

Chapter XIII

Grenada Newspapers and Newspaper Men

Living as we do in an age when Radio, Television and Daily Newspapers keep us well informed relative to contemporary events, and to a considerable extent, influence us in our political, religious, economic and social philosophies, it is hard for us to understand the influence which early small town newspapers exerted upon the minds of the people during the period when the town and county of Grenada were being settled and developed during their formative years. As a rule, the editors were fiercely partisan in their political beliefs, and some of the papers were established to promote political parties and political candidates. In the rough and tumble political struggles of those early years, editors were not always careful to avoid provoking retribution because of harsh, and sometimes untrue charges which they made against politicians and other individuals against whom they directed the influence of their papers. Difficulties over charges of this kind were not usually settled by suits in court, but by physical combat, including the use of firearms. In those days an editor had to be a man of courage and conviction if he was to make any considerable impression upon his subscribers. The better papers usually had good editorials, much local news, some stale national and international news, and considerable advertising.

In the sixty six years elapsing from the establishment of the first paper in the town of Pittsburg, to the year eighteen hundred ninety nine, papers were established in the two little early towns or in the resulting town of Grenada. Most of these papers existed for rather short periods of time, and on more than one occasion, two or three little papers were competing for the support of the town and community. Some of these papers were established to advocate a particular cause, political party, or candidate, and they were discontinued when no longer needed for the purpose which brought about their establishment. Others found that the area would not support more than one paper and were forced to discontinue publication. We list below the names of the papers which were at one time published in Grenada, or in Pittsburg and Tullahoma. We give dates, not necessarily when the papers were established, but when they were known to be in business. Some will have the names of their editors or publishers. Others will just have the names of the papers and dates when they were known to be operating.

In all probability the Pittsburg Bulletin was the first paper printed in the area. We know that John J. Hamilton was publishing this paper in Pittsburg as early as 1834. We also know that in 1835, induced by some financial arrangement with certain men in Tullahoma, he moved his press to the last named town and began to publish his paper under the name The Tullahoma Bulletin. In 1839 The Southern Reporter was published in Grenada. It must have had a brief existence since there is no contemporary information relative to the progress of the paper nor the name of its publisher. The Grenada Herald was the name of a paper operating in 1842 and edited by J. J. Choate, Jr. This paper probably succeeded the Southern Reporter. Mr. Choate was opposed to the political philosophy of F. A. Tyler, editor of the Grenada Weekly Register, which paper was being published at the same time as the Herald. The two editors engaged in some rather hot political arguments. Choate changed the name of his paper to The Saturday Morning Herald, and later changed it again to The Morning Herald. An early paper which seems to have had little impact on the community was The Weekly Mississippian, edited by W. F. Hampton. This paper was in existence in 1837. A good example of a paper established to further the cause of a political party, or candidate, was the paper, Harry Of The West, which was being published in Grenada in 1844. This paper was established by supporters of the Whig Party which had as its presidential candidate Henry Clay who was called, by his fond admirers, Harry of the West.

The founding of the new paper, The Grenada Republican, about 1851, is indicative of the decline of the Whig Party and growth of the new-born Republican Party. The paper was published by Jacob Snider and G. W. Haynie. Mr. Snider is buried in the old cemetery across from the I. C. Railroad Station. The existence of a Grenada paper in 1859, called The Grenada Locomotive, probably has some connection with the arrival of railroad transportation. It was during the last months of this year that trains began to arrive in Grenada over the Mississippi Central Road, and passengers were transferring from that line to the Mississippi and Tennessee Line which gave access to Memphis. Another paper, established in 1861, choose a name indicative of the times. This paper was called Southern Motive, and no doubt sought to support the motive of the Southern States in their withdrawal from the Union. S. M. Hankins edited both the Grenada Locomotive, and The Southern Motive. It is possible that the last named paper succeeded the Grenada Locomotive. Another paper published in Grenada in 1861 was The Southern Rural Gentleman. It seems to have discontinued publication soon thereafter. Its editor was J. T. Davis. We don't know when it was established, but in 1864 the Tri-Weekly Rebel Picket was being published in Grenada. Its name would be supposed to appeal to those people who favored the Confederate cause.

