

Morris Printing Company

Founded: 1877

Location: Originally 467 (later 939–941) South Meridian Street (1877–1966); 1502 North College Avenue (1966– )

William H. Morris opened a job-printing shop in March 1877 at 467 South Meridian Street. His principal account was printing wrapping paper for the Capital Paper Company. William soon brought his brother Edward K. Morris into partnership, and the printing operation became Morris Brothers. The two brothers published assorted journals, including the *Indianapolis Live Stock Review*, *Price Current*, and the *Swine Breeders' Journal*. The *Swine Breeders' Journal* was a popular success. In 1883 a subscription cost \$1.00 per year. The editors solicited subscription agents for the journal among its readers and encouraged them to set up clubs. In order to increase subscriptions, the agents offered readers premiums, which ranged from books on farming and breeding to free business cards and even livestock.

Between 1880 and 1881 William's son, William H. Morris, Jr., joined the firm, and the company became the Morris Printing Company. Between 1898 and 1899 Edward and William Jr. took charge of the firm, continuing to run the firm into the mid-1920s. By 1928 William Jr.'s son George W. Morris had become manager of the firm. The *Swine Breeders' Journal* ceased publication the following year, and George took over the firm, now heavily in debt, shortly thereafter. George and his three sons—William H., Fred F., and George Jr.—worked hard to keep the firm afloat during the depression. By the time the sons were in high school, they were working at the company after school and

on Saturdays. During busy times the entire family would eat dinner at home and then return to the printing office to finish their work.

During World War II William, Fred, and George Jr. served in the military. George Sr. died suddenly in October 1943, and the printing office was closed for the remainder of the war. After the war, Morris Printing Company reopened under the ownership of the three brothers and their widowed mother, Amy B. Morris. The sons plowed the firm's profits into the purchase of new equipment, phasing out the large, old letterpress equipment used to produce wrapping paper and introduced offset printing. The company slowly returned to prosperity and in May 1966 Morris Printing Company moved to a new building at Fifteenth Street and College Avenue. By 1966 the firm's annual gross revenues were \$100,000; ten years later they doubled. In September 1986 Daniel M. Evard, the husband of George Jr.'s daughter Pat, joined the company. Evard purchased it from Fred and George Jr. (William had died in 1982) on 1 January 1990.