THE REGULATIONS OF THE GARDEN ARE SUCH AS TO
PREVENT ALL IMPROPER CONDUCT AND EXCLUDE
EVERYTHING THAT MIGHT OFFEND THE CHASTEST EAR

Amusements and Leisure Time
Activities in Middletown;
1828-1838

Peter Hall
Am. Soc. Hist.
Fall 1980

Judith Schneider
January 24, 1981
In 1830, Middletown was a city in transition. The urban population was growing rapidly in contrast to the rural population, the number of middle-income families was burgeoning, and the number of workers in manufacturing industries grew by 25% between 1820 and 1840.\textsuperscript{1} Downtown Middletown began to develop the rectangle bordered by Main, Washington, Church and High Streets increased from a density of 20 buildings in 1825 to 85 in 1851.\textsuperscript{2} Yet, the leisure time activities available to Middletown residents did not reflect the growth and modernization of the area to any great degree. By modern standards, as well as by the standards of contemporary visitors to the area, Middletown was a dull place, lacking in the amenities and amusements that were beginning to appear in New York and were to overtake the nation in the quarter century to come.

Four restraints in particular shaped the nature and extent of the leisure time activities in Middletown and similar New England communities of the era. The most obvious restraint was that of the church, since the social systems surrounding church-going were the prime shapers of community life. The physical immobility of the people, reliant on seasonal modes of transportation and isolated from the urban centers, limited the extend of activities which relied on attractions coming to the city or townspeople leaving the city to seek amusement. Financial constrictions limited the extent to which the lower classes could attend entertainments, and the prevailing attempts
at gentrification, in imitation of the British, shaped the attitudes the townspeople brought to those activities that they were free to pursue.

Activities in Middletown were to a large degree limited by the weather. Travel coming in and out of the city was primarily via steamboat, and the river was closed in the winter, "frozen over tight as a drum". The itinerant instructors and performers left the towns of the northeast with the fall and started their travels again in the spring. City residents, who relied on excursions by boat to Hartford and New York for entertainment, were consigned to take the arduous stagecoach route, hazardous over the winter road conditions. Charles Dickens describes the two-and-a-half-hour steamboat trip down the Connecticut River from Springfield to Hartford: "The captain of a small steamboat was going to make his first trip for the season that day (the second February trip I believe within the memory of man)."

The river, however, provided entertainment for the youths of the city during both summer and winter. In the summer of 1828 the Middlesex Gazette published the following under the headline "WARNING"

Several citizens who reside on the banks of the river have requested us to give warning to those young men who are in the daily habit of bathing in the river opposite to their houses. There is a law prohibiting this indecency and if the practice is not discontinued it will be rigidly enforced. The Sabbath seems to be more particularly devoted to the exhibition of these disgraceful scenes."
In the winter the river was solid enough for ice skating, much of the time, but in December of 1836, Daniel Ayres wrote irritably; "The skating has been quite good here for some time past, but for two or three days the weather has been quite warm and thereby melted the ice so we are obliged to look elsewhere for amusement." The winter also brought sleigh riding to town, though an older writer complained, "I dislike the motion and after a short time, the jingle of the bells."

In Boston, where wages were probably higher than in Middletown, the average wage of a good footman was $25 per month. A good cook was worth $2 a week, and a good housemaid, $1.50. Daily wages for factory and quarry workers were also exceptionally low. Although there was a fairly wealthy merchant class in Middletown, the large majority of the residents could not afford to pay for amusements. The average admission fee to performances and events was 25¢, with children's admission 12½¢. Dancing lessons were $5.00 a term, ferry trips were $1 round trip, admission to the gardens was 12½¢, and bothing facilities charged 12½¢ for a cold bath and 25¢ for a hot one.

The dominant element in the every day existence of the 1830 Middletown resident was the church. No longer a strictly congregational town, Middletown had thriving Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, Universalist, and AME Zionist congregations. The AME Zion church, the second in the state and the third in the nation, built its first chapel in 1830 on Cross Street. The
Congregationalists had by this time established two congregations, the South Congregational Church and the First Congregational Church. 9

Regardless of denomination, all the New England churches preached the message of the Puritans: study and religious duty were the only proper ways to spend leisure time. "The ascetic proscription of amusements extends to the clergy throughout the country; and includes the whole of the religious world in New England," 10 wrote Horace Martineau, a British visitor to the country from 1834-1836. To the devout, the theatre, fiction, the Pleasure Gardens (filled with nothing more blasphemous than flowers and vegetables), taverns, dancing and all non-religious assemblies were the work of the devil.

"...I would sooner engage to find you twenty church members in some sects that have broken some of the commands in the dialogue than to find one who has ever entered a theatre or who had participated in the dance, since taking upon himself the covenant obligations", a contemporary essayist observed. 11

All non-religious, non-instructive activities on the Sabbath were particularly sinful, and the contemporary literature is full of accounts of dire accidents befalling those who ventured out to go boating or picnicking on the Sabbath. The state government echoed the pulpits, in May of 1800 with Sections 87 and 88 of the Crimes and Punishment Title of the State Statutes. (Title 20).

Theatrical exhibitions
Sect. 87. If any company of players, or persons
whatsoever, shall exhibit any tragedies, comedies, farces or other dramatic pieces or compositions, or any pantomimes, or other theatrical shows whatsoever, in any public theatre, or elsewhere, in this state, with views of gain, and for which they shall demand and receive from the spectators of such shows and exhibitions, or others, any sum or sums of money, as a reward for their service and labour therein, or under colour of a gratuity therefor; each person so exhibiting, being thereof duly convicted, before the county court, shall forfeit and pay a penalty of fifty dollars, one half to him or them who shall sue for, and prosecute the same to effect, and the other half to the treasury of the county.

Exhibitions by mountebanks, tumblers, &c.

Sect. 88. If any mountebank, tumbler, rope-dancer, master of puppet-shows, or other person or persons, shall exhibit or cause to be exhibited, on any public stage or place whatsoever, within this state, any games, tricks, plays, shows, tumbling, rope-dancing, puppet-shows, or feats of uncommon dexterity or agility of body; or offer, vend, or otherwise dispose of, on any such stage or place, to any persons so collected together, any drugs or medicines recommended to be useful in various disorders; every person so offending, being thereof duly convicted, before the county court, shall forfeit and pay, for every such offence, a sum not exceeding two hundred dollars, nor less than sixty dollars, one half to him or them who shall sue for, and prosecute the same to effect, and the other half to the treasury of the county; and if such offender be a minor, or an apprentice under the age of 21 years, or a servant, such fine or penalty shall be paid by his parent, guardian, or master. 12

In addition, the permitting of theatrical exhibitions in one's home was an offense punishable by a fine of seven and a half dollars. In 1828, circuses were added to the list of outlawed amusements:

Sect. 108. No person or persons shall make or use any circus of any description, or any open space, area or edifice for sports, or for the exhibition of any extraordinary feats of any horse, pony, or horse kind, or of any other animal for reward or gain, or under color of gratuity; nor shall any person or persons, owning, or occupying, or having any right to use, or let any lands, or tenements, suffer any person or persons, to appropriate or use for any time or times, any such lands or tenements, or any part of either, for the purposes aforesaid; and every person who shall be duly convicted of either of the acts or offences aforesaid, shall be punished by fine not exceeding two hundred dollars, nor less than sixty dollars.
Exhibitions in any circus.

Sect. 109. If any person or persons shall make or cause to be made, or aid, assist, or abet therein, any exhibition of any extraordinary feats of any horse, pony or other animal, or other show or trick, in any of the places in the next preceding section of this act mentioned, or in any other place, or places, for gain or reward, or under color of gratuity; every such person being thereof duly convicted, shall be punished by fine, not exceeding two hundred dollars, nor less than sixty dollars.