Several new papers were attempted in the years following the close of the Civil War. In 1881 John C. Abbott was publishing a paper known as The New South. We know nothing of the policy of the paper, nor the political affiliation of its editor. In 1884 the Grenada Graphic was being published in Grenada. It soon failed and was followed by another new paper which began publication in 1885. This paper was called the Grenada Gazette and was edited by Walter Ladd. It was established about the time that the prohibition forces in the town were calling for an election to give the people an opportunity to vote on a proposed ordinance to prohibit the sale of liquor in the town of Grenada. The paper was against the proposed ordinance, leading many people to believe that it had been financed and controlled by the liquor interests. In 1896 J. M. Liddell established The Grenadian. It failed in a very short time. About this same period The Grenada News was established. Its purpose was: "To be published in the interest of Colored People". D. D. Sledge was the editor, and G. W. Leonard, a Colored merchant, was its business manager. Like the Grenada Gazette, it didn't last long, not obtaining sufficient support from the colored citizens. The Mississippi Baptist, journal of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, was published for a short time in Grenada, but later moved to Jackson.

We might well ask why so many newspapers attempting publication in Grenada, had to suspend publication. In the first place there was the usual hazzard any new publication faces in the way of competition, as well as the fact that some of the papers were established as the mouth-piece of some particular cause, and ceased operation as soon as that cause had been served. But, in all probability, the chief reason for these failures was the tough opposition offered by a paper which had been established in 1854. This paper was started by J. A. Signaigo. He continued in control of the paper until a short time before the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1878. At his death the paper was sold by his wife to John W. Buchanan, a young man of twenty three years of age. He bought the paper less than six months before the outbreak of the epidemic of which Mrs. Signaigo was a victim. Mr. Buchanan was to publish this paper, known as the Grenada Sentinel, until his death in 1904. The young editor was not only able to survive many attempts of competitive papers to draw public support away from his paper, but also to become a well-to-do property owner. His newspaper contemporaries looked with envy and admiration upon the rarity of the newspaper game, an editor who managed to accumulate a modest competence. After the death of Mr. Buchanan, Mr. O. F. Lawrence was editor of the Sentinel until he was succeeded by his son Malcolm Lawrence. This editor lost his life in a tragic automobile accident and W. W. Whitaker then became editor

of the Sentinel and continued in this capacity until April 1, 1937, when Rice Lawrence became editor for a brief period. After a time Frank Jones, owner editor of the Daily Star, acquired ownership of the Sentinel and on January 2, 1947, the name of his publication was changed from the Daily Star to The Daily Sentinel Star. That the Grenada Sentinel should have survived for a span of ninety three years during which period of years it had numerous competitive papers is pretty conclusive evidence that the publication was directed by men of integrity and ability. Many triumphs and tragedies were recorded by this paper. It told of the havoc created in the town by storms; great financial losses resulting from several disastrous fires which almost destroyed the business section of the town and the failure of two private banks which left the town without banking facilities. The paper must have carried much of the arguments which precipitated the Civil War, and of the training of the State troops ordered to Grenada during the early months after Mississippi had seceded from the Union. It is probable that the paper recorded the arrival of the presses of the Memphis paper which was fleeing that city in anticipation of suppression by the invading Federal forces. Although silent and mute during the trying days and weeks of the Yellow Fever Epidemic, The Sentinel was the first paper to give information relative to the living and dead after the termination of that epidemic. The paper recorded the harshness of Federal Reconstruction, and the suffering of the people under Scalawag and Carpetbag Rule. The paper fought the good fight to help lift the control of state and local politics from evil white men and ignorant Negroes, and was privileged to live to see the time when native white men were again in control of local affairs. It was not destined to live long enough to record the second reconstruction which began with a Supreme Court Decision of 1954.

Buchanan of the Sentinel

In November of the year 1878, Grenada was just beginning to emerge from the dark shadows of fear and sorrow brought by the tragic yellow fever epidemic which had raged in the town for two and one half months. Three hundred and forty three new graves in two cemeteries gave mute evidence of the disastrous effect of the epidemic. Many citizens who had fled the town to escape the disease had not yet returned, and many of those who had lived through the epidemic had been weakened by their fight against the effects of the fever which had not been fatal to them. Only those of the people who had remained in town during the course of the epidemic knew the full horror of the experience. Very few of the survivors had not lost some loved one, and all had lost many long-time friends. Their minds were conditioned to give grateful thanks to the various persons and agencies rendering aid. During the epidemic, and to be bitterly critical of some who, having positions of responsibility, forgot that responsibility and fled town.

