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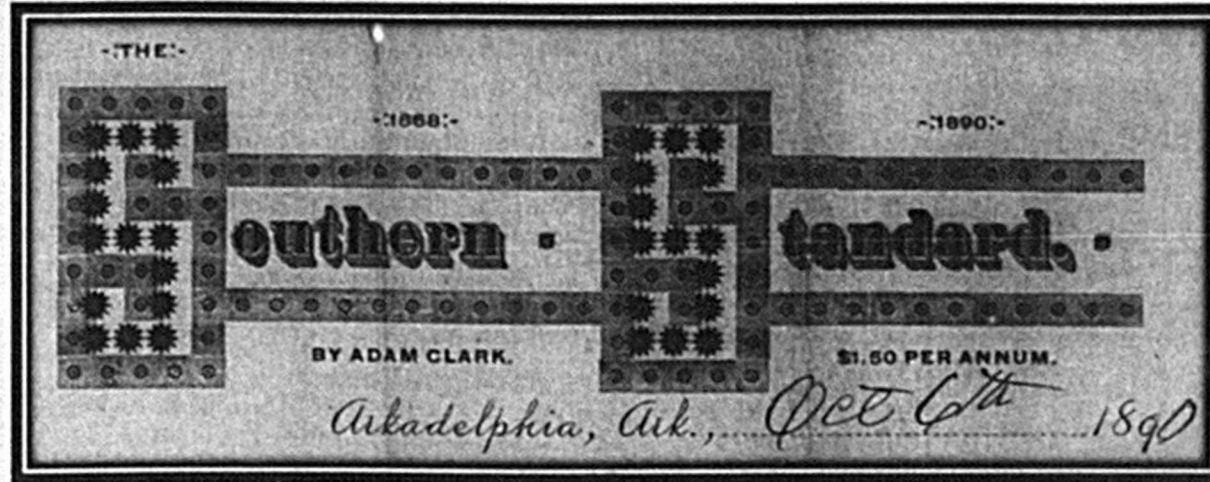
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History of Clark County's media

By Wendy Richter
For the Siftings

For decades now, small-town newspapers have traditionally served as sources of news for Arkansas citizens. Among the stories included in the local papers were items about politics, government, deaths, marriages, social occasions, church activities, business and economic development, advertisements, community news, and personal stories. Arkansas's first newspaper was the Arkansas Gazette, founded by William Woodruff at Arkansas Post in 1819. The Gazette served all of Arkansas Territory, and moved with the territorial capital at Arkansas Post to Little Rock in 1821. On the local level, Clark County has been served continuously by at least one newspaper since 1868. However, Arkadelphia's first paper began publication even earlier, in 1850.

The Arkadelphia Sentinel was the town's first newspaper, established in September 1850 by Robert L. Pigues. The Sentinel was followed in 1852 by the Arkansas Traveler. After several changes in ownership, the paper discontinued operations during the Civil War, began again briefly, but then shut down entirely. The Ouachita Conference Journal was published in Arkadelphia prior to



The Southern Standard letterhead from 1890 is courtesy of the Clark County Historical Association.

and during part of the Civil War, but it moved to Little Rock after the war and ceased publication in 1869. During the war, in 1863, a Baptist publication called The War Times was published in Arkadelphia. Also in 1863, the Arkadelphia Intelligencer appeared for about ten months. In 1865, Rev. Samuel Stevenson published The Index for a short time.

Then, in 1868, Arkadelphia's weekly Southern Standard began publication. According to long-time journalist/editor/local historian W. H. Halliburton, it was "one of the oldest weeklies of Arkansas and even of the territory west of the Mississippi River." As Halliburton put it, the paper was "born in

the turbulent backwash of the Civil War" when two ex-Confederates joined together to launch the paper. Adam Clark and J.W. Gaulding, founders and editors, wrote strong editorials against the Radical Republicans in control of local government after the Civil War. Halliburton reported how "Gaulding was arrested and jailed. But the Standard came out as usual that week. The good citizens were highly incensed. They visited him at the jail and showered him with good things to eat and some flowers." After Gaulding died, Clark became full owner of the Southern Standard. He was popular among other editors in the state and was a charter

member and two-time president of the Arkansas Press Association. Clark was a familiar figure at Confederate reunions and frequently showed the bullet that had been removed from one of his hands during the Civil War. He was wounded twice--once at Hatchie Bridge, and once during the siege of Vicksburg. After Clark's death in 1910, his son, Charles M. Clark, took over and served until 1936. Others who followed included L.W. Rhodes, Faunt Smith, W.J. Taylor, and Keith Tudor. Under Tudor, the paper grew to its largest circulation. After his death, the paper was sold and eventually came under the ownership of the Donrey Media Group, as did the rival

Siftings Herald. The long run of publication of the Southern Standard ended on October 29, 1987.

According to Halliburton, "one of the greatest news stories ever carried by the Southern Standard was the account of the arrival of the first passenger train" at Arkadelphia in 1873. Other later major stories noted by Halliburton were the announcement that Reynolds Metals Company planned to build a \$33 million aluminum plant in Clark County (completed in 1952) and the federal government's announcement concerning its \$55 million multi-purpose DeGray Dam on the Caddo River near Arkadelphia.

To read local history stories by W. H. Halliburton, see the Clark County Historical Association's publication, This 'N That By Hal: A Collection of W.H. Halliburton's News Features, 1909-1976. The 209-page book is available for purchase, and makes an excellent Christmas gift. To get your copy or to learn additional information about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum (www.clark-countyhistory.org or 230.1360) or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library (www.obu.edu/archives or 245.5332).