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The German Press in Indiana

Oscar L. Bockstahler*

An effort to locate files of German newspapers and periodicals published in Indiana met with little success. In many instances not a single copy was available to give an idea of the nature and contents of the publication. Little is known about their editors.¹

The Germans "came with the idea and with the intention of becoming Americans actively participating in the social and political life" of their adopted country. Upon their arrival, they were frequently confused and bewildered, but a paper in their own language served "as a trusted and benevolent guide." The German press played an important role in their political, social, and cultural life in the United States.² It also contributed to the assimilation of the German element in America.

While German newspapers were not printed in Indiana until the nineteenth century, they were published in other parts of the country at a much earlier date. An early one in America, the *Philadelphische Zeitung*, was published by Benjamin Franklin. The first number was issued on May 6, 1732, as a sample copy, and the regular publication of the paper began on June 24, 1732. The paper existed for only a short time. Seven years later, however, Christopher Sauer, the well-known publisher of Germantown, Pennsylvania, started *Der Hoch Deutsch Pennsylvanische Geschicht Schreiber*. This paper is usually credited with being the first permanent German paper in the United States. Although the title of the paper varied, in 1762 it was changed to the *Germantown Zeitung*.³

As the Germans moved westward, Ohio followed in the footsteps of Pennsylvania and published newspapers for their benefit. Among the first German papers in Ohio was *Der*

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¹ For many years the late Logan Esarey had collected notes on the press in Indiana which were made available through the kindness of R. Carlyle Buley. Donald F. Carmony has also done much work on the press in Indiana and gave valuable assistance.

² Paul H. Mueller, "The Influence of the German Language Press in the United States," in the *Year Book of the German Club of Chicago* (Chicago, 1933), 55, 56.

³ Daniel Miller, "Early German American Newspapers," in the Pennsylvania-German Society, *Proceedings and Addresses* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1891-), XIX, Part XXII (1910), 11, 14-15, 35, 39.

Westliche Adler von Lancaster published in 1807 by Joseph Carpenter and John Greene at Lancaster. The following year the title was changed to *Der Ohio Adler*. Apparently, there was an interruption in the publication of this paper since an advertisement appeared in the *Indiana Republican* in 1818 urging Germans of Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee to subscribe to the paper which was "shortly to recommence" publication.⁴ From time to time German newspapers appeared in Cincinnati and other Ohio towns.

For numerous reasons, Germans began to cross the boundary line of Ohio and follow routes into Indiana. By 1850, they constituted 52.52 per cent of the total foreign population in the latter state.⁵ The Hoosier State, therefore, also followed the pattern of Pennsylvania and Ohio by publishing newspapers in the German language. The English language press, however, had preceded foreign publications in Indiana.

With the publication of the *Indiana Gazette* at Vincennes on July 31, 1804, printing was introduced into the Hoosier State by Elihu Stout,⁶ who shipped his wooden press from Frankfort, Kentucky, by way of the Kentucky, Ohio, and Wabash rivers. In April, 1806, the plant was destroyed by fire. This misfortune did not discourage Stout. He returned to Kentucky to obtain another press and paper which was transported to Vincennes by pack mules. On July 4, 1807, the first issue of the *Western Sun* was published.⁷

It took approximately forty more years before a German newspaper was issued in Indiana. In 1843, *Der Deutsche Beo-*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 100-1; Anton Eickhoff, *In der Neuen Heimath* (New York, 1885), 309-10; Madison, Indiana, *The Indiana Republican*, November 7, 1818. Osman C. Hooper in his *History of Ohio Journalism* (Columbus, Ohio, 1933), 29, stated that "*The Ohio Eagle*, originally *Der Ohio Adler*, appeared at Lancaster in 1809 to serve the early German immigration into Ohio. It was established by Jacob D. Dietrich, especially for the Lutheran farmers who, coming most of them over Zane's Trace from Wheeling had settled in the vicinity. Ebenezer Zane had laid out the town and named it for Lancaster County, Pa., from which many of the farmers had come. In 1813 the paper passed into the hands of Edward Schaeffer, who changed the name to the *Eagle* and printed it in English."