Perhaps no one knew better the bitter experiences of the epidemic period and the behavior of the people, than a young newspaper man who, at the early age of twenty three years had, just fifteen months before, become owner of the GRENADA SENTINEL. On November 16, 1878, this young man published what must have been the first paper published after the epidemic had run its course. In an editorial relative to the conduct and duties of physicians and preachers during a period of trial such as the recent epidemic, he gave an early indication of the trenchant editorial pen which would make him respected by many and feared by some. We quote from this early editorial:

"The physician may reach eminence in his ordinary practice, but it is only in times of fearful public calamity, like the period through we have just passed, that he has the opportunity of displaying all those great, but latent qualities, which trying circumstances can only develop. For a time the true physician may be overwhelmed by failure to arrest the progress of the plague, but true to his pro-

fession, true to his education, and true to his own noble nature, he stands firmly by the suffering people, exercising all the functions of skill and courage at his command, without the first thought of his own personal safety beyond the suggestions of prudence and necessity. So long as he stands with dignity and self-possession administering kindly to the relief of the distressed as best he can, there is still hope for the stricken multitude. Let him flee, however, and consternation, if not wild confusion, ensues. Be it said to the honor of the physicians, that few proved cowards in our recent troubles, and we presume, professionally they will did by inaction, with the brand of fugitive from duty in the hour of peril stamped on their brow.

There is another calling whose obligations to society, in a time of peril, is equally important and none the less binding, though of a very different nature. We mean the Preacher. The bedside of the sick and dying is the chosen place of the Godly man, for exercising those ministrations which no other can lawfully do. His duty is to preach to the living, to be ready for war, pestilence and famine should they come by the intervention of Providence, or the violated laws of men or nature.....To leave them under the demoralizing and crushing effects of the horrible plague, would betray a want of faith in his own teachings, a want of courage in the presence of danger he always affected, and a fear, which he ever concealed, of that very enemy now presenting his grim visage. The fireman who would flee when the bells were clanging, people shouting, and the flames roaring and leaping with fearful rapidity to the last retreat of some unfortunate being, whose only hope of rescue was the pluck and courage of some dauntless hero, would be forever dishonored. The Captain who would take to his boat, when his vessel was plunging before the tempest, and driving straight for the rocks that would shiver her timbers and consign scores of her trusting passengers to the tender mercies of the angry deep, could never again tread the quarterdeck of another ship but in disgrace. The keeper of a fortress, who would escape for safety, and leave the responsibility of defense in the hands of subordinates, when the guns of the enemy were tearing away the bastions and battlements, would be cashiered for cowardice. The Preacher, no matter of what church, who would leave his flock and people because of the terror of the pestilence, is far more guilty of a dereliction of duty than any of the above responsible officials. The butterfly floats upon the summer wind and sucks the nectar from the wayside flowers, but when the fierce blasts of winter come, his bearuful wings and erratic flight are seen on more. Thus, some of our holiday preachers when health and vigor spread quiet and contentment over the land, wandered amidst the labyrinths of language to find terms severe enough to condemn the harlot, and when pestilence laden with shrouds and coffins stalked in, they left in haste for a safer place, while the polluted hand of society's exile administered to the sick. How truly she did it, in more cases than one, will be proclaimed in no bated breath from angel lungs on the great day of final reckoning. The death of the least significant of the brave who fell at their posts, faithful to their convictions, their teachings and example, is a broader and more imperishable seal to the Christian religion than all the sermons which our fugitive clergymen can proclaim, though they be permitted to live to the end of time, while those who stayed with their suffering people and survived, like Landrum, Marshall, Palmer, Elder and our own McCracken, will be Living epistles read of all men who in days of brightness preach a religion which they practiced in the darkest hours that ever threw their dismal shadows over an afflicted people."

