

Crawfordsville Journal Review, Incorporated

Founded: 1841

Location:

Review: West Main Street, Crawfordsville (1900–29)

Journal: Northwest corner of Washington and Main Streets, Crawfordsville (1848); Crawford Block (before 1892); 119 South Green Street (1892–1929)

Journal Review: 119 South Green Street, Crawfordsville (1929–58); 119 North Green Street (1958–)

In 1929 two Crawfordsville newspapers, bitter political adversaries in the past, merged to form the *Journal Review*. The *Journal* and the *Review* were the last two competing dailies in Crawfordsville before the merger. After the consolidation the editors pledged to keep the editorial page nonpartisan. In the last year before the twenty-first century the Crawfordsville daily was a part of Freedom Communications, Incorporation, a media chain based in Irvine, California. James McMillen was the publisher, Gail Hamilton acted as the executive editor, and Howard W. Hewitt served as the editor. The paper employed forty-seven and expected sales to exceed \$1 million.

The oldest of the two papers that merged to form the *Journal Review* was the *Crawfordsville Review*. Bennett W. Engle and Joseph D. Masterson founded it as a Democratic party weekly in 1841. The partners had purchased the press and woodcuts of Crawfordsville's oldest newspaper, the *Examiner* after it folded. Engle and Masterson held on to the paper for an unusual length of time, given the era. Masterson, having become sole owner sometime previously, sold the paper in 1854 to Charles H. Bowen and B. F. Stover.

Bowen quickly became the sole proprietor of the journal, continuing to back the Democratic party and supporting Stephen Douglas in 1860. During the Civil War, Bowen's paper was highly critical of Union action. Both before and during the conflict

Bowen waged a war of words with the editors of the *Journal* and others who held Republican sentiments. In 1855, for example, Bowen attacked the Wabash College faculty for its support of abolition. Bowen continued as publisher until selling the paper to E. C. Voris and T. B. Collins in 1872.

John L. Miller purchased the *Review* in 1873, continuing to publish the weekly until October 1881. James B. Seller, John E. Hanna, and E. M. Henkel established a daily edition of the *Review* shortly after purchasing the paper in 1882. By September of 1883 the partnership had dissolved and Hanna had become the owner. Hanna was an Irish immigrant who had been adopted by James Hanna of Crawfordsville. He had attended Wabash College and had been elected township trustee twice on the Democratic ticket. The *Review* became the property of the Hanna Company after it was formed in July 1883. Bayless W. Hanna became the editor and publisher of the daily sometime thereafter. John Hanna and a partner, T. B. Collins, took control of the tabloid after President Grover Cleveland appointed Bayless minister to Argentina in February 1885.

By October 1888, after his friend John Hanna died, Collins tired of printing the paper and sold his interest in the firm to Fleming T. Luse and Clarence E. Galey. Galey sold his share to C. M. Berry in 1889, who in turn was quickly replaced by W. E. Henkel. Luse became the sole owner in 1891. Eight years later he sold the company to Henkel and E. A. and A. B. Cunningham. During Luse's tenure the six-column, eight-page paper cost \$1.00 for a year's subscription to the weekly edition. Each edition regularly featured a children's page, with moral and uplifting tales for adolescents, as well as a jokes column. The *Review* mostly covered local news, and though by the late 1890s its politics had mellowed, it still leaned heavily toward the Democratic party.

Henkel and the Cunninghams changed the name of the daily to the *New Review* and formed the Review Company to control the paper. S. M. Coffman, who also owned the *Crawfordsville Argus-News*, bought the *New Review*, merging the two Democratic papers in March 1900 to form the *News-Review*. In 1905 Coffman sold the paper to G. H. D. Sutherland, who changed the name of the daily back to the *Review*.

Eight years after he purchased the newspaper, Sutherland sold it to four men, Basil T. Merrell, C. L. Goodbar, H. Foster Fudge, and Wallace E. "Wally" Coons, who formed the Crawfordsville Review Company. The partners quickly discontinued the weekly edition of the paper. Fudge and Coons later became the sole owners of the *Review*, merging it with its chief rival, the *Journal*, in 1929 and taking on A. M. Smith as a partner.

