, in April 1851, the *Argus* queried the linguistic appropriateness of the *Times's* use of the word 'silicious', the *Times* fired back on 1 and 3 May 1851, that the word could also be rendered 'selicious' but not 'salsolaceous', as suggested by the *Argus*. Earlier on, the *Patriot*, which repeatedly corrected the *Herald's* bad grammar, had advised the *Gazette* to acquire a good dictionary to improve its fractured English syntax:

We entreat of our contemporary the *Gazette* to beg, borrow, or steal a copy of Johnson's Dictionary, for office use, else we will be under the disagreeable necessity of correcting his blunders in spelling, in the same manner as we have to correct the *Herald's* blunders in grammar and in matter of fact. We don't of course, quarrel with mere typographical errors, ... but we do object to the perpetual perpetration of such blunders as the substitution of "loose" for "lose" which occurs repeatedly in Wednesday's [8 January 1845] publication, and, indeed, in nearly every number.⁶⁷

To be the first to acquire and publish the news was an indication of efficiency. Local, inter-colonial and Empire news reports were extracted from the *Australian*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Launceston Advertiser*, the *Adelaide Observer*, the *London Times*, the *Singapore Times*, the *Nelson Examiner*, and the *Havre Journal* of the Cape of Good Hope. News items were recycled with or without credit. When, in an attempt to bolster its image the *Herald* proclaimed in July 1840 that the *Government Gazette*, then contractually published by it, 'will appear in its columns previous to any other journal',⁶⁸ the *Patriot* reissued the *Government Gazette* with claims that the *Herald* was unlikely to reach the *Patriot's* country subscribers. Similarly, when on 15 July 1843, the *Herald* published the debates of the Legislative Council, it noted carefully that 'but for this arrangement on our part, the public would have had to wait for Monday's *Patriot*'⁶⁹ to receive intelligence of the proceedings of the Legislative Council, a claim the *Port Phillip Gazette* disputed. A few years later, the *Port Phillip Gazette* itself boasted that its supplement of 24 May 1849 containing Governor C.A. Fitzroy's inaugural speech to the new Sydney Legislative Council was issued 'within little more than an hour after the arrival of the *Sydney Mail*',⁷⁰ an important piece of intelligence its contemporaries were yet to publish. There were numerous such claims and counter-claims. Exposing the inadequacies of its rivals' news-gathering machinery in order to advertise the efficiency of its own news features department, the *Patriot* ridiculed some of the falsehoods perpetrated by the colonial Melbourne press:

The public meeting in reference to the expected Municipal Corporation, held at the Crown Inn on Tuesday [28 June 1842] evening, seems to have caught our contemporaries napping. The *Gazette* was probably studying political economy with the aid of his bottle and his glass, and the *Herald* and *Times* were too busily engaged doing honour to St Patrick to pay much attention to a matter of such minor importance as the future Municipal Corporation of Melbourne. It so happened, therefore, that, but that we were at our post, the proceedings on that momentous occasion must have been buried in oblivion. In this dilemma, the *Gazette* wisely gave a report which nobody was asked or expected to believe; but the *Herald* and the *Times*, by way of justification to their readers for thus flagrantly neglecting their duty, set to work to manufacture reports, which they had impudence enough to offer to their readers as an accurate epitome of the sayings and doings on the occasion. This manoeuvre we should scarcely have thought it worth our while to expose, had it not been obvious that the manufacturers of these reports, particularly the latter, had foisted falsehood upon falsehood and misrepresentation upon misrepresentation, upon their readers, under the guise of truth, and that this must have been done knowingly and willingly. The *Times* report, in particular, is a *lie* from beginning to end, and could not have originated with any man who had a single spark of upright feeling in his composition.⁷¹