Although the young editor in the same issue of his paper listed at least five physicians who died at their post of duty during the epidemic, there must have been one or more who fled the town. He also lists two white and two negro preachers who died during the epidemic and one who survived, but there must have been some minister who did not live up to his obligations. The reference to "the polluted hand of society's exile" ministering to the sick had reference to the fact that one or more of the nurses brought in to nurse the sick during the course of the epidemic were supposed to be women of ill-repute. Evidently four of the ministers mentioned above must have served in other areas of fever pestilence, since the editor speaks of "our McCracken".

The young man who was responsible for the above-quoted editorial was John W. Buchanan. During the first few years of his editorship he was known as the "Young Editor; later, as he matured in years and newspaper experience, he was generally known as Ole Buck", and during his years newspaper maturity, he was known by his fellow newspaper men as "Buchanan of the Sentinel". He was not a native of the South, nor of Mississippi, although he came to love the region and its people as much as any native-born citizen could have loved it. Mr. Buchanan was of Scotch Irish ancestry. His parents, Frances M. Buchanan and Ellen Malconsin, were both born in Ireland. They came to this country, and in 1846 were married in Brooklyn, New York. John W. Buchanan was born in that city in 1855. His parents moved to Woodville, Mississippi, shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War. Here, for the first few years of his residence in Mississippi, he became familiar with the atmosphere of the old South which had, as the basis of its economy, cotton produced by slave labor. The town of Woodville, and the county of Wilkinson were not a crude frontier region when the family of young Buchanan arrived there. The area had known something of French, Spanish and British civilizations. In 1798 Mississippi Territory was the southwestern corner of the American possessions. Here, in 1797, Adams was constructed as a Fort, a few miles west of the town of Woodville, and its guns overlooked the Mississippi River only a few short miles above the Spanish possession of West Florida. The importance of this fort was evidenced by a letter written by General James Wilkinson to C. C. Claiborne, Territorial Governor of Mississippi. An excerpt from that letter reads: "I hold this point to be the door to the whole western country, and while we keep it barred, we shall be able to secure and control the interior - a consideration paramount to all others and which would justify the abandonment of every inferior object." A little town grew up below the guns of the fort, and served as the first seat of justice for the newly created county of Wilkinson. In the year 1809 Woodville was founded, and in 1811 it was incorporated, and soon became the county seat. The town and county were already half a century old by the time the Buchanans arrived there from Brooklyn. It was a place of culture and refinement, somewhat akin to the atmosphere of Old Natchez, just a few miles to the north. It was an area of extensive plantations, and the accepted social customs of those areas which had been enriched by the bountiful crops from the relatively new and productive soil of the area. It produced a large number of important early political figures. The county furnished three early Governors of the state. They were George Poindexter, who later became a United States Senator, Gerard C. Brandon, and Abram M. Scott. Just a short distance east of the town of Woodville was the boyhood home of Jefferson Davis. The town was an educational center. As early as 1819 the Woodville Female Academy was in operation. Sligo Academy was established in 1821, and the Woodville Classical School for Boys in 1839.

It was in this atmosphere of wealth and culture that, just before the Civil War the young boy, John W. Buchanan, spent his formative years. He no doubt heard stories of the conduct of Federal soldiers when they invaded the section and burned the beautiful Bowling Green Plantation house just a mile or so outside town. He was probably old enough to remember the occasion when his father, less than six years away from his old home in Brooklyn, New York,

left home after enlisting in Colonel Griffith's Arkansas Cavalry, to serve four years in that Confederate unit, and to die in 1864. As the boy grew older he witnessed harsh reconstruction of the conquered South by a vindictive Federal Congress. These early memories colored his thought and, more or less, shaped his political philosophy. He resented the actions of the radical Republicans, and could see no wrong in the Democratic Party.

