

THE AUTHORSHIP OF *Herbert Wendall*

The author of the anonymous novel, *Herbert Wendall: A Tale of the Revolution*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1835), has not heretofore been clearly identified. Lyle H. Wright, *American Fiction: A Contribution Towards a Bibliography*, 3 vols. (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1957-69)¹ notes the name T. S. Fay,² suggested by a contemporary advertisement. More convincing evidence, but for a different author, appears in the copy of the novel in the Newark Public Library containing a fragment of a letter dated May 11, 1901, signed by a 'Mrs. H. N. Congar,' which ascribes the authorship to Dr. Stephen Congar (1810-1897).

In antebellum Newark, Dr. Stephen Congar was one of the best known and most active citizens of that city. He opened a library, served as secretary to the county medical society and to the Handel and Haydn society, served on the school committee and its successor, the board of education, on which he held office both as president and as the first city superintendent of schools, and was elected state senator from Essex County.³ Probably more than any other individual he is responsible for the establishment of the public school system in Newark.

Mrs. H. N. Congar, who wrote the letter, is doubtless the physician's sister-in-law, the wife of Horace Newton Congar (1817-1893), attorney, antislavery editor, consul to Hong Kong, and prominent New Jersey Republican from the antebellum period to his death. The lady should have known whereof she spoke. Dr. Congar did not marry until he was

¹Wright is followed by *The National Union Catalogue: Pre-1956 Imprints*, 309 volumes in progress, (London and Wisbech, England: Balding and Mansell, Ltd., 1968-1974), 168:157.

²Theodore Sedgwick Fay (1807-1898), an editor of the New York *Mirror* and author of several novels and other works, published, incidentally, by Harper.

³Index to the *Newark Daily Advertiser*, 1832; William H. Shaw, *History of Essex and Hudson Counties, New Jersey*. 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Everts and Peck, 1884), 1:650-651.

forty-nine and had lived for some years up to then with the Horace Congars to whom he was devoted.⁴ No hint appears in the letter that there is any dispute or even doubt of authorship. Indeed, Mrs. Congar goes on to say that 'the William Plum mentioned in the narrative' (pp. 192-197) was Dr. Congar's grandmother's first husband, a casual and hence rather convincing detail which supports her claim that the author of the novel was, in fact, Stephen Congar.

Donald R. Raichle

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO
VERMONT IMPRINTS, 1778-1820

131 *Improved entry*: SERIOUS Thoughts on sudden Death. A Poem, occasioned by the drowning of six men by the oversetting [*sic*] of a boat in Lake Champlain, near Split Rock, about twenty miles below Crown-Point. There were eight persons in the boat when it overset, but two saved their lives by keeping to the boat. ... [21 stanzas of four line verse] [n.p.n.d. Bennington: Haswell & Russell, 1787] Broadside. 45 x 27.5 cm.

MWA* ¶ Broadside is surrounded by a mourning border and is headed by a line of six woodcuts of coffins. The verse is printed in three columns. ¶ Adv. in *Vermont Gazette*, Mar. 19, 1787.

213B WEBSTER, NOAH, 1758-1843

The American Spelling Boo[k] Containing An easy Standard of Pro[nunciation] Being the first p[art of a] Grammatical I[nstitute] of th[e] English La[nguage] By Noah Webster, junior, [esquire] The fifth Vermont edition. Printed at Bennington, by Anth[ony] Haswell With the privilege of copy-right. 1791? 12mo.

MH* ¶ Present are leaves A¹, defective, and A⁴, I¹, I⁴⁻⁶. These leaves were partially overprinted and were pasted together to form a cover to the MH copy of item 575, *Fables for the Female Sex* by Edward Moore.

⁴Newark city directories of the 1850s show Stephen and Horace resident at 115 Mulberry Street in Newark. The Congar Papers in the New Jersey Historical Society contain letters from Stephen to Horace in the 1860s showing his deep attachment to his brother and his family.

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