

WILLIAM JAMIESON PAPE

"The passing of William J. Pape takes from the City a guiding influence that over a long span of years has shaped much of the destiny of Waterbury. His concern for Waterbury was always avid and intelligent and the editorial influence of the Republican-American under his guidance was always directed to the benefit of Waterbury and its people."

— Edward D. Bergin, Sr., January 30, 1961

William Jamieson Pape was born in Liverpool, England on December 1, 1873. In 1887, after the death of his father, Captain Robert Pape, an English merchant ship officer, he came to America. He graduated as valedictorian from Passaic High School at 16 years of age and, in 1890, became a reporter for the Passaic Daily News, starting a newspaper career that spanned seventy years. His proficiency and industry had earned him the title of editor and business manager when he left the Daily News in 1901 to form a partnership with Gordon Lathrop to buy the twenty-year-old Waterbury Republican. Within nine years he became sole owner, and his recognition among the community and his peers began. In 1922 he purchased the Waterbury American, founded in 1844, merged it with the Republican and remained editor and publisher until his death on January 29, 1961.

During Pape's tenure as the leading newspaper publisher in the area, he established the WBRY radio station and chaired the Eastern Color Printing Co. that produced the first color comic book, Famous Funnies. In 1950, he bought the landmark railroad station and, following extensive reconstruction, moved his newspapers there in 1958. Pape's publishing career included a Pulitzer Prize in 1940 for his newspaper's unraveling of the Waterbury political scandals. In 1920, he established Publishers Buying Corp. which collectively bought newsprint at reduced rates during inflationary times, saving many smaller newspapers throughout America. He was elected President of the New England Daily Newspaper Association in 1926 and Vice President of the Associated Press in 1927. He served the Associated Press as Vice President during 1927-1929 and from 1932-1936 and as a Director from 1937-1940. He had the honor of representing the Associated Press at the Institute of Pacific Relations in Honolulu in 1927.

Pape participated in establishing the Civic Theater of Waterbury, served on many State commissions, aided numerous organizations with his philanthropy, and edited a three-volume history in 1918 entitled, The History of Waterbury and the Naugatuck Valley, Connecticut, a valuable contribution to the historical records of Waterbury.