At some unidentified time in early youth he began newspaper training in the Woodville Republican, which had been established late in 1823, and which has had a continuous existence from that date, and which is today the oldest paper in the state. We don't have information as to why he appeared on the scene in Grenada. The first authentic notice we have of his presence in the town is a deed recorded April 28, 1877, by which deed Mrs. Alice Signaigo, for a consideration of \$1900 transferred the press and all other property of the Grenada Sentinel to John W. Buchanan. Mrs. Signaigo was to become a victim of the fever epidemic which struck less than fifteen months after the above mentioned transaction. This marks the beginning of a remarkable career which was to continue for almost thirty years. Editor Buchanan was a man of strong convictions, and, as is frequently the case with men of strong convictions, a man of strong prejudices. One such prejudice was against the reconstruction practices imposed upon the South. Four Buchanan uncles who had remained in the North, no doubt proud of the success of the young editor, became subscribers to the Sentinel. Soon the bitter criticism, which the editor made of the harsh reconstruction forced on the South by the Federal Congress, irritated the uncles who threatened to cancel their subscriptions to the Sentinel. This threat had no influence on the nephew. Mr. Buchanan's editorial policy was determined by no one other than himself. During the latter years of his career his paper had state-wide recognition as one of the most forceful and outstanding papers in the state. His editorials were frequently re-printed in other papers. He felt free to criticize, or commend, as he saw fit. Local School, City, County and State Officials either basked in the glow of his commendation, or writhed under criticism. Often, in a single issue of his paper he would commend on action of such an official, and criticize another action. Occasionally he would come to the conclusion that he had been wrong in his attitude on some question, and then would champion the other side of the cause as vigorously as he had previously opposed it. One example of such a change of mind came on the prohibition of the sale of whiskey in the town of Grenada. Editor Buchanan made his paper available to all those people who wanted to either advocate or oppose the proposed move to outlaw the sale of liquor in the town, but his editorial policy was strong support for the passage of the prohibition ordinance. Another newspaper in the town had recently been established, and was supposed to have been financed by the whiskey crowd. This paper opposed the proposed restriction in the sale of liquor. When the election was held the whiskey element won out, and the sale of liquor continued within the town. Almost as soon as this election had been finished, Mr. Buchanan began, through editorials in his paper, to advocate another attempt to vote out the saloons in the town. In due time another election was held and, this time, the people of the town voted in the prohibition ordinance. As the months passed after the ordinance was put into effect, bootleggers began to operate in the town, and the officers either couldn't or wouldn't enforce the prohibition ordinance. Within less than two years after the hard earned victory in passing the ordinance, the Editor of the Sentinel was commenting that conditions relative to the sale of liquor in Grenada were worse than had been the case before the prohibition ordinance went into effect.

The editor was very liberal with the several churches of the town in providing space in his paper for any sort of publicity they desired relative to regular services or the revival meetings which were very popular with most of the churches of that period. He made a practice of attending some of the services of all the churches, and frequently used his paper to comment on the

services which he had attended. Usually these comments were favorable. During the early years of his ownership of the Sentinel, two of the ministers of the town got into an argument on the question of Apostolic Succession. The Rector of the Episcopal Church supported this doctrine, while the President of Grenada College, a Methodist preacher, discounted the doctrine. Each of the ministers. For several weeks the paper printed a series of letters to the editor in which these two ministers presented their views on the subject. The controversy became heated, and at last the editor became somewhat disgusted at the personalities in which the ministers indulged. He expressed his disapproval of such tactics in the following quoted editorial: "As to the merits of the argument we leave to the judgement of their readers, but we do think that some of their personalities are unbecoming to ministers. The average editor would blush to make use of such language towards his brother contemporaries, and yet, an editor is usually regarded as a vicious being of low morals, while the minister is held up as an example. Unless our ministers can pursue a more even course of temper in their controversies they had better let them severely along. Precept is well enough, but people expect their ministers to mix a little example with it."

