Introduction to "The Producers" of Middletown, and a Major Product— the Newspapers 1820-1833

Mary Francis White
Prof. Pi Hall
Intellectuals and the American Social Structure
Introduction

Considering newspapers as intellectual products implies that there are several different aspects of newspaper production that must be analyzed, in addition to ideological and written content: the social structure of the 'society' and the place of the producer in it; the origin and nature of the material means that enable the person to actually put the paper together; the nature of the occupation and associations of the producer (generalized or specialized); the 'power' that the product wields—i.e., the degree to which it influences and who it influences.

This paper looks at newspapers, and the nature of ownership in Middletown during the early 19th century (and somewhat at the owners themselves), concentrating on the years 1820 to 1833. In dealing with this subject and time period one must consider two newspapers and a total of about 15 men who at one time or another served as 'editors' of the papers. The Middlesex Gazette was issued from 1785 to 1833. The Sentinel and Witness (which was actually called The American Sentinel initially) was begun in 1823. A list of the editors can be seen in Appendix II.

Based on a relatively limited pool of data, an introductory discussion of some of the above-mentioned aspects of newspaper production is presented. (Unfortunately, some of the most important questions to be asked were not 'discovered' until the 'end' of the project, and there are some crucial questions for which there is thus far little data with which to infer answers.)
More specifically, some basic generalizations about printing at this period and about the growth of printing and newspapers in Connecticut, will best be stated to provide a suggestive context to compare or contrast with. Secondly the degree to which the Middletown editors were involved in other occupational pursuits will be examined, centering around the question of whether they were specialized artisans or general merchant entrepreneurs. (Despite the fact that the financial assets of these men is a crucial factor for such a study, the information was sparse and hard to piece together.)

Next to be considered is the political content of the newspapers, and also other ways in which these men were involved in the intellectual life of the local community.

Finally, a look at the way in which these editors might have fit into the picture of political and social change (largely taken from J.M. Morse and R.J. Purcell) will perhaps help to show the reasons for the changes in the nature of the newspaper occupation and paper content. While it can only be inferred from the data here presented, a possible thesis that could be developed by further research is that the nature of the Sentinel and Witness of 1834, as an intellectual product is significantly different from the Sentinel and Witness and Gazette of previous years: its source of support in political, social, and financial terms is perhaps different; the nature of the occupation is probably more commercially developed and specialized; the content possibly reliant on different types of sources. A conclusion such as this
could be drawn by a comparison of the much later 1830's and 40's with the following picture of Middletown newspapers of the 20's.

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General Information and Before The 20's

The first Connecticut printing press appeared in the capital city of New London in 1709. It was established by Thomas Shert who was recommended by Bartholomew Green, and who was the brother in-law of Timothy Green---both members of the family whose descendants dominated Connecticut printing during the 18th century. The next press and the first newspaper was established in 1755 and by 1775 there were not more than four printing houses in Connecticut.

In the latter quarter of the century the number of newspapers greatly increased (35 papers were inaugurated between 1755 and 1800). James Parker, who conducted an extensive printing business from his headquarters in N.Y., and several members of the Green family were influential in this process. The basic materials required for printing began to be produced in the country and political controversy provided impetus. However, most of these newspapers had a relatively short life span (an average of 3 years according to Morse) because of limited advertising, distribution problems and the oftentimes rapidly changing political scene.

Most printers were 'job printers' (It often made the difference between failure and success), depending upon piece meal work and sometimes getting government business. Despite the fact that printing was a craft which one must learn by invested years of apprenticeship, some were also postmasters or general storekeepers.
"...the comparatively few country printers who achieved prosperity were entrepreneurs rather than craftsmen." Some were bookwholesale, printing suppliers, book publishers, suppliers of religious periodicals. Apparently the most prosperous printers owned newspapers, while book and job printers didn't do quite as well. The period in which a printer set up shop was a time of stress. The economy of the shop was rudimentary and due to a relative lack of supply houses, the printer had to utilize several different craftsmen and do-it-yourself techniques for press repair work.

The last decade of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th was a period of transition in the printing trade, according to Thomas and Morse. Improvements in technology and greater specialization within the printing 'industry' occurred. Although they were more expensive, better and more easily repairable presses began to be produced (which substituted horse and steam power for human energy). Division of labor within the print-shop and within the industry increased. A master more interested in publishing and business ventures than in managing a print shop engaged a foreman to supervise journeymen and apprentices. Slowly publishing and printing became separate functions. Copyright laws were established and mail service developed and made less expensive.

