

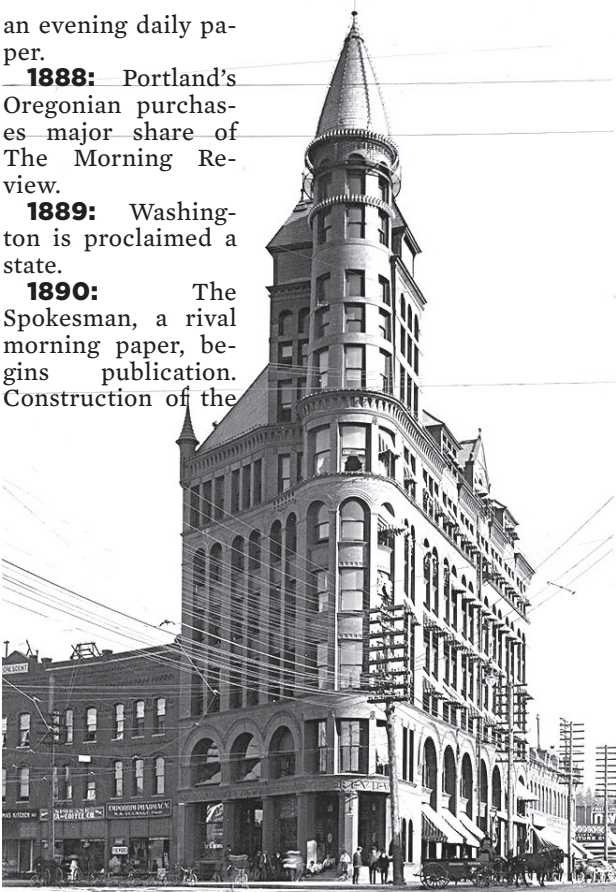
# THROUGH THE YEARS

Milestones in The Spokesman-Review's more than 140 years in existence



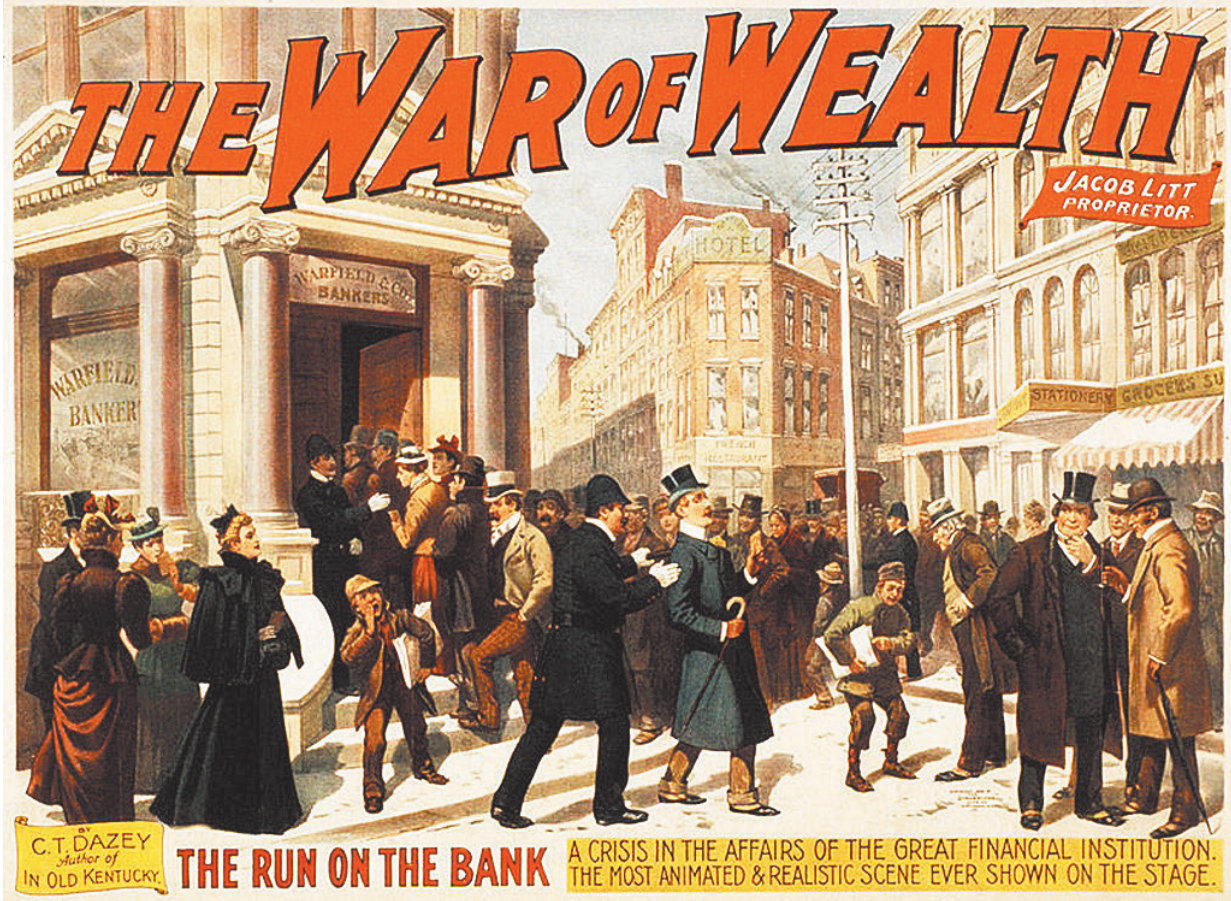
By Nick Gibson  
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

