

A PREFACE:

Editor, Former Resident Team To Supply Issues Used In Star File

As long as we have been associated with newspapers, we have been interested in newspaper files. A newspaper's files are a living "diary" of a community, and without them, much historical information would be lost.

It was because we feel that way about newspaper files that we uttered a groan when we became editor of the Friona Star in 1962. The only bound files the newspaper had -- and apparently the only files -- were for the previous six years -- the time represented since the paper was purchased by Joe A. Osborn and W.H. Graham, Jr.

Our information at the time was that the Star's original editor, J.W. (Uncle John) White, had files of the years he served as editor (1925-1950) in his possession. This proved erroneous.

When Joe purchased Sonny Graham's interest in the Star (September, 1963), another employee and myself were asked to clean out an old shed out behind the Star and Plains Publishers building. It was said to contain some "stuff belonging to the Star."

Part of the "stuff" turned out to be most of the old volumes -- but when I saw them, I had another groan coming. Many of the early volumes edited by "Uncle John" had been rat-eaten; and the only files for the years 1950-1955 consisted of a crude weekly working file -- whose copies had been pushed down over the file's two posts.

Many of these issues were torn or missing abused and yellowed. And the entire bundle was tied cross-wise with a stout rope, with a tarpulin thrown over the heap.

To make matters worse, an entire four-month segment of the 1955 file was missing. This made me shudder; for a year as late as that (only eight years removed at that time), to have only a partial file as a permanent record. Later we discovered that the entire volumes of 1947 and 1949 were missing.

But this was better than nothing -- so we got started in the file "repairing" business, a project which has been our spare-time hobby ever since 1963.

In the meantime we played a hunch and decided to really see how good our classified advertising section was.

Early in 1965, we began running a classified ad, stating that we would pay \$1.00 per copy for any of the missing issues. It seemed hopeless several weeks after the ad had been running. Only a single issue had been brought forward.

But then came the bolt from the blue -- the Star's "guardian angel" showed up. A letter from Mrs. N.R. Cox of Midland (the former Mary Katherine Crawford of Friona) gave the news that she believed she had some of the missing issues, and requested a list of the missing dates.

Correspondence proved that Mrs. Cox did, indeed, have just about all of the copies missing from the Star's file, including almost all of the vacant 1949 volume. In addition, many of her copies were in much better shape than those found in the old store house.

True to its advertisement, the Star paid Mrs. Cox \$1.00 per issue for all issues which "plugged gaps," amounting to 75. We offered to pay Mrs. Cox \$100 and she agreed to turn over the entire collection (1949 to 1961), allowing us to choose the better copy between her file and the Star's.

Thus, using the two files, we have come up with almost every issue for the period covered. Papers used in this filming are almost equally divided from the two files.

Many of the issues from the old "punch file" had to be used, as they were the only ones available, or on occasion had stood the test of time better than those which had been wrapped and mailed to Mrs. Cox.

In this light, the fact that the papers were "poked" over the binder posts, rather than using a paper punch, was actually a good thing. These wadded strips of paper could be, and were smoothed out, and by the use of magic mending tape, repair the holes which had held them in place for so many years.



Bill Ellis, Editor & Manager

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In this manner, many times not so much as a letter-of type was lost from the left-hand editor's column. However, some of the issues had not retained this "scrap" of paper, so they have two small holes on the left hand side.

It has been a long and tedious procedure -- this mending of the newfiles. Sometimes we've run into a stretch of issue in such bad repair that we would shelve the project and not work up the enthusiasm to "attack" it again for many months.

A tip of the hat is also due our wife Carol, who has put up with stacks of old newspapers on her dining table -- under the bed -- or in the hall closet, during this project when we would take the papers home for a weekend or holiday session.

If we knew at the beginning the amount of time it would have taken, we might never have undertaken the project.

However, considering all the work and sweat that went into these early editions of the paper -- it was surely worth some additional effort to preserve them for history's sake.

Bill Ellis
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AD WORKS "MIRACLE"

Believe In Advertising? Star Backs Its Claims

Bill Ellis, editor of the Friona Star, has always believed in the effectiveness of advertising in the local newspaper, but the results of an "ad" run earlier this year has made him even more of a "believer". On numerous occasions the Star has run a small advertisement when it has a need to fill, and has always been gratified with the results of its own "advertising pull."

So earlier this year, when editor Ellis came up with a seemingly impossible situation, he decided to put the Star's classified page to the supreme test.

While working with the back files of the Friona Star last winter, Ellis discovered that more than one yearly volume of the local newspaper had big "gaps" of several weekly is-

suess missing. Various changes in ownership for the paper, as well as moving the office location helped cause the incomplete file, it is thought.

It was an especially acute problem, since all of the missing issues were at least 10 years old, and some of them were 16 years old.

Ellis pondered the problem, figuring it might be a lost cause, but ultimately decided to run an advertisement on the Star's classified page, offering a "reward" for anyone who could dig up any of the missing copies.

The Star offered to pay \$1 per issue of those missing, as an enticement for people who might have kept old papers to check them over.

Results weren't overwhelming at first. One local resident brought in a single copy from 1955 which was missing. He just happened to have the single issue.

Then came the "miracle." A former resident of Friona, Mrs. N. R. Cox, now residing at Midland, wrote to say that she thought she had several of the missing issues, and requested a full list of the lost dates.

Mrs. Cox, the former Mary Katherine Crawford, was contacted at once, and through correspondence it was found that she had practically every one of the missing dates, covering a seven-year period in the Star's publishing history.

The missing issues Mrs. Cox had amounted to 75 copies, so Ellis offered to pay Mrs. Cox

\$75 for the papers, true to the advertisement.

It was not until this past weekend that Ellis was able to make a trip to Midland to get the papers. He was so impressed by the good condition of the papers that he offered Mrs. Cox a \$25 "bonus." She reciprocated by allowing Ellis to take her entire collection for the seven-year period, and thus use the better copy between her file and the Star's, for completion of the permanent volume, which is to be sturdily bound and perhaps microfilmed an insurance measure.

Mrs. Cox says she has been a subscriber to the Star for most of the time she has been away from Friona. She has lived in Midland since 1951. Her husband, who died some 18 months ago, was owner of Bob Cox, Inc., a dealership for caliche and crushed rock.

Since Cox' death, her son has begun Cox Concrete Company. Another son, Kenneth, is employed in the aeronautics division of LTV at Arlington. He is a 1965 graduate of Texas Tech.

"I have thought about writing a history of Friona," Mrs. Cox said in explaining why she kept the old newspapers. Her father, T. J. Crawford, who lives at 511 Cleveland, is a Friona pioneer.

When the Star gets these old volumes bound, anyone will be welcome to come by the local office to use them for reference, as they may already use the current files for such purposes, Ellis points out.



WORTH KEEPING... Mrs. N. R. Cox, former Friona resident, was glad she kept her copies of the Friona Star, because the Star has "bought back" several issues missing from its files, at \$1 each. She is shown inspecting one of the issues, which is 16 years old.