

## **The Standard (Windsor, Ontario, 1879)**

### **Title Variations**

Windsor Standard

### **Publication Dates**

1879: April 23 (Vol. 1: no. 1) – 1880: Dec. ?

### **Frequency**

Semi-Weekly / Weekly

### **Online Holdings**

1879: July 30 (Vol. 1: no. 29) 4p. (damaged)

### **Source of our Digitized Holdings**

Museum Windsor

### **Description**

The Standard began publication on April 23, 1879. It was a 4 page, twice weekly newspaper that came out on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. James C. Murdoch and Frederick Neal were the publishers and their office was located at 102 Sandwich Street West. At the beginning of November 1879, James Murdoch became the sole proprietor and the Standard switched to a Saturday morning, weekly, 8 page format. Based on mentions in other newspapers and directories, the Standard continued publishing until at least June 1880. It likely ceased at the end of 1880.

The Windsor Standard was a rival newspaper to the Essex Review (aka Windsor Review), which began publication 6 months before the Standard. There was no love lost between the 2 papers. Both Murdoch and Neal had previously worked for the Essex Review but “were obliged to quit work on account of not receiving the wages they earned” (1879: July 30, p. 1). They then decided to start the Standard. Both men had some newspaper experience, having also worked on the Dominion/Daily Dominion (Windsor), a newspaper owned by James Murdoch’s father, John Murdoch.

The bitter feelings are very evident in the only extant issue. Murdoch and Neal’s attacks on Charles C. Cliffe, the editor of the Essex Review, are very personal. They call him the Windsor Chromo (an idle, useless, pretty boy?) and talk about his “elephantine feet”. There is also a minor dispute concerning the new post office wall and they accuse him of broad plagiarism. However, copying and paraphrasing articles from other newspapers was pretty common practice at the time.

There are several self-descriptions of the Standard. Its motto was “Independent in everything – neutral in nothing”. On page 2 of the July 30, 1879 issue, the self-advertisement reads : “Subscribe for the Standard: a first-class wide-awake newspaper!! Devoted to literature, science, art, political economy, agriculture, &c, &c. Special attention given to local and municipal matters. The Standard is not “patented” but is printed and published by Britons on British soil.” There is also an advertisement for the Standard in the 1880 Rowell’s newspaper directory: “It is cheap, bright, and enterprising, and is full of news – home and foreign correspondence, choice reading matter, etc. and is an excellent advertising medium.”

It is always hard to judge a newspaper based on one issue. However, despite all the promotion, the content seems to be somewhat sparse. There is some local and Canadian news and many small notices for businesses in Windsor and Detroit. There are a few larger advertisements, including two for the Standard itself and no less than three for the Murdoch Brothers Photo Studio (run at this point by William A. Murdoch and Stanley A. Murdoch, the editor’s brothers).

James C. Murdoch was born in Girvan, Ayrshire, Scotland on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1854 and came to Canada about 1865. After working with the newspapers discussed above, he seems to have joined his brothers in Murdoch Photo Studios (Windsor), working as a photographer in the family business (1881, 1891, 1901 censuses). He also lived for a while in Toronto in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He died in Windsor on May 12, 1935 and is buried in St. John’s Church Cemetery in Sandwich.

Updated: Katharine Ball, August 2020