

Enterprise & News is 125 years old

A glance at our newspaper's history

By Miriam Nelson

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Editor's note: This year marks the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Wittenberg Enterprise.

The first Wittenberg Enterprise was published on Nov. 16, 1893.

"In 1893, the attitude of Wisconsin was one of optimism," according to a history of the newspaper published in 1993. "The national economy was in bad shape but it didn't much affect central Wisconsin, the newly settled northern frontier. The supply of cheap farm land and timber seemed inexhaustible. The modern furniture factory had been closed due to the bad times, but the general feeling was that it would soon reopen and employ nearly 100 men."

The community's first newspaper was the Wittenberg Leader, a weekly edited by Frank Brady that published from 1891-1893.

The Enterprise's first publishers were Wilber M. Hollembaek and Irwin R. Nye. Nye served as the editor. "Nye's creativity did not make up for a lack of business sense," according to the Enterprise's history, and he sold the publication in May 1904 to John Englund and N.E. Ketcham due to uncollected subscriptions.

Over the next 10 years, Englund had a number of partners, including Martin Homme, Just Johnson, Nels Paulson and Nye. Englund became the sole proprietor in 1914.

The newspaper moved from the bottom floor at 516 S. Webb St. to 200 E. Vinal St. in June 1924.

After Englund died on Oct. 4, 1948, his wife, Clara Homme Englund, and their children, Ruth and Luther, continued to operate the paper. In 1959, Luther took over as sole proprietor. In all, the Englund family operated the paper for 63 years.

In June 1969, Luther Englund sold the [newspaper](#) and

AT A GLANCE

WHAT: Coffee and cookies

WHERE: Wittenberg Enterprise & Birnamwood News office, 600 S. Webb St., Wittenberg.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to noon Friday

commercial printing business to Rodney E. Best, of Monroe. Best purchased the Birnamwood News from the Berner Publishing Company of Antigo in 1971. He combined the papers into the Wittenberg Enterprise and Birnamwood News.

Best, Daryl Hanke and John Hartleben operated the paper until August 1980 when it was sold to Gary Morgan and Rod Turchinski. Morgan and Turchinski could not make a go of it, however, and filed for bankruptcy. Best returned to keep the paper alive in April 1982. He sold it in August 1985 to a group calling itself Wittenberg Press Inc. consisting of John and Shirley Hartleben, Gordy and Sally Boldig, Steve and Darlene Block and Lee Sauer.

The group slowly broke up as Sauer returned to his native Indiana and the Hartlebens retired. John Hartleben had started working at the newspaper during John Englund's tenure as [editor](#).

In 1989, the newspaper moved to 110 Vinal St.

In 1993, Gordy Boldig served as the editor while Darlene Block handled the typesetting, advertising and bookkeeping. The paper's correspondents were George Brunecker in Birnamwood, Marcella Hartleben in Wittenberg and Lorraine Boldig in Morris.

Miriam Nelson purchased the [newspaper](#) in December 2008 from the Boldigs and the Blocks. She moved the office first to 511 S. Webb St. for two years and then to its current location at 600 S. Webb St. Nelson sold it to Wolf River Media, now operating as NEW Media Inc., in September 2016. She remains editor of the publication. The paper's paid circulation is 1,237.