

120 YEARS OF THE REPORTER-NEWS

Continued from 1F



George Anderson: Rescued the paper.

16. Wished he had stayed
 "There are fond recollections of Abilene. While I had some ups and downs during my five years there, I always loved the town and the people. Of course, when I left for Dallas it was only the ambition of youth to try a larger field... I have often wished that it had been my fortune to remain in Abilene."
 — C.E. Gilbert in an interview for the Reporter's 50th anniversary edition in 1931.

17. Drought!
 Dr. Alf H.H. Toler, publisher of the Colorado (City) Clipper, bought the Reporter in 1886 in the midst of a drought. The drought (or drought as it was spelled then) was so bad, that a rival Taylor County News reported, that "a prominent prohibitionist has ordered a case of beer from Decatur... as evidence that he wants a lather to shave with."
 Toler ran the struggling paper for two years before John Hoeny Jr. from Weatherford took it over.

18. Flowery prose
 "The Abilene country is the land of flowers, and the city of Abilene the home of refined ladies, who cultivate roses of the most dainty tints and delicious fragrance."
 — Abilene Reporter, May 8, 1891

19. Other papers
 The Abilene Reporter and the Taylor County News weren't the only papers on the scene in Abilene's early days. Besides the Magnetic Quill, other newspapers included the Evening Lance, the Daily Times, the Sentinel, the Gossip and the Evening Mirror. Most lasted for just a few issues.

20. First classified ads
 The Abilene Reporter, under John Hoeny Jr., was one of the first newspapers in the country to print classified ads in a column by themselves. Editorially, Hoeny supported good roads, a high school building and the development of Simmons College, which opened in 1891.

21. George Anderson
 Dr. George S. Anderson joined the Reporter's staff in 1894, became its manager in 1895 and principal owner in 1900. He rescued the paper from bankruptcy. To keep the struggling paper alive, he often would start work at 7 a.m. and not get through until midnight.

22. Supporter of education
 Anderson Hall at Hardin-Simmons University and Anderson Outpatient Center at Hendrick Medical Center are named for George S. Anderson. Anderson was board chairman of both HSU and Hendrick and a leader in first Baptist Church. He also helped raise the money to bring Abilene Christian and McMurry here and was involved in many other civic causes. He died in 1964.

23. Pony express
 "Bernard Hanks and his pretty little pony have undertaken to deliver the Daily Reporter on the north side. As soon as they learn the route they should do the job a turn. Should anyone fail to get the paper please be patient and report the matter to us, though Bernard thinks he found all readers this morning. The rain yesterday afternoon prevented the usual delivery at that time."
 — Abilene Reporter, Sept. 17, 1897

24. Bernard Hanks
 Bernard Hanks and George Anderson divided the management duties of the Abilene Reporter beginning in 1906. Hanks was responsible for business and editorial operations, Anderson for printing and production. Eventually they would form two companies, Reporter Publishing under Hanks, and Abilene Printing and Stationery under Anderson, but they remained partners in each other's company — and friends.

25. Never a harsh word
 George Anderson said that in their

long association, which spanned more than 50 years, he and Bernard Hanks never had a harsh word or misunderstanding.
 "I never knew him to do a dishonest thing, and he possessed one of the brightest minds I have ever come in contact with," Anderson said.

26. Objectivity
 "Bernard and I agreed long ago that the news columns should never be used to punish an enemy or to reward a friend."
 — George Anderson

27. Newspaper slogan
 Bernard Hanks is credited with selecting the lines from Lord Byron's "Don Juan" to be the slogan for the Abilene Reporter-News. For more than 70 years it ran under the masthead on the front page and continues to be published every day on the editorial page:
 "Without or with offense to friends or foes, we sketch your world exactly as it goes."

28. Fight for the little guy
 "Always keep an eye out for the little fellow," Bernard Hanks was often quoted as saying. "The big ones can look after themselves, but the little fellows have nobody but the newspaper to fight for them."

