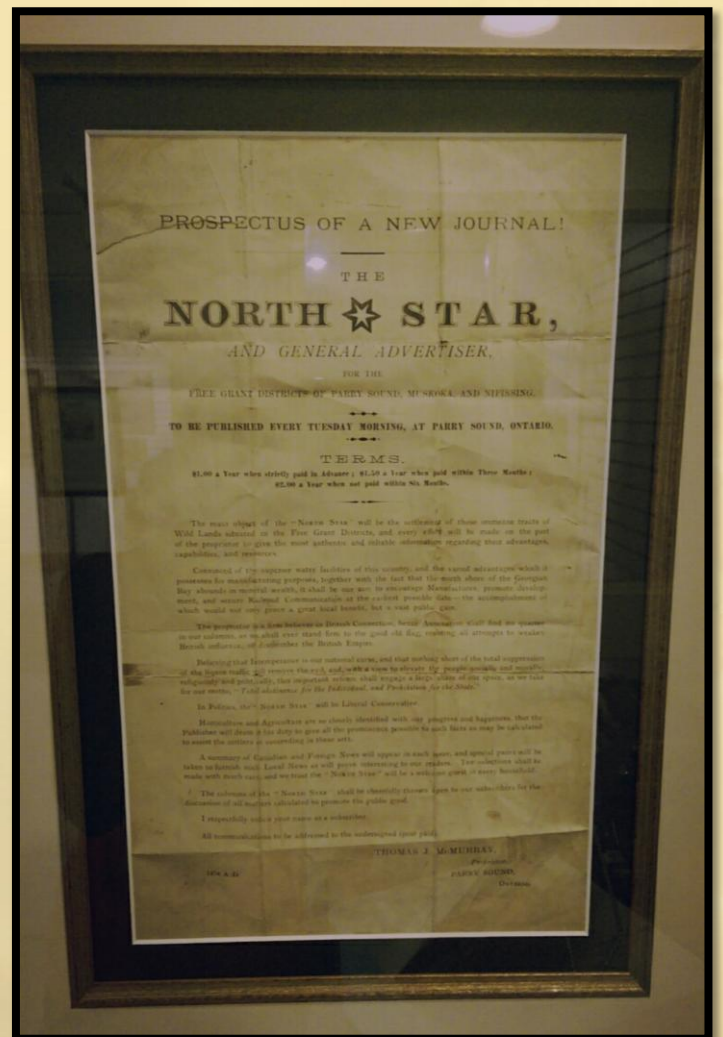


# History of the *Parry Sound North Star*

In 1869, Thomas McMurray pioneered the first newspaper to serve, not only the town of Parry Sound, but the district as well. It was called the *Northern Advocate*. In September of that same year, Mr. McMurray moved the *Advocate* to Bracebridge where it was subsequently merged into the *Free Grant Gazette*. He returned to Parry Sound in 1874 and printed the first issue of the *North Star* on October 1<sup>st</sup> of the year.

In the Prospectus, a summary of the new journal, which has been carefully preserved by the *North Star*, dated 1874; Mr. McMurray states that the main objective of the *North Star* will be the settlement of immense tracts of wild lands situated in the Free Grant District. It reads,

*...convinced of superior water facilities of this country, and the varied*



*advantages which it possesses manufacturing purposes...abounds of mineral wealth. Our aim is to encourage manufacturers, promote development and secure the Railway Communication at the earliest possible date...*

Through the *North Star* archives, we find that this tradition has been carried on to this day.

In February of 1879, McMurray sold the paper to B. Noel Fisher who conducted the paper with vigor until November of that year when he was drowned in the wreck of the [Waubuno](#). Mr. William Ireland, then-editor, purchased the paper in January 1880 and continued the sole management and ownership until July of 1895, when he took into partnership with Mr. W.H. Bundy. The paper was now the foremost journal of Northern Ontario with a six column quarto and one of the best in the Province of Ontario.

The [Parry Sound Canadian](#) was started in the spring of 1895 by Mr. Thomas W. Whalley and in 1896 it passed into the hands of Mr. Charles Sarney. In June of 1938, the *Parry Sound North Star* bought the [Canadian](#) and its publication subsequently discontinued.

Shortly after, a syndicate of local men bought the *North Star* from Mr. Ireland and John Scoobie Dick became managing

editor in 1918. A decade later, in 1928, Harvey Derbyshire Wing purchased the *North Star*, and upon his death in 1946, his son, also Harvey, took over as publisher and his wife, [Agnes Wing](#), became editor.

