

*Richmond Palladium-Item*

Founded: 1831

Location: Washington and Main Streets, Richmond (1831); southeast corner of Main and Front Streets (1844); 4–6 Main Street (1857, 1865); 226–228 Main Street (1870); 339–341 Main Street (1880); 831–833 North Main Street (1881, 1891); 922–924 Main Street (1898); corner of Ninth and A Streets (1912); North Ninth and Sailor Streets (1919); Palladium Building, 19 North Ninth Street (ca. 1929–76); 1175 North A Street (1976–)

Nelson Boon, a great-nephew of Daniel Boone, founded the *Richmond Palladium* in January 1831 as a Whig party paper. Unlike many newspapers of the period, however, it did not stress politics; instead, its editors claimed to be “devoted to news, miscellany, literature and amusement.” Original poetry, “moral tales” with speeches and writings from famous people including Rousseau and Oliver Cromwell, and reports from other newspapers across the country filled most of the paper’s columns. By July Boon had sold the weekly to Thomas J. Lash, who held on to the journal for only a year and a half. Besides printing a newspaper, the company made stationery, invoices, and other forms needed by individuals or businesses.

David P. Holloway bought the paper next, sold it three years later, but reacquired it with business partner Benjamin W. Davis in 1837. Holloway remained editor of the paper for more than thirty years. Holloway and Davis added a motto just below the title, which remained there for thirty-eight years: “be just and fear not; let all the ends thou aims’t at be thy Country’s, thy God’s, and Truth’s.” They fought against slavery in their editorial pages and encouraged readers to refrain from buying any goods made with slave labor. After the Civil War the paper’s publication day was changed from Friday to Thursday.

Holloway and Davis were active outside of their editorial duties. Together they founded the Sons of Temperance to fight the alcohol trade. The pair began backing the Republican party in 1856. Holloway's loyalty to the party earned him a number of public posts including state representative, state senator, United States Representative, and Commissioner of Patents.

In 1875 Holloway and Davis sold the paper to Isaac Jenkinson and Martin Cullaton. Jenkinson had been a member of the electoral college in 1860 and the nation's consul to Scotland in the late 1860s and early 1870s. He also published a book on the personal and political relationships between Aaron Burr, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton, with Jefferson cast in an unfavorable light. Jenkinson founded the *Fort Wayne Gazette* before purchasing the *Palladium*. Arthur M. Reeves became a partner in the venture in 1876, and a short time later the partners began publishing a daily, as well as a weekly. The motto was dropped from the front page and advertising was switched from the left-hand column of the front page to the right-hand column. Jenkinson became the sole owner in 1883. He sold the paper to Daniel Surface and Samuel Flickinger in 1896. Sometime in the 1880s short society news briefs were added.

After several ownership changes Jeanette Garr Leeds, head of the Palladium Printing Company, bought the paper in January 1906, turning it over to her son, Rudolph G. Leeds. The positioning of topics became more regular under Leeds. A social page brought together many personal items into one or two pages, amusements were advertised on only one page, and serials were added to the paper's format. In addition the four-page daily was increased to six pages in 1906 and later to eight or ten pages by 1919. Leeds changed the title of the weekly edition of the paper to the *Farm Palladium*

in 1906. A little over a year later both editions were merged with the *Sun-Telegram* to form the *Palladium and Sun-Telegram*. Leeds also acted as the proprietor and editor of the *Indianapolis Sun*. He was a writer, in the muckracker tradition, publishing a series of articles entitled “The Equal Price Law,” which traced the “growth of the money power” and suggested a law to discourage rebates and volume discounts. After the turn of the century the business purchased Linotype printers, used until the late twentieth century.

The weekly edition of the paper, the *Sun-Telegram*, continued until around 1917. The *Palladium and Sun Telegram* was published twice daily until 1911. In the 1912 presidential election the *Palladium*'s editors supported Theodore Roosevelt, the former president who had split with the Republican party and helped to form the Progressive party. In the mid-1910s the publishers added a sports page to keep up with the growing national obsession and began to give news briefs that concerned both Indiana and Ohio in two special columns. Interestingly, Leeds added a *Junior Palladium* weekly. Each issue included moral stories, biographies, and children-oriented classifieds and social event news.

A continuation of the progressive spirit of the paper's editors was manifest in its opposition to the Ku Klux Klan during the 1920s. Also during the Roaring Twenties, the paper went to a fourteen-page layout, photographs beamed from several pages, a church section was added, and editorials took a decidedly more independent turn.

In January 1939 the two papers merged with the *Item*. The *Palladium-Item and Sun-Telegram* became the name of the daily. The fourteen-page layout was continued during the 1930s. During World War II the number of pages was reduced to ten. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s the editorial pages continued to back the Republican

party and in fact became more conservative during the 1950s. In the early 1950s the paper hired individuals in area cities to act as reporters for the daily, usually reporting the more social side of the news.

In 1964 Edward H. Harris, Jr., became the sole owner of the Palladium company after the death of Rudolph G. Leeds. Edward S. Harris succeeded his father in 1969. Three years later the name of the paper was shortened to the *Palladium-Item*. The number of pages in each edition ran from sixteen pages to as many as forty pages between 1960 and 1976, with the price per issue increased from five cents to fifteen cents. Conservative politics still dominated the editorial pages throughout the period.

In August 1976 Harris sold the paper to the Gannett Newspapers Company but remained as publisher and editor until May 1977. Since 1976 the paper has changed in numerous ways. The new managers grouped the local news together into one section or sometimes two sections instead of spreading the regional news throughout the body of the paper. In the 1980s the paper's front page included a synopsis of international, national, and local news. In addition, the conservative nature of the paper's editorials became less pronounced. In the 1990s editorials came from a variety of nationally syndicated columnists, some conservative and others liberal. An editorial board, present since the late 1970s, made up of both staff and members of the community, wrote opinions of local interest. Most issues ran from eighteen to twenty pages in length.

In 1998 the third oldest newspaper in Indiana had 50,000 on its subscription list and reached five Indiana and two Ohio counties. Approximately 200 people were employed by the *Palladium-Item*, and it was a part of the Federated Publishing Corporation, a division of Gannett Newspapers, the nation's largest newspaper company.

Besides publishing a newspaper, the company also provided offset printing and typesetting services. Emmett K. Smelser retained the office of president and publisher and Tim Johnson was employed as editor. Sales were expected to reach more than \$10 million in 1998.