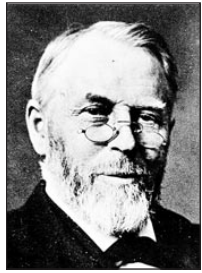


A STORIED HISTORY

William Byers

1831-1903 • Editor and founder



William Byers launched the *Rocky Mountain News* in 1859, beating a competitor by 20 minutes for the title of Denver's first newspaper during the Colorado gold rush.

But that was just the beginning for this risk-taking, big-dreaming pioneer, who had already helped found Omaha.

Besides starting the newspaper, he became Colorado's biggest champion, pushing statehood, helping to found the University of Denver, the Colorado Historical Society, the Natural History Society and the city's first library.

"Byers was a pioneer, an opener, a pass-crosser of a pure American breed, one for whom an untrodden peak was a rebuke and a shame to an energetic people," celebrated Western author Wallace Stegner wrote.

He sold the paper in 1878 and died in 1903 at 72, one of the last of the '59ers.

APRIL 23, 1859

Byers sends first Rocky forth to the world

With our hat in our hand and our best bow we this week make our first appearance upon the stage in the capacity of Editor.

We make our debut in the far west, where the snowy mountains look down upon us in the hottest summer day as well as in the winters cold; here where a few months ago the wild beasts and wilder

Indians held undisturbed possession—where now surges the advancing wave of Anglo Saxon enterprise and civilization, where soon we fondly hope will be erected a great and powerful state, another empire in the sisterhood of empires.

Our course is marked out; we will adhere to it with steadfast and fixed determination, to speak, write and publish the

truth and nothing but the truth, let it work us weal or woe.

Fondly looking forward to a long and pleasant acquaintance with our readers, hoping well to act our part, we send forth to the world the first number of the Rocky Mountain News.

MAY 5, 1878

Goodbye from a champion of Colorado

It is impossible after more than nineteen years of daily repeated tasks; of constant solicitude and anxiety, how best to perform a great duty to the public; of intimate association with all the newspapers that have ever risen, lived and died, or that yet live, in Colorado; of personal acquaintance with so many—it seems to me with all—of the people of the state, to lay down the editorial pen without sad and strange emotions. These years have compassed a larger part of my

life than can be given to any other undertaking, and they were of what should be its best for work.

Undertaken by accident, the newspaper business has had for me a strange fascination. Not educated as a journalist, I have not been confined to the straight and narrow path of the profession. My feelings have been those of personal championship for a state in which I have felt a deep personal interest; of neighborly feeling for every person who has become a citizen of

the state.

I know that my work has been roughly done and that I have made many mistakes. If I have seemed too earnest it was not with malice, and I crave the pardon of each and every one whom I may have unintentionally offended.

Toward my brethren of the press I have none but the kindest feelings. All differences are forgotten and only pleasant recollections of them shall dwell in my memory.

Jack Foster

1906-1978 • Editor



Jack Foster—one of the *Rocky's* greatest editors, and the man who helped save it from certain death—began his career at 15, as a sports-writer in Cleveland. The paper's owner,

Scripps-Howard, soon transferred him to Denver, where the energetic Foster managed to work for both of the company's Denver papers, the morning *Rocky Mountain News* and the afternoon *Denver Evening News*, showing up at all hours with reams of copy.

Foster moved to New York, where he was assistant executive editor of the *New York World-Telegram* when Scripps-Howard asked him to take over as editor of the *Rocky*. Foster jumped at the chance. But he found the *Rocky* nearly at death's door.

Foster and business manager Bill Hailey led the effort to change to a tabloid format. Along with other innovations by Foster—including the "Molly Mayfield" column written by his wife, Frances "Frankie" Foster—the *Rocky* rebuilt its circulation and survived.

When Foster retired in 1970 after 30 years as editor, his newspaper was Scripps' largest. The University of Denver's Penrose Library houses a collection of his papers, including correspondence with President Eisenhower.

APRIL 13, 1942

Tabloid Rocky to keep pace with times

The Rocky Mountain News appears today in a new form—a form in keeping with the demands of the times.

The page is smaller. It is easier to handle, easier to read.

More emphasis is put on pictures. This is in keeping with the faster tempo of

American Life. Sometimes a photographer with a flick of a finger can tell a story more vividly than any of us can spin in words.

Headline type is bolder, more vigorous, more legible. News stories are terser, more compact.

Pace of living has quickened. Pulse of

production has been speeded up. With the revolutionary change of Colorado life has come the need for a crisper, more direct, more dynamically human type of daily newspaper.

The new Rocky Mountain News is designed to supply that need.

NOV. 23, 1963

The enveloping grief of JFK assassination

Grief is a growing thing. It does not come all at once, but step by step. It begins with disbelief. The President has been shot, they say.

The President of what?
The President of the United States.
Oh, no!

Then it becomes a stealing numbness. Stealing all warmth from the blood, the smile from the face, the light from the eyes.

What is it now they say?
The President is dead.
Oh, no! Oh, never no!

This cannot be. Only a moment ago, brimming with health and confidence, he waved at the crowds. He sat up high so all could see him. Hail to the Chief! The Stars and Stripes rippled proudly in the au-

tumn breeze.

How could such a parade ever end in death?

The heart is cold and heavy. It seems scarcely to move at all.

Grief now turns to desolation. How could such a monstrous thing happen? In this land of peace and freedom, who is there to strike down our leader... to strike down a young husband and father and leave along and mourning his beautiful bride?

Whom shall we blame? In our frustration toward whom shall we point the finger? A sickening wave of revulsion crosses the soul. The dinner lies un-eaten on the plate.

Silence then embraces grief. Silence,

the Ultimate Grief! We search our hearts. Why must it have happened to us in this frightful way? An assassin's bullet? A bullet piercing the brain on which we and the world we love had depended so much?

And we remember the words written by a great poet after another President was struck down in the same dark way:

*I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.*

Thus grief crossed the nation Friday, step by step, and it was followed by shadows that will not soon be lifted.