Sect. 110. Each and every animal so used or employed, whether for a greater or a less time, in any exhibition aforesaid, may be seized therefor, and shall become forfeited to the state, and may be so seized, and proceeded against at any time, within six calendar months after such forfeiture hath accrued, and upon a judgment of forfeiture, the court before which such judgement shall have been rendered, shall direct a sale of the property, in such manner as to it may appear proper, and the avails thereof, deducting all expenses, shall be paid to the treasury of this state.

Sect. 111. And every wall, fence, edifice or circus, hereafter made or erected, for the purposes of any exhibition by this act prohibited, or which may hereafter, with the consent of the proprietor or proprietors, be used or at any time employed for the purpose aforesaid mentioned shall be deemed a public nuisance, and may be abated.\(^{13}\)

These laws stood until 1853, when the municipalities were given the authority to "allow and regulate, under such terms and conditions as they shall see fit to prescribe any theatrical or other exhibition."\(^{14}\)

Though the law was inconsistently enforced, it served to censor the entertainment that reached the community, and was used against those assemblies that the community elders found abhorrent. The only documentation of its use in the Middletown newspapers of the time concerns a show revealing the art of Masonry. From the American Sentinel of December 30, 1829:

For several evenings last week (says the Hartford
Courant, 22 inst.) many of our citizens were entertained with a series of exhibitions at Allyn's Hall, purporting to be illustrations of the seven first degrees of Free Masonry. The gentlemen who conducted the exhibition were part or all of them regularly initiated Freemasons who had been advanced to the degree of Royal Arch. Their professed object was the exposure of Free Masonry. On Saturday a prosecution was commenced against the performers founded on the 87th section of the statute against theatrical exhibitions. It was also claimed that the exhibition was illegal at common law as being indecent and contrary to good morals. On examination, held before Nathan Johnson, esq. one of the defendants was bound over in a bond of $50 to take his trial before the county court to be holden next March.15

Though the law was enforced in this instance by officials sympathetic to the cause of Freemasonry, its most significant effect was in limiting those entertainments that did enter the state, rather than in the prosecution of them after performances. 6 Under the aegis of the church, morally correct leisure time activities were pursued. "The people of New England do good by Mania"16 observed Martineau. Organizations espousing popular causes met regularly and organized activities through which to proselitize.

The temperance movement, which had organized in Connecticut as the Connecticut Temperance Society in 1829, had 22,532 members pledged to abstinence by 1830.17 In Middletown there were two Temperance Societies: the Middletwon Temperance Society with leading citizen Nehemiah Hubbard as President, and the Middlesex Association for the Promotion of Temperance.18 The societies met to hear speakers, mainly clergymen, lecture on the evils of drink, and to get pledges of abstinence signed by
those moved to reform by the eloquence of the lecture. In November of 1833 the Temperance societies joined forces to present an exhibition at Wesleyan University, including short addresses, a dialogue on the evils of drink, and songs from a choir culled from the choirs of the various congregations of the town.\textsuperscript{19} The leading citizens of Middletown, without completely altruistic motivations led a "Working Men's Association" to help foster temperance and moral righteousness among the working men of Middletown.\textsuperscript{20} There were several active abolitionist and Colonization societies in Middletown. Among the Abolitionist Societies was the "Colored Female Anti-Slavery Society", founded in 1834 by Clarissa Beaman, wife of the first pastor of the AME Zion church. It was the second women's abolitionist society in the country.\textsuperscript{21} The colonization movement had strong organizational backing in the city, with both female and juvenile colonization societies. The groups met both collectively and independently to hear lectures on the colonization movement, which advocated returning blacks to Africa to settle in new colonies as a solution to the slavery issue.\textsuperscript{22} The societies took advantage of the Independence Day holiday, both in 1829 and 1831 to assemble and promote their cause. In 1829 the Reverend Smith Pyne lectured to the societies and other civic groups, including the Franklin Society. In 1831 Reverend T.H. Gallaudet of Hartford, soon to become well-known for his work with the deaf, led the lecture; afterward, a collection was
taken up in aid of the funds of the society." 23

The Franklin Society catered to the needs of the young men of Middletown. "The Franklin Society is composed of young men between the ages of fifteen and thirty. Their object is a very laudable one, viz. improvement in declamation composition and debate and they devote one evening in each week to that purpose. The society consists we understand of about one hundred members." 24 In addition to running their own meetings and attending those of other civic groups, they ran a library, available to "all the young men of the city" for an annual borrowing tax of $37 4 25

The restraints on leisure time activities imposed by the church and religious values had considerably more effect on the women of Middletown than on the men.

"As for the occupations with which American ladies fill up their leisure; what has been already said will show that there is no great weight or diversity of occupation. Many are largely engaged in charities; doing good or harm according to the enlightenment of mind which is carried to the work. In New England, a vast deal of time is spent in attending preachings and other religious meetings; and in paying visits, for religious purposes to the poor and sorrowful." 26

Middletown's women organized charity organizations under the direct aegis of the churches as well as independant organizations. Two particularly active women's societies were the Assistance Society of Christ Church and the apparently independant Union Society. Both held frequent fairs to support their charitable works, selling handcrafted goods and hot and cold refreshments. There was a standard admission fee of $1 2 4 for the fairs of both
societies, and they represented a large investment of time on
the part of the women involved:

"We have had an opportunity of looking in on
the preparations for the ladies fair which is to
commence today. The tables were not finished nor
the arrangement of articles completed, but if the
fine taste exhibited in the outline is carried
through the details, the tout ensemble will be strikingly
brilliant. A portion only of the articles was to be seen,
but we saw enough to justify us in affirming that for
variety and elegance, for origality of design and
beauty of execution, the ladies may safely challenge
comparison with any similar productions that were ever
offered for the admiration of the public"

complimented the Middletown Gazzette on the eve of the Union
Society Fair in May of 1832. The fairs were not only advertised
in the local papers, but usually were accompanied by editorial
praise, once in the form of a poem.27

Most of the charitable works performed by the ladies were
not of the sort to get attention in the newspapers. As Martineau
points out, they frequently went calling on the poor and sick
with baskets of food and clothing, yet their charity was not
uncritical. While they would sew clothing for the families of
the poor, they would avoid a seamstress whose husband was in
jail, boycotting the wife for the husband's amorality.28

Despite their involvement in charitable activities, the
Middletown women's lives were centered around their homes. Even
their charitable activities were, to a great degree, home-
centered. The baking, sewing and craft work which was given both
directly to the needy families and sold at the fairs were products
of the free time that the women were expected to spend overseeing
their homes. The Middletown Gazette and the periodicals that were available to the women suggested activities to be done at home:

"That division of the fair portion of our community who as Cowly wittily says of the ex-courtier 'are condemned to do what they please all morning' will take an interest in a method Mr. Ackerman has discovered of transferring prints, both plain and colored upon fire screens work boxes etc so as to wear the appearance of being original drawings made upon the implements themselves..." 29

Detailed instructions for a decoupage-like technique follow in this feature from the Middletown Gazette. Even the wealthiest American ladies were expected to know how to clear starch and iron the family laundry, how to "keep plate and glass", "cook dainties" "and if they understand the making of bread and soup, so much the better." Yet "The gentlemen usually charge themselves with the business of marketing--which is very fair." 30 And also keeps the women's sphere of influence in the home.

