



***The Glade Community Historical Society, Inc.  
Including Glade, Garfield & Pine Log, Arkansas***

**A 501 (c)(3) Charity**

**GCHS Newsletter #2, 2025**

**The purpose of the society is to preserve the history of Garfield, Pine Log and Glade by researching and gathering stories, documents and artifacts to connect with the community.  
([www.gladehistorynwa.org](http://www.gladehistorynwa.org))**

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**Join us at Coal Gap School for our second general meeting of 2025 at 2 pm, April 27, 2025. Come and listen to toe-tapping music by local musicians. Refreshments will be served!**

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**From Newspapers to Digital Data**

Historians divide the history of technology and newspapers into three eras: the Pre-industrial, the Industrial, and the Post-industrial world, which has shifted from manufacturing to services. Gutenberg's press was invented around 1450, changing the industry. It provided printed material, not just for the elites, but allowed information to be widely circulated among all who could read.

Around the eighth century, Chinese government officials created news for court officials, handwritten on silk. Newspapers started in China, but Johannes Gutenberg revolutionized the publishing industry. The first European newspaper was published in Strasbourg in 1605, and news bloomed. By 1702, the first daily newspaper, the British *Daily Courant* surfaced, and the industry stayed the same for two hundred years until technological changes reshaped their existing business models.

Newspapers became more profitable with increased circulation and the first generation of media barons arose. Advertising became more important to increase readers, and women were allowed advice columns. Journalism evolved into a profession and the University of Missouri opened a journalism school in 1908 "to strengthen the effectiveness of public communication in a democratic society."

By 1920, there were 130 newspapers for every 100 households in the United States, and 40% of all cities and towns had two or more competing papers. It was a golden age for newspapers, but the owners began to acquire chains of more than twenty papers and by 1960, almost a third were owned by a chain.

After World War II, newspapers were vulnerable to television, unable to compete for national advertising accounts, they focused on local retail and classified advertisers. The sole surviving newspaper in a community became the only source of news. Radios ended the dominance of newspapers, and by 1960, 90% of households in the US had a television.

The chains began competing with one another and by the year 2000, more than 90% of US newspapers raised capital by selling stock. It raised concerns that newspaper corporations would put shareholder's expectations ahead of substantive journalism instead of their local communities.

As the newspaper industry contracted, news media barons and news media corporations developed around the globe. In India the Jain Family, owners of *The Times of India*, controlled much of the Asian market. In Australia, Rupert Murdoch inherited two Australian newspapers in the 1950s and over the next four decades became the world largest media corporation with major newspaper holdings in the United States and the United Kingdom, including *The Times* of London, a major studio, and Fox, a major television network.

The Internet attacked the business model of newspaper costs and revenue. Search engines and social networks lured people and advertisers online and away from television and newspapers. Craigslist, Monster, and Zillow wiped out newspaper classified ads. Google and Facebook commanded most of the retail advertising money.

The 2008 Recession increased the downfall of the newspaper industry. Private equity firms and hedge funds gobbled up hundreds of distressed newspapers in small and mid-sized communities. They sold the equipment and closed the newspaper. Print newspapers declined by almost half between 2004 and 2018. Only 56 papers in 2019 sold more than 100,000 copies daily. The ten largest chains owned between 70 to 450 newspapers in 2019. Consolidation reduced the hometown newspapers.

The business model that sustained journalism for two centuries ended in less than two decades. The twenty-first century will need many business models to survive and thrive, and they will be tied to the specific needs of the readers and businesses in the communities they serve. According to the University of North Carolina, successful publishers will establish five-year goals for costs and revenue, and then prioritize those initiatives most likely to long-term profitability and sustainability—even if it means lower profits in the short term.

The *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* (WEHCO Media Inc) is the primary newspaper in Arkansas. It is privately owned, and WEHCO includes newspapers, cable television systems, and an internet service. They publish ten daily newspapers serving three states. In 2009, WEHCO merged its Northwest Arkansas media interests with Stephens Media to form the joint venture Northwest Arkansas Newspapers LLC. Then, WEHCO purchased Stephens' half in 2016.

When two newspapers still existed in Arkansas, they duelled fiercely. A lawsuit accused WEHCO of predatory practices to harm the Gazette, but WEHCO responded it only sought to be larger and more dominant. No guilt was rendered by law. Still, on December 1, 1986, the Heiskell family sold their *Arkansas Gazette* to Gannett, the nation's largest newspaper chain. But Gannett's financial losses led to the chain throwing in the towel and selling the Gazette to WEHCO. The *Democrat-Gazette* transitioned to a digital replica edition throughout 2018 and 2019. The Sunday newspaper is still printed.

Currently, newsmaking has evolved into our digital-only sites that produce news updates, blogs, podcasts, videos, and investigative pieces 24 hours a day, every day. SAGE International Encyclopedia of Mass Media and Society concludes: “Our sense of community and our trust in democracy at all levels suffers when journalism is lost or diminished.....We need to be sure that whatever replaces the twentieth-century version of newspapers, it serves the same community-building functions and...that we empower journalistic entrepreneurs to revive newspapers in whatever form in print, broadcast or digital.”

Digital data now floods our world and technology is moving fast. No one knows the future as the world grows increasingly complex with facts and conspiracies. Both have existed through history and various cultures. In the future, those who can process data faster will lead. Will the power belong to a few people or many? Will humans be in charge or will Artificial Intelligence (AI) control?

“The greatest single constant of history is that everything changes.” Yuval Noah Harari

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**Thank you for supporting our organization and our mission to save and share history. The Glade Community Historical Society officers are: Judi Walter, Secretary; Ruth Billingsley, Treasurer; Patricia Heck, President, and board members Gary Blackburn and Dorothy Williams. The board meets the second Friday of each month and offers four general meetings in January, April, July and October.**

**Help us with pictures and records to save more history of the area. You can send information, pictures and suggestions to us via email: [judiwalter7@gmail.com](mailto:judiwalter7@gmail.com); [rbillingsley@hebco.com](mailto:rbillingsley@hebco.com); [garfieldmayor@outlook.com](mailto:garfieldmayor@outlook.com); [patricialucilleheck@gmail.com](mailto:patricialucilleheck@gmail.com)**

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