

## Washington Times-Reporter

Est. 1840

The year was 1840. The president of the United States was Martin Van Buren, and the city of Washington had already been established 15 years. The Washington Investigator, an ancestor of The Washington Times-Reporter, was the town's first newspaper. It was established by A.A. Couch. The Washington Times-Reporter is the second oldest published paper in the state of Illinois, according to the 1975 Tazewell Publishing Co. Sesquicentennial special section.

The Washington Times-Reporter is the result of several newspapers merging over the years. The Washington Investigator ended publication in 1855. The Washington Herald and The Washington Republican merged to form The Washington News in 1885.

At the same time, two other newspapers, called The Home-Coming Daily and The Washington Post, were also in operation. The Washington News and The Washington Post merged to form The Washington Post and News in 1912.

Paul R. Goddard was the editor of The Washington Post. He came to Washington in 1899 and purchased the paper. He worked in the publishing business all his life.

In 1917, The Washington Post and News evolved into The Tazewell County Reporter, which was still owned by Goddard.

He and his wife, Anna, had two daughters. One of them, Isadora Bunton, married Edwin G. Kilby in 1926.

Kilby purchased The Tazewell County Reporter from his father-in-law in the 1930s. Goddard stayed on as the editor of the newspaper. All Washington residents knew Edwin and Isadora as "Tip" and "Iz." After the couple retired, they moved to Texas. Edwin G. Kilby died at age 84 April 6, 1984, in Memphis, Tenn., and Goddard died in 1944, but the newspaper lived.

The Tazewell County Reporter was eventually purchased by Tazewell Publishing Co. in Morton. The company has a heritage dating back to 1888 when it was established as a weekly newspaper in Morton.

As the business grew, more individual newspapers were purchased and added to the company. In 1994, the business owned The Tazewell News, The East Peoria-Courier, The Washington Reporter, The Illinois Valley Advertiser, The Chillicothe Bulletin, and The Observer.

In 1973, The Tazewell County Reporter, dropped the "county" and became The Tazewell Reporter. In 1981, the "Tazewell" was dropped and "Washington" was added.

In the April 23, 1981, edition of The Washington Reporter, Vernon K. Richey wrote an article about the change. "It all started just under 141 years ago — on May 12, 1840 — when Tazewell County's first newspaper was born," Richey wrote.

Richey quoted background from a 1939 master's thesis written by Gladys Matilda Dubson, who submitted her paper to the faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Colorado for her master's in history degree.

Dubson said, "The only newspaper in Washington at present is The Tazewell County Reporter. It was founded May 12, 1840, and was the first paper printed in Tazewell County."

The name of the paper was changed to The Washington Reporter, Richey said, "Because of the newspaper's increased in-depth concentration of things in Washington."

In October 1997, The Washington Reporter and the other newspapers in the company acquired a new owner and publisher, Jim Glassman.

"Times" was added to the names of all the newspapers and The Washington Times-Reporter was born. Operations moved from Morton to North Peoria.

In July of 2007, GateHouse Media Inc., based out of New York, purchased TimesNewspapers. In

2009, operations moved to the Journal Star building.

Currently, TimesNewspapers includes the Washington Times-Reporter, Chillicothe Times-Bulletin, East Peoria Times-Courier, Morton Times-News and Woodford Times as well as one shopper, the Morton Pumpkin Advertiser.

The newspapers gradually changed their focus to local news in the last 15 years. They do not publish coverage of the national state news as in the early days of The Washington Investigator. The Washington Times-Reporter covers events in Washington and stories about Washington residents. Jennifer Freeman is the current editor.

— by former Washington Times-Reporter editors Jeanette Kendall (1992-1997) and Marina Harris