

## EARLY SOUTH AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS.

BY GEORGE PARKER WINSHIP.

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The earliest news publication of which we know, printed in South America, was issued to supply the popular demand for information regarding the capture of the English free-booter, Richard Hawkins, and his ship, *The Dainty*, off the Peruvian coast in 1594, just ten years after the printing-press began its work at Lima. It was a quarter century later when the publication of occasional news-sheets, the forerunners of the modern "Extra," began to become more or less regular. In 1620 appeared an "Account of important events in Peru," and in the year following "News from Castille, which arrived in October of the present year 1621," and "Summary of the News from the Court, with the Beginning of the New Reign of his Catholic Majesty, our Sovereign King Philip the Fourth."

The printer of these two news-sheets of 1621 was Jeronimo de Contreras, the founder of a printing office from which was issued most of the published South American news of the next hundred years. Contreras had been established at Seville in Spain, where he issued in 1618-19 a volume of the writings of a Franciscan brother then recently returned from Peru. Two years later the printer's name appeared for the first time on a book dated at Lima. The new-comer promptly allied himself with the family of the principal rival craftsman, and within a short time acquired a recognized position as the leading printer in the South American metropolis. In 1641 he was succeeded by his son, José, who maintained the family establishment until 1688. His son, of the same name, began to issue books over his own name in 1686. He seems to have been the most

successful of the family, and for more than twenty years, until 1712, he conducted the only printing office in the country. He monopolized the very profitable business of printing the primers used in the local schools, obtained the appointment as Royal Printer by decree of the Spanish Crown, as printer to the Holy Office of the Inquisition, to the Tribunal de Cruzada, and to the University of San Marcos. José de Contreras y Alvarado, in addition to his business occupations, appears to have attended to the editing of the paper which he published, and he was a frequent writer of verse. In 1713 he was succeeded by his brother Jeronimo, who had been associated with the business since 1677, and who continued it until 1720, when the last book recorded as bearing the family name appeared.

Throughout a considerable part of this century, it is probable that the news of the day, or more accurately of the month, was published from the Contreras press with approximate regularity, the issues possessing the essential characteristics of a newspaper, as distinguished from the occasional extra or news-sheet. They usually appeared about once a month, as a small-quarto, single-fold, four-page paper, wretchedly printed in small type. The news was presented in the form of a diary, made up from day to day, and printed without revision or reference to paragraphs of later date, however pertinent to the event. Births and deaths and robberies, a play at the palace, a disaster in the frontier Indian wars, a fire in the slums, or a raid by the English pirates, mingle together in that curious way that events have, in this world of every day life, of occurring quite regardless of human convenience or notions of relative importance.

Besides these regular monthly issues of the news-letter, chiefly made up of local South American news, extras containing the latest foreign advices were usually issued as soon as possible after the arrival at the vice-regal capital of the messengers charged with the important mission of conveying the dispatch-boxes in which were locked the royal orders and instructions, the public and private correspondence, the communications from the officials of the

religious orders, and the bundle of Madrid and Seville newspapers. These papers furnished the basis for an abstract of European news, occasionally supplemented by the reprinting of an entire paper, when some single event claimed a monopoly of current interest.

The knowledge of these South American newspaper publications, in this part of the world, is derived from three sources, two of which seem to place us in a position of peculiar advantage. The Lenox Library in New York and the John Carter Brown Library in Providence each possesses a consecutive series of Lima papers, the first for the years 1700 to 1711, and the other for 1743 to 1763. That there may be other similar series is probable, but nothing at all comparable to either was known to the third source of information, Sr. José Toribio Medina's *La Imprenta en Lima*.

This work, which appeared in 1904, is a descriptive bibliography of 1264 publications printed in the Peruvian capital between 1584 and 1767. It is a masterpiece of literary, historical, biographical and bibliographical research, and fully establishes the position of its author as the only rival, on either continent, to Sr. Garcia Icazbalceta, who has long been recognized as the most scholarly of American bibliographers. The work on the Lima press is only one of Sr. Medina's publications, which include a number of reprints of important early books, historical records, a series of volumes on the Inquisition in America, six large volumes of descriptive bibliography of Spanish Americana, three on Chilean books, three on the Philippines, an elaborate study of the press in the Argentine countries, and a series of smaller volumes devoted to the history of printing in Mexico and in the lesser Spanish American cities.

Sr. Medina lists some forty news-sheets known to him which were issued during the century preceding 1720, the period of the Contreras press, of which only one is in the decade covered by the Lenox Library volume. This most interesting volume contains the series, apparently complete with the exception of one possible break of five months, March to August, in 1705, of the news-sheets, numbering in all 102 separate issues, which were published

by Contreras during the years 1700 to 1711. With them are bound a dozen pamphlets issued from the same press, mostly publications commemorating special events which demanded a fuller account than could be compressed into the four pages of the newspaper. Seven of these are new titles, not known to Sr. Medina. They give the funeral sermon in memory of King Charles II., of Spain, a treatise on the various armorial bearings of the viceroys of Peru, a reprint of the rules promulgated in Spain for the identification of houses occupied by malcontents, the ceremonies attendant on the arrival of a new viceroy in 1707, an account of the sources and probable truth of the rumour that the Queen was enceinte, followed six months later by the even more joyful news of the birth of a Prince.