Another example of Mr. Buchanan's impatience with men who did not measure up to their pretensions was his dismissal of J. J. Williams as a part-time employee of the Sentinel. This dismissal, which came in 1881, early in the editorial career of the young editor, indicates the editor's firm belief that the success of the Democratic party in Mississippi was the only sure means of overcoming the reconstruction policies of the Federal Government, and his scorn for anyone who would desert the party for personal gain. Mr. Williams had served a term as a Democratic Party representative from Grenada to the state legislature. In the Democratic Primary following his term of service in the Legislature Mr. Williams announced as a candidate for renomination by the democrats to the legislative seat. He was defeated in the primary, and shortly thereafter he announced as an independent candidate. At this time there was a fierce contest between the Republicans and the Democratic parties for control of state and county officers. The running of an independent candidate, formerly a democrat, would have the effect of splitting the democratic vote, mostly cast by white voters, between the regular democratic nominee and Mr. Williams, thus endangering the chance of the democrats to elect a democrat to the legislature. As soon as Mr. Williams announced for office as an independent, Mr. Buchanan informed him that his connection with the paper was terminated. After this, Mr. Williams wrote a note of formal resignation. In a news article in the Sentinel Mr. Buchanan gave his reason for the termination of the service of Mr. Williams. In the next issue of the paper Mr. Buchanan published the following quoted letter which he had received from Mr. Williams: "Mr. Buchanan: Believing that you did me an injustice (unintentionally of course) in your announcement of my dis-connection with the Sentinel, you will please publish the line which I wrote in reference to the same." Mr. Buchanan then printed the explanation which Mr. Williams had made to the public relative to the incident. "To The Public: Having become a candidate for the Legislature my connection with the Sentinel necessarily ceases." Then Mr. Buchanan makes the following comment: "It is immaterial to the public whether Col. Williams connection with the Sentinel terminated by resignation or dismissal. His own conscience must have whispered to him that the Sentinel would never be presented to the reader with the hand to shape its course and its policy, which was raised in opposition to the best interests and welfare of the people of the county. (Mr. Williams had been allowed to write some political editorials - this was the meaning of the phrase, shape its course and its policy). But if the Colonel insists upon the public having the facts they are these: The first intimation the proprietor had of Col. Williams intention to break his faith and pledge was the request to publish his card of announcement, and the proprietor at once denounced his course and told him that his connection with the Sentinel ceased from that hour."

Grenada County, having been organized in 1870, was populated by people

who had not yet recovered from the financial losses incurred by the war, and therefore the county was not in financial shape to build a pretentious courthouse. The county authorities rented a store building on the northwest corner of the Public Square to serve as a temporary courthouse. This building served this purpose for thirteen years. Almost as soon as he became connected with the Sentinel, Mr. Buchanan began advocating a new and adequate courthouse. From time to time he prodded the Supervisors because they were doing nothing, looking forward to erection of a new and adequate building. On more than one occasion the court room was so inadequate that the term of court would be held in the auditorium of the Methodist District High School, which school was the forerunner of the Methodist Grenada College established some years later. The building containing the auditorium had originally been constructed by the Baptist denomination for the Yalobousha Female Institute, which institution folded up about the end of the Civil War. On June 30, 1883, Mr. Buchanan wrote: "The time has come for the Board of Supervisors to take some action toward building a courthouse. This matter had been deferred so long and has become such a plain, practical necessity that the Board can hesitate no longer." In a subsequent issue of his paper the editor is more emphatic and somewhat sarcastic: "Just now is time to talk of building a new courthouse. The present one is a disgrace, not only as to ornamental architecture, but is a reflection upon the good will of our citizens. The people really do not intend to kill, by suffocation, the Court, the juries nor the officers, but if they do not do something better than punish them in this large stew kettle these learned bodies will begin to think that there is a secret murder in roasting men alive in discharge of official duty, and an action will be against the county for premeditated murder. Will not some of our leading citizens attend the meeting of our Supervisors and see if they can not stir up the officials to the humane and christian purpose of building a new court-house in order to save the lives of those who have to remain in the present one during Circuit Court?" About one month after the publication of the above quoted editorial, the Board of Supervisors purchased a lot on the west side of the square as the site for a contemplated new courthouse, and in September of the same year, the Board of Supervisors let a contract for a courthouse which was to serve Grenada County for more than sixty five years.

Space will not permit the inclusion of many other influential editorials written by Mr. Buchanan, but those heretofore given will serve as an example of his skill in advocating his civic and personal projects. He was an early advocate of a diversification of crops. He was convinced that the day of a purely cotton economy was over for the south. He was a kind of one man Chamber of Commerce in trying to build up an interest in some form of industry for the section, and in attempts to get local capital to invest in such proposed industrial establishments. The improvement of schools was one of his pet projects. He compared the low educational facilities of post-war Grenada with the much better facilities which had been provided before the war. As fire after fire devastated Grenada, which was then without any effective fire protection, he admonished the "City Fathers" that it was high time for them to make some provision for fire protection. He was one of the leading spirits in educating the people to the needs of the establishment of city water and sewage systems, and it was a proud day for him when his paper announced the completion of these projects. He also led in the movement to bring about the construction of a city power plant to produce electric power for local consumption. It was also his privilege to herald the establishment of a telephone system in the city. During the years of his editorship he saw Grenada transformed from a rather primitive town with few public utilities into a modern town with modern facilities. He lived to see Grenada become known as the "City Beautiful", and to be one year selected by the State Board of Health as the cleanest town in the state. In almost every phase in this transformation, Mr. Buchanan of the Sentinel played a conspicuous part. It would be difficult to overestimate the influence which the editor and his paper exerted over all

