

Rockport Printers

Founded: 1855

Location: Fourth and Main (1855–90); 119 North Third Street (1890–1990); 213 Main Street (1990–)

Royal S. Hicks and Calvin Jones founded the *Rockport Weekly Democrat* in March 1855. The paper quickly became popular, gaining more than one thousand subscribers by the end of 1856. In 1857 Hicks sold out, but continued to write editorials for the paper until 1860. Although elected as a Democrat to the office of county clerk in 1856, he left the paper over the Democratic party's support of slavery. In the same year, the weekly's name was changed to the *Rockport Democrat*. An often repeated story about the Civil War, perhaps apocryphal, is that at one point during the war Confederate soldiers were angered by an editorial charging them with corrupting the town's women. The soldiers ransacked the office, took the printing press, and threw it into the Ohio River. The press was easily retrieved and publication was not interrupted.

Jones accepted the editing responsibilities in 1863, remaining the sole owner until 1876, forming a brief partnership with J. D. Armstrong. Clyde Douglas became the paper's owner in 1888. Douglas sold the newspaper to R. E. Roberts, who two years later turned the paper over to W. W. Kellams.

Kellams retired in 1929, selling the periodical to A. N. Powers. Powers upgraded the equipment by adding a Model 8 Linotype machine. He kept control of the weekly for only a few years before handing it to Joseph H. Haines in 1932. After Haines' s death in 1936, his wife published the newspaper briefly before turning it over to Francis J. Fella and H. C. Bolin. Fella sold out in 1944. Near the end of World War II Bolin sold the weekly to John F. Perkins and his mother Agnes, who in turn sold it to Raymond and Lois Patmore. The Patmores kept control of the paper and the printing shop for thirty-one years.

Landmark Community Newspapers, Incorporated, purchased the newspaper part of the business in 1977, consolidating the *Democrat* with the *Rockport Journal*. The print shop was kept as a separate business by the Patmores until 1985 when they sold the concern to Cindy and John Limp. In 1998 the paper continued to be produced in the offices of the *Journal*, while the *Democrat's* former offices were converted to the offices for Rockport Printers. The business in 1998 employed four people and had sales of under \$500,000 per year.