Harvey Wing Jr. took the *North Star* to a twice a week publication in November of 1962, with the first Tuesday issue sold on November 6<sup>th</sup> of that year. The semi-weekly publication arose due to increased pressure from the



AGNES WING'S DESK AS IT APPEARED IN THE "NORTH STAR EXHIBIT" AT THE MUSEUM ON TOWER HILL

*Sudbury Star*; nearby competitors. Management from the *Sudbury* had made the trip to Parry Sound twice in an attempt to purchase the *North Star*; however, the local paper was not for sale. Aggravated, the *Sudbury Star* threatened that they would hone in on the market of the *Parry Sound North Star* and would subsequently put them out of business. Thus, the printing of two publications a week arose to compete with the *Sudbury Star*.

Under the ownership of Harvey Wing Jr., new equipment was introduced such as a [Ludlow type caster](#), a Kleisagraph image-maker, and a Goss press.

In 1973, [M.W. \(Morry\) Barr](#) purchased the *North Star* and brought the paper out of the hot metal era and into the world of offset – known in the industry as cold type. He brought in Compugraphic equipment, the latest trend in the newspaper business, putting the *North Star* in step with the rest of the industry. In the same year, Barr, who also owned the *Almaguin News* in Burks Falls, appointed [Fred Heidman](#) as General Manager, who worked at the *North Star* for an astounding 48 years, and hired [Jack Thompson](#) as editor, who filled the position until his retirement in 1988.

1973 also marked the year that the press stopped running in Parry Sound. Printing was moved to a community press house in Elmvate. Sourcing the printing process out was the way of the future as it was becoming too expensive for small community newspapers to own their own press. This move was necessary as the paper grew in size and new products – such as “Fun in the Sun” and other special features – were produced by the *North Star*.

Fred Heidman recalls the last day that the press stopped running very clearly. In an interview with Fred, he said,

“Many people, including Agnes Wing, went downstairs to watch the press roll over for the last time. Everyone at some point made their way downstairs...you know, people would make excuses just to get up...like they had to go to the washroom or something else. It was really something...I don't want to make it sound romantic or anything but it really was the end of an era.”

The motor of the old press can still be found beneath the floorboards in the basement of the old *North Star* building on James Street, as it was too large to remove.

In 1982, Michael Atkins, owner of Laurentian Publishing, [purchased the \*North Star\*](#) from Morry Barr. Heidman maintained his position as General Manager and later, Publisher, and [Thompson](#) stayed on as editor until his retirement in 1988. [Jim Hanna](#) was subsequently appointed editor later in that same year. In 1984, two years after Atkins had purchased the *North Star*, he purchased the *Georgian Bay Beacon* and merged the two publications to produce what is now known as the *North Star*, released weekly on Wednesdays, and the *Beacon Star*, released weekly on Fridays.

In the early 1990s, the *North Star* entered the world of computers and purchased a MacIntosh Powerbook 145B which

replaced the now obsolete Compugraphic equipment. This was yet another necessary change in order to keep pace with the ever-changing technology in the newspaper industry. The Macs allowed more creativity and flexibility saving both time and dollars.

As trends for the future moved more towards the online world of computer, the Internet, e-mail, electronic and global communications, a new department was formed under the direction of Dan Heidman, son of Fred Heidman, to explore these new mediums and to catapult the *North Star* into the new millennium. This department, "Parry Sound Online," was remarkably established in 1996, making the web address, "[parrysound.com](http://parrysound.com)," one of the first Canadian news websites. Due to the fast paced nature of change, and the demand to keep up with such changes, in 1999, it was decided to move full-time into the online world of newspapers.

In early 2014, the *North Star* vacated their building on James Street and moved to their new location on Bowes Street – only the third location that the 'Star office has occupied since it began publishing in 1874.



FRAMED OLDEST EXISTING EDITION WHICH WAS UNVEILED ON NOVEMBER 15, 2014, TO MARK THE OPENING OF THE MUSEUM EXHIBIT AND THE OFFICIAL HANDOFF OF THE *NORTH STAR* ARCHIVES.

DATED MARCH 17, 1879

The *North Star* has always been, and continues to be, one of the leaders in progress, growth, and development for this area. What is next for the *North Star*? Only time will tell.