

YesterYear Broadwater County Newspapers

People new to Broadwater County may be surprised to see that Townsend has 2 newspapers, MT43 News and the Broadwater County News. Very few people in the county remember Broadwater County having more than one newspaper (except for a very brief period in 2013 when we had both the Townsend Star and the Broadwater Reporter).

Broadwater County has been home to 15 newspaper publications; well, technically, 14 since the Diamond City paper “The Rocky Mountain Husbandman” was actually published in Meagher County before Broadwater County was formed.

Of course, many of the newspapers were very short lived. Only a few issues were ever printed. And, of course, there were several mergers.

The first newspaper published in what is now Broadwater County was the “Rocky Mountain Husbandman” in the mining town of Diamond City. The newspaper was devoted to publishing articles about agriculture and about farming/ranching lifestyles. The “Rocky Mountain Husbandman” was published in Diamond City from 1875 to 1879. When the Meagher County Seat moved from Diamond City to White Sulphur Springs, the newspaper moved with it. The paper was published until 1942.

The Townsend Tranchant started publishing in Townsend in 1883 and was in publication for 7 years, until 1890.

In 1890 the Townsend Messenger started publishing and ran until 1901 when it merged with the Townsend Star.

Broadwater County’s longest running newspaper, The Townsend Star was founded by the T.N. Averill family in 1897. The paper merged with the Townsend Messenger in 1901 and then the Townsend Forum in the same year. The Averill family published the Townsend Star until 1957. The Star finally closed in 2013.

The Townsend Forum was founded in 1900 and was taken over by the Townsend Star in 1901.

Very little is known about the Townsend Citizen. The Broadwater Bygones has a banner of the Townsend Citizen showing the first publication to be October 1902.

In 1904, the Broadwater County Citizen was very short lived; it started publishing in April of 1904 and only published until September of 1904.

The Common Sense Journal was a publication by the Broadwater County Democratic Central Committee. It started publishing in October of 1908 and was ostensibly just published for the election of 1908, ending after the election.

The Broadwater Opinion started publishing in 1909 and in 1914 became the Townsend Inter-Mountain. The Inter-Mountain paper stopped publishing in 1915.

Radersburg had a newspaper called the Broadwater County Taxpayer published by the Crow Creek Farms Club. The paper only published 5 issues starting in 1908.

Many people might be surprised to know there were 3 (maybe 4) newspapers that claimed Toston as home:

The Toston Times published in 1923 and 1924

The Missouri Valley Index published in 1914

The Crow Creek Journal banner shows its home as Toston, but was actually edited and published by Fred H. Averill in the Townsend Star office.

The Broadwater Bygones also references an article stating “Alexander Watkins died in July 21, 1924. While in Toston he edited the Toston Sun.” No further information is given about the Toston Sun except that the newspaper used the “old Washington press that was used by The Star when it started”.

And finally, Winston also had a newspaper that the Broadwater Bygones call “a very fine newspaper”. The Winston Prospector, founded in 1897, was published to “further the interests of the extensive mining community”.

A few years ago, the Broadwater County Museum / Historical Society began a project in conjunction with the Montana Historical Society to digitize the newspapers of Broadwater County and publish the newspapers on the Montana Historical Society website.

To date, all of the historic newspapers except the Townsend Star have been digitized and are on the Montana Historical Society website. We have also digitized the Townsend Star up to 1973. At that time, the Montana Historical Society had turnover and the digitizing stopped. We are continuing to try to get the Montana Historical Society to finish digitizing the Townsend Star.

The Broadwater Reporter, MT43 News and Broadwater County News have not yet been digitized.

The information for this article came mainly from the Broadwater Bygones (available at the Broadwater County Museum) and from a variety of websites. To learn more about these newspapers visit the Broadwater County Museum. To view the digitized papers visit the Montana Historical Society Website.