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Contributions of the Istmian Press in National Development its Beginnings and Times of the Colonies

History of the Isthmian Press Colonial Period

Garrit Geneteau Delis

Abstract- **The appearance of the written press in Panama dates back to the first half of the 19th century,in the midst of constant political, social and economic debates. This article is a contribution to scientific knowledge, 30 existing newspapers between 1821 and 1903 are listed and systematized. The year of launch, the intention and associated writers are taken into consideration; categorized into 5 periods attending the Justo Arosemena Institute School of Journalism, which had its first graduation in 1956.**

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I. Introduction

According to the Dictionary of the Royal Academy, the written press is the set of publications printed on paper, with varied periodicity, whose objective is to inform and entertain society. Newspapers are part of the most widely distributed written press. According to Saint Charles in (Arona Castillo, 2016), newspapers "are the best instruments of the history of an era, whatever point of view from which one wants to study it." They are published daily and offer general information on political, social, economic, geographical, cultural, sports, judicial and educational issues of a region, country, territory or state (Kayser, 1974). For UNESCO, newspapers are all printed media published in a certain country, intended for the public, whose publications constitute a continuous series, with the same title, with a certain periodicity not exceeding oneyear, dated and numbered copies (Arona Castillo, 2016).

In Panama, the written press has its origins at the beginning of the 19th century, when José María Goytía imports to the isthmus the first printing press destined for the propagation of liberal doctrines (Castillero, 1958), the first newspaper Miscelánea del Istmo (Luna Vásquez, 2012), edited by Juan José Argote, Manuel María Goytía, Juan José Calvo and Mariano Arosemena. It was a four-page weekly with a small format, which appeared every Sunday. This newspaper supported the independence of the Isthmus from the Spanish crown and its adherence to Colombia (Candanedo, 2003).

Despite the wide variety of newspapers that have circulated in Panama, there are few scientific documents, published in Spanish and open access that can demonstrate the contribution of newspapers in the historical development of the national context or, present a systematization or record of these newspapers as a strategy to understand the evolution of the country. In this document we present chronologically the newspapers that emerged, evolved and became extinct from the Isthmian press, during the period of the Unification to Colombia -1821 to 1903, attending the School of Journalism of the Institute Justo Arosemena, located in Panama.

II. Developing

First Period

In the period of union between Panama and Colombia, the government created in 1823 an organ of information: *The Official Gazette of the Department of the Isthmus* which, towards the end of 1825, was called *Gaceta del Istmo de Panamá* (Del Rosario, 1968) in (Estrella de Panamá, 2021). Published the administrative acts of the Government of Colombia. In 1823, the first official newspaper of the Department under the name of Gaceta Del Gobierno Independent of Panama. Apparently it is not a new newspaper but a name change of the Gazette founded the previous year. He is followed in order by *The Prosecutor* and *The Law* and later *The Panamanian* (Castillero, 1958).

Table 1: Newspapers of National Circulation. 1821-1827

Name of the Newspaper	Year	Description
THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ISTHMUS	1823	Sole Interest of its Publishers it accepted subscriptionsto cover the expenses of paper.
THE COMET OF THE ISTHMUS	1823	It presented as its motto the following thought of Rousseau: “When Legislation Weakens, Customs Degenerate; But then the judgment of the censors will dowhat the force of the laws has not done”.

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THE PROSECUTOR AND THE LAW	1824	Printed Fortnightly. His motto was "The Constitutioncan be free and not be the citizen", De Monstesquieu.
THE PROSECUTOR		The Previous Journalistic Work continued. He was a Constitutionalist and in his editorial he frequently recor- ded "The prosecutor has kept quiet all the time that his voice was insignificant"
THE DISCOVERER OF THE ISTHMUS	1827	He called himself the brother of the prosecutor, with whom he later merged. It Was Characterized By Pointing Out The Irregularities Of The Administration O· n Duty.
GREAT CIRCLE ISTHMIAN	1827	Newspaper Linked To Liberal Ideas. Its editors were Mariano Arosemena, José de Obaldía and José Agustín Arango.

Second Period

Researchers of the matter place this stage between the 1830s and the mid-19th century, in which economic conditions, the California gold mines, the construction of the Panama railroad, among others, facilitated the proliferation of approximately 30 newspapers, Table 2, characterized by theirpolitical ideal, their euphoria for having achieved their "own virtue". His primary desire was the permanent validity of these ideals, fighting at all costs the contrary outbreaks.