The ascetic existence, free from frivolous diversions of all sorts, was not only the the result of the church's influence. Middletown residents, were joining the rest of the country in a tremendous course of self-improvement. Influenced by the germs of European culture filtering through romanticized accounts of titled living and stirring intellectualism, the society developed affectations of Old World breeding and education. The result amused many visitors; when coupled with the tremendous seriousness and moral righteousness bred by the church, it produced the insufferable pendency and moral pontification which characterized the popular culture of the time.
"There cannot be a stronger contrast than between the fun and simplicity of the usual domestic talk of the United States and the solemn pendency of which the extremest examples are to be found there; exciting as much ridicule at home as they possibly can elsewhere." 31

This pendency was both a product of institutions outside of the home and activities within the family. Outside the home it took shape in the lectures, offered to the public in lieu of entertainments, and was the driving force behind the movements to establish lyceums and libraries for public access.

The American public was crazy about lectures. Offered frequently on political, religious and academic subjects, they often drew big crowds, and apparently were often more significant for their entertainment value than as learning experiences.

"Lectures abound in Boston and I am glad of it; at least in the interval before the opening of the public amusements which will certainly be required sooner or later. These lectures may not be of any use in conveying science and literature, lectures can seldom do more than actuate to study at home. But in this case they probably obviate meetings for religious excitement which are more hurtful than lectures are beneficial." 32

Though Martineau, as an English visitor, could be cynical about the value of the lectures, she did not underestimate their appeal as substitutes for tabu activities, and the extent to which people went to justify them. "When there was talk of attempting to set up the Italian Opera (in Boston) a gentleman observed that it would never do; people would be afraid of the very name. 'O! said another 'call it Lectures on Music"
with illustration and everybody will come." In Middletown, that would certainly have been the case. The townspeople went to lectures on Mineralogy, Handwriting, History, they went to see the Indian Redjacket, in his native costume 'wearing the medals presented to him by George Washington.' They also regularly attended the orations and excersises at the university, even when their subject matter wasn't officially announced.

There was great community pressure to build a public lyceum, in Middletown. Letters and editorials appeared in the Middletown papers in June of 1830 supporting the cause:

"There is in this town and we believe in each of the towns in the vicinity materials for a useful association, where information could be mutually imparted and received. In Middletown advantages are possessed to a degree far more abundant than in most towns. Lectures might be given to large audiences without any extension of the resources already in reach of us. Why should not our citizens look to this? They have given strong proof of the loves of knowledge; will they not take another step and thereby secure to every person disposed to receive it the invaluable benefits to be derived from further acquaintance with science and the practical arts of every day importance as well as those of more recondite influence."

In the absence of a public lyceum, the lyceum of Captain Partridge's school, which was build in 1824, offered public lectures, particularly after the school had been taken over by Wesleyan University, and the orations were accompanied by the Middletown Artillery Band. The "Wesleyan Lyceum" may have been identical to the "Wesleyan Missionary Lyceum", or the latter may have been a seperate building open to the public.
"in which various and interesting articles received from missionary stations in different parts of the world are collected; where meetings are held to hear information concerning missionary operations and prospects and to pray for the conversion of the world." 38

The absence of a public library was decried in the Middlesex Gazette two weeks before the editorial calling for the establishment of a lyceum:

"Amusement and instruction go hand in hand among those who daily unite in social intercourse. Where the book which has amused this one or informed that one can scarcely fall of notice: and the young are no less influenced by the indirect manner which is used. Thus what is found to interest the attention of all will never be neglected and a fondness for reading will be the consequence." 39

The need was somewhat assuaged by the establishment of the Franklin library (open only to young men), the founding date of which is not known. On December 19, 1832, however, the library announced that it had moved to "the office of S.W. Griswold esq. over the store of Mr. P. Fagan, where it is now arranged and nearly ready for use." 40

Four months previous to the Franklin Library's move, Luke C. Lyman a Middletown merchant, announced his expansion into the library business. He offered subscription rates of one year for four dollars or three months for one dollar. Those without either the capital or the intellectual appetite to make subscribing worthwhile could pay by the book; "For an octavo volume: 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) to 12\(\frac{1}{2}\) cents. For duodecimo or octodecimo volume: 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) cents." 41 Presumably the library was open for business concurrently with his store. He opened his library notwithstanding
the competition of E. G. Southmayd's Circulating Library, which had been in business for several years. The need for the libraries in the community must have been fairly strong, since they both succeeded in the city, advertising new arrivals on a monthly basis. The Franklin library received no further mention in the available local papers of the early 1830's.

The quest for self-improvement was even stronger in the home: through efforts to learn the social graces, and to keep up with literature, families attempted to attain culture. The young ladies of the families who could afford it took lessons in handwriting, French and art. Mr. Tucker advertised a writing academy in the summer of 1833; his course of twelve one-and-a-half-hour lessons was promoted with free penmanship lectures. Although artists advertised their services in the Middletown newspapers, they did not advertise drawing lessons. These were available through ladies' academies, and presumably through private tutors. The quality of the lessons and the finished artists was probably fairly primitive, however, at least by the contemporary British standards:

"I did not meet with a good artist among the ladies in the states. I never had the pleasure of seeing a good drawing except in one instance; or, except in two, of hearing good music. The entire failure of all attempts to draw is still a mystery to me. The attempts are incessant but the results are below criticism." 

There was scarcely more praise for other cultivated talents:

"Natural philosophy is not pursued to any extent by women. There is some pretension to mental and moral philosophy; but the less that is said on that head, the better."
The most significant home activity of this era though, was reading. The United States as a whole was going through a major upheaval in its reading habits.

"The emergence of a popular book market naturally depended on the appearance of a mass popular audience which in turn derived from the great population explosion between 1790 and 1830 when the American public doubled in size, and doubled again by 1860. As opposed to the British and European public this was an educated audience more than ninety percent literate, one that already had the reading habit. Reading in the United States was not restricted to the well-educated, the wealthy or even the upper class." 45

The explosion was partially the result of technological advances. ". . . the invention of improved oil lamps (later gas) meant more reading hours per day for everyone; the expanding network of roads and railroads meant cheaper and wider distribution for reading matter of every kind." The 1830's saw the number of paper mills in the country grow from 150 in 1830 to 400 in 1840. The Napier and Hoe cylinder presses made flatbed presses obsolete. "The publishing industry by the 1830's could turn out books as rapidly and efficiently as shirts, nails, or matches." In addition, a more practical arrangement between book publisher, and booksellers - the sale of books to the merchant to resell to the public, proved more financially lucrative and more stable. "By the 30's several of the great publishing houses - Harper, Matthew Carey, Thomas, Cummins and Hilliard were established in the major cities. 46
The publishing explosion reached Middletown, where books, newspapers, and periodicals were sold, and poetry both read and
written. Everybody was a reader to some degree: "All American ladies are more or less literary; and some are so to excellent purpose: to the saving of their minds from vacuity. Readers are plentiful: thinkers are rare." 47

The Middlesex Gazette and the American Sentinel of the early 1830's carried ads E. and H. Clark, Luke C. Lyman and E. Hunt, Middletown booksellers. There was a changing selection of books: Middletown residents were sold Histories, Sermons, Poetry anthologies, Medical texts, etiquette books, works of fiction, biographies, and other books with titles suggesting contents both informative and didactic.

The fiction read by Americans of the 1830s was romantic, yet often very moral in its tone. The romances of British lady writers led American women into their fantasies of noble European mores. The Leatherstocking Tales of James Fenimore Cooper, mythologized the Far West and the frontiersman. The New Englanders never lost sight of their religious piety, however, and by 1830, the American Sunday School Union published six million works of good fiction for adults and children, tracts, periodicals, and even clean lyrics for dirty songs. 48 The extent to which their piety interfered with their cultural strivings was noted by Martineau, "I even know of more families than one, unconnected with the clergy and not making any strict religious profession where Shakespeare is hidden for prudish reasons." 49 Yet nonetheless, they owned copies of Shakespeare's plays, which they insisted were to be read, and not sinfully
produced on the stage.