⁵ *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Statistics*, xxxvii.

⁶ Elihu Stout was born on April 16, 1782, in Newark, New Jersey. While quite young he became interested in the printer's trade. Ten years after the close of the American Revolution, Elihu's parents, Judiah and Mary Stout, migrated west and settled in Lexington, Kentucky. Here Elihu found employment on the *Kentucky Gazette*. Anxious to edit his own paper, he left Kentucky and came to Vincennes to try his luck. Elizabeth M. Denehie, "Indiana's First Newspaper," *Indiana Magazine of History* (Bloomington, 1905-), XXXI (1935), 125.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 125-28. Number 2 dated July 11, 1807, is in the Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

bachter von Indiana was projected in Fort Wayne. There is some doubt as to whether it was ever actually printed. C. Schmitz did purchase type and circulated a prospectus. According to T. B. Helm it was published, but to date no copy has been located.⁸ The next attempt to establish a German paper, *Die Staatszeitung*, was made by Georg Walker⁹ at Indianapolis in 1844.¹⁰ The following year he established the *Hochwächter* which was suspended in 1849 when Walker became a victim of the cholera. In 1847, Julius Bötticher, a Prussian, founded the first successful German newspaper, the *Indiana Volksblatt*, in Indianapolis.¹¹ As the German population increased, more newspapers in their native tongue began to appear in the Hoosier State. World War I, however, sounded the death knell for many.

The Sunday editions were never considered a part of the regular daily or weekly paper and were always edited and listed as separate publications. For instance, the *Terre Haute Banner* called its Sunday edition the *Literarisches Sonntagsblatt* because it specialized in literature, and more or less scholarly discussions. Probably a unique publication was the *Spottvogel* of Indianapolis. A characteristic description of it might be referred to as a pleasing blend of the usual American Sunday paper, *Fliegende Blätter*, and *Punch*. It had a wide circulation and was one of the last German papers to suspend publication.

Since it was possible to examine only a few newspapers and periodicals, no attempt will be made to give a description of the publications in Indiana. The list which follows has been arranged in alphabetical order by towns.¹² Despite the fact that this is the most complete data ever collected on the Ger-

⁸ T. B. Helm, *History of Allen County, Indiana* (Chicago, 1880), 108; Fort Wayne *Sentinel*, March 4, 18, 25, April 8, 15, and September 4, 1843.

⁹ Georg Walker was born in Württemberg in 1808. He studied theology at the University of Tübingen under Georg W. F. Hegel and David Strauss. In 1833 or 1834 he came to America and settled in Tuscarawas County, Ohio, until 1838 when he moved to Germantown, Ohio. He did not remain long here but went to Cincinnati, then Louisville, back to Cincinnati, and finally to Indianapolis in 1844 where he remained until his death in 1849. Gustav Körner, *Das deutsche Element* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1880), 203-4.

¹⁰ Fort Wayne *Sentinel*, April 6 and October 5, 1844.

¹¹ Körner, *Das deutsche Element*, 204, 237.

¹² The material for this list was gathered from the Esarey Newspaper Directory, Manuscripts Division, Indiana University Library; Donald F. Carmony Newspapers Notes; county histories; the various newspaper directories; Harold S. Bender, "Two Centuries of American Mennonite Literature," in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* (Goshen, Indiana, 1927-), I and II; "Die Deutsche Presse in den Vereinigten Staat-

man press in Indiana, it is not complete and sometimes the evidence that was available conflicted.

Anderson

Evangeliums Posaune. German edition of *The Gospel Trumpet*, a publication of the Church of God. In 1881 it started at Rome City.

Berne

Christlicher Bundesbote. Founded in 1882 it became the official organ of the General Conference of the Progressive Mennonite Church.