29. Morning edition
 Under Bernard Hanks, the newspaper grew. A Sunday edition was added in 1908. The paper purchased the Taylor County News in 1911. A morning edition began on Sept. 1, 1926, as the Abilene Morning News, with the Reporter continuing as the afternoon paper. The names were combined in 1937 to become the Abilene Reporter-News, with morning, afternoon and Sunday editions.

30. North 1st and Cypress
 The Reporter moved to its present location on Cypress Street downtown in 1921. The current building was built in 1971.

31. Depressing times
 During the Great Depression, Bernard Hanks was credited with keeping the newspaper alive. One employee said, "Mr. Hanks called us all together in a meeting and told us he was having to go to the bank every week to borrow the payroll."

32. Eggs-tra, eggs-tral
 Former Reporter-News circulation director Frank Pruitt said that during the Depression the newspaper took chickens, eggs, pecans, cottonseed, and even old batteries as payment for subscriptions.

33. Friend of LBJ
 Bernard Hanks was an early supporter of Lyndon Johnson. He started Johnson's campaign fund when LBJ ran for Congress, and Johnson never forgot him. That friendship would pay huge dividends for Abilene.

34. Camp Barkeley
 Bernard Hanks was one of the Abilene civic leaders to go to Washington in 1940 to try to get an Army camp for Abilene. With the help of some of Hanks' political allies, including Lyndon Johnson, Speaker Sam Rayburn and Sen. Tom Connally, Abilene got Camp Barkeley.

35. Army air base
 Hanks and Abilene civic leader Dub Wright took a proposal to Washington in 1942 to get an air base located in Abilene. They were unable to get any action until Hanks called on Lyndon Johnson. Abilene got the base.

36. Harte-Hanks
 Bernard Hanks and Houston Harte, publisher of the San Angelo newspaper, founded what would become an international communications company, Harte-Hanks Communications, traded on the New York Stock Exchange. They began in the mid-1920s by buying interests in newspapers in Lubbock, Harlingen, Corpus Christi and Brownsville. By the 1970s, Harte-Hanks owned more Texas daily newspapers than any other company. It

became a publicly traded company in 1972 and continued to own the Reporter-News until 1997.
 A key executive in the early years of Harte-Hanks was Hanks' accountant, Bruce Meador. Meador eventually became the operating head of the company and held the title of vice president and general manager.

37. Frank Grimes
 Frank Grimes joined the Abilene Reporter in 1914 and became its first full-time editor in 1919. He would be editor for the next 42 years.

38. Esteemed editor
 "Frank Grimes: Scholar and esteemed editor, whose common touch, warm humor, sound judgment and civic devotion have helped shape our community and have endeared him to West Texas during his 41 years among us."
 — Plaque presented by the citizens of Abilene to Grimes on Frank Grimes Day, April 10, 1956.

39. Not a crusader
 Dr. Rupert Richardson, the noted historian from Abilene and Hardin-Simmons, said Frank Grimes was the master of the "come let us reason together" approach to editorial writing. He was not a firebrand crusader, though he did have his pet causes.

40. Books on books
 "Books are company. Books are friendly and companionable. Books are the soul of great men running back for thousands of years speaking to your soul...
 "To tell the truth, the book that influenced me more than any other was the biography of a horse, Black Beauty, by Mrs. Anna Sewell... because it was the first book ever given to me and the first one I ever read on my own power. Black Beauty hooked me, and I have been a devotee of books ever since."
 — Abilene Reporter-News, Sept. 30, 1956

41. Grimes on editorial writing
 "There really isn't anything to editorial writing: it's just a matter of putting down one word after another, day after day, week after week, year after year, decade after decade. We suppose it's habit-forming in some degree like smoking...
 "It is much easier to write a long editorial on a single subject than two very short ones on two subjects, so we have always felt that long-winded editorials, like long-winded speeches, and sermons, were a sign of laziness."
 — Abilene Reporter-News, Dec. 4, 1949

42. Grimes on Christmas
 "Christmas is our finest day. Although most of us are given to rude display of wealth (as represented by gifts costlier than we can afford) we get nearer to genuine unselfishness on this than on any other day."
 — Abilene Reporter-News, Dec. 23, 1943

43. Grimes on women wearing shorts
 "Few women look alluring in shorts or tight britches. By coming practically all the way out they leave little to the imagination, but they do destroy the mystery and the promise of illusion, which after all is the highest development of art."
 — Editorial quoted in an Associated Press article on Frank Grimes in 1956.