However, according to Silver, there was little chance of becoming rich in the business. A printer usually had to start out in debt, and contend with low subscription rates (if he published a newspaper) and rival publications, scarcity of money and bill avoiders. To secure financial aid a printer might appeal
to a village, or a patron, or he might be sought out by public spirited patrons.

Perhaps, given the literary nature of their craft, printers were very self-conscious of their profession as such and had an emotional commitment to, and respect for it. In making this point Rolfe Silver cites the early trade organizing among printers pushing for higher and more uniform wages. However, in writing about newspaper editors, Isaiah Thomas mentions (through the words of Rev. Miller) a change that might indicate an exception to the above rule:

In the former part of the 18th century, talents and learning at least, if not virtue, were thought necessary in the conductors of political. Few ventured to intrude into this arduous office, but those who had some claims to literature. Towards the close of the century, however, persons of less character, and of humbler qualifications, began without scruple to undertake the high task of enlightening the public mind. This remark applies, in some degree to Europe, but it applies with particular force to our own country, where every judicious observer must perceive that too many of our gazettes are in the hands of persons destitute at once of the urbanity of gentlemen, the information of scholars, and the principles of virtue. To this source, rather than to any peculiar depravity of national character, we may ascribe the faults of American newspapers, which have been pronounced by travellers the most profligate and scurrilous public prints in the civilized world."

The above opinion must be taken into account in looking at the fact that with the increase in indigenous political activity, and trade and 'manufacturing' which stimulated the growth of newspapers, many other individuals began to enter the position previously held largely by the Green family and friends.

The first (extant) printing in Middletown was done by Thomas Green and Moses Hawkins. Woodward in 1765 when they published the first issue of the Middlesex Gazette. In Hull's words: "The impor-
tance of the Middlesex Gazette in the development of printing in Middletown cannot be overstated. Although it was financially shaky during most of Woodward and Green’s tenure of ownership, it was the foundation of all other printing done in the town during the 18th and the early 19th centuries.”  Green withdrew from the partnership in 1789 and Woodward remained as sole proprietor until 1797 when his business was taken over by Tertius Dunning who published it until 1824 (and whose brother joined him between 1806 and 1810). Both Woodward and Green, and the Dunnings printed and published other materials on request and on their own, and Dunning sold books and writing materials and ordered books on request out of his printing office.

Two other important figures in Middletown printing at this time were Isaac Riley and his brother-in-law Richard Alsop. During the 18th century there was little printing done for Hartford and New Haven publishers. However:

An exception to this rule, a cosmopolitan element, was brought to Middletown printing and publishing by Isaac Riley, merchant, bookseller, publisher, and general entrepreneur who carried on his business in Middletown from 1791-1793. He then moved to New York although partnerships continued to be formed there under his name during the next fifteen years. In 1791 he financed and Moses Woodward reprinted... Confessions of Thomas Mount...Most of Rileys Middletown publications were printed in conjunction with his brother-in-law, Richard Alsop, the poet and "Hartford Wit" who ran a printing office in Middletown from 1807 to 1808. In Karl Harrington's words, "Richard Alsop was a 'printer' in the same sense that any man who 'builds' a house (that is pays the bill) is a builder". Most of his books were probably printed by Tertius Dunning who took over the Middlesex Gazette when Woodward moved to New Haven in 1797. The Middletown publications of Alsop and Riley in 1807-1808 are unique for their versatility and worldliness..."

Although he did not publish a Middletown newspaper, the
"general entrepreneurship" nature of Riley's business was characteristic of that of the editors of the Gazette during the 1820's (although perhaps not of that of Starr and Niles' editors of the Sentinel). The association of Riley, Alsep, Woodward, and Dunning in different situations also foreshadows the shifting yet existent associations between the small group of Middletown printers in the 20's.

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Artisan or Merchant

Based on ads printed in the newspapers themselves, and on the publishing notes given for items in Hull's Middletown Imprints, and on other information offered by Hull, one can piece together a picture of the various occupations and associations held by the Middletown newspaper owners.

Almost all of these men were involved in other businesses related to printing. As well as being involved in publishing, Tertius Dunning's brother John Betsford Dunning often advertised in the Gazette, his own book and paper supply store (probably run in conjunction with the newspaper) between 1810 and 1825. In addition at his death he left a circulating library of 660 volumes worth $125.00—a another revenue making enterprise.