Der Brüdertsbotschafter. In 1907 it had a weekly circulation of 925.

Der Heilsbote. It began publication in 1898 to further the interests of the Defenceless Mennonite Church.

Der Kinderbote. The first issue appeared in January, 1886, and continued as a monthly until 1889 when it became a semimonthly.

Der Missionsfreund. A four-page monthly which had a circulation of 1,025 in 1907.

Sonntagschul-Lektionen fuer Jung und Alt. It began publication in 1889 as a quarterly.

Witness. The first issue appeared on September 3, 1896. From March 1, 1900, to November 1, 1901, a German edition was published.

Bowling Greene

Clay Co. Deutsche Zeitung. A weekly Democratic paper founded in 1875. There is a difference of opinion as to the place of publication. Some claim the paper was published at Brazil.

Brazil

Der Clay County Demokrat. It was founded in 1877.

Brookville

Der Leuchtturm. It was established about 1872. In 1876 it had a circulation of 600.

Crown Point

Freie Presse. It was a weekly paper founded in 1875.

Elkhart

Der Christliche Jugendfreund. It was founded in 1878 and printed by the Mennonite Publishing Company until 1908 when it was moved to Scottsdale, Pennsylvania.

Der Herold der Wahrheit. This was the German edition of the *Herald of Truth* founded in 1864 and discontinued in 1901.

Der Zionsbote. It began publication as a quarterly in 1884 and in 1889 became a weekly.

Mennonitische Rundschau. It was an agricultural paper which began publication in 1880. In 1908 it was moved to Scottsdale, Pennsylvania.

en," in *Der Deutsche Pionier* (18 vols., Cincinnati, Ohio, 1869-1897), VIII (1876), 305; S. N. D. North, "The Newspaper and Periodical Press," in the *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*, VIII; *State of Indiana, Sixth Annual Report of the Department of Statistics, 1884*; William A. Fritsch, *German Settlers and German Settlements in Indiana* (Evansville, Indiana, 1915), 25-26; *Indiana Magazine of History*, XLII (1946), 232-33; Jacob P. Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis* (2 vols., Chicago, 1910).

Evansville

- Union*. This was a weekly Republican paper founded in 1849 and edited by J. Esslinger. Its highest circulation of 1,912 was reached in 1877.
- Union*. It was a daily evening paper founded in 1849 and edited by J. Esslinger.
- Demokrat*. Probably one of the best edited German dailies in the Middle West. It was founded in 1864, and discontinued in May, 1918.
- Demokrat*. This was a weekly paper founded in 1864 and always had a larger circulation than the daily.
- Demokrat*. It was published only on Sundays and was more belletristic than either the daily or weekly editions.
- Die Freie Presse*. It was founded in 1888 and always had a smaller circulation than the *Demokrat*. In 1909 the *Presse* merged with the *Demokrat*.
- Die Glocke*. It was a Catholic paper founded in 1882 in Evansville and in 1884 moved to Indianapolis.
- Die Indiana Post*. It was established in 1879 as the official organ of the Sängerbund. In 1900 the title was changed to *Post und Anzeiger*. Nine years later it united with *Die Freie Presse* and in 1912 merged with *Der Demokrat*.
- Die Reform*. Theodore Dietsch, the editor, had been a member of the Frankfurt Parliament and may have been too radical in his utterances as the paper founded in 1853 soon ceased to exist.
- Das Sternenbanner*. This was a weekly Catholic paper established in 1882.
- Volksblatt*. This was a Republican campaign paper founded in the 1860's and edited by Robert S. Sproule.
- Der Pythias Ritter*. According to Logan Esarey it was a monthly published in the interest of the Knights of Pythias and founded in 1894.
- Der Volksbote*. The paper was founded in 1851.
- Der Volksfreund*. This was a daily paper established in 1894.
- Der Volksfreund*. It was founded in 1894 and published semiweekly.