44. Grimes on pumpkin pie
 Most editors have pet peeves, and one thing that peeved Frank Grimes was pumpkin pie — or punkin' pie, as he put it. He loved to hate it, claiming that it had the taste and consistency of axle grease.
 Reporter-News readers often joined in the fun. After one of his tirades about punkin' pie, a downtown restaurant displayed the editorial on the pie counter and ran a special on pumpkin pie. Grimes, in an editorial the next day, had to admit they sold out of pie.

45. The Old Mesquites Ain't Out
 Frank Grimes was a poet as well as an essayist. His most lasting verse,



The late Lash Lashbrook, former oil editor with the newspaper during the 1980s, demonstrates how to work the Abilene Reporter original press.

"The Old Mesquites Ain't Out," has been memorized by thousands of school kids and often reprinted at the onset of spring.

We see some signs of returning spring
 The redbird's back and the tie' larks sing,
 The ground's plowed up and the creeks run clear,
 The onions sprout and the rosebud's near,
 And yet they's a point worth thinkin' about
 We note that the old mesquites ain't out!

The fancier trees are in full bloom,
 The grass is green and the willows bloom,
 The colts kick up and the calves bend down,
 And spring's a-pear-ently come to town,
 And yet they's a point worth thinkin' about
 We note that the old mesquites ain't out!

Well, it may be spring for all we know
 There ain't no ice and there ain't no snow,
 It looks like spring and it smells so, too,
 The cal-en-dar says it's plenty true
 And still they's a point worth thinkin' about
 We note that the old mesquites ain't out!

46. Robbed!
 In 1951, Frank Grimes and six other editors were nominated by the Pulitzer Prize jury for the Pulitzer Prize in editorial writing. Grimes, according to reports, was the favorite for the prestigious award but was reportedly rejected because the decision makers couldn't believe that one man could produce that much high quality material.

47. Personal experience
 "He is a man who can write about anything and make it interesting. He can write about the awkwardness of bedspans or about the United Nations and make each editorial a personal experience for his readers. It would not

be amiss for some big-city editors to visit Abilene!
 "The outstanding quality of his work is the fact that he is able, consistently, to write daily editorials which provide a voice of leadership in his community, editorials which will help to keep his readers thinking for themselves."
 — Pulitzer Prize jury's nomination of Grimes for the prize in 1951.

48. Editorial leadership
 Frank Grimes campaigned editorially for a strong national defense, a reliable water supply for Abilene, and a variety of local bond issues. He also campaigned, unsuccessfully, for burying the railroad tracks that split Abilene down the middle.

49. School dropout
 Frank Grimes dropped out of school in the eighth grade because he was "bored." Later he would say, "It was a foolish thing to do."
 McMurry University awarded the man known as "the prophet from Abilene" an honorary doctorate in 1946.

50. Pecking away
 Frank Grimes wrote an estimated 500,000 words a year in his editorials, or more than 20 million in his 42 years as editor. He typed with his two index fingers.

51. Lone Star Christmas
 Charlie Marler, longtime journalism professor at Abilene Christian University, is the resident expert on editor Frank Grimes. He wrote his master's thesis and doctoral dissertation on Grimes, and he edited a collection of editorials by Grimes about the Christmas season. The book, titled Lone Star Christmas, was published by ACU Press in 1989.

52. One-man show
 Almost 30 years after his death, Frank Grimes was the subject of a one-man performance based on the Christmas editorials he had written. The performance, written by Charlie Marler and directed by Ted Starnes, featured the then-editor of the Reporter-News, Glenn Dromgoole, in the role of Grimes. The play was performed during the Christmas season in 1990 and 1991.

53. Growth
 Abilene literally grew up reading Frank Grimes. When Grimes joined the Abilene Reporter in 1914, Abilene's population was about 10,000. When he died in 1961, it was more than 90,000. Circulation of the newspaper had grown from around 2,000 to 56,000.