**1881:** Spokane Daily Chronicle publishes first weekly edition.  
**1883:** Spokane Falls Review publishes first weekly edition.  
**1884:** The Review converts to a daily paper called Spokane Falls Evening Review.  
**1885:** Converts to a morning paper called The Morning Review.  
**1886:** Spokane Daily Chronicle transitions to an evening daily paper.  
**1888:** Portland's Oregonian purchases major share of The Morning Review.  
**1889:** Washington is proclaimed a state.  
**1890:** The Spokesman, a rival morning paper, begins publication. Construction of the



Review Building begins.

**1891:** Yale graduate William H. Cowles arrives in Spokane at 24 years old, quickly becomes publisher of The Spokesman.  
**1892:** Both The Spokesman and The Morning Review become seven-day papers by launching Monday publication on same day.  
**1893:** The Spokesman ceases publication when the two newspapers merge under the name The Spokane Review. W.H. Cowles paid The Review's owners \$24,000 and assumed one-fourth of Review building mortgage.  
**1894:** Economic depression dubbed Panic of '93 leads partners to sell interests to Cowles, he renames paper The Spokesman-Review.  
**1897:** Cowles buys Spokane Daily Chronicle.



Poster depicting run on banks.



1939 Chronicle Newspaper staff.

**1911:** Inland Empire Paper Company is founded by W.A. Brazeau, an associate of a Wisconsin-based paper company. Cowles becomes investing partner during Great Depression.  
**1915:** Cowles Publishing Company acquires



In the early 1900's this group of workers at Inland Empire Paper Co. loaded up in a company truck and headed for a company picnic.

Northwest Farm Trio, Inc., later known as Western Farmer Stockman, the company's first subsidiary. Cowles assumes publishing of Washington, Oregon and Idaho farming magazines.  
**1925:** Louis A. Wasmer moves Seattle-based AM radio station KHQ to Spokane, relaunches it as 1,000-watt station. Station becomes a pioneering affiliate of the National Broadcasting Company within two years.  
**1928:** The Chronicle Building is built, abutting the Review Building.



THE SPOKANE CHRONICLE BUILDING—1928.  
This new fireproof concrete and steel building, with its specially designed equipment in all departments and its giant double-ecrupe presses, in one of the finest newspaper plants in the United States. Its staff, carrier and agents include 1450 persons.  
1881—Circulation 300  
1928—42,000

**1939:** Scripps League's Spokane Press closes, making Cowles Company the sole publishing operation in Spokane.  
**1946:** Cowles company acquires KHQ. W.H. Cowles dies, and William Cowles, Jr. assumes role of publisher.  
**1948:** President Harry S. Truman says The Spokesman-Review is one of the worst papers in the country in stop in Spokane on a national tour decrying a conservative Congress and the media he believed put them in power.  
**1950:** The Utah Farmer is added to Western Farmer Stockman publications.  
**1952:** Cowles launch KHQ-TV, first commercial television station in Spokane.



