

CHAPTER XXV

JACKSONVILLE NEWSPAPERS

Beginning in 1835, the record of local newspapers represents a chain, the links of which are years. Rust spots, meaning temporary suspensions, appear here and there in the early years, but only in two places are the links completely gone, in 1841 and 1862-3. A trace of a paper may yet be found for 1841.

Jacksonville Courier—This was the first paper started in Jacksonville, in January, 1835. It was a weekly paper published by Lorenzo Currier & Co., of Boston, with Elijah Williams, a lawyer, as active editor. Mr. Williams died in about a year,^a and after a temporary suspension the paper reappeared in the fall of 1836 under the ownership of Haslam, Dexter & Gregory.^b O. M. Dorman afterward became connected with the Courier, but in what capacity is not clear.^c On or before February 15, 1838, Weir & Richardson took charge of the Courier, with Rev. David Brown (Rector of St. John's Church) in the editorial chair. The editor of the Pensacola paper "took a fling" at Mr. Brown's poetry, stating that "he wrote poetry as the fellow in the play wrote prose; his sentences are inverted as we find them in blank verse, as thus—'inverted are his sentences all'."^b So it seems that even at this early day editors were in the habit of paying their "respects" to one another. Financial troubles, probably brought on by the Seminole war, beset the Courier and Jacksonville's first newspaper went out of existence in 1839.

East Florida Advocate.—The vacancy left by the Courier was filled by the Advocate, which appeared in 1839, Aaron Jones, Jr., editor. This paper was published until the end of 1840, Mr. Jones moving in January, 1841, to St. Augustine to accept a position with the News.^b

Tropical Plant.—George M. Grouard came to Jacksonville from Washington, D. C., and late in 1842 started the Tropical Plant.^d It may have been an agricultural paper carrying news items, for about that time there seems to have been a development scheme known as the Tropical Plant Nursery Development. This, however, is only an inference, as there