Fort Wayne

- Der Deutsche Beobachter von Indiana*. This paper was probably founded in 1843. There is some question as to whether it was actually printed.
- Die Zeitung* or *Deutsche Zeitung*. It was established in 1856 and two years later merged with another paper whose name is not known.
- Der Ft. Wayne Demokrat*. This paper was founded in 1856 and issued irregularly.
- Indiana Staatszeitung*. It was founded in 1857 and in 1908 combined with *Die Freie Presse*. It was a triweekly issued in the interest of the Democratic party.
- Indiana Staatszeitung*. This was a weekly paper founded in 1857 and ceased publication in 1926.
- Indiana Volksfreund*. This was a weekly Republican paper established in 1871.
- Der Anzeiger*. No date of the establishment of this paper was found.

The Fort Wayne *Daily News* of November 11, 1874, stated that it was being moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Das Ft. Wayne Tageblatt. This was a daily Republican paper founded in February, 1876.

Der Weltbürger. This was a Catholic paper founded in 1883.

Die Ft. Wayne Freie Presse. This was a daily paper founded in 1888 which ceased publication in 1926.

Die Abendpost. It was a daily paper founded in 1908 which merged with *Die Freie Presse*.

Der Botschafter. According to Esarey, it was a monthly religious paper founded in 1909.

Goshen

Evangeliums-Panier. This was the German issue of the *Gospel Banner* founded in 1879 which was discontinued about 1898.

Hammond

Die Deutsche Volkszeitung. It was a weekly paper founded in 1888.

Huntingburg

Signal. The first issue appeared on May 11, 1867, and a year later was suspended. In January, 1869, the paper was revived. On May 1, 1914, the paper began its publication in English.

Demokrat. It began publication in September of 1868, but was suspended after the sixth issue.

Indianapolis

Die Indiana Staatszeitung. The Ft. Wayne *Sentinel* actually received the first copy issued on October 6, 1844.

Der Hochwächter. It began publication in 1845 and continued until 1849.

Das Indiana Volksblatt. This paper was founded in 1848 by Julius Bötticher.

Die Freie Presse von Indiana. It began publication in 1853.

Die Neue Freie Presse. It was founded in 1876.

Der Täglicher Telegraph. This paper began publication in 1864.

Der Telegraph. It was founded in 1868.

Die Zukunft. This was the official organ of the North American Turner Bund founded in 1864.

Indiana Volksblatt und Telegraph. This was the title of a weekly paper issued after the merger of the *Volksblatt* and *Telegraph*, which took place in 1876.

Der Spottvogel. This was the Sunday edition of *Der Telegraph* and founded in 1865. In the beginning comics were the dominant feature, which showed the influence of certain European publications.

Die Deutsche Zeitung. This was a weekly Republican paper which began publication in 1873 and ceased to exist in 1877.

Die Deutsche Zeitung. This was the Sunday edition of the previously mentioned paper, and according to Esarey founded in 1874 by Charles B. Lizens. Four years later it merged with *Die Tribüne*.

Die Indiana Tribüne. It was founded in 1878 as an opposition paper to the *Telegraph*.

Die Tribüne. This was a Sunday paper founded in 1882. On March 3, 1907, it merged with *Der Telegraph*.

Die Deutsch-Amerikaner Buchdruckerzeitung. It was the official

organ of the German-American Typographia devoted to the cause of union labor. It began publication in Philadelphia on July 1, 1873, but in 1877 moved to New York City, and in 1894 to Indianapolis.

Jeffersonville

Der Beobachter aus Indiana. It began publication in 1886.

Lafayette

Der Beobachter am Wabash. An association of immigrants began the publication of this paper in October, 1858.

Die Indiana Post. It was founded in 1860.

Der Deutsche Amerikaner. It was founded in 1875.

La Porte

Freie Blätter und Presse. This paper began publication in October, 1858, for the benefit of the large number of German settlers in the northwest corner of the state.