New Center of Interest in the Home: The Television Set

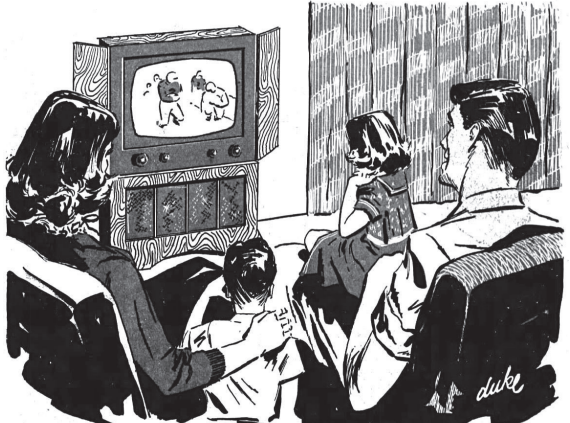


Illustration "New Center of Interest in the Home: The Television Set, from a 1952 television section of The Spokesman-Review.

**1955:** KHQ airs region's first full-color programming.  
**1960:** Spokesman-Review columnist Dorothy Powers becomes the first woman to win the Ernie Pyle Memorial Award, one of the top honors in column-writing.  
**1963:** Cowles acquires Montana Farmer-Stockman, Inc., lumps it with subsidiary's other farming publications.  
**1970:** W.H. Cowles Jr. dies, and William Cowles, III, assumes role of publisher.  
**1974:** The World Fair, Expo '74, draws millions of visitors to Spokane.  
**1975:** Review Building is added to the National Register of Historic Places.  
**1977:** First Bloomsday is held in Spokane.  
**1983:** A third building facing Riverside Avenue is added to the Review-Chronicle complex, completing what is known today as the Review Tower. Editorial departments of the Chronicle and The Spokesman-Review are merged.  
**1984:** Cowles acquires Arizona Farmer-Ranchman magazine.  
**1992:** Spokane Daily Chronicle runs its last edition. W.H. Cowles III dies suddenly, and son William "Stacey" Cowles assumes role of publisher.  
**1993:** The Spokesman-Review named finalist for Pulitzer award for coverage of Ruby Ridge standoff a year earlier.  
**1994:** The Coeur d'Alene bureau of The Spokesman-Review opens.  
**1996:** The Spokane Valley bureau of The Spokesman-Review is bombed by white supremacists in connection to a bank robbery. The paper's first digital format, Virtually Northwest, launches.  
**1999:** Named one of the top 25 newspapers in the country by the Columbia Journalism Review.  
**2001:** Twenty-five newsroom employees are laid off due to declining revenue and circulation; more layoffs come in 2004 and 2007.  
**2008:** One-fourth of newsroom staff is laid off amidst recession.  
**2016:** Rob Curley is hired as editor of The Spokesman-Review.  
**2017:** The last Coeur d'Alene bureau employees transfer to the main downtown Spokane office.  
**2021:** The Spokane Daily Chronicle returns as an e-edition newsletter.  
**2022:** Comma Community Journalism Lab is founded.  
**2025:** Stacey Cowles and Rob Curley announce intentions to transfer paper to ownership of Comma Community Journalism Lab.



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SPOKESMAN-REVIEW PHOTO ARCHIVES

By Charles Apple | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Once upon a time, newspapers were the first, best source of news for the public.

In many cities, people had a choice of newspapers. Some arrived first thing in the morning. Some were delivered in the afternoon — just in time for dad to get home from work, plop into his easy chair and peruse the previous day’s box scores.

That’s not the case any more. Newspapers have seen an alarming shrinkage of their revenue, their resources, their staff and their readership.

And while smaller, local papers are hit especially hard by this, it is by no means limited to certain areas. This is a nation-wide problem.

