

Osborne, John ^[1]

Osborne, John Chevor

by Gertrude S. Carraway, 1991

d. 5 Mar. 1819

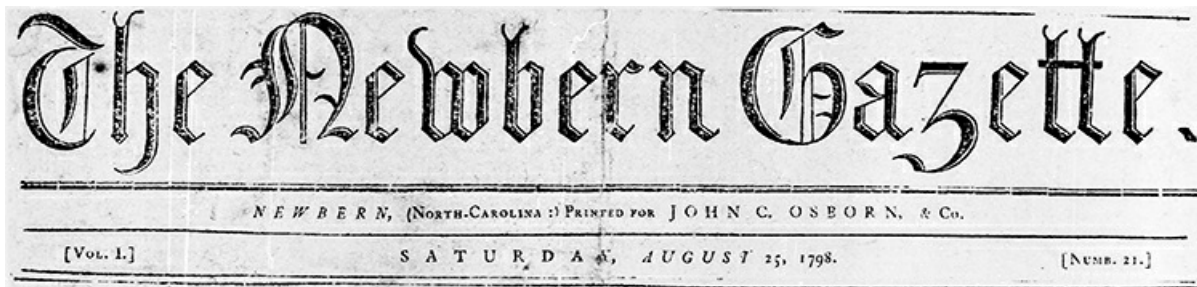
John Chevor Osborne, physician, printer, publisher, Masonic ^[2]leader, and merchant, was born in Middletown, Conn., the son of an eminent physician. He settled in New Bern, N.C., as a young man.

In 1792 Osborne was a steward of St. John's Masonic Lodge and its treasurer of 1793–94. He served on the lodge's committee of laws and correspondence, which was instructed to "form an address to our Grand Master Wm. R. Davie ^[3], Esq., and Congratulate him on his appointment as Chief Magistrate of the State of North Carolina." Osborne wrote the script, went over it with the other committeemen on 11 Jan. 1799, and obtained their approval before relaying it to Davie, whose appreciative reply was read to the lodge on 20 March.

At the same time, the committee was requested to "form an address to our Worsh'l Grand Sen'r. Warden J. L. Taylor ^[4] and Congratulate him in the above manner on his Late Appointment as one of the Judges of Law & Equity in No. Carolina." Osborne also was on a 1799 committee of three "to draw up a Subscription for the building of a lodge upon the lots purchased by the brethren." He was a liberal contributor towards the cost of constructing the Masonic Temple.

In 1802 he was elected grand marshal of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. While still holding that office, he was chosen to formally present to the lodge on 6 Mar. 1805 the purchased portrait of its worshipful master, Francis Lowthrop, painted by William Joseph Williams. A decade previously Williams had painted a similar portrait of George Washington in Masonic regalia for the Alexandria-Washington Lodge, Alexandria, Va.

In 1800, when there was an outbreak of "contagious fevers" a mile and a half below New Bern, Dr. Osborne was one of three physicians named as "health examiners."



The masthead of The Newbern Gazette of August 25, 1798, published by John Chevor Osborne. Image from the North Carolina Digital Collections. ^[5]

To supplement his income as doctor, printer, and publisher of the Newbern Gazette ^[6], established in April 1798 and continued until sometime between July 1799 and May 1800, Osborne also operated a store. In 1799 an item in his newspaper advertised "Currants for sale at the store of John C. Osborn and Co." His "Soothing Syrup" was praised, "as all mothers within reach considered it a blessing to them for their children."

At the second annual meeting of the first, short-lived North Carolina Medical Society ^[7] on 1 Dec. 1800, in Raleigh, Osborne was elected president. For its 1801 meeting, also held in Raleigh, he delivered the opening address: "A cursory narrative of the progress of the science of Medicine, from the earliest ages." He remained president until the organization ceased to function sometime after 1804.

From 16 Apr. 1799 to 25 Apr. 1807, when he sold it to Francis Hawks ^[8], Osborne and his family resided in a frame house on Hancock Street. In the 1980s it was entered in the National Register of Historic Places as one of the few gambrel-roofed structures in the region, having remained "remarkably unchanged from its period of occupancy by the Hawks family, prominent in North Carolina for three generations."

In 1807 Osborne moved from New Bern to New York to become professor of the Institutes of Medicine at Columbia University. He also was a trustee of the New York College of Physicians and Surgeons. After contracting tuberculosis, he went to the Virgin Islands for his health but died on the day he landed.

Osborne married Elizabeth Barron, the daughter of Major David Barron, of New Bern, a successful merchant and distinguished Patriot. She was the grand-daughter of Major Thomas Graves, Episcopal church-warden and the 1760–62 representative of Craven County ^[9] in the Assembly. Their son, Samuel, died in 1804. Elizabeth Osborne apparently died

before her husband moved to New York, for in 1816 Osborne was married to Louise Payne ^[10] of New York City.

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[masthead]. *The Newbern Gazette*. August 25, 1798. 1. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn83025840/1798-08-25/ed-1/seq-1/> ^[5] (accessed November 26, 2013).

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Authors:

Carraway, Gertrude S. ^[17]

Origin - location:

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