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THE EFFECT OF COMPETITION ON THE
MIDDLETOWN, NEW YORK, TIMES HERALD, 1956-1959

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Division in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science

By
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Pittsburg, Kansas
June, 1963

ABSTRACT

During the past two years the attention of many persons interested in the field of journalism, including those of us who vicariously enjoy an association with the profession by teaching journalism subjects in high schools and colleges, has been directed to a situation which points up the question of whether competition stimulates or stifles newspaper enterprise. While mergers of newspapers in the United States have come about to some extent because of the need for economic stability, there are those who claim that the lack of competition has made newspapers complacent, and the fire of leadership and enthusiasm which has led journalism down its 270-year colorful history in the United States is flickering and in danger of going out.

Herbert Brucker, writing in the Saturday Review, April 25, 1958, posed the question: "Is the Press Writing Its Obituary?" in an article in which he discussed the situation in Middletown, New York, where the long-established daily newspaper, the Times Herald, found itself challenged by a newcomer, the Record. Facts of the case were startling. In a community which by most measurements should have been able to support only one good newspaper, both the conservative Times Herald and the newcomer Record maintained practicable

advertising percentages, and in circulation the Times Herald secured commendable increases while the Record jumped by leaps and bounds. The 9,000 circulation which the Times Herald maintained before the Record began publication was a good average for a city of 22,000 population like Middletown; but the concentrated effort toward building circulation which the Times Herald and the Record exerted between 1956 and 1959 netted them a combined total exceeding 31,000, truly a startling and exceptional achievement.

Interesting personalities figured in the picture at Middletown, also. Ralph McAllister Ingersoll, remembered for his picture tabloid PM of the early 1940's, was the power behind the Times Herald after 1951, and Jacob M. "Jack" Kaplan, a financier with many business interests, started the Record in 1956. Although Ingersoll flatly stated that one of the newspapers would fold within five years, Kaplan claimed that there was a place for both newspapers in Middletown and that they and the town would profit by the competition.

On the surface the story reflects fairy tale features, and with competition a moot question in many lines of business today, the Middletown situation seemed to call for a study to determine whether or not Brucker, as well as Kaplan, was correct in his observation that newspapers today are losing ground because of their complacency, and competition enhances rather than hinders

successful newspaper operation.

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CHAPTER I

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEWSPAPER IN THE UNITED STATES

Growth of Newspapers

Two of the important factors which help to build and maintain a democratic government are responsibility and enterprise, and the profession of journalism has incorporated these two factors as the evolution of newspapers in the United States has reflected the trends of promoting the people's right to know while keeping in mind that business enterprise must be profitable to be really successful.

When the nation was young, the town meeting provided the means of carrying on the government of the community. As the population and the communities grew, however, it became impractical if not impossible for all the people to attend these meetings, and they relied more and more upon the news chronicles, which were issued weekly or semi-weekly, for their information about government affairs.

From their slow beginnings because of mechanical limitations in typesetting and printing, newspapers grew in number as fast as the nation itself mushroomed. Newspaper publishing has followed an historical parallel

with the trends in American industry. Just as many large manufacturing enterprises can trace their beginning back to the single artisan, so the newspaper can go back to the printer-publisher in his shop.¹ A small initial investment of only \$500 enabled James Gordon Bennett in 1835 to start publishing his New York Herald and Horace Greeley needed only \$1,000 in addition to his own printing press to start the Tribune.² All but two of the colonies, Delaware and New Jersey, had newspapers at the end of 1766. The number totaled twenty-three, all weeklies, including four newspapers in Boston and three in New York.³ Just before the Revolution thirty-seven newspapers were in the colonies, but only twenty came through the war. Six years after the war began, however, thirty-five newspapers still were serving the colonies because new ventures were started from time to time to offset the newspapers which failed. Nearly all of these newspapers still were weeklies, although attempts were made to establish semi-weeklies or tri-weeklies.⁴

¹F. Fraser Bond, An Introduction to Journalism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 117.

²Ibid., p. 116.

³Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 43.

⁴Ibid., p. 95.

⁵Ibid., p. 675.

