

*New Albany Ledger-Tribune*

Founded: 1842

Location:

*New Albany Ledger*: Northeast corner of Pearl and Main Streets, New Albany (1849–71); Main and State Streets (1871–1890s); Pearl and Spring Streets (1903–1930s)

*New Albany Tribune*: 50 Pearl Street, New Albany (1888–1890s); 42 Pearl Street (1903–14); 141–143 East Main Street (1915–65); West Market and Second Streets (1965–)

*New Albany Ledger-Tribune*: 320 East Spring Street, New Albany (1930s–1965); corner of West Market and Second Streets (1965–)

Like many newspapers throughout the state, the *New Albany Ledger-Tribune* is the result of several mergers. Its story begins with the publication of the *New Albany Register* in the 1840s and ends with the union of the *New Albany Tribune* and a successor to the *Register*, the *New Albany Ledger*, in 1937.

The oldest antecedent of the *Ledger-Tribune* began as the *Register* in 1842. In 1843 Phineas M. Kent bought the paper from Jared C. Joycelyn and changed its name to the *New Albany Democrat*. After a succession of owners in the mid-1840s, the paper became the *Western Union Democrat* under proprietors John B. Norman and J. T. Bosworth. Bosworth eventually left, and Kent returned as a partner with Norman. From the paper's title one can infer that the paper's proprietors were ardent supporters of the Democratic party, a tradition continued into the mid-twentieth century.

In 1849 the publishers started a daily, while continuing to print a weekly edition, and changed the title to the *New Albany Ledger*. Norman left for a short time to edit the *Indiana State Sentinel* in Indianapolis but returned shortly after in 1855. Fourteen years later he died, and Luciene G. Matthews, his partner since 1850, became the *Ledger's* sole

owner. In 1872 C. E. Merrill and C. R. Moter acquired the journal and merged it with the *New Albany Standard*, forming the *New Albany Ledger-Standard*.

Merrill, Moter, and three other business partners formed the Ledger-Standard Publishing Company to manage the paper. Jonathan Peters assumed control of the company in 1881, shortening the title of the journal back to the *Ledger*. Peters created the Ledger Publishing Company to supersede Merrill's operation. Just before the outbreak of World War I, Peters died, and his daughter Ada inherited the business. She quickly sold the enterprise to the New Albany Ledger Company, headed by the state's attorney general, Evan B. Stotsenburg.

Stotsenburg's first editor, Bruce W. Ulsh, stopped publishing the daily *Ledger* in 1923. Everett H. Smith, who succeeded Ulsh, revived the daily and dropped the weekly edition in 1936. A year later the *Ledger* merged with the *Tribune*, and G. E. Weinmann became the *Ledger-Tribune's* publisher.

The younger of the merged papers, the *New Albany Tribune*, had been founded in 1888. Jasper Packard was the first publisher of the pro-Republican weekly. Packard had served three terms in the United States Congress before going into the newspaper business in La Porte. In 1888 he stopped printing the *La Porte Public Spirit*, packed the presses, and moved to New Albany. Within two years of his arrival, Packard began publishing a daily.

Around the turn of the century Fred J. Brown became a partner in the business. Then just prior to American involvement in World War I, Walter S. Montgomery purchased the journal. Montgomery remained the publisher until his death in 1937. That

same year the weekly edition of the *Tribune* merged with the *Ledger*. The daily edition of the *Tribune*, however, remained a separate entity.

After the merger of the *Ledger* and the weekly *Tribune*, the editorial content of the journal became more moderate. Weinmann served as the combined paper's first publisher, then from about 1943 to 1949 James E. Montgomery, Walter's son, published it. During the 1950s Nell Brown served as the *Ledger-Tribune*'s editor. In 1963 the Thomson Newspaper Company bought the paper, and Robert J. Rossi became publisher. Donald F. Miller and J. Robert Stathas served as publishers in later years.

Even after the weekly *Tribune* merged with the *Ledger*, the daily *Tribune* continued publication. James Montgomery published it from the time of his father's death in 1937 until his own death in 1949. At that time Brown became the publisher and editor. In 1963 the Thomson Newspaper Company bought the *Tribune* along with the *Ledger-Tribune*, and over the years Rossi, Miller, and Stathas also led the daily along with the weekly.

Fred Ward was the last general manager of the papers under Thomson. Thomson sold the *Ledger-Tribune* and the *Tribune* to the American Publishing Company in 1995, and the new owners installed Russell E. Maroney as publisher of the journals in January 1996. The *Tribune* continued to be the designation for the daily edition of the paper, while the *Ledger-Tribune* was the name of the Sunday edition. In 1998 the American Publishing Company continued to print the papers, and Ken Dulaney served as editor.

Innovation throughout the past half century has kept both the *Ledger-Tribune* and its younger sister publication, the daily *Tribune*, profitable and competitive. In 1949 James Montgomery bought for the company a high-speed press that could print up to

eight pages. Two years later a Fairchild photo-electric engraver allowed the papers to quickly and inexpensively reproduce photographs. The engraver was used into the 1970s. In 1976 Thomson switched to offset presses, again reducing costs and, more important, allowing as many as thirty-two pages in each issue. In the 1980s the firm switched to computer production, allowing a reporter to transfer his or her work directly to the typesetter. The new techniques have permitted the papers' owners to expand into neighboring Clark and Harrison Counties at a reasonable cost.