

Herald-Republican (Steuben Printing Company)

Founded: 1857 (*Steuben Republican*); 1876 (*Angola Herald*); 1980 (*Herald-Republican*)

Location:

Steuben Republican: Original location unknown, Angola (1857–); south side of public square; southeast corner of square adjoining courthouse yard; 45 South Public Square

Angola Herald: Original location unknown, Angola (1876–)

Herald-Republican: 45 South Public Square, Angola (1980–)

In May 1857 J. M. Bromagen, who had been publishing a newspaper in Auburn, moved his printing plant to Angola and established the *Steuben Republican*. Heavily in debt, Bromagen sold the paper within the year. Charles Case, a would-be congressman, sought to ensure that the paper survived at least through the upcoming election and installed F. C. Chapin as editor. Ownership of the Republican paper, which strongly supported Abraham Lincoln, continued to change frequently up until the Civil War. At the start of the war Jacob O. Rose and Francis Macartney operated the newspaper. Rose sold his share of the *Republican* to Macartney in April 1864, and Macartney subsequently sold it to J. J. Minor. After another change in ownership, J. A. Myrtle acquired the newspaper in June 1866. Myrtle owned the paper with various partners until March 1874, when Francis Macartney again, this time in partnership with Germ Brown, purchased the newspaper.

Macartney sold his share in the *Republican* to James U. Miller in June 1875. Miller and Brown enlarged the paper to a nine-column folio and purchased a power press. Brown died in August 1878, and Miller acquired full ownership of the newspaper the following spring. By 1880 the paper, which sold for \$2.00 per year, had a circulation of about two thousand and featured Information, Children's, Farm, Humorous, and

Personal columns. "It is just the paper for the farmer, the mechanic, the merchant, and the professional man," an advertisement claimed. Miller ran the newspaper until mid-1883, when its editor, Frank T. Burnham, purchased it with a partner, Donald C. Wood. The following January, however, Miller bought the paper back and quickly sold it again, this time to the Republican Publishing Company, which included Burnham, William W. Ferrier, Oscar F. Rakestraw, and C. H. Aldrich. Ferrier, Rakestraw, and Burnham had been publishing the *Steuben County Journal*, and they merged this paper with the *Republican*. By 1885 the paper's circulation was nearly three thousand. All of the partners aside from Rakestraw withdrew from the paper by February 1886. The Ohio-born Rakestraw had sold insurance before joining the *Republican* in 1877; after becoming an owner in 1884, he remained with the paper for almost thirty-eight years. The *Steuben Republican* moved from a brick building on the south side of the public square to the second floor of a new building on the southeast corner of the square.

In 1907 Rakestraw entered into partnership with Raymond E. and Edward D. Willis. The Willis brothers' father, Frank, had edited the *Waterloo Press* and ran a print shop in De Kalb County, where Raymond started setting type as a boy. Raymond Willis purchased an interest in the *Angola Magnet* in 1898 and in 1907, with Edward, gained complete ownership of it. That same year Raymond and Edward merged the *Magnet* with the *Republican*. Upon Rakestraw's death in 1922, the Willises obtained complete control of the *Steuben Republican*. In 1925 the two brothers formed a stock company, the Steuben Printing Company, which purchased their Democratic rival, the *Angola Herald*. Raymond Miller became president of the publishing company; however, the two newspapers continued to operate independently.

The *Angola Herald* had been established in January 1876 by Isaac L. Wiseman. Shortly after founding the paper, Wiseman sold out to William B. McConnell. In July 1877 William K. Sheffer entered into partnership with McConnell, becoming editor and publisher; the next year he became sole proprietor. He owned the paper for the next eleven years. Originally from Ohio, Sheffer moved to Kendallville at the age of twenty. There he began working in the printing business. From 1872 to 1877 he was at the *Ligonier Banner*. Sheffer sold the *Angola Herald* in July 1889 to two young lawyers from Waterloo. The paper changed hands two more times before Sheffer repurchased it; he continued to publish the *Herald* for the next fifteen years. Ernest C. Klink and Elbert C. Green bought the paper in 1906 and sold it two years later to Harvey W. Morley, a newspaperman from Michigan. Active in civic affairs and business, Morley was editor of the Angola paper for most of the next forty-two years. During World War I he sent free copies of the paper to Steuben County servicemen. Shortly before Christmas 1947 Morley jokingly proposed that Americans donate used or unwanted neckties to European nations still recovering from the ravages of war. Much to his surprise, his “Neckties for Europe” scheme hit a nerve, and readers began sending in neckties to brighten drab European outfits. Morley gained attention around the world and eventually shipped 47,000 ties overseas, “knotting a tie of fellowship with Britain” in the words of one London associate.

Morley owned the *Herald* until March 1923. The newspaper changed hands twice before being acquired by the Willis brothers in 1925. Morley continued to edit the *Herald* after its 1925 acquisition by the Steuben Printing Company, of which he became vice president. Edward Willis was appointed mayor of Angola in February 1938, a post

to which he won election in his own right the following fall. In the same year other northern Indiana Republican newspaper editors boosted the candidacy of Raymond Willis for the United States Senate. Raymond lost the general election in 1938, but by criticizing the New Deal and pledging to vote against American participation in any foreign war, the conservative editor won election to the senate in 1940. He sold his interest in the newspaper to Edward. After serving one term in the senate, Raymond returned to Angola and became president of the Steuben Printing Company. By the mid-1950s, the *Steuben Republican* averaged sixteen pages per issue and boasted a circulation of approximately 4,500 copies. The *Herald*, published briefly as a semiweekly, featured Lucy Emerson's weekly "Nosing through the News" column as well as Morley's "Something to Talk About."

Harvey Morley died in November 1960, and Lucy Emerson, who had been involved with the *Herald* since 1938, became editor in February 1961, a post she held for many years. In 1962 Edward Willis died. Management of the *Steuben Republican* passed to his son Henry E. Willis, who had joined the paper as associate editor and manager in 1946 and become president and publisher in 1961. After Henry's death in 1979 his daughter Cynthia Willis Pinkerton became the newspaper's publisher. On 3 December 1980 the *Steuben Republican* and *Angola Herald* merged to become the *Herald-Republican*, with Pinkerton as publisher. Home News Enterprises of Columbus, Indiana, later purchased the Steuben Printing Company. By the time of the paper's 140th anniversary in 1997, Bill Parsons served as publisher and Rick Martinez as editor. The Steuben Printing Company published the *Herald-Republican* on a semiweekly basis and

also a supplemental weekly advertiser and other publications. The company was also a commercial printer and distributor of media products.