The etiquette books that were often advertised for sale in Middletown were fairly popular. "From the late 1820's on, this literature poured forth in a never ending stream. An incomplete enumeration shows that aside from frequent revisions and new editions, 28 different manuals appeared in the 1830's..." The etiquette books offered direct and private answers to the questions of the emerging middle class striving to gentrify itself. They Americanized the standard codes of the French and English, adapting them to the more rural and less mannered ways of life in the United States.

"The rising classes reasonable confident of their grip on Christian principles but timorous about the proprieties of taste and behavior thirsted to 'know the little things the graceful finishing touches' which they associated with persons to the manner born."

Separate books addressed the needs of young men, young ladies and children. 50

This was an era that saw the rise in the popularity of poetry. Poetry was not considered a highbrow art form, and the popular poets were followed in the newspapers. Both the Middlesex Gazette and the American Sentinel reserved 2/3 of the first column of copy on the first page of every issue for the publication of poetry. Usually one, or two less lengthy poems filled the column. In keeping with the editorial practices of the day, the poetry was for the most part purloined from other publications. The dominant poet of the first half of the nineteenth century was Lydia Sigourney, a Connecticut housewife,
second only to Longfellow in contemporary popularity. She started out working anonymously, but soon started using her own name, writing 69 books from 1815-1865, and 2000 articles. "She immortalized in elegiac song everything from a canary who died of starvation to a child drowned in a bushel of swine food." Her poetry stuck very close to an established formula: twelve stanzas described an event, usually a tragedy of some degree, and one or two stanzas at the end clearly delivered the moral. Other popular poets, like Charles Sprague who was honored by the Phi Beta Kappa of Harvard in 1829, could come up on demand with a verse honoring any occasion. Middletown produced one of the more well-known of the nineteenth century popular poets. John G. C. Brainard, "The first of a long line of newspaper poets" was born to a Middletown family in 1795. Unable to make a go of a business career in Middletown, he settled in Hartford to write. "'Tuning his pastoral pipe to the woodland lays and lyrics of his native state, Connecticut'" a contemporary critic observed, he received wide recognition, 'apparently becoming a minor celebrity in Middletown. Most of the newspaper poetry was of a predictable sentimentally overindulgent sort; this anonymous sample appeared in the Middlesex Gazette:

There is in the lone, lone sea
   a spot unmark'd but holy;
For there the gallant and the free
   In his ocean bed lies lowly.
Down, down beneath the deep
That oft in triumph bore him
He sleeps a soft and peaceful sleep
   with the salt waves dashing o're him."
The poem continues for another stanza. William Cullen Bryant was a frequently published poet of the Gazette, who still retains a portion of the high critical standing his contemporaries accorded him. He was more consistently victimized by the press though: his poetry was reprinted frequently both in Middletown and the rest of the country, but he rarely received royalty money though the papers cashed in on the recognition value of his name. Felicia Hemans, who published alternately as Hemans and Mrs. Hemans, but never under her first name, was another widely read and talked about poet of the time. Catherine Maria Sedgwick, published alternately as Sedgwick, Mrs. Sedgwick and C.M. Sedgwick, was also to receive widespread recognition. Richard Alsop of Middletown published poetry during the same era.

"This is the Age of Magazines
Even Skeptics must confess it:
Where is the town of much reknown
That has not one to bless it?"

The rise in literacy, combined with improved mail service and rates, encouraged an explosion in the number of magazines published in the country. The Middletown papers published announcements of new magazines frequently, and E.H. Hunt acted as local agent for many of them. The North American Review, was generally considered to be the most prestigious of the larger circulation magazines; "it was founded in 1815 with the deliberate purpose of achieving greater national scope than any previous American magazine. Never a popular magazine, it was largely a historical and critical review from the time of its founding until
it ceased publication in 1939." It was published in Boston and retained a Harvard-tinged flavor. Most of the influential nineteenth-century writers were published in it and Henry Adams, an editor and son of John Quincy Adams called it the "first literary power in America." 55

Another influential literary publication was the Knickerbocker Magazine, publishing literary works by the best of that school of New York writers, including Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper. It started publication in 1833. 56

The most popular magazines of the period though were of more popular and less literary appeal. The Saturday Evening Post, published out of Philadelphia starting in 1821 was published under the legend "A Family Newspaper, Devoted to Literature Morality Science News Agriculture and Amusement" during the 1830's. It published the works of William Cullen Bryant, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Edgar Allen Poe, Cooper, Emerson and Hawthorne, and reached a pre-civil war circulation of 90,000. 57

The most important new magazine genre of the period was the women's magazine. With the birth of the most influential magazine of the nineteenth century, Godey's Ladies' Book in 1830, joining The Casket (founded in 1826), The National Magazine, The Token, and others, the magazine industry began to wield a powerful authority in home life. Godey's "affected the manners, morals, tastes, fashions in clothes, home diets of generations of American readers. It did much to form the American woman's idea of what she was like, how she should act, and how she should
insist that she be treated. Godey's had no interest in political matters or in intellectual subjects. It published nothing of either." It did publish fashion articles illustrated with black and white line drawings and engravings, and with Godey's famous handcolored plates, moral stories, "elegant stories of the chaste and the pure which were meant to instruct as well as to entertain, and sentimental, didactic and moral verse... (which) read like drivel, but they must have been adored in their day." also, recipes, embroidery patterns and instructions, and beauty and health hints. It grew rapidly in popularity, with a circulation of 25,000 in 1839, indicating readership of probably five times that size, and a circulation of 1,000,000 before the war. Godey's was available in Middletown through the shop of Luke C. Lyman and E. Hunt, and was first advertised for sale by them on January 5, 1831.

Other magazines available in Middletown included, Littel's Museum, the Edinburgh Review, the London Quarterly Review, the American Review and the Museum of Foreign Literature and Science, to satisfy those wishing intellectual stimulation, The Missionary Herald, the New York Evangelist, the Annals of Education, the Sabbath School Record, and the American Journal of Education, for those involved in the primarily religious educational process, and Scientific Tracts, for those interested in the discoveries of the day. Rip-off magazines were common. The Sentinel and Witness carried long advertisements for Adam Waldie's The Select Ciuculating Library, which agreed to present its readers with the
equivalent of fifty volumes of print for $5 annually. "Arrangements have been made to receive from London an early copy of every new book printed either in that mart of talent or in Edinburgh, together with the periodical literature of Great Britain." The fifty volume equivalency was arrived at by strange mathematical computations: fifty-two issues of 16 pages each were promised and "the whole fifty-two numbers will form a volume well worth preservation, of 832 pages equal in quantity to 1200 pages or 3 volumes of Ree's Encyclopedia" the advertisement continued. Since there were no international copyright laws in effect at the time, Waldie's procedure, would be as simple as he promised: he's simply reproduce, sans payment, the copies of British work which he would receive.59 This practice left American authors at a disadvantage as they tried to compete in the market with the free British publications. In the 1830's this, as well as the lack of national copyright protection, and a fascination for things British among the readers precluded most American authors earning a living at writing.60

"In 1830 the United States with its population of thirteen million had more so-called newspapers than Europe with almost fifteen times as many people."61 The standard newspaper was simply a large sheet of paper folded once and printed as four pages. Manufactured this simply and mailed at reduced rates, the newspaper was the cheapest and quickest way to disseminate information.