54. Lettie Faucett
 One of the most celebrated writers at the Reporter-News was women's editor Lettie Faucett, who wrote about social happenings for the newspaper for 32 years before retiring in 1952.
 In 1950, she was featured in a Life Magazine article. A Life writer and photographer chronicled a week of her home, social and workday life. The magazine spread included 13 pictures.

55. Not important
 It wasn't Lettie Faucett but another writer in the women's department of the newspaper who noticed that the bridegroom's name hadn't been filled in on a wedding form. The reporter called the bride's mother about the oversight.
 "Oh, it's not important," the mother said. "Nobody here knows him anyway."

56. First radio station
 The first radio station in Abilene was KRBC — the letters standing for Reporter Broadcasting Company. Bernard Hanks and George Anderson were the principal stockholders. The station went on the air Oct. 1, 1936, from studios atop the Hilton Hotel, now the Windsor.

57. First TV station
 The Reporter-News played a role in the first TV station in Abilene, too. The Hanks family had applied for a TV permit for KRBC. It was granted in 1936, but before it could go on the air, Mrs. Hanks sold the station and the permit

to members of the Ackers family. The call letters, however, remained — even to this day.

58. Ike or Adlai?
 Bernard Hanks' widow, Eva May Hanks, became president of Reporter Publishing Co. after Hanks died in 1948.
 In 1952, the Reporter-News board of directors voted to endorse the Republican Dwight Eisenhower for president over Democrat Adlai Stevenson.
 Frank Grimes refused to write the endorsement, and Mrs. Hanks overrode the board's decision. She said Mr. Hanks wouldn't have approved of the endorsement.
 Although she delegated authority to operating executives, Mrs. Hanks had the final say. She continued as president until her death in 1967.

59. On strike
 Reporter-News printers went on strike twice in the '40s. The first strike was a wildcat, or unauthorized strike, when printers failed to show up for the night shift on Aug. 30, 1945, and the next morning off. The newspaper missed one issue.
 On Dec. 9, 1947, the printers union called a full-scale strike. The principal issue was who would have control over technological innovations — the printers or management. The printers walked out, and Reporter-News managers and employees from other departments put the paper out. This time the newspaper did not miss an issue, and the strike was never resolved.

60. Publishers
 Since Bernard Hanks' death in 1948, four men have held the title of publisher of the Reporter-News: Howard McMahon, Andrew B. "Stormy" Shelton, Frank Puckett and David Mercier.
 D.F. McCarty and Bill Martin were general managers, in charge of business operations, but never held the title of publisher.

61. Hubbard Creek Lake
 As publisher, Howard McMahon led the effort to expand Abilene's water supply by building Hubbard Creek Lake. A bond issue was passed in 1959 by voters in Abilene, Breckenridge, Albany and Anson to build the lake.
 In 1961, McMahon backed a Reporter-News investigation of reports of salt pollution which threatened the quality of water in Hubbard Creek Lake.
 "The series resulted in public action to correct the problem and a number of awards for writer Kathryn Duff and the newspaper. But McMahon felt the heat from oil interests responsible for the pollution.
 "Without or with offense to friends or foes..."

62. Air Force award
 Howard McMahon and fellow Abilene civic leader W. P. "Dub" Wright were given the Air Force Exceptional Service Gold Medal by the Secretary of the Air Force for their efforts in helping get Dyess Air Force Base located in Abilene in 1956.

63. Champions of Dyess
 Two Reporter-News publishers have played critical roles in relations with Dyess Air Force Base.
 Howard McMahon was the first. The other was Frank Puckett. Puckett became chairman of the Abilene Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee in 1991, responsible for promoting the continued viability of Dyess at home as well as in Washington and Austin. Though retired from the AR-N, Puckett continues in that role today.

64. Editors
 Counting Frank Grimes, there have been just six editors of the newspaper since 1919. The others are: the late Ed Wishcamper, Dick Tarpley, Glenn Dromgoole, Jimmy Denley and Terri Burke.

