

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Today in Texas history

First issue of the San Antonio Light published

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On Jan. 20, 1881, the first issue of the San Antonio Light was published. The original appearance of the paper was heralded in an occasional paper called the San Antonio Surprise, a four-page sheet which explained the necessity for a lively daily devoted to the issues and interests of San Antonio.

The Light was first published as a daily, except Sunday, at the office of the Texas Sun, which was published by A. W. Gifford and James Pearson Newcomb. In 1890, the paper was described as the only Republican daily in Texas, but after 1911, when Harrison L. Beach and Charles S. Diehl bought the paper, the Light became liberal-Democratic in its political views.

In 1924, William Randolph Hearst bought the Light and by 1945 the circulation had climbed to 70,000. In 1972 the Light, with a daily circulation of 122,292 and a Sunday circulation of 160,905, was one of the leading Hearst newspapers in the United States.

By 1987, however, it was operating on a deficit, and in October 1992 the Hearst Corporation, after purchasing the rival San Antonio Express-News, closed the Light.