Between 1813 and 1821 Lucas C. Lyman and Horace Clark were partners—at first in a bookselling, stationary, and bookbinding business. Between 1814 and 1832 they were involved in publishing together and Tertius Dunning did their printing between 1814 and 1818. By one report Horace Clark went to Middletown in 1817 and
established a printing office there.\textsuperscript{12}

In 1822 Clark brought out Lyman's interest. Lyman became (or continued as) a general-store and bookstore owner. He continued advertising specific books and general store services in the \textit{Sentinel} and \textit{Witness} as late as 1833 when he also advertised a circulating library. Horace Clark formed a partnership with his brother Epaphras in the printing and publishing business. They also advertised as booksellers, job-printers, and binders. An ad in the \textit{Gazette} in 1822 included in their inventory music, state publications, and school books— all "Cheaper than can be purchased at any other Bookstore in Middletown."\textsuperscript{13}

The brothers brought the office of the \textit{Middlesex Gazette} after Tertius Dunning died and published the newspaper between 1824 and 1828. Apparently the paper was "solidly under Horace Clark's control as editor and manager."\textsuperscript{14} In 1828 for some reason they filed for bankruptcy. In 1829 (June 3) a probate notice in the \textit{Sentinel} and \textit{Witness} advertised the stock of books belonging to the estate of E. and H. Clark as offered for sale by W.S. Camp, and added that Clark was back in the bookbinding business. He continued apparently at least throughout 1831 (with a brief break: an ad in the \textit{Sentinel} and \textit{Witness} of July 21, 1830 announced that O.B. Beebe would carry on the bindery of Mr. Clark but he was advertising again in 1831).

T.N. Parmelee (who was editor for a while in 1828 with the Clarks, in 1829 with E.T. Greenfield, and after two years was away from the paper again in 1831 with T. Greenfield Mr.) began advertising books and stationary in November of 1829 and did some publishing during his editorship. Edwin Hunt (and Co.) be-
gan advertising his services in 1824, in bookbinding, and blank books. He advertised quite a lot (as many as 7 ads in one issue of the *Sentinel and Witness*) and included such items as maps, 'elegant prints', paper hangings, 'cheap books', and a half-price bookstore. In 1830 he began publishing, sometimes using Hartford printers.

There is no evidence that Starr and Niles were involved in anything other than publishing the newspaper and in book publishing (In Hull's *Imprints* Niles was often listed as a 'publisher', whereas Starr was not titled. Their names were never listed together in reference to the same book!) There is little information about the other involvements of H.W. Green, S.W. Griswold, and John Lenking during this period.

The men who owned the newspapers in the 1820's dominated the printing-publishing business in Middletown and increased to some degree contacts with Hartford and even New Haven. Earlier T. Dunning had printed most monographs and books from Middletown until 1814 when competition appeared with three new partnerships: Clark and Lyman, Hart and Lincoln, and Leomis and Richards. Although Dunning did some printing for Clark and Lyman after this date he published little on his own. Hart and Lincoln disappeared from the scene after two years, and Leomis and Richards also dissolved their partnership in 1816 leaving Seth Richards to print alone for about a year.

Between 1814 and 1820 these men entertained several printing jobs for publishers in Hartford (particularly Oliver D. Cooke, Shelden and Goodrich and Co., and later George Shelden alone and
S.L. Loomis alone). While in the 20's Clark and Lyman, and E. and H. Clark continued to do printing for these same Hartford companies, they and Starr, and Niles mainly did their own publishing and printing. (However, Hull's citations may not be complete—i.e. there would be more business between Hartford and Middletown than his citations show.) Between 1821 and 1828 E. Clark and the firms of E and H. Clark and of Starr and Niles almost completely dominated the printing and publishing scene in Middletown. For the next several years after that Edwin Hunt and W.H. Miles (who broke with Starr in 1827), published most works from Middletown. Several works also came from the Gazette office—published by either the Greenfields or Parmelee. W.D. Starr did some printing and perhaps some publishing on his own also.

Little can be said about the number of monographs printed on the market that the Middletown publishers found for them. Often particular books were advertised in one of the two papers, as; "recently published by..." and "on sale at the .... office".

With notable exceptions the output of eighteenth and early 19th century Middletown printers was typical on a reduced scale, of the printing industry in the U.S. in general. The newspaper was the basic revenue source of most printers with bestsellers (sermons, almanacs, and primers and other schoolbooks) rounding out the staples of the trade. The establishment in 1825 of Captain Alden Partridge's American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy in Middletown and of Wesleyan in 1831 were influential in the production of some important atypical items, as well as for those local business provided in the printing of catalogues, programs, etc.... 15

Who brought the primers and how many did the publishers sell—are crucial questions that would shed much light on the issue of the place these men held in Middletown intellectual life.
The question of the degree to which these men were artisans as opposed to general merchant entrepreneurs must be more clearly defined. If artisanship in this case refers to the craft--i.e. the physical production of printing and/or news collecting--then these men are not simply artisans. They were all involved in at least several different types of activity in their businesses--e.g. retail selling of books and paper products, advertising, buying wholesale, business negotiations with publishers and/or printers and with authors, bookbinding, circulating libraries, news collecting. (Indeed, the probate records of E. and H. Clark's bankruptcy proceeding list a great number of debtors and creditors (persons "natural and artificial") from Middletown, Philadelphia, New York, Hartford, New Haven, Boston--demonstrating quite extensive and developed business transactions).