Middletown had half a dozen newspapers before and into the
1830's. The *Middlesex Gazette* was the oldest, founded in 1785 by Moses Woodward and Thomas Green. Green left the partnership and in 1797 the paper was sold to Tertius Dunning, who ran it until his death in 1823. After his estate was settled, his son Charles sold it to Ephraim and Horace Clark who in July of 1828 sold it to Theodore Parmelee and Edwin Greenfield. Parmelee sold out in 1829, returned to the partnership in 1830 and in 1832 they sold it to Edwin Hunt. Hunt sold the paper shortly after he bought it to Joseph Longking, Jr. who apparently couldn't save it, weakened by its long succession of short term owners, and it died in 1834. George Olmsted took over the *Gazette* presses and struggled for two years with the *New England Advocate*, but that too died and the presses were sold to Charles H. Pelton who printed books. Another short term paper was the *Connecticut Spectator* published from 1814 to 1817 by Loomis & Richards. William D. Starr and William H. Niles started the *American Sentinel*, Starr retaining control of the newly titled *Sentinel and Witness*. A new competitor appeared in 1838, the *Constitution* published by Abner Newton Jr. A daily newspaper didn't appear until the *Daily News* of 1850, which died within a year. 62

The newspapers of the 1830's were not strictly informational. As well as publishing poetry, the average weekly paper published short fiction, sometimes in serial form, book reviews, jokes and riddles, advice, both for the home and farm, and moral homilies. The local news columns of the *Middlesex Gazette*, and the *American Sentinel* were actually quite short, often no more than a single
paragraph entry. Like some magazine publishers, newspaper staffs culled most of their material from previously printed material; often credited but equally as often with the original source omitted.

The news that was published often was fairly irrelevant to Middletown residents. Deaths in Gambier, Ohio, fires in Charleston were covered often with follow up articles in successive issues. The practice of sharing news was encouraged: a death notice in the Sentinel was followed by the italicized "Printers in the state of New York are requested to take notice." 63

The Middlesex Gazette published stories along the lines of "The Triple Marriage", a story it serialized in the issues of January 12 and 19, 1831. The son of a homespun, rustic yet good hearted New England sailor, and a British woman of entirely unfounded noble pretensions (a common attack - the real nobility of the Americans versus the pseudo gentrification of the British, an apologia for being American, though the attitudes of the times belied the moral of the tales.) marries for love against his mother's wishes. She of course tries to turn the young lovers from each other, but with her deathbed confession they are reunited and remarried. The story contains all of the following romantic lines: "Yet no man could call Rodney Reeve a libertine," "All innocent thoughts, all gentle affection grew spontaneously in the heart of Amy Howland and clustered roundit (sic) with a luxuriance to shame the hothouse and forced sentimentalities of the finished belle," and finally, "She heard for the first
time the music of the spheres." To add a moral twist to the story, the lovers are separated because she cannot read her husband's letters, and their reconciliation comes only after she has become a polished and educated lady. 64

The stories were all very similar to "The Triple Marriage", and though plot alternatives were used, the romantic language was consistent in tone, as young heroines 'heard the music of the spheres.'

News stories were pursued in the same manner, a moral could always be found, and the news, rather than being self-contained was spread over 2 or 3 or more weekly stories. The American Sentinel covered the murder trial of Reverend E.D. Avery in May and June of 1833, first publishing smuggled testimony from the closed courtroom trial. Avery was accused of tying a pregnant girl to a stake, beating her and finally strangling her. The evidence was serialized in three issues, concluding with the nonguilty verdict. 65 Thereafter the whereabouts of Reverend Avery who was apparently hounded from city to city, was published almost weekly through the fall. (He was met with a riot in Middletown in August of 1833.)

Newspapers were still being written for new readers, passionately interested in self-improvement, voraciously interested in reading, yet not that discriminating in their taste. Everyone read the papers, and, at least in print, no one complained. The four dense pages of writing, filled a need in Middletown. The thirties and forties saw the emergence of a
story papers, four pages of serializations, introducing the detective story, and eventually becoming the dime novel, that continued to fill the space occupied by the weekly newspapers of the first part of the century.

The self-conscious striving for culture brought some classical music, art and dance to the city of Middletown, both in the form of itinerant artists, and new Middletown establishments.

Classical music concerts were provided by travelling shows, who would stop one night in Middletown during their tours.

On July 8, 1829, a concert was announced in the American Sentinel:

"VOCAL CONCERT

E. Ives Jr.

Has the honor most respectfully to announce to the Ladies and Gentlemen of Middletown and its vicinity his intention of giving a CONCERT OF VOCAL MUSIC at Pease's Hall on Friday evening the tenth of July to commence at 8 o'clock.

He has engaged the Messrs Barklays recently from England where they were engaged at the London, Bath, Cheltenham and other grand musical concerts.

Likewise Master DYER, 9 years of age who has recieved great applause from large and respectable audiences in New York. The selections will consist of some of the most popular SONGS, DUETS, GLEES, & etc.

Master DYER will sing, also perform on the pianoforte and violin. For particulars see handbill.

Tickets may be had at most of the bookstores in the city also at the bars of the Mansion House and Central Hotel. Price 37½¢.

Other concerts were probably announced through handbills, pasted up throughout the city just previous to the arrival of the attraction.

Singing classes were available to Middletown residents, both through the academies and schools, and through the city singing teachers. Daniel Ayres, then a student at Chase's Boys school
writes to a friend on February 24, 1838: "We have also formed a singing class in our school; it meets every Wednesday and Saturday. The boys like it very well, and it affords a very pleasant recreation. Mr. Clarke is our teacher. He is a pretty clever fellow." By spring though the excitement of it has worn off and he writes again: "Our singing school gets on as usual but I am almost tired of it. He keeps us all Saturday morning and Wednesday afternoon." 68

In October 1833, the Sentinel and Witness tentatively announced a new singing teacher for the city:

Mr. Andrew (from Italy)
will give lessons in music provided a number of pupils sufficient to induce him to establish himself in Middletown should be procured..." 69

Whether or not he stayed is not known.

Mr. John Porter, a singing teacher from Hebron, Connecticut came to Middletown in the mid 1830's, and he found enough students in the city to induce him to stay. He bought the house that Tertius Dunning, had lived in at the corner of College and Broad Streets, and gave instruction in vocal and instrumental music, supplementing his income by manufacturing instruments in his home. The demand for lessons must have been fairly great for him to have been able to afford to live in the newspaper publisher's home. Indeed, he looks chubby, jolly and content in a contemporary portrait of him, now hanging at the Middlesex Historical Society Headquarters in Middletown. He died in 1860, at the age of 66. 70

Middletown was the home of the largest military band in the state of Connecticut by 1833. Its Military Artillery Band had
between thirty and forty members, who played at civic functions and performed on their own at frequent concerts. Their taste in music was obviously considered fairly highbrow, for they are praised in the American Sentinel: "This attempt to improve the musical taste of the place is entitled to great praise and we trust the public will encourage them to persevere." At a concert they gave in May 1833, they charged 25¢ admission, but offered "Tickets to admit a gentleman and a lady, 37½." They occasionally accompanied the Artillery at military displays, where their presence was advertised as added inducement to spectators.71

Though there was a conflict between the church's strict proscription of dancing, and the association of dance with the cultured (albeit sinful) European gentry, there was dance instruction available in Middletown throughout the first part of the century. Dance instruction in the late twenties and early thirties was provided by Mr. Fuller, who apparently appeared seasonally, announcing the opening of his dancing school in the local papers. In 1830 he announced:

DANCING SCHOOL
Mr. Fuller

Respectfully announces to the inhabitants of this city that he proposes opening a school for the reception of young ladies and gentlemen at the Mansion House Assembly Room on Thursday the 29th inst at 3 o'clock in the afternoon for Ladies and from 7 till 10 for Gentlemen.

Practicing balls will be given once a fortnight.