By 1833 there were 1,200 newspapers in the United States, and the number jumped to 3,000 by 1860, 4,500 by 1870, and 12,000 by 1890. Dailies had increased by 50 per cent in the fifty-seven years from 1833 to 1890, more rapidly than weeklies.⁵ Daily newspapers multiplied from none in 1650 to 2,250 in 1892, and weeklies grew to 12,500 by 1892, with the number of semi-weeklies tripling to 600 by 1892. Circulation spread with a steady pace in proportion to the growth in the number of newspapers, also.⁶

In 1914 newspapers reached the highest point in United States journalistic history, but in the five years from 1914 to 1919, 2,435 newspapers dropped from the scene with scores of dailies and hundreds of weeklies wiped out by consolidation and others quietly "giving up the ghost."⁷ A greater decrease in the number of dailies was noted in the consolidation flurry of the 1920's than in most of the depression years of the 1930's, except in the years 1938 and 1939. As a result of the mergers in the 1920's a decrease of five per cent developed in the number of dailies and by 1939 a decrease of an additional three per cent had developed.⁸

The number of English language daily newspapers in

⁵Ibid., pp. 404-411.

⁶Ibid., p. 549.

⁷Ibid., p. 634. (New York: The New York Times, 1960), p. 497.

⁸Ibid., p. 675.

the United States decreased during the early 1940's and reached the lowest point in fifty years with 1,744 in the fall of 1944. During the last half of the decade a slight increase in the number of dailies was noted each year while weeklies decreased about a thousand in number during the decade.⁹ During the 1940's increases in the costs of labor and materials were passed on to consumers in higher circulation and advertising rates, and in most cases the increases in rates had no adverse effect on circulation. The aggregate daily circulation increased from 40,000,000 in 1940 to 52,000,000 in 1949.¹⁰

In the last five years of the 1950's, the number of daily newspapers in the United States decreased from 1,765 in 1955 to 1,751 in 1959. Circulation increased during the same period, however, reaching a high of 57,805,445 in 1958. Weekly newspapers reached a high of 8,478 with a circulation of 18,529,199 in 1959.¹¹

¹⁵ The only evidence of the tradition of the independent newspaper is in the small town where young men

Mergers and Consolidations

As national industry enlarged from the small company through the partnership to the large corporate organization of today, the newspaper seemed naturally to follow

⁹Ibid., p. 771. (ed.), Your Newspaper: Blueprint for Better Press (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949).

¹⁰Ibid., p. 784.

¹¹World Almanac and Book of Facts. (New York: The New York World-Telegram, 1960), p. 497.

the same evolution of business organization. With Joseph Pulitzer came the development of mass circulation; then the Scripps brothers brought in the idea of the newspaper chain, even before the plan became popular in retail merchandizing. Mergers and consolidations have been common in the newspaper publishing business in recent years.¹²

All kinds of newspapers are essential in a democracy, but some authorities argue that the press "speaks with fewer and fewer voices."¹³ Traditionally in the history of the United States anyone who wanted to be heard and who could line up a press could and did start a newspaper. Now the trend seems to be toward chain ownership and what is called "boiler plate uniformity."¹⁴

Newspaper experimentation has almost disappeared and in the cities, where the bulk of the population ever is concentrating, the number of newspapers steadily declines.¹⁵ The only evidence of the tradition of the independent newspaper is in the small town where young men with courage and ideas launch small newspaper operations. But these are rare, and many times the cost of operation

¹²Bond, op. cit., p. 117.

¹³Svirsky, Leon (ed.), Your Newspaper: Blueprint for a Better Press (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), pp. 188-189.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 189.

¹⁵Ibid.

in a short time gobbles up the courage, enterprise and faith of the singular figure in the midst of monopolies. The day when a poor man could start a newspaper is gone.¹⁶ Even a small newspaper press is expensive. To establish a new metropolitan newspaper, publishers now estimate, would take five to ten million dollars.¹⁷

One of the criticisms of newspapers where ownership is limited and sometimes continues to shrink is that freedom of expression could thus be endangered. This criticism is supported by such facts as these:

1. Ten states have no cities with competing daily newspapers.
2. Competing newspapers can be found, actually, in only 117 cities.
3. A fourth of the daily circulation in this country is controlled by eighteen newspapers owned by only fourteen companies.¹⁸

As evidence of the danger of newspaper monopolies, critics recall the incident in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1946 and 1947. Under the same control were the four newspapers of the city--the Morning Union, Evening Union, Republican and Daily News. When, in September of 1946, the mechanical departments went on strike, all four newspapers were stymied and ceased

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 190.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 189.

