

## History of the Journal Tribune

**Source: Reid Beveridge e-Mail of 09/05/2005** Notwithstanding what the front page of the present-day Journal Tribune says, the paper was actually founded in 1885, right about the time the post office name was changed from Stellapolis to Williamsburg and also about the time the Milwaukee Railroad built its line from Cedar Rapids to Ottumwa through Conroy, Williamsburg and Parnell.

It began as the Williamsburg Journal, and at least in 1957, one copy of Volume 1, Number 1 still existed. The “Tribune” was a short-lived project of about 1905-06. It’s been the Journal-Tribune ever since.

The Journal Tribune suspended publication in about 1942 when Roland Halbasch, the publisher and owner, was drafted into the Army and could see no way to keep the paper open during the war. Shortly thereafter, the Childress’s opened the Williamsburg Shopper in the building off the northeast corner of the square. When Halbasch returned in 1946 and reopened the J-T, the Childress’s sold out in a couple years. The “Shopper” name continued to be included on the nameplate at the top of Page One for many years, but in small type.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were only three publishers/editors worth noting. All were long-time owners. They were J.P. Gallagher, from 1916 as I recall to 1937. Then there was Halbasch from 1937-55. And my father, G. Wiley Beveridge, from 1955 to 1975. By this time, there were three papers: The J-T, the Oxford Leader (now Clear Creek Leader) and the Iowa County Farmer.

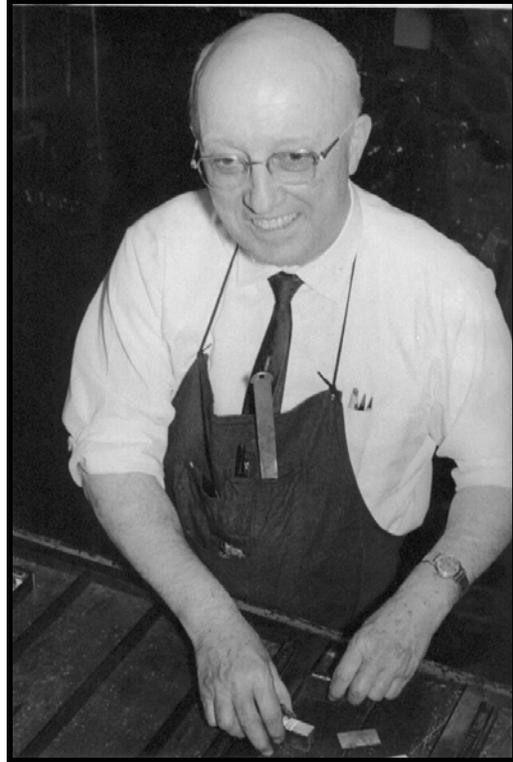
J.P. Gallagher was a well-known Iowa political figure and served in the state legislature for many of the years he was a publisher. His weekly column from Des Moines while the legislature was in session (only a few months each biennium back then) remains worth reading.

Wiley Beveridge was equally well known in Iowa newspaper circles. He won a number of state awards for editorial excellence over the years, including General Excellence and Iowa Master Columnist. He also won a couple national awards.

He was president of the Iowa Press Association in about 1970 and after that, served on the board of the National Newspaper Association until his retirement in 1975. He was awarded the Master Editor-Publisher Award by the Iowa Press Association in 1973, its highest honor.



But perhaps Beveridge's most lasting legacy will be having his name on the lawsuit that got the sales tax on advertising ruled unconstitutional by the Iowa Supreme Court: Beveridge et al v. Hughes (Gov. Harold Hughes at the time). I don't remember that the Journal-Tribune contributed much to the legal fees of a very expensive and very high-quality Des Moines law firm. The Des Moines Register paid for most of it, but the Cowles family didn't want their name on the suit, so the Iowa Press Association leadership took on that part.



The Beveridge family sold the Journal-Tribune to Lee and Jim Turnbull in January 1975. Lee and his wife, Jean, had been college contemporaries of the Beveridges. The J-T from then on was a part of the Marengo Publishing Co. mini-chain which at that time included the Pioneer-Republican, the Belle Plaine Union, the South Benton Star-Press and the Anamosa newspaper.

Jim Turnbull, who died suddenly and young in 1979, was the son of Lee Turnbull, who had been publisher of the Davenport Times-Democrat earlier. Prior to buying the Pioneer-Republican, the Turnbills owned the Keokuk County News in Sigourney.

■ Reid K. Beveridge