Terms of tuition for one day in a week, $3.50 per quarter.72
By 1832, he offered two classes a week for $5, and in 1833 his terms were $6 for two classes a week including waltzing with a concession to returning students, who were kept on at the old rate of $5.73

Practicing Balls were probably a popular social event in a time when "courtship continued to be the only proper basis of companionship with the other sex."74

Mr. Fuller was successful in Middletown, and the Sentinel at one point even promoted his classes editorially:

"Mr. Fuller it will be seen by an advertisement in today's papers has opened a school in the city for Manners and Dancing. He is well known to our citizens as an accomplished instructor in his profession and we doubt not will recieve a large share of public patronage."

Mr. Fuller's advertisements never specifically promised education in "Manners".75

In the early part of the century, practice in dance was available through private parties, public balls and dancing assemblies. The Middletown Dancing Assembly with a paying membership organized winter balls. It advertised for members through the Middlesex Gazette.76 There was no mention of it by the 1830s though, and whether it dissolved, or its membership sustained itself without the benefit of advertising for new members is not known. In 1829 F.D. Mallet offered a subscription Ball. "Gentlemen who wish to subscribe will leave their names at the bar of the Hotel. The Ball will take place as soon as a sufficient number of subscribers will be obtained." Mr. Mallet had been a dancing master in Middletown at one point, though this
is the last mention of him in the local papers.\textsuperscript{77}

The American Literary Scientific and Military academy, gave a private ball on September 12, 1825, to which the prominent young ladies of the city were invited. When the school was replaced by the Methodist Wesleyan University, the dances on the hill stopped. There was a Citizens Ball managed by some of the leading citizens of the city, S.D. Hubbard, Charles Dyer, A.G. Stow, and T.G. Mather on August 23, 1827 at Mansion House, but whether the "citizens ball" was repeated annually or not is not known. Private Balls, which were open only to invited guests did not make the newspapers, and now can be traced only through extant collections of private papers of the time.\textsuperscript{78}

The free blacks of Middletown attended a ball in Rocky Hill in July 1833. It was disrupted by white intruders who demanded entrance. "Not at all relishing this intrusion and claiming the entire monopoly of fiddle floor and phillis (sic) the sable gentry forthwith commenced an action of ejectment and assayed to obtain exclusive possession \textit{via et armis}.\textsuperscript{79} A riot ensued, which culminated in the arrest of several blacks, including two or three from Middletown who were taken to a Hartford jail.
The celebration of public events and holidays was a relief from the monotony of everyday life in Middletown, though for the most part they were celebrated with the customary solemnity if the time. Daniel Ayres described his Thanksgiving, while a boarding student at Mr Chase's school:

In the morning we attended the Episcopal Church and heard Dr. Jarvis deliver a very expressive and appropriate sermon prepared for the occasion, about 4 o'clock (Pretty late) we were called to dinner, with which we were all very much pleased being hungry. In the evening, Mr Chase gave a singing party to which we were invited to hear some music and partake of some refreshments which we accepted of course. This is the way I spent Thanksgiving not quite so well as if I had been home, but considering all things very pleasantly and as much so as expected.

The New Year was celebrated in a less staid fashion, at least by the younger Middletown residents, and judging by the joyful anticipation of the holiday, prompting this letter to Sylvester Smith from Ayres, New Year's day was the social highlight of the year.

I suppose you look forward to fine times during the coming Holy Days. I can say I expect joyful times. You know New Year's Day gives a lustre of cheerfulness to the countenance of young ladies not to be equalled on any other day. The shaking of hands and cracking of lips goes round as often as the complements of the season. This is not the best but then the social circles and parties afford such a fine opportunity to enjoy their company and refine the manners of Middletown-bred students.

The Jacksonian Democrats celebrated the victory of New Orleans annually, as a testimony to Jackson and Jacksonian politics. The gatherings of the day were advertised well in advance of the holiday and the celebrations were open to the "Gentlemen
of this and the adjacent towns of all parties, friendly to the Preservation of the Union who feel disposed to Unite in the celebration." In 1832, the holiday was ushered in with a morning artillery salute. Another salute at sunset preceded a supper at the Central Hotel which was illuminated for the occasion. The Middletown Artillery Band provided the celebration with the "appropriate airs." A large part of the evening was spent in the presentation of toasts, including thirteen official toasts, accompanied by music, and thirty "Volunteer Toasts" given by the assembled guests, and by some of the organizers who had previously recited official toasts.

President Andrew Jackson actually came to Middletown on June 18, 1833 and the town gave him the requisite celebration. He stopped on his way from Hartford to Boston, arriving by steamboat. After a rest at the hotel, his first meeting in the city was with Wilbur Fiske, president of Wesleyan University. He then returned to the hotel and was greeted by fanfare on the Promenade, after which he "partook of an elegant collation prepared by Mr Goodale in the best style." Following supper, he received the "Ladies of the City" in private, and then returned to the steamboat escorted to the river by the townspeople and the Middletown Artillery. The day was a success, and was reported on with satisfaction in the next day's papers. It was a historic event, and one obviously treated with much importance.

The Fourth of July was celebrated as a national holiday and, although nationally fireworks and other celebrations were
beginning to obscure the historic value of the day, in Middletown it was treated seriously.

We regret that so much apathy exists among our citizens in relation to the anniversary of our national independance. We are no advocate for celebrating this day in the manner which is common in many parts of our country; but the birth-day of this nation ought not to be passed over in silence and regret. It is a sacred occasion.

So the Middletown Gazette editorialized, yet the holiday was never actually neglected in the city. The Fourth was the day of the big temperance gatherings at which temperance and other civic groups gathered to hear speeches. The Sabbath Schools of the various denominations in the city gathered together as did the Mechanics Society, to hear other orations, and, according to Daniel Ayres the celebrations included the reading of the Declaration of Independence, the making of toasts, and the firing of a cannon, in addition to speeches.

Despite the sacredness of the occasion, some residents evidently did enjoy the holiday in the "manner which is common in many parts of our country," for in the next issue, the following editorial appeared: "The use of squibs, Crackers and other combustibles in the streets and on the sidewalks of our city for sport and amusement has we beleive been at all times disapproved by every considerate person."

In 1829, Heth F Camp enlivened the eve of the Fourth with an evening of celebration in his Palestine Garden.

BALLOON & FIREWORKS
On the evening of the 3rd of July, a balloon
12 feet high and 36 feet in circumference will ascend from PALESTINE GARDEN if the weather is pleasant. Also an exhibition of Fire Works. A concert of music may also be expected at the Garden. Tickets 25¢. Season subscribers half price agreeable to subscription and the usual discount for families; the same regulation to be observed as on other occasions. Boys and others who are sometimes in the habit of climbing fences and making disturbances on such occasions are reminded that if they wish to see the balloon inflated and ascend, they must provide themselves with tickets and submit to the regulation of the Garden as a guard will be placed about the Garden enclosures to prevent climbing the fence or making disturbances. Tickets may be had at the Central Hotel, Mansion House, the subscriber's store or at the Garden Gate.

July 1st

Heth F Camp 89

The event was favorably received and commented on at length the following week:

...on this occasion quite novel for our city, we found the citizens numerously assembled to witness the ascension of a balloon &tc and we were happy to find everything concurred to render it a most agreeable entertainment for the public. At the stated time, a small balloon was sent up as a precursor—then an exhibition of Fireworks—at length the large balloon was sent off in fine style to the infinite gratification of the spectators. It was a fine, still evening, highly favorable for the occasion; and the balloon rose and took a northern direction at a high elevation.

When the interest of the balloon had passed away, the discharge of skyrockets afforded a new source of entertainment for the rest of the evening which with the accompaniment of an excellent orchestra of musicians rendered it a most agreeable entertainment.

The Summer House was brilliantly illuminated and the Garden filled with company. We were equally gratified and astonished to find the most perfect harmony and decorum prevail among so great a number of persons as had there assembled. We had supposed that this beautiful garden might have suffered from an evening exhibition. We however saw the Garden the next day in the most perfect order and were happy when Mr. Camp declared that not an article
had been touched or injured. We may truly boast of such a steady exhibition in the land of [...] habits.