¹⁸ Bond, op. cit., p. 8.

publication. Springfield was without a local news outlet from that time until well into 1947.¹⁹

Most daily newspapers today are owned by corporations because corporate enterprises are more advantageous than individually-owned enterprises.²⁰ With the split personality of operating as a social institution as well as a business enterprise, a newspaper today faces problems which are not encountered by other business ventures, and in addition must deal with situations peculiar to the newspaper world.²¹

World War I helped to inflame the rash of consolidation of publications. For instance, the Chicago Inter Ocean merged with the Record-Herald under the name of the Herald, then the Herald consolidated with the Examiner, leaving Chicago with only two morning newspapers, the Tribune and the Herald-Examiner. Consolidations were more general in the morning newspapers which suffered more from war conditions than did evening publications.²² Consolidation began in the smaller cities but with the depression years and the advantage of merging, the number of newspapers in even the larger cities

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., p. 118.

²¹Ronald E. Wolseley and Laurence R. Campbell, Exploring Journalism (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1949), p. 33.

²²Mott, op. cit., p. 636.

could be counted on one hand.²³

Introduction of Tabloids

Another development in the field of journalism was the coming of the modern tabloid. Ironically, the format of the tabloid was not new. Early-day newspapers were small in page-size and had few pages, but this was because of the limitations in the printing facilities. The modern tabloid emphasizes that the small size is convenient for folding, and also boasts many pages.²⁴

Recently gaining in popularity, the tabloid is throwing off an ugly stigma resulting from the fact that some publishers of earlier tabloids used sensationalism to help promote circulation. Among those publishers were Robert R. McCormick, Joseph M. Patterson, Bernarr Macfadden and William Randolph Hearst,²⁵ colorful figures no less exciting than their brainchild publications; but for a time the elements of good taste were sorely strained as each newspaper sought supremacy.²⁶

The dirty taste of the gutter journalism practiced for a time by the tabloids takes a while to rinse out, but in the past twenty years tabloid journalism has been

²³Ibid., p. 637.

²⁴Ibid., p. 666.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 637-638.

²⁶Ibid., p. 671.

recognized by three characteristics:

1. Small page size in comparison with the traditional eight-column newspapers.
2. Much space given to pictures.
3. Condensed and lively presentation of the news, disregarding at times the customary summary lead.²⁷

The problem with some tabloids--with their accent on pictures, comics and puzzles--is to find the reading matter.²⁸

The Newspaper as a Public Servant

"To measure the value of a journalistic medium to the advertiser, measure the size and quality of its circulation."²⁹ But some authorities argue that a newspaper's importance has little close relationship to its circulation, that the importance of a newspaper is reflected by its purpose and integrity.³⁰ In the United States the eight hundred cities with populations between 10,000 and 50,000 have residents interested in local events and personal affairs just as much as they are interested in world events.³¹

²⁷Ibid., p. 673.

²⁸Bond, op. cit., p. 112.

²⁹Ibid., p. 301.

³⁰Ibid., p. 107.

³¹Wolseley and Campbell, op. cit., p. 110.

Newspapers in towns of this category serve their communities as no other instrument of public information or opinion, because the people want a "medium of communication which reflects their ideals and their attitudes, their customs and conventions, their behavior patterns and their intellectual lives."³² These newspapers control seven-eighths of the daily newspaper output in the United States, and of the 1,700 of these dailies 1,200 have no local competition. These newspapers concentrate on local news, although they may subscribe to a wire service.³³ Locally written features are generally lacking in some of the small dailies, but an effort is being made to improve the coverage of local feature material which abounds in the small cities.³⁴

Some large cities have newspapers which do not care for rural circulation; they consider such service too expensive and perhaps find no merit for themselves in the fact that rural readers are enough of a potential that they figure in the success of weekly magazines.³⁵

Newspapers build prestige by the news, opinions and advertising emanating from their pages, but they need readers to reflect this prestige; therefore circulation

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 114-115.

³⁵Svirsky, op. cit., p. 71.

is important to the financial success of newspaper organizations.³⁶ Every day people in the United States buy newspapers--57,000,000 of them--and about three-fifths are evening editions.

Newspapers must sell subscriptions and single copies to augment income and to build prestige as an advertising medium because the larger the circulation the better the chance for newspapers to have independence as business enterprises and social institutions.³⁷

To hold the large circulation, or to succeed in any department, newspapers have come to realize that the second function of journalism, that of influencing readers, is becoming as important as the first function, that of informing the readers. Complexity is the hallmark of this age, and modern man frequently finds himself in the midst of conflict and confusion with complex situations arising which require interpretation and explanation; and background material often is needed to supplement the facts in the news columns.³⁸ "The ordinary mortal caught in the maze of economics, science or invention needs to be led by the hand through its intricacies."³⁹

³⁶Wolseley and Campbell, op. cit., p. 116.