Table 2: Newspapers of National Circulation. 1930-1953

Name of the Newspaper	Year	Description
THE UNION	1830	Edited by the company of José Ángel Santos and company. Its printing wasprohibited by General Espinar, whom he frequently lashed out.
THE CONSTITUCIONAL OF THE ISTMUS	1831	Weekly. Promoted the publication of information on the latest administrative provisions and others of public interest. The annual subscription cost tenpesos and was distributed at home.
FREE TRADE	1834	By Mariano Arosemena. Circulation was free and he defended what was called the greatly plan of free transit trade.
THE WATCHMAN OF THE ISTHMUS	1834	Sunday publication. He was greatly concerned about the prosperity of the Isthmus, as stated in one of his slogans.
THE FRIENDS OF THE COUNTRY	1834	Published by Arosemena, Obaldía and Arango. He was a tireless defender of the progress of Panama.
THE POLITICAL MONKEY	1836	Printed by Jaime Bousquet. Small format and only two pages. Its content of a satirical nature offered intentional parables and business epigrams.
THE CLADY FOX	1836	Posted by José Ángel Santos. Sunday. It was one of the most important political humor publications of the time.
THE POLITICAL MONKEY	1836	It happened to the POLITICAL MONKEY, which had caused a great impact in the political circles of the Isthmus. It had the same characteristics of theprevious publication.
TELESCOPE OF BOTH SEAS	1841	It appeared when there was important news to communicate, the monthlysubscription costing four reales (Four Five-cents) at the time.
THE POPULAR PRIMER	1843	Fortnightly, He dealt preferentially with the problems of the people and the isthmian education. The annual subscription cost six reales at the time.
THE NEWS OF THE AMERICAN ISTHMUS	1847	It reported on the most recent independence events and the latest commercial note.
THE MAIL WITCH	1848	His concern for current politics was evident. The achievement was accompa-nied by the following explanation: "This newspaper will come out when convenient and is distributed in the store of the lady, María José Paredes."
THE PANAMANIAN	1849	Weekly. Posted by José Ángel Santos. It is distinguished for being one of the most prestigious and important newspapers during the last century.
THOSE WISHING FOR INSTRUCTION	1849	Published by the students of Panama Higj School (Colegio Panamá), who declared it "Literary and News".
OFFICIAL CHRONICLE	1849	Due to its official status and its relative duration. Crónica Oficial is considered one of the most important publications of the mid-19th century.
THE STAR OF PANAMA	1853	Published by The Star Editors (Editorial La Estrella). General newspaper, standard size, currently in circulation.

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Among the most prominent newspapers

The Union dedicated itself to fighting and fighting for the integrity of the Isthmus under a democratic government. The war on Press Censorship made itself felt with the closure of all printing presses and the suspension of the Union, which, because it has such an ephemeral and important life, is classified as the first victim of a tyranny in the territory of the Isthmus.

The Isthmus Constitutional was created for government acts. After the movement of General Espinar was suffocated and the Isthmus returned to the bosom of Gran Colombia, other newspapers with very different tendencies arose, perhaps less conservative and more broad-minded.

The Commercial Trade, founded by Mr. Mariano Arosemena to defend the Department's fiscal affairs. Colonel Tomás Herrera founded the Civic Society Los Amigos del País in January 1831 and to sustain their patriotic brotherhood, they founded a newspaper with the same name, whose publication lasted until 1841. With this newspaper, the first outbreak of informative journalism appeared on the Isthmus, since local and foreign news and daily incidents and armed conflicts that occurred in other provinces were published in its columns.

The Star of Panama "La Estrella de Panamá" centennial newspaper, founded in 1853 It was born from a need for information for gold prospectors heading to the legendary California, and a century later it continues to be published, fulfilling an admirable function, a newspaper that places it among the most prestigious from the Continent and even from the Old World. Since its foundation, this newspaper kindly cared about the social and cultural improvement of the isthmus.

The Star of Panama "La Estrella de Panamá", in force today, has been a true champion of Spanish-American interests, an eager propagator of whatever could redound to the good of the various sections, a defender of their rights and the disseminator of all the information it could procure on its immense natural resources.

Third Period

This third period opens with the *Aspin Wall Courier,* published in English in the city of Colón, although with a small section in Spanish. Due to the work on the Trans-Isthmic Railroad, something that publicists took advantage of to found this body that has been published for more than a year.

Subsequently, a series of jocular-style newspapers burst into national life. From their titles it is clear that a wave of humor had invaded the Isthmus and that things were taken half jokingly and half seriously. The content of its columns is a valuable source of information to learn about the customs of that time. Some of the titles that are known are: *The Triangle, The Tarantula, The Comet, The Muleteer, Death, Boot Foot, The Whip. (El Triángulo, La Tarántula, El Cometa, El Arriero, La Muerte, Pie Bota, El Látigo). With clearly political tendencies, The Tribune "El Tribuno"* appeared in 1856. El Pueblo made its appearance in 1858 supporting the presidential candidacy of Don José Domingo de Obaldía.

La Nueva Era began publication in February 1861 to strongly oppose the government of General Santiago de La Guardia. and closes this third period El Istmeño, published in 1867, organ of the Conservative Party and during the validity of the Constitution of Rio Negro, which, despite being "an organized anarchy", enshrined the rights of the law on printing and advocated because it was the press that assumed the responsibilities of their actions.

Fourth Period

In this time of a true literary awakening, we must include the first journalistic organs that appeared in the interior provinces, thus demonstrating that humanistic concerns were spreading beyond the valleys and mountains of our countryside. We have to mention in the foreground *The Torch "La Antorcha",* a handwritten newspaper that circulated in David, Chiriquí, around the years of 1854. Then appears *El Coclesano,* in Penonomé, written by the illustrious Simeón Conte and Manuel de Jesús Quijano. In Santiago de Veraguas, *El Republicano* is published. *La Voz De Chitré* made its first edition in 1882.

The Isthmus was also distinguished by its literary effervescence, a latent restlessness animated the intellects and the newspapers flourished with different tendencies. El Cefiro was published to collect the literary production of a romantic generation that throbbed poetry and emotion.

Fifth Period

This period is known as the pre-independence period and *The chronicler "El Cronista trail"* opens. Then follows *The Republican Union* "*La Unión Republicana"* in 1884, a political newspaper founded to support the candidacy of Dr. Justo Arosemena for president of the Sovereign State of Panama. *The Idea* "*La Idea"* in 1888 with a fighting spirit and fight for independence. Finally, The Regeneration "*La Regeneración"* appears in 1897, advocating for an immediate separation from Colombia, in order to organize The Isthmians "El Istmeños", a free and sovereigngovernment.

III. Conclusion

It is concluded that, during the post-colonial period, there was an ephemeral proliferation of newspapers with national circulation, newspapers that supported the expressions of liberal thought, politics and the separatist movements of Panama from Colombia. Only the Star of Panama remains today.

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