

*South Whitley Tribune–Pierceton News*

Founded: 1887

Location: Originally Eberhard Building, corner of Columbia and State Streets, South Whitley (1887– ); building where Mary’s Dime Store later located and that was residence of W. W. Stauffer; Farmers Bank Building ( –1896); near corner of Mulberry and State Streets (1896–97); offices of AtoZ Printing Company (old Springfield Academy Building), corner of State and Market Streets (1897– ); Farmers Bank Building; Stump Printing Co. plant on State Street ( –1943); 113 South State Street (1943– )

On 1 April 1887, twenty-one-year-old William E. Ashcraft published the first issue of the *Whitley County News*. Ashcraft, recently graduated from Fort Wayne College (now Taylor University), published out of the offices of the short-lived *South Whitley Magnet*, which had folded in 1885. The *Whitley County News* was originally Republican, although it soon became independent. Between its founding in 1887 and 1894, ownership of the paper changed hands several times. Ashcraft sold the paper to O. H. Downey. Downey, in turn, sold the *News* to Webster Emerson, who moved its office to a room in the building where Dr. W. O. Stauffer and his family lived. Stauffer later edited the paper under the ownership of George Bumgardner. Bumgardner sold it to Robert Emerson, Webster’s brother, who called the paper the *South Whitley News*. Robert Emerson took charge of the paper in January 1894. The Emerson brothers’ father was a farmer and sawmill operator. Robert had spent twenty years as a schoolteacher before he and Webster purchased the *Orrville Crescent*, a newspaper in Wayne County, Ohio, which they operated for only six months. In 1896 Frank E. Miner purchased the paper from Robert Emerson, returning it to the original title of *Whitley County News*.

Miner moved the paper to a frame building near the corner of Mulberry and State Streets and installed a large Miehle printing press, which he powered with a gasoline

engine. Born in Columbia City in 1871, Miner had learned the printer's trade as an adolescent. He worked briefly at the *Columbia City Post* before acquiring the *South Whitley News*. Miner aggressively expanded the newspaper's job printing operations. By 1897 he had established the AtoZ Printing Company, which he incorporated in partnership with E. R. Hibbard of Chicago and J. W. Hibbard of New York. AtoZ Printing Company became the *News*'s headquarters and for a while showed promise of making South Whitley into a dominant midwestern printing center. By 1907 AtoZ Printing Company was employing five Miehle presses with automatic feeders manned by fifty to one hundred workers to produce large runs of pamphlets. The company, with offices in the old Springfield Academy, possessed a plant that occupied thirty-six thousand square feet. Some of its contracts called for ten million copies. (The company was able to print 500,000 thirty-two page pamphlets, with covers, in twenty-four hours.) In 1914, however, the AtoZ Printing Company disposed of the *Whitley County News* and left South Whitley. Although it eventually returned to the city, the printing company never matched its previous local or national dominance.

In 1914 W. O. Cascadden purchased the newspaper and renamed it the *Whitley County Tribune*. Once again, the paper saw a series of changes of ownership; Cascadden published the paper only through March 1915. From 1915 through 1933 the *Whitley County Tribune* had seven different owners, including W. J. Miller, who owned the paper from 1918 through 1924, and Lloyd W. Yeiser, who ran the paper from 1924 through 1928. While finishing high school, Artley Cullum began working at the paper as a twenty-cents-per-hour printer's devil in 1923. Five years later, just short of the age of twenty-one, he became the paper's publisher. Although Cullum left the paper in 1931, he

remained active in journalism. He later returned to Indiana to publish the *Bourbon News-Mirror*. Herbert Stump purchased the paper in October 1933 and remained publisher for ten years. He published a weekly editorial column, "Hube A's Says Sos," on local matters. In July 1943 Stump sold both the paper and his commercial printing firm to Basil Adams of Indianapolis. Adams moved the newspaper offices to 113 South State Street.

In 1945 Charles M. Bowerman and Harold F. Tschantz purchased the paper and job printing company. Tschantz was from the Laud area and Bowerman from Columbia City. Both had previous newspaper experience. The two partners upgraded the company's printing technology, purchasing a Kluge automatic feed printing press in 1946, adding a second Linotype machine, and in the 1950s introducing modern offset commercial printing. In addition, they acquired a newer-model Miehle flatbed cylinder press. The paper's circulation grew from 975 in 1945 to 1,600 in 1974. In the latter year J. David Tranter of Ligonier and his wife, Linda, acquired the *South Whitley Tribune*. A graduate of Western Michigan University with a degree in printing management and business administration, Tranter modernized the plant, introducing modern high-speed printing and computerized typesetting. In the late 1970s the Tranters expanded the paper, adding an office in Pierceton. In February 1976 they merged the paper with the *Pierceton News* of Kosciusko County and renamed it the *South Whitley Tribune—Pierceton News*, or, for short, the *Tribune-News*. Operating as the Tribune Printing Company of South Whitley, they briefly opened a branch printing office in Columbia City in 1976. When the office burned down later that year, however, the Tranters did not reopen it. They also established the *Argos Tribune* in August 1977 and acquired the

*Culver Citizen* in March 1978, publishing both out of their South Whitley offices. The Tranter Printing and Publishing Company grew to fifteen people and four offices. Tiring of the greater demands of this expanded enterprise, however, the Tranters sold the *Argos Tribune* and *Culver Citizen* in 1982 and concentrated, instead, on the *Tribune-News*.