However, perhaps such a limited definition of artisanship is not appropriate for this time and place. What appears to be important here is that all of the activities with which these men are financially involved are related to the printing and publishing and disseminating of written material. These men are general entrepreneurs in that they must deal relatively extensively with several types of economic activity (sales, production, buying) for their livelihood. They are also artisans in that they are dealing with a single activity in a broad sense--that of publishing and selling printed matter.

To be a printer at this time (although perhaps not necessarily to edit a paper) meant that one had to commit oneself to an apprenticeship--usually at a young age. Silver speaks of the experience as relatively hard and rigorous and cites some of the arduous jobs an apprentice did. Partially because of this training, printers
were apparently fairly self-conscious of their skill as such. They were among the first to organize as a trade for wage improvements. According to Silver the sense of skill and artisanship was important for these men.

That all these men were apprenticed printers is likely but not certain. William Starr apparently lived in New Haven and New York while young before settling in his native town and Horace Clark went to New York at age 16—It's quite possible that they served as apprentices on a New York Daily.

The two people involved in printing and/or disseminating of written material in Middletown during the 20's and early 30's, who never served as editors of the two papers were L.C. Lyman (who published and printed with Horace Clark) and S.G. Southmayd (who owned and advertised a circulating library as early as 1821, and in 1825 became of the Middletown bank). There were several transactions made with Hartford and New Haven publishers—however it was mainly these 15-16 individuals who dominated the field at the time, and in several instances apparently worked together.

For example Tertius Dunning printed for Clark and Lyman between 1814 and 1818. Starr and Niles, in a editorial chastising the editors of the Clark's Gazette contrast them with Tertius Dunning who, in their words, taught us the art of printing

Some facts only suggest that there was some sort of interaction between the men. Edwin Hunt (later editor of the Gazette) mentioned in his advertisements that bookbinding orders should be left at the office of the Sentinel and Witness. In 1825 Clark and Lyman (after their separation) were appointed appraisers of the estate of John
B. Dunning (who left relatively little besides a circulating library of 660 volumes, worth $125.00). E.G. Southmayd, was one of the appraisers of the estate of the bankrupt Clarks, and W.D. Starr was appointed to appraise the estate of T. Greenfield. Horace Clark was also one of the original petitioners in 1825 for a Savings Bank, and was elected a trustee of the Middletown Savings Bank (of which E.G. Southmayd was treasurer). Clark held the office during his life outliving all other original trustees.

In the late 20's a Franklin Society was formed in Middletown. According to an ad in the Sentinel it was "composed of young men between 15 and 30 years of age... whose object is improvement in declamation, composition, and debate and they devote one evening of each week to that purpose. It has about 100 members." Among the members of the society were E.T. Greenfield, E. Clark, and E.G. Southmayd (the first a Gazette editor, the second a previous editor, and the third the owner of a circulating library—mentioned above). Interestingly, in November of 1829 an essay contest for members of the society was announced in the Sentinel. The subject was "on the importance of improving the mind", and two of the three judges were E.G. Southmayd and W.D. Starr. The Mechanics Society of Middletown, formed in 1832, included in its membership Horace Clark and Edwin Hunt, who served as the librarian for the society.

In addition to regular bookstore ads, the newspapers often included ads, special notices, or articles about educational products or local 'schools'. For example: large advertisement-articles listing the tuition requirements and courses of a new ladies
seminary; a lecture on education by Captain Partridge of the American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy; a notice under an ad for a work published by E. and H. Calrk, and written by two doctors mentioned: "It is confidently expected that... the members of the faculty in Connecticut will exhibit the same liberality which is known to prevail in other parts of the union, when professional works are offered to the public..."

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Paper Content--Politics

Political controversy and partisanship were often mainstays of newspapers during and after the revolution, and along with increasing commercial activity are cited by writers as what at least periodically provided the main financial support. But politics can be a factor in different ways and partisanship can be expressed with varying degrees of support and vehemence. For example editors could be directly involved in local or national politics, using the paper as a tool to further their interests, with financial support coming from partisan interests. Or, the editors could either have their own money, or other types of sources (e.g. commercial) to support their venture and include political argument mainly to attract buyers--having no real personal stake in political ventures. (Of course there could be variations of, and gradations between these two extremes) As will be discussed in this and the next section, the decline in vehement political argument in the papers during the early 30's--which is probably a function of the particular nature of Connecticut politics at this time--support the theory that the financial source of the Sentinel...
(i.e. of Starr and perhaps Miles) as it continued in the 1870's was not of a political nature.

