OBERLIN NEWS HAD ITS START IN WAR PERIOD
TWO EARLY OWNERS LEFT WORK TO ENLIST IN ARMY
LONG SUCCESSION OF EDITORS PRECEDED UNION WITH THE OBERLIN TRIBUNE

The first issue of The Oberlin News, then known as The Lorain County News, appeared March 7, 1860. The paper was owned and managed by V.A. Shankland and J.F. Harmon, who were at that time the publishers of the Oberlin Evangelist. The News is the second oldest newspaper in Lorain county. The initial issue of the paper was a six column folio sold at $1.00 per year. The editor in the first year was A.B. Nettleton, who quit his work to become a commissioned officer in the union armies. Mr. Nettleton was succeeded as editor by J.B.T. Marsh, then a student in college, in later years a treasurer of Oberlin College.

The paper was born at a time when the question of preservation of the Union was uppermost in all minds. This fact was reflected in the resignation of Mr. Harmon in 1861, to enter the Union service, where he served for three years. Mr. Harmon sold his interest in the paper to his partner. For a time Mr. Shankland continued his work alone, but on March 5, 1862, when the paper was about to observe its second birthday, he sold an interest to Professor Henry E. Peck. The business was continued under the name of V. A. Shankland and Company. Professor Peck and Mr. Marsh serving as editors.

In the summer of 1863 the appeal of the Union cause could no longer be resisted by Mr. Marsh and he followed in the footsteps of Mr. Harmon by resigning his position and enlisting in the Army. At the same time Mr. Peck found it impossible to continue his work as an editor. He also, while not actually in the service, did notable work in support of the Union cause.

In July of 1863 Mr. Shankland employed William Kincaid, then a senior in college. Mr. Kincaid, who served for about a year, was succeeded by L.L. Rice, who had charge of the editorial work until October, 1865. On the completion of his three years’ service in the army Mr. Harmon returned to Oberlin and again became joint owner of The News. In November, 1864 he purchased Mr. Shankland’s interest and became sole proprietor. About a year later Mr. Harmon sold the paper to Mr. March, who conducted it both as editor and manager until July 1867, when he sold it to Elbert W. Clark. Mr. Clark owned the paper for two years and in that time Professor C.H. Churchill was editor. E.P. Brown succeeded Mr. Clark in the ownership and conducted the paper until February 1870. Mr. Brown, who was at the time of his purchase publisher of the Bellevue Gazette, sold The Oberlin News in February 1871 to Justus N. Brown, a graduate of the Oberlin Theological Seminary. Mr. Brown finally sold an interest to J.H. Lang and the two owners disposed of the paper in 1873 to George B. Pratt and J.H. Battle.

These two men conducted the paper until 1877, when William H. Pearce purchased it and retained editorial management and ownership for a quarter of a century. He was associated for several years with Captain J.F. Randolph of Oberlin. The two partners managed and edited the paper with unusual success. Mr.
Randolph was a keen business man and Mr. Pearce was an editor of ability and very fine character. After the death of Mr. Pearce the paper was for several years managed and edited by Harry T. Marsh and Charles B. Marsh, sons of J.B.T. Marsh, who was associated with the paper in its infancy. These two men conducted the paper for H.W. Ingersoll, Elyria attorney, who had purchased it soon after the death of Mr. Pearce. In 1909 W.J. Swisher, who died here in Oberlin a few years ago, became editor and manager and conducted The News until 1911, when he was succeeded by W.H. Phillips, who had charge of the paper as editor and manager until its consolidation with The Oberlin Tribune in March 1930.

The Oberlin Tribune was founded by J.L. Kinney in November 1894. The first paper was a four-page paper so small in size that it was printed on a 10x15 press. The plant was then located in the Comings Block on West College street. In 1895 the paper was enlarged in size. It was originally established as the Oberlin Owl. In 1907 the business was incorporated under the name of The Tribune Printing and Publishing Company, with J.L. Kinney and C.W. Kinney, his brother, as chief stockholders. The paper was so conducted until it was united with The Oberlin News in 1930. When this union was formed C.W. Kinney became editor of The Oberlin News Tribune, a position which he has held with credit since that time.