

White, Philo ^[1]

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White, Philo

by D. A. Yanchisin, 1996

23 June 1796–15 Feb. 1883

Philo White, newspaperman, diplomat, and town developer, was born in Whitesboro (Whitestown), Oneida County, N.Y., the son of a man by the same name and the grandson of the town's founder, Hugh White. After brief periods of schooling in his hometown and in Utica, N.Y., he became a printer for the *Columbian Gazette* in Utica and probably the *Manlius Times*. In 1820 he went to Salisbury, N.C., and with [Lemuel Bingham](#) ^[2] established the *Western Carolinian* ^[3] in the old printing shop of Jacob Krider. In 1823 Bingham withdrew from the paper, and with the financial and polemical support of [Charles Fisher](#) ^[4], White made the *Western Carolinian* ^[5] a powerful voice in support of western rights until 1830, when his health failed and he left the paper to become a purchasing agent for the U.S. Navy on the Pacific Coast. In 1834 he returned to the state and established the *North Carolina Standard* in Raleigh. The paper was an active Democratic organ, and its editor was made the state printer. In 1836 White's health deteriorated again, and he sold the *Standard* to Thomas Loring. Securing another post with the navy, he was a purser with the fleets for seven years.



Masthead of the *Western Carolinian* (Salisbury, NC), January 6, 1824. Philo White was the publisher and editor of the paper from 1823-1830. From the State Archives of North Carolina Historic Newspaper Archive. ^[6]

In 1844 he moved to what is now Racine, Wis., becoming one of the founding fathers of the city and erecting the United States Hotel, which was the grandest structure in the new city. He bought property in Racine and Milwaukee and for two years published the *Racine Advocate* with the financial support of Solomon Juneau, a wealthy real estate developer. As a member of the Territorial Council from 1847 to 1848, White introduced plank roads to the territory. In 1848, after Wisconsin was granted statehood, he was elected to the state senate. An [Episcopalian](#) ^[7], he was active in establishing the Diocese of Wisconsin. He was also one of the founders and a trustee of Racine College, an Episcopal institution, which granted him an honorary doctor of laws degree in 1856.

In 1849 White was appointed U.S. consul in Hamburg. In 1853 he became chargé d'affaires in the Republic of Ecuador, and from 1855 to 1858 he was the resident minister located in Quito. In 1859 he returned to Whitesboro, where he found that the other White heirs had sold the town hall and green during his absence. After a great deal of work and expense, he succeeded in regaining the title in order to return the property to the town in accordance with his grandfather's wishes.

On 9 May 1822, while editor of the *Western Carolinian* in Salisbury, he married Nancy B. Hampton (2 Sept. 1803–29 Nov. 1877), the daughter of William and Mary Hampton. The Whites had two children, Esther (b. 1830) who died in infancy and Mary (1824–44) who married [John W. Ellis](#) ^[8]. After Nancy White died, Philo White married Lydia M. Marsh of Whitesboro in October 1880. He died at age eighty-six in his hometown.

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