(It must be mentioned that other types of articles--foreign news, human interest stories, educational essays--would also provide much information on the 'intellectual' material absorbed by Middletown residents. The emphasis here is on political news and commentary because of the supposed financial support it signifies. It should also be noted that a comparison of the papers' treatments of particular issues was difficult because of incomplete collection.)

Overall, throughout this period the Gazette supported Federalist interests and politics. But the degree of overt support varied over time, as did the amount of political editorializing. Between 1819 and 1822 there were few editorials, and those that existed were reprints from other papers. Information pertaining to politics and government--such as state statutes and election results--were printed but there was little criticism. With the advent of the Sentinel the Gazette editor printed a very long and developed editorial basically against the new paper's political partisanship (see Appendix IV). Although there were several brief ripostes against the Sentinel after this, there were few political editorials until the Clark's took over.

Upon beginning editorship of the Gazette, E. and H. Clark promised in an editorial, 'sound' fairly non-partisan information. However, as early as March 1824, they began to print very definite opinions regarding national and local political issues. Concern-
ing the presidential election of 1824, the paper was adamantly anti-caucus, anti-Jackson, and anti-Crawford. In the March 31st issue, an anti-caucus editorial was printed on the front page instead of the normal page three. In the same issue the editors printed a long editorial against the Sentinel editors, reacting to the criticism of their anti-caucus stance. They wrote of the editors:

They appear willing to conceal or yield their opinions to that of a few dictators in Washington. They do not scruple to pin their faith upon the sleeve of any cabal who arrogate to themselves the title of a Republican Caucus... By what wonderfully powerful and instantaneous argument was it that your political conversion from Mr. Adams to Mr. Crawford was affected.

In the issue of April 14th, 1824, the editors replied vehemently to the Sentinel charge that they were Federalists:

We therefore shall rest content with referring, on that subject, to the whole life and uniform course of the publishers of the Gazette, from their youth upwards which has been without any ostentatious boasting Republican, and so generally acknowledged Republican it shall be.

Throughout the mid- and late 20's, and the early 30's, the paper in general remained fairly politically vociferous, although not always directly through editorials. Although there were few papers to view from the 30's, from the few that exist it's possible to infer that there were fewer editorials during the period when editorial hands changed so frequently. The Gazette was generally pre-Adams, and in favor of districting.

A fascinating collection of letters (held in the Connecticut State Library) reveal many of Horace Clark's business associations and among other things political correspondence concerning the Gazette. They suggest his heavy involvement in the politics of Middletown. Some excerpts demonstrate:

No
Dear Sir, I have been expecting to hear you out on state politics—why is the Gazette remaining still? It is important that you should have a county meeting, or some public meeting, to nominate a senator and to express the sentiments of those who are friendly to districting and enemies to caucus imposition and tyranny and to prepare the way, it seems to me necessary that the Gazette should without delay enter upon the subject. Permit me to recommend a piece from the Stonington Yankee... 

P.S. I don't see the Sentinel—If it should contain anything deserving or requiring particular notice—pray send me one whenever you think it worthwhile. 
(written Dec. 21, 1826, from R. Fairchild)

Dear Sir, Yours of yesterday just received. I was glad to find you out in fine style this week—I approved of all except the last extract from the New Haven Register, where W. Barber says he approves of the nomination for Governor and Lieutenant Governor—I was sorry to see that—1st because many of your readers will suppose it to be your own piece from the manner in which it was placed...
(written Dec. 30, 1826)

Dear Sir, Your explanation of the Sentinel account of the Haddam meeting places the matter just where I expected it to be. I do not believe Brigham penned the account signed 'A Democrat'. He cannot write as well—he is a bungler, as you might readily perceive from the make of his head and shoulders...
(written Feb. 28, 1827 from New Haven by Joseph Barber)

The American Sentinel in general supported Jeffersonian Republican causes, yet followed the conservative spirit of Connecticut politics in general by not going on to support Jacksonians. As with the Gazette the degree of political editorializing varied, but in some contrast during the early 30's, editorializing decreased somewhat, or became less vehemently partisan. In 1824 the paper expressed pro-Crawford support and editorialized fairly strenuously. It also edited against the Gazette periodically, for example the following in the issue of Feb. 18, 1824: "That the lad who has charge of the Gazette (editor I do not call him for he is known to be incompetent to that duty) should become the dupe of designing men and be guided in his conduct by unprincipled and
and irresponsible advisers, is much to be regretted."