Das La Porte Journal. It was founded in 1877 and circulated widely among German farmers.

Minerva. This was a weekly Democratic paper which began publication in 1860.

Der Demokrat. It was a weekly paper founded in 1867 and published for approximately one year.

Das Gemeinde Blättchen. This was a monthly paper founded in 1897 by the Lutheran church.

Der Gemeinde Bote. It was a monthly religious paper founded in 1909 for the benefit of Lutherans.

Logansport

Der Demokrat. It was a weekly paper founded in 1867 and published for about one year.

Logansporter Banner. This was a weekly paper which began publication about 1870.

Der Wecker. It was founded in 1872, but could muster only 500 subscribers and suspended publication after six months.

Die Post. It was a weekly paper which began publication in 1875.

Logansport Chronicle. This was an English and German paper founded in 1875.

Die Deutsche Zeitung. John Day, a Bavarian, founded this paper on October 7, 1882.

Das Sternenbanner. This was the *Deutsche Zeitung* under another name and founded in 1892.

Die Freie Presse. John Day began the publication of this paper in 1899.

Michigan City

Die Freie Lanze. Karl Freitage was the editor of this paper which began in 1891. There was no record of it after 1907.

Der Kirchenbote. This was a weekly paper founded in 1882 by the German Congregational church.

Mt. Vernon

Das Wochenblatt. This was an independent weekly paper founded by John C. Leffel in 1873.

New Albany

Die Sonne. This was a weekly paper founded in 1850.

Der Demokrat. It was founded in 1861 but suspended after six months. Because no compositors could be found, it was moved to Evansville.

Die Deutsche Zeitung. It catered to a German population of about 5,000 when it was founded in 1875.

Das Echo der Gegenwart und der Zeitgeist. This was a Protestant paper founded about 1875 and published for ten years.

Richmond

Der Kirchenfreund. It was moved from Richmond in 1868 or 1869, and published elsewhere as an official paper of the Lutheran church.

Die Volkszeitung. It began publication in 1871, but was suspended in July, 1906, for want of German readers.

Der Hausfreund. It was a weekly paper founded in 1872.

Der Korrespondent. It was founded in 1872 by Elijah Parker.

Rockport

Das Banner. This was a weekly independent paper founded in 1877.

Seymour

Das Journal und Volksblatt. This was a weekly paper founded in 1861.

Der Anzeiger. It was a weekly paper founded in 1872.

Das Journal. This was a weekly paper founded about 1880.

Das Seymour-Columbus Journal. It was founded in 1881.

Der Beobachter aus Indiana. It began publication in 1886.

Die Volkszeitung. It began publication in 1881. About 1883 the *Journal* and *Volkszeitung* merged.

South Bend

Der Indiana Courier. It was founded in September, 1873, by a company of Germans.

Tell City

Helvetia. It was founded in 1859 and ceased publication in 1865.

Das Volksblatt. Founded in 1865, it used the old *Helvetia* press. It lived for only a few months.

Der Beobachter. It also began publication in 1865, but failed in a short time.

Der Anzeiger. It was a weekly Republican paper founded in 1865.

Terre Haute

Die Bürgerzeitung. This was a weekly Republican paper founded in 1865.

Das Volksblatt. It was founded in 1870.

Die Zeitung. It was established about 1860.

Das Banner. It was founded on August 20, 1870, as a triweekly.

Das Banner. It began as a weekly in November, 1870.

Die Indiana Post. This was the Sunday edition of the *Banner* and founded on February 20, 1876.

Das Journal. This was a weekly paper which began publication in 1881.

Das Journal. It began as a triweekly in 1881. On June 17, 1889, it became a weekly, and after 1896 it was published daily.

Literarisches Sonntagsblatt. It was founded in 1906 and suspended publication in 1912.

Vincennes

Das Wochenblatt. This was a weekly founded in 1874.