These pamphlets are inserted in their proper places, with reference to the dates of their publication, between the issues of the newspaper, and the whole series was bound with a special title page:

Diarios, y memorias de los sucesos principales, y noticias mas sobresalientes en esta Ciudad de Lima, Corte del Perú. desde 17. del mes de Mayo del Año de 1700. hasta fines de Diciembre de 1711. Con las que se han recibido por Cartas, y Gazetas, de Europa en el mismo tiempo.—Con licencia del real gouierno. En Lima, Por Joseph de Contreras y Alvarado, Impressor Real.

Throughout the volume, many of the typographical errors and misstatements are corrected by pen, a type-line which had been omitted by the printer when the form was made ready for the press is supplied in manuscript, and there are other signs which give rise to the suggestion that this volume may have been put together, with a specially printed title leaf, by the printer, publisher or editor in order to preserve his file of the papers.

These *Diarios* or *Noticias* continued to appear for another decade or more, and then, a few years after the disappearance of the Contreras firm which had for so long been responsible for their publication, the regular issues ceased. A revival took place at the beginning of the year 1744,

and was maybe brought about by the popular excitement over a scandalous robbery of the jewels from one of the Lima churches, the details of which, with the account of the apprehension and execution of the thief, furnish the larger part of the contents of the first issue of the new paper. This was now given a definite name, *Gazeta de Lima*, and the successive issues were numbered consecutively, for twelve years. In 1756 a new editorial management tried the experiment of numbering the issues of each year separately, but after three years' trial, this plan was abandoned, when the paper again changed hands. The new consecutive series ran from 1759 until 1762, in which year there was another change in the management, and the paper began to be published at a press which seems to have had the newspaper work as its principal business. This office issued at least twenty-nine numbers of the *Gazeta*, the last one of which a copy is known, being dated on the 31st of July, 1767, embodying the news from the preceding March 26. The *Gazeta* was throughout its career much less regular than the less pretentious Contreras papers. It came out usually about once every two months, at varying intervals which reflect the shifting prosperity and the political or religious activity of the community.

Of the *Gazeta*, Sr. Medina describes fourteen issues and notes a reference to two others. The volume in the John Carter Brown Library, of which a detailed description, with a facsimile of the first issue, has recently been printed by that library, contains eighty-two issues, of which only seven are among the sixteen known to Sr. Medina. Altogether there were at least a hundred and forty-six numbers of the *Gazeta* published, of which ninety-one are still in existence, and of these seventy-five are known only from the copies in Providence. Undoubtedly many more of these South American papers have survived and are now hidden away in other libraries not examined by Sr. Medina.

It is hoped that by calling attention to the interest there is in them, information may be secured which will make possible the preparation of a more adequate account of the development of newspaper publication in colonial Spanish America.

LIST OF NEWS SHEETS<sup>1</sup>

Printed at Lima in Peru, 1621-1767, recorded in J. T. Medina's *La Imprenta en Lima*, Santiago de Chile, 1904.

1621

Nuevas de Castilla, venidas por Octubre.  
Sumario de las nuevas de la Corte.

1622

Nuevas generales, 22 Octubre, 1621 hasta 18 Março.

1625

Verdadera relacion de las admirables vitorias que an sucedido, el año passado.

1626

Relacion verdadera, de todo el daño que causó las crecientes del rio Guadalquivir.

Nuevas de Castilla.

Insigne y celebre vitoria, en los Estados de Flandes.

Relacion de la batalla, con las armadas de Olanda è Inglaterra, en el estrecho de Ormuz.

Sucessos de Cadiz y entrada del enemigo Olandes en su Baia.

1630

Provisiones nuevas de 1629-1630. Va assimismo en esta Relacion, lo restante hasta 8. de Abril deste año.

Dos relaciones verdaderas. Vitoria . . . contra dos naos de Turcos cosarios.

1631

Relacion de la vitoria, en Chile, 13 Henero 1631.

1633

Relacion de la iornada, al socorro del Brasil.

1641

Quarto pliego del estado en que estan las cosas de Portugal.

1643

Diario verdadera relacion de todo lo sucedido en Espana, Flandes, Italia, y Francia, desde los fines de 1641 hasta 1643.

Relacion verdadera de todo lo sucedido en España, Francia, Inglaterra, Flandes, Alemania, y demas partes de la Europa.