In the latter half of the 20's editorializing decreased and became less 'pro' or 'anti', and became more 'respectable' and detached. They were in general against the division within the Republican party and printed patriotic calls to Republicans of all kinds to unite, for example the following printed in the issue of March 18, 1829: "Republican, whether of the Adams or Jackson sect, who have 12 years fought, shoulder to shoulder the battles of toleration and reform ought not at least to array themselves against each other."

Upon Jackson's election, they did not rail against, or laud Jacksonian Democrats but criticized what they viewed as a rise in Federalism (exactly who they were referring to is hard to say). In the issue of March 17, 1830, they criticized: "The party which is now styling itself Republican and advocating the 'peoples' ticket'-it's spirit and its tendencies are essentially aristocratic." In the same editorial it demonstrated support for the then present administration and accused the 'new group' of being disguised Federalists and anti-nationalist. Besides the continual criticism of Federalists, the Sentinel printed fewer and fewer partisan editorials although throughout this period they continued to print things such as election returns, and state legislation.

Based on the above observations, it may be thought that political involvement may have had considerable importance in supporting the newspapers. However many questions arise from looking at the editorial trends, and changes in editorship of the papers.
For example why did E. and H. Calrk go 'bankrupt' in 1828? (Horace went on to be a successful businessman and town politician). Why was there such a turn over in Gazette editorships during the early 30's? Why did Starr and Miles begin the Sentinel in 1823? Answers to these questions would depend on a much closer look at the sources of support (e.g., advertising, publishing revenues, political association and support) of the editors and papers. For example Horace Clark, one-time editor of the Gazette was elected as a delegate of the Democratic-Republican group of Middletown in 1831 (Jan. 5). However a look at the general trends in Connecticut and Middletown political and social history may offer some very suggestive leads. In addition the years of 1823, 1828, 1838 are sufficiently significant politically to suggest some relationship with associated changes in newspaper management.

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Connecticut Politics—Middletown

While the bitter struggle between Federalists and Republicans during the first two decades and the triumph of the republicans in the state political sphere did not change the basic pattern of politics, according to Morse, it did signal the rise of new and varied interests and new individuals which spurred for political power in various party forms. The nature of the Republican takeover was slow. For example there were many localities whose politics they did not control—thus their antipathy for a time to the district plan which would have devolved more power onto localities in electing state officials. Therefore it is understandable that
a Republican newspaper did not appear in Middletown until 5 years after the significant 1818 constitutional convention.

Relatively major legislative and political changes occurred around the year 1828:

For 10 years after the making of the constitution to be sure, no great progress in political customs was discernible, but from 1828 on, the assembly sanctioned, usually under pressure from the Democratic party which was associated with the national interests of Andrew Jackson, a number of departures from traditional practices. One of these was the first amendment of the constitution passed in 1828 in which the state divided into districts for election of senators. This amendment largely did away with the choice of senator carried by caucuses made up only of assemblymen, the nominees for the upper house being henceforth chosen at county meetings, or primaries, at which party bosses found it difficult to manage the selection of candidates.

The significance of the passage of the district plan for party politics is confused by the various interests involved:

In the 1828 election, the Union Party—a reform party composed of anti-Democrats and pro-district men won...It was generally recognized that the pro-district men had won because of the strong anti-Jackson feeling prevalent in the community...however the narrow margin of popular voting showed that J. M. Niles and his associates had gained considerable influence over the inner workings of the old Republican Party.

According to Morse by 1833 (the year in which the Gazette ceased), the Democrats seemed to hold a significant amount of political power. During that year several liberal acts were passed—among them one which deprived clergymen of exemption from the poll tax—a significant abolition of clergy privileges.

However perhaps even more significant than the rise of the Democrats is the dissolution of politics among more than two main interests (as evidenced by the several interests involved in the passage of the district plan) and what Morse sees as a turn—
ing away from political machinery by various interests. If this 
were true then it might be reflected in the nature of the news-
paper as product. Morse writes:

The Republican era was drawing to a close. Hardest advocates 
of social reform despaired of securing aid from politicians 
and sought help from other private sources. Consequently 
the third decade witnessed developments unique in Connecti-
cut annals. Teacher's conventions and Lyceum lectures cap-
tured the public interest formerly monopolized by caucuses. 
But even on the eve of its decline political conservatism 
appeared to be impregnable and the election of 1832 was hailed 
as a vote of confidence in the administration...

