

The Pink Reporter

Anson Reynolds visited Three Forks this Memorial Day weekend. Anson is the grandson of Delos N. "Tip" Reynolds, the editor of the infamous *Pink Reporter*, who is probably one of the few residents of Three Forks to be written about in *TIME* magazine. The April 29, 1940 issue of *Time* said this about Tip Reynolds;

Last week Tip Reynolds was under arrest again, this time in jail. Tip Reynolds came from Michigan. A husky, amiable six-footer, he went to Montana in 1902, when he was 20. A lineman by trade, he spent most of his life electrifying railroads in the West.

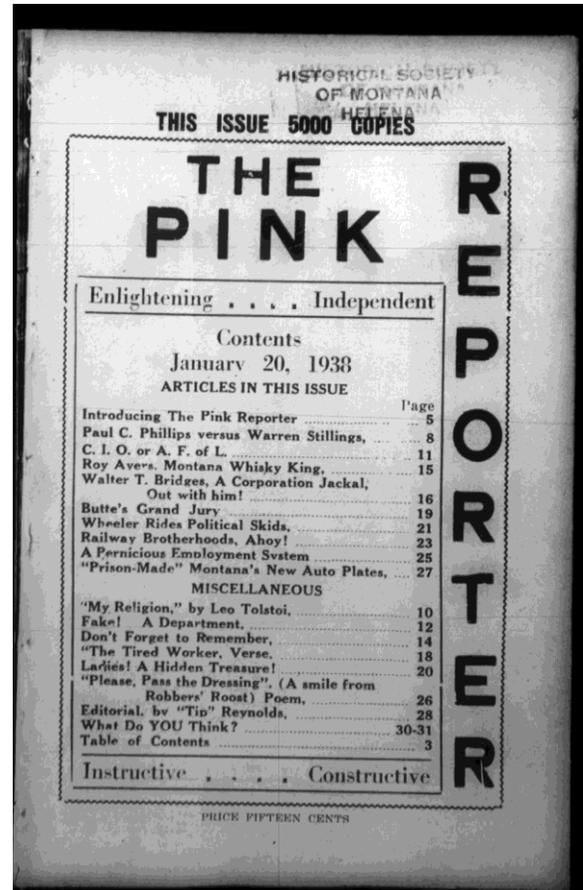
Three years ago, at 55, Tip Reynolds started a newspaper. Printed on a violent, near-red shade of newsprint, the Pink Reporter turned out to be a two-fisted, name-calling, muckraking fortnightly.

Reynolds was in jail for criminal libel against Governor Roy E. Ayers and several other state officials. The Governor, it was said, swore out and signed the warrant himself. Reynolds was arrested in Three Forks and taken to the county jail in Bozeman.

Born in Michigan in 1882, Delos served in the Army for five months in 1901 during the Spanish-American War. Delos Reynolds came to Three Forks about 1915 with wife Charlotte and son, Anson. He was working to electrify sections of the Milwaukee Railroad. In 1919, Charlotte died during the third wave of the Spanish Influenza. Delos married a Willow Creek girl, Woneta (Juanita) Evans. The 1930 census shows him and his family living on Main Street and he was managing a steam laundry. While he set up the *Pink Reporter* in 1938, his wife operated the Arbutus Shop, a beauty parlor that she and her sister Mrs. R. C. "Tillie" Bates ran.

The first *Pink Reporter* was issued on January 20, 1938; 5,000 copies with a newsstand price of fifteen cent or \$1.50 for a one year subscription. The opening lines of the *Pink Reporter* read "This little sheet is born not for the purpose of wasting either good paper, ink, time or effort to praise good people or good practices. Rather, it is here to uncover and expose all that we can find which is quite visibly rotten and detrimental to the best interests of the working class, locally or nationally."