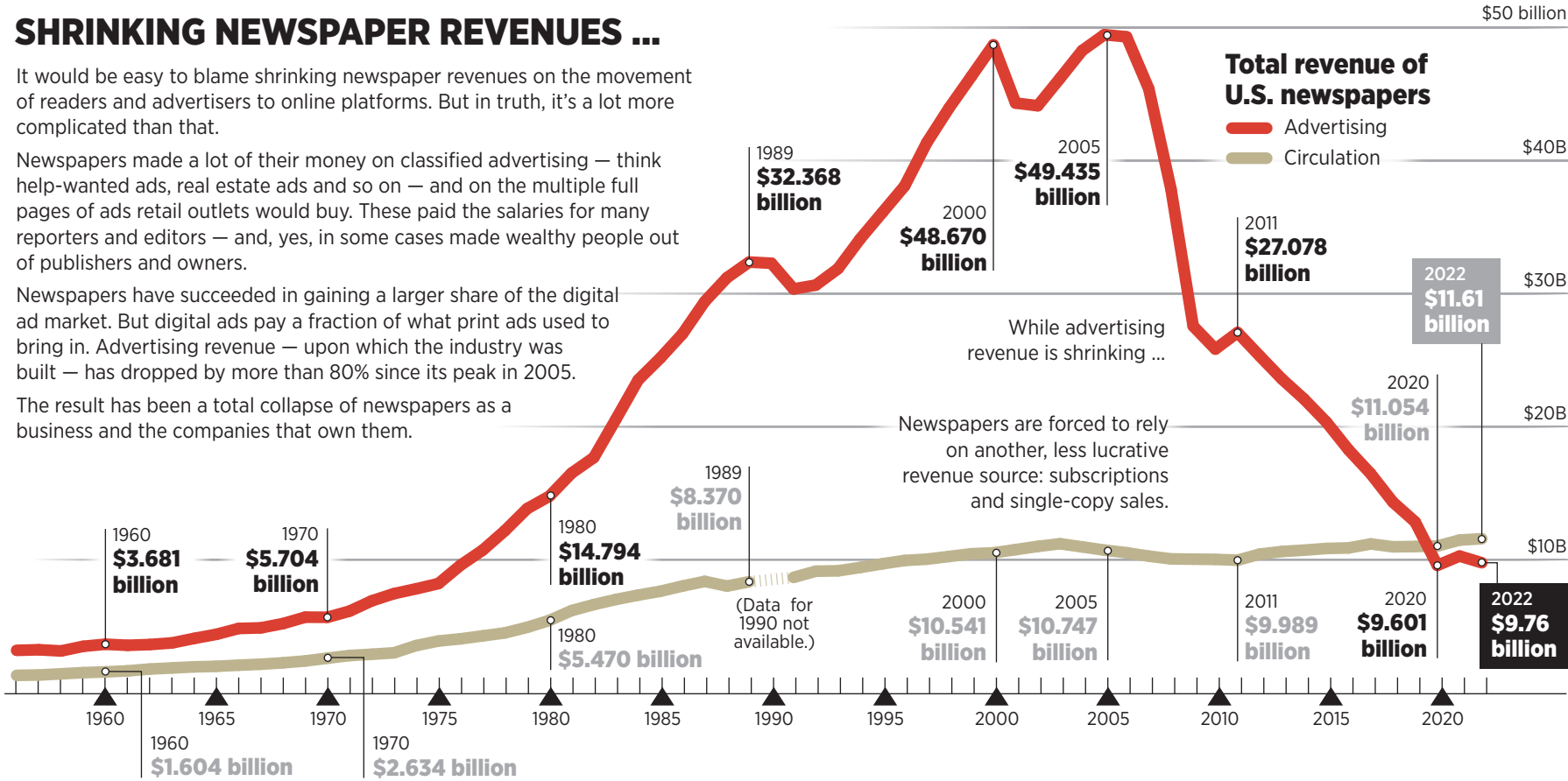
SHRINKING NEWSPAPER REVENUES ...

It would be easy to blame shrinking newspaper revenues on the movement of readers and advertisers to online platforms. But in truth, it’s a lot more complicated than that.

Newspapers made a lot of their money on classified advertising — think help-wanted ads, real estate ads and so on — and on the multiple full pages of ads retail outlets would buy. These paid the salaries for many reporters and editors — and, yes, in some cases made wealthy people out of publishers and owners.