A higher proof of public approbation could not have been bestowed on Mr. Camp than was manifested by his company on this occasion. 90

It seems that the crowd of people who did attend the festivities were of the sort that the writer felt would probably damage the place, while on the same evening, a more classical audience assembled at Mr. Pease's Room to hear Mr. John Porter, the future music teacher, perform Handel with the accompaniment of the Choir of the First Congregational Church. 91 Despite the civilized response, the celebration was not repeated on ensuing Independence Days.

The Palestine Garden was a singular experiment in entertainment, which lasted only a short time, before its dissolution for unknown reasons. Heth F. Camp bought the corner property at the corner of William and High Streets, facing the University, in 1826 for $1400. 92 In the fall of 1828, he first advertised his garden.

NOTICE

THE PALESTINE GARDEN

Will be open every pleasant day and evening for the reception of visitors during the remainder of the warm season. The price of tickets will be 12½¢. Season tickets given to families at a reasonable price which will admit them as often as they please. Good refreshments may be had at all times at the Bar of the Summer House and all the best of fruits. Those who have a taste for gardening can probably spend an hour or two agreeably in visiting the garden at the same time doing something to promote the cause of benevolence as one fourth part of all the money received will be applied to charitable objects. 93

By giving a quarter of the receipts to charity, he hoped to
assuage those who considered the garden and amusing oneself in
the garden to be sacriligious. The inducement didn't succeed and
the following season he attacked the issue more directly, (if
somewhat wordily) as he enumerated his improvements to the garden:

The subscriber has also connected with his Summer
House, two Bathing Rooms which are well provided with
conveniences for bathing. As this is considered by many as a great luxury, he hopes to be enumerated for his expense. The Garden will be well-lighted and a concert of music will generally be given evenings. The subscriber is aware that some persons (and no doubt from good motives) cry out against an establishment of this kind, because, they say it tends to dissipation, and probably this is the case where other amusements are connected and from want of proper regulations. Could the subscriber be convinced that this would be the fact in the present case, he would be one of the last persons to put it in operation, and one of the first to disapprove of it, but under his regulations, he has far different views of it. Some kind of recreation is and will be sought by those who have leisure and others at certain periods of relaxation from business and it will be allowed by all that the kind of recreation or amusement which possesses the least temptation and affords the most instruction is best calculated to promote the morals of community. And what recreation I would ask could be more innocent pleasant and instructive than to spend an hour or two in a Pleasant Tower Garden and breathe a pure air perfumed by a rich variety of the sweetest luxuries of nature rendered more pleasing by skillful cultivation and also to taste the fruits which a kind providence has made the earth to bring forth for our accommodation. This was the first and only employment allotted to man by his creator in His original state if innocence and rectitude. Who then can say that its tendency is pernicious. The regulations of the garden are such as to prevent all improper conduct and exclude everything that might offend the chastest ear, or to wound the feelings of the most scrupulous.

The intention of the proprietor is to make it a pleasant retreat, where gentlemen and ladies of all ages may amuse and refresh themselves with a walk and enjoy the luxuries of nature and art combined; and it remains with the generous public to say whether he shall be in any measure enumerated
for the great expense and labour he has incurred in fitting up this establishment for their accomodation.

Admittance 12½¢--Bathing 25¢
Admittance can be had on Saturday evening for the purpose of bathing alone, but no admittance on the Sabbath.94

By opening up baths, he put himself into competition with at least two other bath houses which were already established, the one at the foot of William Street, which charged $2.50/season for a family of up to six members, $1.25/season for an individual, 12½¢ for a bath with soap and towel, and 6½¢ for a bath only, and Samuel Ranney's Floating Bath (later taken over by Rubert Williams) which charged 6½¢ per bath except to subscribers.95

The Garden struggled on for two more seasons, in 1830, announcing that "the garden will be much pleasanter this season than last as great addition has been made in plants, shrubbery and flowers since the last season, and all will be in great perfection,"96 and in 1831 Camp begged that "He has made extensive improvements since the last season and will endeavor to keep it in much better order than formerly and he hopes for more liberal patronage."97 The Garden did not open in 1832, and in 1833, Camp sold the land.

Heth F. Camp was something of a wheeler-dealer. "He dealt in Real Estate. He ran a dry goods store." He ran a millinery and mantua manufacture, he sold bills from a bankrupt bank, he auctioned furniture and dry goods.98 At some point he entered into a partnership with E.F. Ackley, which he dissolved in
1829. It might of been his impatience with keeping the same business for a length of time, maybe he got tired of the world of gardening, or the fact that he "endeavored to keep it in much better order than formerly," which implied that it had not been particularly well tended or organized, in the past, that lead to its failure. Certainly, a garden that charged a 12½¢ admission fee only attracted the upper classes, who frowned on that sort of unproductive entertainment were the only ones who could pay for the facility in which to take their walks. The students, who arrived in 1831 were boarding for $1.35-$1.50 a week could ill afford the luxury of spending 8-10% of that on one walk in a garden. That he ran into resistance from religious groups seems evident, and perhaps there was unified church action to close the Garden. The Garden's failure was indicative of the Middletown attitude toward leisure time activities. The Garden's frivolity did not yet suit the Middletown spirit.

While much of Middletown clung to its moral ways, the state of popular entertainment in the Northeast was beginning to change. The legitimate theatre was booming due to a tremendous increase on the number of theatres built in the 1820's, and a drop in prices from a $2.00 top to a 75¢ or 50¢ top with 12½¢ gallery seats. The 'Ethiopian Opera' at the Bowery Theatre in New York in 1833, was the first entire blackface theatrical event, and led directly to the formation of Dan Emmet's Virginia Minstrels, the first minstrel group, a decade later. In 1815, Nathaniel Bailey had the idea that he should tour the countryside
with his elephant, "Old Bet" and charge admission to see her, and by 1830, Bailey and his neighbors had formed a circus syndicate which bought up small shows, signed top performers, and imported animals. The Siamese twins Eng and Cheng arrived in the United States in 1829, and started touring the country.

Some of this began to pass through Middletown in the 1830's despite the Connecticut Statutes. Freaks, menageries, and wonders on tour would stop in Middletown for a day at Mansion House, the Central Hotel, or Pease's Hall. Most of these stops are unrecorded, announced on handbills plastered up around the city a few days before the attraction is due in town. A few shows advertised in the papers. The Siamese Twins, whose appearance on June 20 and 21, 1831 was apparently announced by handbills, extended their stay, "in consequence of the disappointment of many who have been prevented visiting the young men the last two days" by another day. They reduced their admission charge on the 22nd to 25¢. On the same day, "Mr. Nichols (the Ve Ventriloquist)" announced that he would demonstrate "Specimens of ventriloquism" for a 25¢ admission fee, and referred readers to the handbills for details.

Middletown had its own ourang outang in residence, "brought to this city from Batavia by Captain Shirley." The ourang outang had gotten sick "by her own indiscretion in going to the medicine chest and taking a quantity of sugar of lead which came near to killing her. She will probably soon be well enough to be seen by those who may call on her."
Menageries came to Middletown in April of 1832, and October of 1833. The first came accompanied by a travelling wax museum, charged 12½¢ admission with children half-price, stayed for two days, and then went on to Durham. The second show was larger, advertising

...one of the most numerous collections of Animals exhibited in this place, consisting of the Unicorn or one horned Rhinoceros, the great Indian elephant, African lion, lioness, and cubs, zebra, camel, Royal Tiger of Asia, Polar or white bear, Royal Tiger and Tigress of Guyana, Ichneumon, Kangaroo, Moco, Dandy Jack and his poney, monkeys, &c, &c. A band of music accompanies the ménagerie.

