

Rushville Republican

Founded: 1840

Location: Main Street, north of Ruth Street, Rushville (1860); Odd Fellows Building, Second and Main Streets (1880s); Morgan and Second Streets (–1906); Perkins and Second Streets (1906–16); 219–225 Perkins Street (1916–)

Pleasant A. and Oliver C. Hackleman began publishing the *Rushville Whig* 25 April 1840. The brothers were strong advocates of the Whig party generally, and William Henry Harrison, Indiana's favorite son and Whig candidate for president in 1840, in particular. The early editions reprinted campaign speeches and Whig state convention oratory, as well as local happenings. Subscriptions sold for \$2.00 per year. Pleasant remained as editor of the paper through four ownership changes. Pleasant became a general in the Civil War, the only Indiana general to die in combat.

When Granville Cowing and Norval W. Cox assumed the duties of publisher in February 1846 they changed the paper's title to the *Rushville True Republican*. This did not reflect a change in political leanings, however, as the partners and their successors remained loyal to the Whig party until its breakup after 1852. Under Cowing and Cox the paper reported the news in a less partisan manner every Wednesday and at a cost of \$1.50 for a year's subscription. The weekly was a four-page journal. Page one was filled with national and international news. The second page contained partisan editorials and reports on news around the state.

Sometime shortly after its purchase by George C. Clark in October 1852, the Rushville paper ceased publication. A. M. Cowing and Thomas J. Kemper revived the journal on 5 January 1853. In early 1854 the owners changed the title to the *Republican*. At this point the publication began backing the newly established Republican party. A year later A. M. Cowing purchased control of the journal and created the A. M. Cowing & Company to publish the

weekly. Money problems plagued the small-town paper. In March 1857, for instance, the paper was owed over \$95 for one week's advertisements and subscriptions but had received only \$1.25. Often the partners took produce in exchange for payment.

In the 1860s the paper boasted a circulation of more than 1,000. Advertisements lined the left-hand margin, and subscriptions remained \$1.50 a year until after the Civil War. By 1887 personal information, a reporting on the activities of local citizens, could be found in the "Brevities" section. By the 1890s "Personal Points," a section of brief social notices, joined "Brevities" so that much of the local news amounted to impending marriages, notice of travels, and a record of visiting relatives. Both the Tuesday and Friday editions ran four pages in length.

Various partnerships would control the paper until the Republican Company was formed in 1884. John F. Moses, a previous owner of the journal, repurchased an interest in the weekly and formed the Republican Company to serve as a publishing holding company. By 1887 Moses and Jacob Feudner had majority interest in the company. The partners changed the publication of the newspaper from a weekly to twice a week, publishing it on Tuesdays and Fridays. Moses retired in 1903, and complete control passed to Feudner. Feudner published the newspaper every day except Sunday.

When the paper became a daily it grew to encompass eight pages of print in every edition. Novel serials and local social news could be found on the back pages. By 1899 the editors had banished advertisements from the front page and had placed editorials on the fourth. The editorials continued to adhere to Republican party principles, and stories of the Civil War were often reprinted.

Feudner reorganized and incorporated the Republican Company in early April 1910, with Feudner and his son, Will O., retaining majority control of the paper. The weekly edition of the

paper was discontinued in 1913. Will became president of the company after his father retired in 1914. In 1929 Will sold his majority interest in the paper to Wilber L. Kendall, Edward J. Hancock, Walter L. Lowe, and L. B. Braden. Kendall became general manager. Feudner later became the editor of the *Telegram*.

Between World War I and the Great Depression the paper continued to be published in the eight- to ten-page format, with a mix of local, national, and international news on the front page. Cartoon illustrations, with editorial comment, illuminated news stories. "Hoosier Briefs" were added during the 1910s, and cartoons and sports became popular in the 1920s. The price of a subscription fell from \$4.50 per year in 1917 to \$4.00 in 1926.

In early February 1930 the word "daily" was dropped from the title of the journal. The company also purchased the *Rushville Telegram*, a pro-Democratic party morning daily. In 1968 the *Telegram* was reduced to a weekly. A. Hartwell Coons purchased the interest of Kendall and another partner and was named general manager in 1948.

During the 1930s and 1940s the journal remained staunchly behind the Republican party. A column by Congressman Raymond S. Springer appeared every week. By the 1950s church information and sports took up the most space in the paper. Personal news continued to reveal the activities of local citizens. By 1967 the price of a subscription had reached \$12.00 a year, and more than one picture graced the front page. The average issue ran ten or twelve pages in length.

In 1974 the *Republican* was sold to Worrell Newspapers, Inc. The company later changed its name to Rushville Newspapers, Inc. The American Publishing Company of Marion, Illinois, later purchased the paper, selling it to Thompson Newspapers in 1996. Thompson owns eight other Indiana community newspapers.

Little personal information continued to be reported after the late 1960s. Weddings, funerals, and a report on who had recently undergone surgery in the local hospital took up only a little room compared to the voluminous space accorded such information in the 1880s. After 1974 the new owners created a new, clearer format for the daily. Ten years later editorials were no longer local opinion. National syndicators provided an opinion. In the 1990s national and international news remained mixed with local concerns on the front page. The majority of information though, the sports and social news, as well as advertisements, remained centered on Rush County and Rushville.

In 1998 the paper employed fifteen and estimated project sales of more than \$1 million. It remained the oldest business in continuous operation in Rush County and continued to publish both the *Republican* and the *Telegram*. Donald W. Krause served as publisher.