But a change was inevitable, even though its advent was 
not heralded by politicians or the weekly press, and the 
election of 1832 proved to be the last major victory won by 
the party of the status quo. 25

In addition, elsewhere in speaking of occupational change during 
this period, Morse mentions:

In the absence of state regulations, workingmen turned to 
fraternal or cooperative societies for aid... e.g. society 
of mechanics... built up funds from which loans could be made 
to young apprentices, and gifts extended to local benevol-
ences... Middletown The mechanics Society in perhaps provided 
little money but they did provide members with intellectual 
benefits through small libraries. 26

A turn away from politics as a regulator of certain aspects of 
life could be manifest in a newspaper concern in two ways. Firstly 
it could be evident in the kind of material printed—is there a 
decline in political advocacy and editorializing? Is there an in-
crease in 'educational material'? Secondly the interest of the 
newspaper's editor is significant and in this respect the associa-
tion of W.D. Starr with the Episcopalian Church and its singular 
position in Connecticut life, demonstrates that his financial and 
social interests may very well not have been ultimately dependent 
upon or concerned with political party concerns.
The Protestant-Episcopal church was the second church in Connecticut and until 1812 its experienced a regular healthy growth. According to Purcell: "It's ministers were men of education...influential in the business life of the state." However in 1816 there was a congregational revival and an anti-episcopalian outburst in Connecticut and the Episcopalians, out of necessity, Purcell infers, allied with the Republicans:

"The Episcopalians used their strength to gain concessions which chanced to be liberal in character, rather than to bring about reform for principles' sake, thus differing from the Baptists and Methodists, who had labored through the heat of the whole day with the Republicans, for the overthrow of the state-favored church. Against an establishment as such the Episcopalians could not logically declare, but only against a Congregational establishment." 26

The Sentinel was certainly not a radical paper (although if Niles was at all involved with the Democrats it may have been influenced by that party in its first several years of existence), and in fact in the early 30's it tended away from strong advocacy of one or another issue and voiced general conciliationist feelings for the split Republican party in Middletown. W.D. Starr was "fairly wealthy," although where he got his wealth is unclear. Orphaned at an early age, his father left him nothing, while his grandfather was fairly wealthy, but appeared to leave him nothing in his will. However in the 1835 tax assessments list him as owning three houses ($2000) among other items, and (occupationally) assessed at $20 with a tax total of $101.80. Niles was also very wealthy, with one house worth $2200 and a tax total of 114.10. Little other information could be found on him.
A relatively small group of men controlled and/or were involved in the production and dissemination of 'intellectual' products and material in Middletown during these years. Of course there were many other means of dissemination (e.g. ministers, school teachers) but these men certainly played a major role. More information on their financial background and associations and on the paper content itself would serve to either emphasize or perhaps minimize the degree to which these men 'controlled' in an effective sense, the intellectual life of Middletown.
Appendix I

Bibliography

2. Emery, Edwin and Smith, Henry. The Press and America
3. Hull, Harvey R. Middletown imprints. (Middletown, 1968)
11. Purcell, R.J. Connecticut in Transition 1775-1818
16. Probate Records—Court St. Middletown
17. Probate Papers—Conn. Ste. Library—Archives (for Starr, Parmelee, Dunning, Clarks)
19. The Middlesex Gazette (1797-1833)—Olin Library
20. The American Sentinel (under Sentinel and Witness)—Olin Library
21. Franklin Society Records
Appendix II

Middlesex Gazette

Thomas Green 1785—fore a few years
Moses Woodward 1785-1797
Tertius Dunning 1797-1823
J.B. Dunning 1800-1810
Charles Dunning (?) 1823-1824
Epaphras Clark 1824-1828
Horace Clark "
Theodore N. Parmelee 1828-1829, 1831
Edwin T. Greenfield 1829-1830
Thomas Greenfield Jr. 1830-1831
Edwin Hunt (?)
S.W. Griswold 1833
J.R. Palmer and Co. (Prop.) 1833
John Longking Jr. (?)

'Sentinel'

William D. Starr 1823--1855
William H. Miles 1823-1827
H.W. Green 1833 (Aug.)
W.D. Starr and William J. Starr 1851
Appendix III

Middletown Printers and Publishers 1785-1850 (taken from Hull's Middletown Imprints)
(total # item printed in parentheses, n indicates newspaper)