Intensive editorial competition often led to litigation, and crusading editorial zeal often resulted in libellous or allegedly libellous remarks. In 1839, George Arden and Thomas Strode jointly charged Fawkner with impugning their private character in a legal application that was set aside by the Attorney General.⁷² Arden, who clashed with Resident Judge John Walpole Willis on a variety of matters, including the latter's money-lending activities, was jailed for twelve months (of which he served two months) for libelling the judge and fined £300, subsequently remitted.⁷³ In late 1842, the *Patriot* unsuccessfully prosecuted the *Gazette* for stigmatising it as 'a felon journal'.⁷⁴ In 1848, the *Patriot* itself was fined £250 for slandering the private character of Melbourne Town Councillor Moor: such libels and bitter rivalry were a typical feature of colonial journalism.⁷⁵

CONCLUSION

Thus the story of the *Melbourne Advertiser* and the *Port Phillip Gazette* illustrates some of the ways in which Victoria was built. Although the newspaper press was an essential instrument of nation building, it was no easy task in the early days to operate it. Because of the difficulties of raising an investment capital, many newspaper businesses were joint ventures or family enterprises. As there were few wealthy individual proprietors, the commencement capital was usually publicly subscribed. But many plans to operate newspapers never got to issuing the customary preliminary prospectus and several potential publishers never got beyond issuing a pompous one. Publishing an introductory issue was itself only the beginning of the problem in a business largely conducted on credit. In spite of the generous credit facilities extended to them, subscribers were few and paid erratically. Subscriptions irregularly delivered were terminated abruptly with debts unpaid. Sometimes subscriptions were cancelled for odd reasons, as was the case with the subscriber who terminated his subscriptions because he did

not find in it that species of information I was anxious to obtain when I subscribed. I have looked over it carefully for six months for the death of some individual I was acquainted with, but as yet not a single soul I cared for has dropped off.⁷⁶

Neither did advertising seem to offer a reliable source of income. In an attempt to secure a steady income in 1844, the *Gazette* printed government advertisements for one penny per inch, a contract price which amounted to a loss of about 200% on each advertisement, or about £25 per year.⁷⁷ Advertisements were generally small and restricted to the announcement of the arrival of artisans and their particular skills. Most social services and products were locally produced and there were very few big businesses offering a wide range of manufactured products. The large advertisements, like Rowland's Macassar Oil, for colonial companies based in London were few and far between, and it seems that many journals filled their pages with these

advertisements to boost their reputation. For many years it was customary for the *Patriot* to fill 'ONE-FOURTH and sometimes *one-third*' or 'six or eight' of its columns with 'useless past date, worn out, pretended advertisements',⁷⁸ from which absolutely no revenue was derived.

Unpredictable revenue generated financial uncertainty which in turn pushed many newspaper proprietors into manifold occupations. Fawkner was bookseller, subscription librarian, hotelier, lime-merchant and commission and general agent.⁷⁹ He speculated widely in land in Melbourne and Geelong, where he established the *Geelong Advertiser*.⁸⁰ In 1850, Fawkner attempted unsuccessfully to establish a savings bank.⁸¹ By 1843, William Kerr was vending 'Masonic Jewellery and Paraphernalia',⁸² and by 1844 Thomas M'Combie was a wool merchant.⁸³ Newspaper publishing did not often make the colonial printer a rich man. Fawkner was unable to meet his liabilities in 1845.⁸⁴ By June 1844, George Arden, foundation editor of the *Gazette* had 'experienced severe reverses in his pecuniary circumstances, which, it was said, had affected his mind'.⁸⁵ But the newspaper business could make a man an author and socially influential. Arden wrote the first book to be printed in Victoria, and M'Combie, who became a Melbourne Town Councillor, wrote three important histories of Victoria.⁸⁶ Thus the *Melbourne Advertiser* and the *Port Phillip Gazette* laid a solid literary and historical foundation for the State of Victoria. The *Advertiser* developed into the *Melbourne Daily News* which bought out the *Gazette* before it was itself bought out by the *Melbourne Argus* which survived as the *Argus* until 19 January 1957. George Cavenagh's *Herald* is a success story.