phases of city and county affairs. Although there was only one paper published in Grenada when Mr. Buchanan took over the Sentinel, various other papers were established in Grenada from time to time, but were not able to meet the competition of the Sentinel, and one by one each new paper faded out of existence. On the other hand Mr. Buchanan was so successful in a business way that he began to buy up town property and, at the time of his death, was the owner of considerable real estate, chiefly in the town. He was elected Director of one of the Banks established in the town. One of his contemporaries remarked: "Ole Buck never runs for office, but always has a lot to say about who shall be elected to office."

By the year 1904 Editor Buchanan was the peak of his professional career. He was known, respected and admired by most of the newspaper men of the state. He was a familiar figure at state and national press conventions. He was that rare country newspaper who could mix with the editors of large national newspapers and feel at home with them, and have them accept him as a friend. But his health gave way. He continued his active career until about two weeks before his death. His last editorial was published on November 12, 1904. A presidential election had just been decided, and the Democratic nominee had lost to Teddy Roosevelt. This was a hard pill for Mr. Buchanan to take, but he attempted to face the defeat as best he could; the editorial which he wrote might be considered his swan song so far as his political convictions were concerned. He wrote: "Therefore, we of the South, who are unalterably opposed to his views on some questions, must make the best of the situation. We have done our duty as we saw it, and will continue to carry out our views along certain lines, regardless of who occupies the White House. The country is prosperous, the South particularly so; there is no use to worry. We will still move and have our being; still pursue the even tenor of our way. The South is prosperous and flourishing and will continue to so in spite of Roosevelt and Republicanism."

Two weeks after the printing of the last quoted editorial, the Sentinel came out with black bordered column lines and with this death notice in Grenada, on Saturday morning November 26, 1904, at half past five o'clock, John Walton Buchanan, editor and proprietor of The Sentinel, aged about forty nine years, after an illness of more than two weeks, of Brights Disease." Then followed an editorial comment by someone who had charge of the paper during the illness of the editor. This comment read: "For nearly thirty years Mr. Buchanan presided over the destinies of the Grenada Sentinel, and was one of the best known and most prominent members of the press of the state. Ever to be found upholding truth and justice, strong and forceful in his advocacy of all things for the betterment and advance of the state and of his people; fearless in his editorial capacity and tireless in his devotion to duty, he brought The Sentinel to the very front rank of Mississippi journalism. In his death the press loses a valuable member; the state a true and loyal citizen. His work is over; life's fitful voyage has ended. He has gone to that bourne from which no traveller returns. Peace be to his ashes. A widow and two daughters, two sisters, Mrs. Therrel, and Mrs. Richardson of Woodville; two brothers, William Buchanan of Starkville, and Robert Buchanan of Centerville, and many relatives are left to mourn his loss." In the December 3rd issue of The Sentinel appeared the following news local: "Mrs. Richardson, who has been in Grenada for several weeks at the bedside of her brother, the late J. W. Buchanan, left Saturday evening for Woodville, where she is serving as Postmistress."

The same issue of The Sentinel reprinted the following quoted editorial comments from some of Mr. Buchanan's newspaper friends. From the Jackson Daily News: "The News on Saturday conveyed the sad information of the death of Mr. J. W. Buchanan of The Grenada Sentinel. This information brought sadness to the News. The editor of this paper has long sustained friendly relations with the dead editor. He was blunt and bluff, but beneath his rough exterior there