The *Journal* began as the *Montgomery Journal* in 1848. The paper's first editor was Dr. T. W. Fry, and its first publisher was Jeremiah Keeney. Urged by Whig party leaders to create a paper to challenge the Democrats, the partners purchased the equipment of two older Whig newspapers that had folded. The weekly supported the Whig party for a time before switching to the Republican party in the mid-1850s. The partners also published the *Indiana Christian Herald* for a short period around 1849. When the partners sold out to J. A. Gilkey and D. M. Cantrill in August 1856 the name of the paper changed to simply the *Journal*. Within six months W. H. Foust took over for Gilkey, then Foust himself was succeeded by a Mr. Huntsinger. Huntsinger and Cantrill could not make the paper a financial success, however, and were forced to sell the weekly to Keeney, the paper's original publisher, sometime around late 1857.

Keeney continued to publish the paper until 1866 when he sold it to George W. Snyder, who sold out two years later to Thomas H. B. McCain and J. H. Hendricks. After Hendricks's death, John T. Talbot became McCain's partner. For eight years the publishers brought stability to the pages of the *Journal*. On 4 July 1887 the partners began publishing a daily edition of the *Journal*, moving the weekly publication day to Saturday and changing its name to the *Saturday Evening Journal*. The daily grew quickly as circulation rose from 500 in its first year to 1,294 by 1894. The partners prided themselves on the coverage given local events within each twelve-page edition. Talbot sold his interest to McCain in 1888.

In May 1892 McCain formed the Journal Company. When he died in May 1898 his son Arthur, an officer in the company, succeeded him at the publisher's desk. Fred T. McCain and Mrs. S. S. McCain inherited Thomas's interest in the company. Fred worked as the business manager. In 1904 the *Crawfordsville Star*'s owner, Samuel D. Symmes sold that paper to the McCains, who merged it with the *Journal*. The daily under the McCains ran four pages in length and seven columns in width, and it covered national, state, and local news. The editors also ran serials of famous novels, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Study in Scarlet*. Circulation of the *Journal* ran to 3,675 by 1910.

After eighteen years as publisher, Arthur McCain sold his interests in the paper to Alaric M. Smith, an employee at the *Journal* since 1880. Smith also gained the shares of Fred and Mrs. S. S. McCain in 1922. Upon taking control of the paper, Smith quickly discontinued the weekly edition of the *Journal*. He changed slightly the format of the daily, increasing the columns to eight and adding one large headline that stretched across the entire front page. National and local news dominated the front page while sports,

social, and personal items appeared in the other seven pages. In 1929 Smith sold a share in the paper to Fudge and Coons.

After the merger of the two papers, the *Journal Review* pledged itself to nonpartisan reporting. After 1929 any political news that could be considered favorable to one party was balanced by an article that tilted toward the other party. The layout of the *Journal Review* was the same as the pre-1929 *Journal*. The paper continued to print serials into the late 1940s, with major political national news on page one, followed by local interests on pages two through seven. By 1948 the price of a subscription had risen to \$6.00 a year.

In 1954 Fudge became the sole proprietor of the daily. His son-in-law, W. Addington Vance, began working for him in 1956. In 1957 the paper remodeled the old armory building, moving in to the facility in 1958. In the new building the company installed a Goss Universal Press, capable of producing a clearer thirty-two-page run and color printing. By the late 1960s, however, the paper ran only ten to twelve pages and continued to follow the layout of the past. There were a few new developments, however, including a “Dear Abby” column. In 1973 the company switched from a hot-metal process to a more modern cold-metal process. The family sold the paper to the Freedom Newspapers chain (later to become Freedom Communications, Incorporated) in the fall of 1974, believing that the spiraling costs of newspaper production and the need to constantly upgrade the equipment was becoming too much for a small city paper to handle.

Vance, the last family publisher, decided to sell the paper to Freedom Newspapers because he appreciated the corporation’s management philosophy, which valued local

control. The Freedom chain named James J. McMillen as publisher, a position he continued to hold in 1999. McMillen, a native of Oklahoma and a graduate of the University of Texas, began working with Freedom Newspapers in 1960. He left the *Journal Review* in 1978 to take on other responsibilities in the Freedom chain, only to return to Crawfordsville in 1988.

The corporation did not neglect the *Crawfordsville Journal Review*; instead, it upgraded equipment as new technology allowed. In 1980 the paper changed to off-set printing, which cost the company \$500,000. In the 1990s the company switched to computer pagination. By 1991 circulation ran at 11,000, and the stories covered by the paper included all types of news, from international incidents to local festivals. In 1999 each edition ran eighteen pages in length and six columns in width. Since 1974 the editorial page, while nonpartisan, has taken on a libertarian cast. Individual freedom, free trade, and voluntary association stand as the pillars of the editorial page's comment.