This menagerie charged 25¢ admission with children half price, stayed for two days, and then travelled on to Hebron, East Hampton, Berlin, and Meriden, stopping for a day in each place. 104

On April 15 and 16, 1830, C.B. Hulsart exhibited "the machine invented by Mr R VanDyke, being the long sought for art of perpetual motion patented by Congress last May that has exacted so much attention through the country as noticed by the public journals for the last few months." 105 In October of 1833, Franklin Kellsey exhibited a model steamboat and the design of a barge to be built and charged a 12½¢ admission.

Despite the strength of the religious community of Middletown, its restraints that it tried to impose on the society were not entirely effective. Middletown was still a river town in the 1830's, though that era was near the end, and the river area had grog shops and taverns. Ayres mentions Shad Warner on a list of firms to go bankrupt in the hard times of 1838 and 1839. "This last named individual I don't know as you remember. He is an eminent
man, (distinguished only for his corpulence) who kept a noted grog shop down by the river." 106 The taverns of the city included the bars of both the Mansion House and Central Hotel, and if they were typical of taverns around the country, they served distilled liquors, malt liquors, and coffee. 107 Because Middletown was a river town, alcohol was cheap. New England rum and American whiskey cost 20-30¢ per gallon, and St. Croix rum cost 62½%. In her travels, Harriet Martineau claims that she saw many Americans, including "seven or eight cases of the higher classes of the society of one city." 109 Alcohol was prescribed by doctors to cure some common ailments. For some Middletown residents, if Middletown followed the pattern set by the rest of the country, drunkenness was a common amusement.

In his impassioned 1847 Plea for Amusements, Frederic W. Sawyer blamed the communities for the drunkenness of their residents and visitors:

The village pastor gives no entertainments, of any kind, to his parishioners, and would as soon think of turning his parlor into a bear-garden, as to allow it to be used in the entertainment of them, in the enjoyment of the dance, or any other light and joyous amusement. The officers of the church are usually more rigid on these points than their pastor, while the members of the church seldom venture to break over the rules of self-denial that are imposed upon them by their superiors. Those, perhaps, constitute a majority of the most influential families in the place, and the social condition of that village is fixed by those few leading individuals. Thus social amusements are effectually excluded from the firesides of the majority of the leading families in the parish. Nothing is done by them to amuse or entertain the young, the middle-aged, or the aged. Nothing is done by them to fill up those long winter hours, so capable of
useful appropriation.

Though they provide no place for social amuse-
ments, is no place provided? Who does not know that
that system has made the village inn, with its bar
room, as much an adjunct of the village church as
the graveyard? In that respect, travel in what direc-
tion you will, the church steeple carries consolation
to the thirsty traveller, for he knows that the tap-
room is near. Why is this? The answer is a plain one.
Men will be social. It is their nature.

His suggestion is modern, and had he been speaking
one hundred years later, he would have used psychological jarg-
on; he would have called it a repressed society. The leisure
time activities available to Middletown residents were severely
restricted, restricted more by the traditions of the pasts
than by any physical boundaries. A society was given amusements affordable by a
few, and acceptable morally mainly to those for whom they
weren't affordable. It was both a repressed society, and
the tag end of an era, when the social control that the elites
had over the working classes been unknotted. The separation
of home and place of employment, the influx of immigrant work-
ers uninvolved with the social dynamics between the elites
and older generations of workers began to unravel a social
structure. This is apparent in the curious process of gentri-
fication that all the elements of the Middletown were undergoing
around 1830. Unlike in Britian, everyman could be a noble man,
and everyman, from the slaves through the old New England Soci-
ety was improving themselves to face the new structures.
ENDNOTES


4) Charles Dickens, American Notes, Bernhardt Tauchnitz Jun., Leipzig, 1842, p. 84.


6) Ayres, Dec. 16, 1837.


8) Martineau, p 172.

9) Cleary, also David D. Field, Centennial Address, William B. Casey, Middletown Ct, 1853.

10) Martineau, p 236.

11) Frederick Sawyer, A Plea for Amusements, D. Appleton and Co., N.Y. 1847, p 34.


16) Martineau, p 204.
18) Gazette, Dec 30, 1829.
19) Sentinel and Witness, Nov 20, 1833.
20) Gazette, Nov 3 1130
21) Cleary.
22) Sentinel, July 8, 1829.
23) Gazette June 29, 1831.
24) Sentinel July 8, 1829.
25) Gazette, Dec 19 1832.
26) Martineau, p 176.
27) Gazette May 2 1832, also Apr. 18, 1832, Sentinel Dec 19 1832, Feb. 10, 1830.
28) Martineau, p 276.
29) Gazette July 20, 1831.
30) Martineau, P 173.
31) Martineau p 143.
32) Martineau, p 238.
33) Martineau pp 237-238.
34) Karl Harrington, The Background of Wesleyan, Wesleyan University, Middletown Ct, 1942, 0 73.
35) Gazette, June 16, 1830.
36) Cleary.
37) Sentinel, June 26, 1833.
38) Field, p 218.
39) Gazette, June 2, 1830.
40) Gazette, Dec 19, 1832
41) Gazette, Aug 15, 1832.
42) Sentinel, Aug 14, 1833.
43) Martineau, p 176.
44) Martineau p 176.
47) Martineau p 176.
49) Martineau p 237.
51) Nye, p 95.
52) Nye, p 97.
53) Sentinel, August 29, 1832.
56) Wood p 49.
58) Wood pp 54-55.
59) Sentinel, Oct 24, 1832.
60) Martineau, p 273.
63) Sentinel, May 8, 1833.
64) Gazette Jan. 12, Jan, 19, 1831.
65) Sentinel, May 29, June 5, 1833.
67) Sentinel, July 8, 1829.
68) Ayres, Feb, 24, March 31, 1838.
70) Portrait of John Porter, anonymous, with title card, Middlesex County Historical Society, Middletown Ct.
71) Sentinel May 1, May 8, 1833.
72) Gazette April 14, 1830.
73) Sentinel, July 10, 1833.
74) Schlesinger, p 25.
75) Sentinel, July 10, 1833.
76) Leslie Barr, "Music and Dance in Middletown, Connecticut in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries" unpub., Wesleyan University, 1979, p 10.
77) Gazette, Sept 16, 1829.
78) Misses Emily and Sarah Sage papers, Middlesex County Historical Society, Middletown Connecticut.
79) Sentinel, July 31, 1833.
80) Ayres, Dec 16, 1837.
81) Ayres, Dec 9, 1839.
82) Sentinel, Dec 26, 1832.
83) Sentinel, Jan 16, 1832.
84) Sentinel, June 19, 1833.
85) Gazette July 2, 1828.
86) Sentinel, June 26, 1833.
87) Ayres, July 24, 1837.
88) Gazette July 9, 1823.
89) Gazette July 1, 1829.
90) Sentinel, July 8, 1829.
91) Gazette, July 1, 1829.
92) Harrington, p 67.
93) Gazette, Sept 3, 1828.
94) Gazette, Apr 22, 1829.
95) Gazette, July 28, 1828, Aug 1, 1832.
96) Gazette, May 5, 1830.
97) Sentinel, Sept 7, 1831.
98) Harrington, p 66.
99) Nye, p 144.
100) Nye, p 163.
102) Gazette, June 22, 1831.
103) Gazette, July 6, 1831.
104) Gazette, April 18, 1832, Sentinel and Witness, Oct 2, 1833.
105) Gazette, Apr 14, 1830, Sentinel and Witness, Oct 23, 1833.
106) Ayres, Dec, 9, 1839.
107) Martineau p 205.
108) Harrington, p 78.
109) Martineau, p 184.
110) Sawyer, pp 176-177.