was a warm and loyal heart. As an editor he was courageous and fearless, doing his duty as he saw it. In his death the press of the state, and in fact, the South, has lost one of its noble members." From the Greenville Democrat: "Mr. John W. Buchanan for twenty five years the editor of the Grenada Sentinel, died at his home on Saturday, aged about forty eight years. Mr. Buchanan was one of the best known newspaper men in Mississippi, a strong man, a successful business man, true to his political convictions, and vigorous in advocating the right and denouncing the wrong. He was also one of the truest of friends, never forsaking the old for the new. He was a brother of Mr. W. H. Buchanan, for twenty years a citizen of Greenville and is therefore an uncle of Miss Jennie Buchanan connected with the Democrat. The death of Mr. Buchanan is a distance loss to the Mississippi Press". From the Clarion-Ledger: "Though young in years Mr. J. W. Buchanan, editor and proprietor of The Grenada Sentinel for the past quarter of a century, has always been known and referred to by his friends as "Old Buck", his peculiar styles - perhaps idiosyncracies, which distinguished him as an individual, as well as an editor, from the others of his genus. Mr. Buchanan was born in Wilkinson County about 1856, and was therefore forty eight years of age at the time of his death, which occurred at his home in Grenada, a town with the upbuilding of which he had as much, or more to do perhaps than any other citizen thereof. It has been known to Mr. Buchanan's friends and intimates for some time that he was a victim of Brights disease. The last time he was in Jackson, or at least the last time the writer saw him, he stated that he was not long for this world, or words to that effect, but was as sociable and jovial, as lighthearted and gay as ever. He did not seem to dread, or fear, the end that he knew was near at hand, and when it was suggested that his condition was not as bad as he supposed, he declared positively that it was, and expressed a desire to retire from active business so that he might take better care of himself, and be spared to his family as long as possible. As indicated above, Mr. Buchanan was a peculiar genius. His likes and dislikes were as strong as those of any many in the state, and the beauty of his nature was that he had the courage of his convictions and never failed to call a spade, a spade, when he believed it to be one sure enough. This characteristic naturally made him enemies as well as friends but "Old Buck" pursued the even tenor of his way- fearing no man and rendering justice to all men - a tribute that can be paid few editorial writers of this day and generation. Requiescat in peace." From the Canton Picket: "Mr. Buchanan was a forceful writer, a practical and successful newspaper man, and one of the rare few of the profession who accumulated anything like affluence. He was a prominent member of the National Press Association, and numbered scores of friends all over the country. In his death The Sentinel loses an editor whose place will be hard to fill, and Grenada a loyal citizen." From the Summit Sentinel: "The editor of the Sentinel has known John Buchanan since he was a mere boy, and was well acquainted with his innate goodness of heart and nobleness of character. Although frank to a fault at times, he knew not what sophistry and policy meant. He was as true as steel to his friends, and his death, while a great loss to the state he loved so well, is deeply deplored by all who knew and admired him." From The Aberdeen Examiner: "The press of the state deplores the death of Mr. J. W. Buchanan, of The Grenada Sentinel. He succeeded Mr. Signaigo, the founder of the Journal, some twenty five years ago, and has for a number of years been regarded as one of the most prosperous and successful newspaper men in the state. He was a man of strong hates and affinities, and while his bold utterances frequently gave offense, few men had more friends and he was true to them." The Woodville Republican: "Mr. Buchanan was a native of Woodville where he spent his boyhood days, and learned the printer trade in the Republican Office. He move to Grenada and purchased The Sentinel which he owned for the past thirty years. He was a man who had the courage of his convictions; was an upholder of the truth and fearless in all his utterances on all questions upon which he was called to take sides. He was a loyal friend and ever ready to lend aid in their defence. As a result of his manly and fearless devotion to duty he gained for himself a position of high esteem

with the people of the state, and his paper stands as one of the state's leading journals." From the Carrollton Conservative: "For several years the figure of J. W. Buchanan has been a familiar and prominent one in the business and political circles of Grenada. He came there in his young manhood and soon obtained control of The Sentinel, which at that time was the only newspaper in the county. His vigorous style as a writer, his independent individuality as a man, his success as a diligent man, marked him among the active, hustling business men of this section of the state. He never sought public office, but pursued the even tenor of his way, preferring success in his profession. He had many friends among the editors and correspondents in the state, all of whom had kind words for the deceased and kindly remembrances of their association with them. His death creates a vacuum in the editorial brotherhood that will be hard to fill. Peace to his ashes."