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NOTES

- 1 *Launceston Advertiser*, hereafter, *LA*, 27 June 1831; The *Melbourne Advertiser*, hereafter, *MA*, 1 January 1838, Thomas McCombie, *The History of the Colony of Victoria from its Settlement to the Death of Sir Charles Hotham*. (Melbourne: Sands & Kenny, 1858), p.31.
- 2 *The Port Phillip Patriot*, hereafter, *Patriot*, 2 April 1845.
- 3 *MA*, 17 April 1839.
- 4 *MA*, 12 February 1838; *Patriot*, 26 December 1839.
- 5 *Patriot*, 3 February 1840. There is also a manuscript edition of 5 March 1838 and a republished and lithographed edition by Peter C Alcock of 50 Temple Court Melbourne which was distributed throughout the Australian colonies.
- 6 *MA*, 5 March 1838.
- 7 Kenneth Eric Eckersall, *Young Caxton: a History of Aims in Printing Education in Melbourne, 1870-1970*. (Melbourne: Melbourne College of Printing and Graphic Arts, 1980), p.46; J. Hagan, *Printers and Politics: a History of the Australian Printing Unions, 1850-1950*. (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1966), pp.47-8; R T Fitzgerald, *The Printers of Melbourne: the History of a Union*. (Melbourne: Isaac Pitman in assoc. with The Printing and Kindred Industries Union), pp.42-3.
- 8 *MA*, 5 March 1838.
- 9 8° George IV, No.2, quoted in R B Walker, *The Newspaper Press in New South Wales, 1830-1920*. (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1976), p.12.
- 10 *LA*, 27 June 1831; Geoffrey Serle, *The Golden Age: a History of the Colony of Victoria, 1851-1861*. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1963), p.7.
- 11 *Patriot*, 24 June 1841, 18 November 1841.
- 12 *Patriot*, 15 May 1845.
- 13 *The Port Phillip Gazette*, hereafter, *Gazette*, 29 January 1840; *Patriot*, 3 February 1840; James Bonwick, *Early Struggles of the Australian Press*. (London: Gordon & Gotch, 1890), p.54.
- 14 *Gazette*, 16 October 1839.
- 15 *Gazette*, 29 September 1841.
- 16 *Gazette*, 28 August 1841.
- 17 *Gazette*, 29 September 1841.

- 18 *Patriot*, 29 August 1842; *Gazette*, 31 August 1842.
- 19 *Patriot*, 20 February 1843.
- 20 *Patriot*, 3 October 1844.
- 21 *Gazette*, 19 July 1849.
- 22 *Gazette*, 8 September 1841.
- 23 *Gazette*, 18 December 1839.
- 24 *Patriot*, 6 April 1840; *Port Phillip Herald*, hereafter, *Herald*, 7 April 1840.
- 25 *Gazette*, 21 November 1850.
- 26 *Gazette*, 23 March 1839.
- 27 *Gazette*, 12 January 1839.
- 28 *Gazette*, 5 January 1839.
- 29 *Patriot*, 20 June 1844.
- 30 *Patriot*, 20 February 1840; Henry Gyles Turner, *A History of the Colony of Victoria from its Discovery to its Absorption into the Commonwealth of Australia: in Two Volumes*. (Melbourne: Heritage Publications, 1973), I:247.
- 31 *Gazette*, 28 June 1849.
- 32 *Gazette*, 31 May 1849.
- 33 *Patriot*, 12 December 1839.
- 34 *Patriot*, 13 January 1840.
- 35 *Gazette*, 8 December 1838.
- 36 *Patriot*, 21 May 1840.
- 37 *Patriot*, 29 June 1840.
- 38 *Gazette*, 2 October 1839.
- 39 *Patriot*, 13 February 1840.
- 40 *Gazette*, 14 July 1849.
- 41 *Patriot*, 24 February 1840.

- 42 *Patriot*, 5 February 1845, 7 February 1845.
- 43 *Patriot*, 5 October 1840.
- 44 *Melbourne Daily News*, hereafter, *MDN*, 20 November 1848.
- 45 *Gazette*, 2 October 1839; Turner, I:245-6.
- 46 *Gazette*, 10 July 1839; *Gazette*, Suppl., 26 August 1839.
- 47 *Patriot*, Suppl., 29 August 1839.
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