In this same introductory editorial, Reynolds takes his first shots at the establishment, namely Montana Governor Roy E. Ayers. Reynolds accused Ayers "of acting as a one-man subsidiary of the Anaconda Mining Company." Reynolds also accused Ayers of



Cover page of the first Pink Reporter

corruption for his actions regarding state liquor laws, giving Ayers the moniker of "Whiskey Ayers." Ayers, according to one author, "did his share of consuming it [alcohol]. Sometimes the governor kept 300 bottles of liquor at his home. According to his personal doctor, the governor drank 16 to 18 ounces of liquor without appearing drunk, and much of the time he drank till intoxicated." Indeed, some of bills signed into law by Ayers during his tenure were reversed by his successor, Sam Ford.

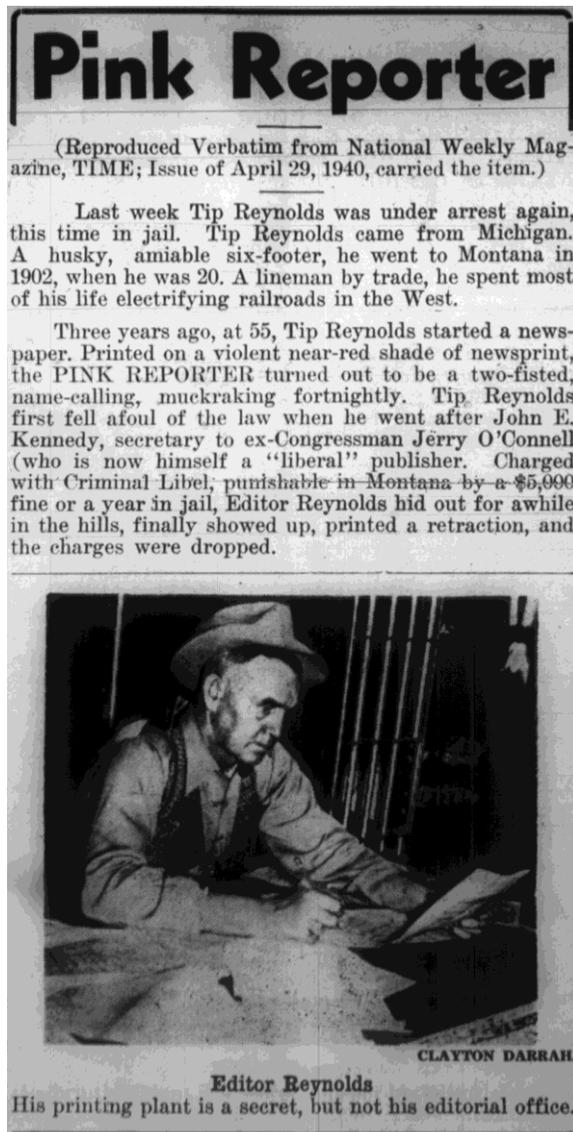
In the first 56 issues of the *Pink Reporter*, the list of Reynolds' targets is lengthy; Franklin Roosevelt, Jews, communism, U.S. Congressman Jerry O'Connell, The American Federation of Labor and it's President James D. Graham, Montana Power Company, Safeway Stores, most railroad companies, Butte Mayor Hauswirth, Cascade County Sheriff Guy Palagi, Eddy's Bakery, Senator Murray, Woolsworth stores, University President George F. Simmons, and many other bureaucrats too numerous to mention.

Tip Reynolds, took his campaign against corruption to the radio airwaves several times and went to jail at least three times. His criminal libel

against Governor Ayers was dismissed by Judge W.W. Lessley in January 1941. He went to jail later that year when he gave former U.S. Representative Jerry O'Connell the moniker of "Red" Jerry.

Governor Ayers' administration seemed riddled with corruption, greed, political favoritism and drunkenness and this may be the reason that Tip Reynolds started the *Pink Reporter*. I would not call the *Pink Reporter* a newspaper, but more of a long, sometimes rambling editorial. The recent emergence of the "End the Fed" campaign and the rise of the Tea Party could be a modern response to recent events.

In 1945, Tip published several more issues of the *Pink Reporter*. Tip and Juanita eventually moved to Hamilton and where he published a few more issues. Tip died in May 1952 at the age of 70.



Left: Excerpt of the TIME Magazine report reproduced in the *Pink Reporter* newspaper