Tertius Dunning 1797-1800, 1809-1824(40,n)
T. and J.B. Dunning 1800-1808(24,n)
Thaddeus Bailey (pub) 1804(1)
Alseop, Riley and Alsop 1807(1)
Richard Alsop 1808(2)
Savage and Pomeroy (pub) 1808(1)
Frederick Spencer (pub) 1808-1817(4)
Loomis and Richards 1814-1815(9,n)
Clark and Lyman 1814-1822(29)
Thomas Spencer Jr. (pub) 1818, 1820(2)
Hart and Lincoln 1814-1815 (7)
Seth Richards(13,n)
E. Clark 1821-1822(5)
E. and H. Clark 1822-1828(46,n)
J.T. Porter (pub) 1823(1)
Starr and Niles 1823-1827(13,n)
J.A. Boswell (pub) 1824(1)
E. Hunt (pub) 1824-1843 (30)
L.C. Lyman (pub) 1824, 1831(2)
William D. Starr 1827-1850 (49,n)
William H. Niles (pub) 1827-1836(11)
Parmelee and Greenfield 1828-1829(6,n)
Edwin T. Greenfield 1829-1830(2,n)
Hunt and Noyes (pub) 1829, 1836-1840(11)
D.D. Parmelee (pub) 1830(1)
Lemuel Austin (pub) 1831(1)
H.W. Greene 1833(n)
Joseph Longmire 1833-1834(3)
J. and S. Baldwin (pub) 1833(1)
G.F. Olmsted 1834-1836 (4,n)
Appendix IV

Reprint of Gazette editorial in issue of Jan. 9, 1826 upon the advent of the American Sentinel (excerpted)

The public were yesterday presented with the first number of the American Sentinel published in this city by Messrs. Starr and Niles. We sincerely wish them all the success which they anticipate, and hope that their paper may be the means of diffusing more extensively correct information on moral, literary, and political subjects. The utility of newspapers, judiciously conducted, in disseminating knowledge in all its various branches, among all classes of society in a cheap and grateful form is universally admitted.

But we regret, exceedingly that Messrs. Starr and Niles should have determined to give theirs the cast of a party-political paper. We say a Party-political paper—not that we mean that we have any objection to the discussion of general, fundamental, abstract, political principles, as applicable to the interests of our common country—but we think that the title is passed when it is either unnecessary (if it ever were) or indeed proper, for editors to enlist under the partisan banners of local, limited, partial, and personal interests such as those by which our own state has been, for a few years, unfortunately in our humble opinion divided. There is now a general and universal sentiment among the more rational and candid portion of the community, to buty party names and the animosities which they have engendered and a wish to unite with a single reference to what shall be like to preserve the best and lasting interests of the state. May that individual be looked upon with distrust who shall attempt to fan the embers of party which are now nearly, and left to themselves, will soon be wholly extinguished.

"...We would only add that we also profess and shall maintain REPUBLICAN principles: not however as applied or rather mis-applied to this or that party—but as used in its correct most enlarged, and so-to-speak philanthropic sense...with party politics we have done...and rely on the good sense of an intelligent, candid people for our justification and support...."

It may be argued by those who differ from us on the expediency of the moderate and peaceable course we recommend, that the objects of the dominant party are not yet fully attained...that although they have succeeded in what they deem a reformation of the most important grievances, yet there remain others of minor consequence which require correction. Waving from a desire to avoid angry topics, the question whether any such minor grievances in fact exist, we ask this question...is the benefit to be expected from such frequent and violent struggles equal or indeed comparable to the pernicious consequences which would result from them?

It may be again said that the ruling party in the state are not yet so firmly cated in power, that they can safely afford to relinquish party distinctions—that if party spirit should subside, there might be danger to be apprehended, from a rallying among the minority, of their being displaced. This is a very obvious argument and at the same time a very influential one—indeed it is also
plausible. But on a dispassionate view of it, it is believed that the danger is more imaginary than real at this time...Without being under the necessity or disposition of expressing any opinion as to the comparative blessings of the present and old order of things, (of which it is useless now to speak) we think there is too much good sense among those who constitute the minority in Connecticut, to permit them, as a matter of POLICY, to make any effort even with the prospect of temporary success, to displace the present rulers...Not but that they might, and would, under a different state of things, feel a disposition to have the government of the state in the hands of those whose sentiments correspond more nearly to their own—not but that they have, if the phrase is more agreeable, that love of domination which is inherent in human nature...but we say that as a matter of POLICY, only they are not so foolish, so a absolutely demented, as to rally under a standard which is broken.
Appendix V

Footnotes
(# indicates source as numbered in Bibliography)

1. 13-p295 and 3-pl-2
2. 9-pl-8
3. 12-p65
4. 12-pl28
5. 12
6. 13
7. 9
8. 12-pl66
9. 13-pl20
10. 4-pl2
11. 4-pl5-6
12. 1
14. 1
15. 4-pl9
16. American Sentinel—July 8, 1829
17. 21-
18. 17-
19. 8-pl39
20. 8-pl40
21. 7-pl93
22. 8-pl42
23. 7-pl112
24. 8-pl19
25. 11-pl42
26. 11-pl44