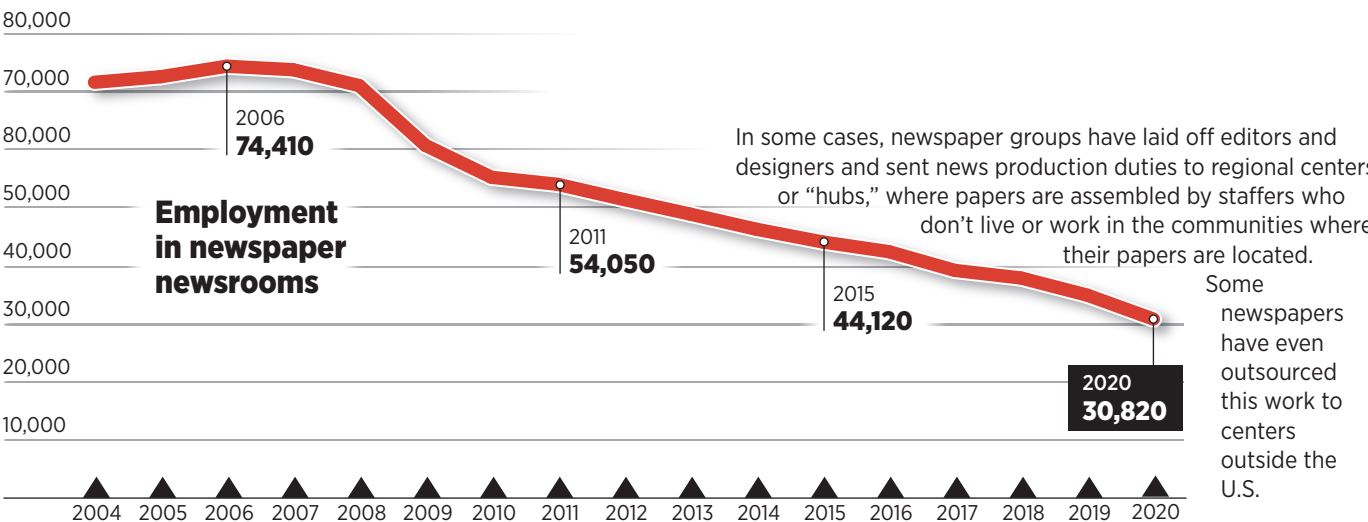
Newspapers have succeeded in gaining a larger share of the digital ad market. But digital ads pay a fraction of what print ads used to bring in. Advertising revenue — upon which the industry was built — has dropped by more than 80% since its peak in 2005.

The result has been a total collapse of newspapers as a business and the companies that own them.



... MEANS FEWER EMPLOYEES TO GATHER NEWS

The number of people employed in newspaper newsrooms has shrunk nearly 60% over the past 17 years. This means fewer reporters, fewer photographers and fewer editors. This means less coverage of local issues, businesses and sports. In some cases, it means a paper might reduce its print schedule to only three or four issues a week.



THE DECLINE OF NEWSPAPERS BY THE NUMBERS

10M

The combined circulation of the 500 largest U.S. newspapers in 2024. In 2005, it was 50 million.

2.5

Newspapers that shut down per week in the U.S. over the past three years.

310

Number of papers owned in 2024 by the nation’s largest newspaper publisher, Gannett. In 2020, it was 613.

2/3

Of daily newspapers in the U.S. still print seven days a week.

3.5M

People in 206 U.S. counties who no longer have a local source for news.

62%

Decrease in circulation of Gannett’s USA Today since 2020.

47

The median age of a full-time journalist in the U.S. in 2022. It was 32 in 1982.

64%

Of readers who prefer print say physical newspapers allow them to read more easily.

19%

Of news readers in the U.S. who pay for digital access to newspapers.

IS THERE A SOLUTION?

“There’s one obvious lesson to be drawn from the collapse” of the newspaper industry: “that a public service industry can be lost when subjected to overwhelming financial pressures,” writes Radford University journalism professor Bill Kovarik in his textbook, “Revolutions in Communication.”

“At some point, people will pay for the content they love,” continues Kovarik. “But then, what does that say about journalism? The popularity of the profession has gone down, and few people today would see journalists as knights of the press, as they did a century ago.

“Journalists have always been the gadflies of their communities, and perhaps as unwelcome today as in the days of William Cobbett or Joseph Pulitzer.”

- Some news organizations are already planning for the day when they deliver a digital-only product, with no printed components.
- Some news organizations have looked for new ways of distributing the news. One good example: Several years ago, many papers began what was called a “pivot to video” and concentrated on posting ad-driven video news segments to Facebook. This dropped off after it was revealed Facebook had spread bogus numbers on the effectiveness of those videos. Other organizations invested heavily in tablet-driven delivery.
- Some news organizations have begun exploring ways to become nonprofit organizations. These might be supported by donations from their local communities or businesses, much like public television and radio are today, or from grants.
- Some news organizations have pursued government-subsidized funding.
- Some news organizations are searching for new streams of income, such as holding fashion shows or book club meetings, selling products or offering digital marketing consulting services.

Sources: “Revolutions in Communication: Media History from Gutenberg to the Digital Age” by Bill Kovarik, Columbia Journalism Review, the Local News Initiative of Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism, the Nieman Lab of Harvard University, News Media Alliance, Pew Research Center, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the New York Times, NPR, Politico, Forbes magazine, CBS News, theAmericanJournalist.org, the Press Gazette, Redline Digital, WordsRated.com