65. Managing editors
 Max Bentley was named managing

editor of the Reporter-News in 1926. As managing editor, he was responsible for the day-to-day news coverage while Frank Grimes wrote editorials.
 Others who have held the title of managing editor include Wendell Bedichek, Hal Sayles, Ed Wishcamper, Dick Tarpley, Richard Seaman, Rebecca Harris, Doug Williamson and Danny Reagan. Since 1996, the editor has functioned as editor and managing editor, assisted by a team of senior editors.

66. From Tents to Computers
 The most comprehensive history of the Abilene Reporter-News was written by former editor Ed Wishcamper in 1981 in observance of the newspaper's 100th birthday. The title: From Tents to Computers.

67. Story of the Prairieland
 The Abilene Reporter-News special edition of the Abilene centennial is titled Abilene Remembered: Our Centennial Treasury Book, 1881-1981. The book is available from the newspaper's Web site, www.reporternews.com, keyword: **shopan**.
 It is a reprint of a series of special sections published to commemorate the city's 100th birthday. The sections, distributed with the Sunday paper over a six-week period, totaled 350 newspaper pages.

68. Catclaw Country
 Kathryn Duff, the Reporter-News' longtime Page one columnist, wrote what is still considered the most authoritative history of Abilene — Catclaw Country: An Informal History of Abilene in West Texas, published in 1980. Much of the book was reprinted in the newspaper's centennial edition in 1981.

69. Kathryn Duff
 "In the last 50 years, Frank Grimes and Kathryn Duff probably had more readership than anyone else."
 — Publisher Stormy Shelton, quoted in an article profiling Duff in 1990. She joined the newspaper staff in 1942 and retired in 1981.

70. Gruff Duff
 Bill Whitaker, later a front page columnist himself, told a story about another young reporter who sat down at the computer where Duff had been working, not realizing that she had a claim on it.
 "Upon returning to the computer and finding it occupied," Whitaker said, "Kathryn gave him such an inspired tongue-lashing that he quietly turned in whatever he was working on, gathered his things, walked out the door, left town and moved to Lubbock."

71. Dive-bombing blue jays
 "For the better part of two decades, Kathryn Duff greeted people each morning. She broke the ice for them with some humorous anecdote about dive-bombing blue jays or a tree sprouting from someone's engine block, or maybe a gentle essay on how lovely the irises were at McMurry University or the turning of the leaves out on Highway 277. Then she'd send them on their way through the rest of the day — but always with just enough incentive to do it all again the following morning."
 — Bill Whitaker, in his eulogy of Kathryn Duff, July 15, 1995

72. Stormy Shelton
 In 1933, Andrew B. Shelton came to Abilene from Harlingen to attend Hardin-Simmons University, where he gained the nickname he would carry throughout his life — "Stormy" — for his exuberant tales about a hurricane that swept through the Rio Grande Valley. He went to work at the Reporter in 1935 as a part-time classified ad salesman for \$7.50 a week.

73. Boss's daughter
 Stormy Shelton married his HSU sweetheart, Patty Hanks, who just happened to be the publisher's daughter, in 1940. They would be married for 46 years until her death in 1986.



Frank Puckett, recovering from a near-fatal hunting accident, shows up for a corporate planning meeting on a hospital bed.



Howard McMahon: Expanded water supply



Kathryn Duff: Kept reporters on their toes.



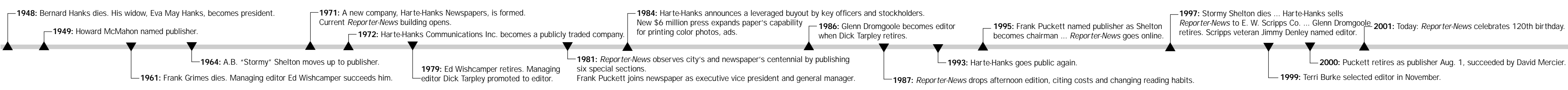
A.B. "Stormy" Shelton: Part-timer to publisher.



Ed Wishcamper: Started work for free.



Dick Tarpley: Preached responsibility of the press.



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