

"The American Sentinel Newspaper"

Carroll County Times article for 19 March 2000

By Jay A. Graybeal

Last week's column presented a history of the Democratic Advocate and its predecessor newspapers published in Westminster from 1838 to 1972. In keeping with the times, the paper was the highly partisan voice of the Democratic Party. Equally partisan was the Republican Party paper the American Sentinel published in Westminster from 1855 to 1928. The Sentinel was started by William H. Grammer and was a successor to the Westminster Carrolltonian began by John K. Longwell as the The Carrolltonian and Baltimore and Frederick Advertiser in 1833.

William L.W. Seabrook edited the paper from 1868 to 1873 and again from 1888 to 1909. The November 26, 1909 issue contained an article entitled "A Word in Parting" signed by Seabrook and his son, Wm. L. Seabrook:

"Tomorrow the connection of the undersigned with the American Sentinel as its editors will cease, and a word in parting, covering a brief review of that connection, may not be inappropriate.

To many of its present patrons and readers it may not be known that the senior editor became one of its proprietors and its sole editor October 1st, 1868, and continued in that relation until January, 1874. During that period the subscription list was increased about 60 percent. In May, 1888, he again became the sole editor and so continued until the incorporation of the American Sentinel Company, which took over the paper September 14, 1907, a period of more than 19 years. During that time he edited the entire issue of the paper, every week except one when he was suffering with severe illness. Although confronted with strong competition the subscription list was not only maintained undiminished, but it was increased about 8 per cent., and the proprietress, and later her estate, received a handsome income from the business. Since September 14, 1907 he has been the senior editor.

That he retires with regret from connection with the Sentinel, as one of its editors, after these many years of devotion to its interest and to the cause which it represents, goes without saying. That his work as editor has been generally satisfactory to its patrons and to the Republican party of the county of which it has been the organ is a claim which seems justified by the success which has attended its publication. He has come into personal contact with many of the subscribers and patrons of the paper and that intercourse has been a very pleasant character. He is glad to believe that he will carry with him personal friendship in his retirement and that that friendship may be maintained during the remainder of his life.

The junior editor will sever his official connection with the Sentinel as regretfully as does the senior editor. During the little more than two years since he became associated with his father in its editorial management, the business of the office has increased fifty percent, two semi-annual dividends have been made to the 83 stockholders of the American Sentinel Company, and there have been valuable additions made to the equipment of the office. This success could not have been achieved without the cordial cooperation and uniform courtesy of the company's board of directors and the printers, who are the men behind the guns.

The tender of the appointment to the chief deputy clerkship of the Circuit Court came to him as a great surprise and in view of his deep interest in the Sentinel, he would have declined it, if it had been possible to do so. Influenced by the kindly expressions on the part of the members of the bar, the apparent

universal desire of the members of the Republican party and citizens of the county generally without respect to the party, and desiring to cooperate with the Clerk-elect in serving the best interests of the county, he has felt constrained to accept the appointment.

Thanking all friends, correspondents and patrons of the Sentinel for courtesy, kindness and cooperation, the retiring editors wish to express in advance, their gratitude to their friends for the same kindly cooperation with Joseph D. Brooks, Esq., in his editorial management of the paper and plant, to which he has been elected by the board of directors."

Joseph D. Brooks edited the American Sentinel until the paper ceased publication in 1928. By that time, this newspaper, founded in 1911, had become the local Republican paper.

Photo caption: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph D. Brooks posed in costume at their summer residence "Gosbrook" in 1904. Mr. Brooks was the last editor of the American Sentinel newspaper. Gift of Mrs. Harry K. Myers, 1958.