

Founding Fathers

*When Summerside was very new
We had no paper printed,
Til Joseph Bertram came in view,
And very soon he hinted
That he would start the JOURNAL here
If we would show him favor,
And give one dollar every year
To pay him for his labor!*

So run the first lines of “The Journal”, composed in 1888. It briefly recounts the *Summerside Journal*’s history from the time of its inception in 1865 when a young man by the name of Joseph Bertram, and his (unmentioned) business partner, Henry Barnard, migrated from Charlottetown to the “summer side” of the Island, hoping to establish a successful journalistic enterprise.

Spoiler alert - they succeeded.

Summerside’s booming prospects in 1865, coupled with its lack of an established press, no doubt proved irresistible to Bertram and Barnard. After setting up a newspaper and job printing office on Central St., they began to turn out the *Summerside Journal*. But who were these men, these founding fathers?

The origins of Joseph Bertram are hazy. He was born around 1840, but little is known of his childhood; however, journalism struck a chord, for in the mid 1850s he entered into a nine-year apprenticeship under John Ings of the Conservative-supporting *Islander*, where he supposedly remained until venturing to Summerside.

No doubt it was in Charlottetown that Bertram met Henry Barnard. Both men were educated-and probably found themselves walking around in the same social circles. But whereas Bertram’s background is marked by uncertainty, that of Barnard is more clear. Born in August of 1844 to Silas Steel Barnard and Jane Hawkins Williams of Charlottetown, he was a graduate of Prince of Wales College, as well as Stow’s Model and Normal Training School, making him an ideal match for Bertram’s experience in journalism and newspaper production.

The “Bertram & Barnard” partnership was not characterised by longevity. It began (in print) in October of 1865; by March of 1867, it ended with Barnard’s departure. In that time, the *Journal* had been published on a weekly basis without interruption. Bertram courted Agnes L. Gordon of

Alberton, whom he married in June of 1866. Barnard was his bondsman. Nothing on record hints at any animosity.

Bertram continued to pursue the newspaper business-until 1872, when he sold the *Journal* to the firm of Graves and McMurtry. His family had grown to include three children by this point, a son and two daughters. By the time a second son arrived in 1875, he had become a commercial merchant, and an agent for the Prince Edward Island Steam Navigation Company.

Life for the Bertrams, however, was about to change dramatically. In an eerie foreshadowing of events to come, false reports began circulating in March of 1875 that Joseph had died. Although quickly disproved, his death actually did come to pass in May of 1876 after a prolonged illness. The *Journal's* co-founder was not yet forty.

But what of the other co-founder? After quitting the partnership in 1867, Barnard made his way to Minnesota and established a reputation as a respected educator, becoming a school principal, and receiving a state certificate for “eminent qualifications, practical experience, and success”. After serving as president of the Minneapolis Business College from 1870 until 1875, “Professor” Barnard moved to San Francisco, where he founded Barnard’s Business College and Telegraphic Institute. Here he remained until sometime in the 1880s, after which he disappears from the historical record.

The partnership of Joseph Bertram and Henry Barnard, although fleeting, lasted long enough to set the *Summerside Journal* on the road to success. 150 years later, theirs is a legacy that only continues to grow.