1644

Relacion verdadera de todo lo sucedido en España, y otros partes.  
Sumario de lo sucedido en Europa desde Mayo de 1641 hasta el de 1643.

<sup>1</sup>Information regarding any news publications not included in this list is greatly desired by the Librarian of the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, Rhode Island.

1672

Relacion de todo lo sucedido en Europa hasta el lunes 21. de Setiembre de 671.

1680

Noticias en continuacion de la relacion desde 25 Agosto 1679.

Relacion de las novedades que Juan Perez de Amegaga, Agente de negocios del R. Consejo de las Indias, ha sacado para sus amigos de su diario, sucedidas desde 14 Julio 1678, que salieron a nauegar Galeones para Tierra Firme, y Flota para Nueva España.

Relacion de la armada, al oposito de los Piratas Franceses y Ingleses.

1684

Carta y noticia que participo el Governador de Baldivia al Presidente de Chile.

1685

Noticias del Sur. Despacho y felizes sucesos de la Armada de 1685.

1687

Noticias que se han ofrecido desde 23 Junio 1686 hasta ultimos de Febrero de 1687.

1688

Noticias del Sur continuadas desde 6 Noviembre 1685 hasta Junio de 1688.

Ultimas noticias del Sur, y felizes operaciones contra Piratas.

1691

Copia de carta, dando cuenta de la muerte del duque de la Palata en Portobelo.

1695

Noticias de Europa que se han resivido por diferentes cartas de la Nueva España y Guatemala, traydas en el Aviso que llegó a la Vera Cruz, y en los Navios de registro de Honduras.

La relacion siguiente impressa en España se ha buuelto a reimprimir en Lima, en la misma forma que llegó a ella. Añadense los sucessos ultimos de Europa.

1696

Noticias de España, que vinieron en el aviso que salio de Cadiz a 7 de Junio de 1696 y llegó a esta Ciudad a 30 de Octubre.

1698

Relacion de las noticias generales, que han llegado en los dos Avisos, el primero por Tierra Firme a 26 de Octubre; el segundo por la via de Buenos Aires a 1 de Noviembre de 98, y se han sacado de diferentes papeles impresos, y Cartas de Europa, siendo las ultimas fechas de Madrid de Abril de 98.

1699

Noticias generales de Europa, sacadas de varias gazetas, y papeles, impresos en Madrid, sus fechas desde 15 Julio de 98 hasta 10 Março de 1699.

Relacion del espantoso terremoto que padecio esta Ciudad de los Reyes [Lima], 14 Julio .1699.

1711

Diario de noticias sobresalientes de Lima desde 13 Septiembre hasta 15 Noviembre.

1715

Gazeta reimpressa en Lima, de las novedades mas sobresalientes de Europa, del mes de Febrero de 1715.

1723

Memorias y noticias de los sucesos mas sobresalientes de Lima en estos ultimos meses hasta fines del mes de Octubre de 1723.

1724

Memorias y noticias de los sucessos, en los fines del Año passado y principios del presente de 1724.

1725

Relacion y diario de las operaciones del Navio, que salió en demanda del Navio Frances y de mas estrangeros de ilicito Comercio.

1743

Breve relacion del aplauso conque Lima ha celebrado la llegada de las Bullas Originales de su Arzobispo.

1744

Gaceta de Lima, 1 Diciembre 1743-18 Enero 1744.

1746

Individual y Verdadera Relacion de la extrema ruyna que padeció Lima, con el horrible temblór de tierra.

Desolacion de Lima, y Dilubio del Puerto del Callao. Cérrose esta relacion en 6 de Noviembre.

1749

Gazeta, hasta 24 Febrero.

1750

Relacion y verdadero romance que declara la inconsiderada y atrevida Sublevacion que intentaban hazer los indios mal acordados y algunos Mestizos en Lima.

Segunda parte en que se refieren los Sucessos que acaecieron en el levantamiento de los Indios.



1751

Gazeta, num. 21; 24 Agosto-14 Octubre.

1755

Gazeta, num. 47; 14 Abril-8 Junio.

1756

Gazeta, num. 6; 7 Noviembre-fines de Diciembre.

1761

Gazeta, num. 15; 10 Diciembre-27 Enero.

1762

Gazeta, num. 2; 10 Octubre-3 Diciembre.

1763

Gazeta, num. 4; 20 Enero-30 Marzo.

Gazeta, num. 5; 30 Marzo-20 Mayo.

Gazeta, num. 6; 20 Mayo-12 Julio.

1765

Gazeta, num. 15; 4 Diciembre-28 Enero.

Gazeta, num. 17; 24 Marzo-17 Mayo.

Gazeta, num. 18; 18 Mayo-4 Julio.

Gazeta, num. 19; 4 Julio-28 Agosto.

1766

Gazeta, num. 25; 16 Junio-6 Agosto.

1767

Gazeta, num. 29; 26 Marzo-31 Julio.

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