³⁷Ibid., p. 542.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 10-11.

³⁹Bond, op. cit., p. 6.

Specialization has reached into the field of journalism, also, and the best newspapers strive to secure for their staffs men and women who have backgrounds in particular fields to better explain to the average person the facets of new developments.⁴⁰ Besides introducing and exposing, newspapers now educate, counsel and advise the general reader. Reviews of creative presentations such as motion pictures, plays, musical events, exhibits and books satisfy the interest of some readers in the various art forms, and critical articles give people the opportunity to develop better judgment and better taste.

Since readers have extended their demands on newspapers over the years, beyond merely the supplying of information, to include influencing and entertaining the public, newspaper organizations have become more complex and massive. As newspapers have grown from local to national and to international scope, they also have become so diversified as to include all kinds of news stories as well as features and puzzles.⁴¹

Thus journalism in the United States has become both a social institution and a business enterprise; and although metropolitan newspapers, because they are corporately owned, have become so depersonalized that readers often do not know who the publishers are, and a

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Wolseley and Campbell, op. cit., p. 9.

point for argument is whether serving the public or making a profit is more important, still journalism more than any other business enterprise emphasizes its role as "servant to society."⁴²

The Newspaper Today

Demand for newspapers is at an all-time peak with the 57,000,000 copies being sold in the United States every day, according to D. Tennant Bryan, president of the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Publisher of the Richmond, Virginia, News-Leader and the Times-Dispatch, Bryan disputes any contention that mergers or consolidations of newspapers are any indication that a trend exists towards newspaper debilitation.⁴³

Delegates to the seventy-fourth annual meeting of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, held in April, 1960, in New York, were impressed with the idea that many problems would be in store for the American newspaper industry, but that the years ahead would be full of prospects for continued development and growth. ". . . All of us are searching constantly for new and better ways of producing newspapers and for more efficiency and more economic operation," observed Mark Ferree,

⁴²Ibid., p. 33.

⁴³James Devlin, Associated Press, "Newspaper Demand Hits an All-Time Peak," Independence, Kansas, Daily Reporter, April 27, 1960, p. 12.

vice-president of the association.⁴⁴

Problems outlined by Ferree in the coming years included the problem of "maintaining our trusteeship" of the right of the people to know; the problem of finding the revenue sufficient to operate; the problem of the increasing competition for the advertising dollar; the problem of meeting the "constantly rising cost spiral."⁴⁵ Indeed, the mergers of newspapers are merely a natural working of economics to effect operating conservation through a joint production plant, and reflect in no way the demand for newspapers.⁴⁶

To generalize about journalism is difficult because there are news agencies which distort the truth, high-minded journalists who suffer for the cause of truth, and prejudiced observers who can make a case for either distrust of or faith in the press. But newspapers have, in the 270 years of American journalism, been read for news; and they have furnished that news faithfully, honestly and as completely as possible.⁴⁷

⁴⁴"Many Problems Facing Newspapers of Nation," Independence, Kansas, Daily Reporter, April 26, 1960, p. 3.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Devlin, loc. cit.

⁴⁷Mott, op. cit., p. 788.

CHAPTER II

MIDDLETOWN AND THE TIMES HERALD

Middletown

Middletown, New York, was the setting for the lively experiment in newspaper competition which lasted four years and unquestionably brought about improvement in newspaper publication. Middletown is a marketing center of nearly 24,000 population in the black-dirt farmlands sixty-five miles northwest of New York City. In Republican Orange county, Middletown is the second largest city. Newburgh, on the Hudson river and twenty-four miles across the county from Middletown, has a population of over 32,000. The United States Military Academy is not far from Newburgh, but Middletown is closer to Goshen, the county seat. With a population of 154,000, Orange county has been increasing in population gradually since 1955. The county area comprises 829 square miles.

Middletown is in the state which boasts the financial center of the United States--New York City. The state ranks high in textiles, paper, steel, chemicals, tools, electrical equipment, scientific instruments. Dairying leads the farming pursuits, and New York is the second largest producer of grapes and maple sugar. The state also produces a number of vegetables and fruits.

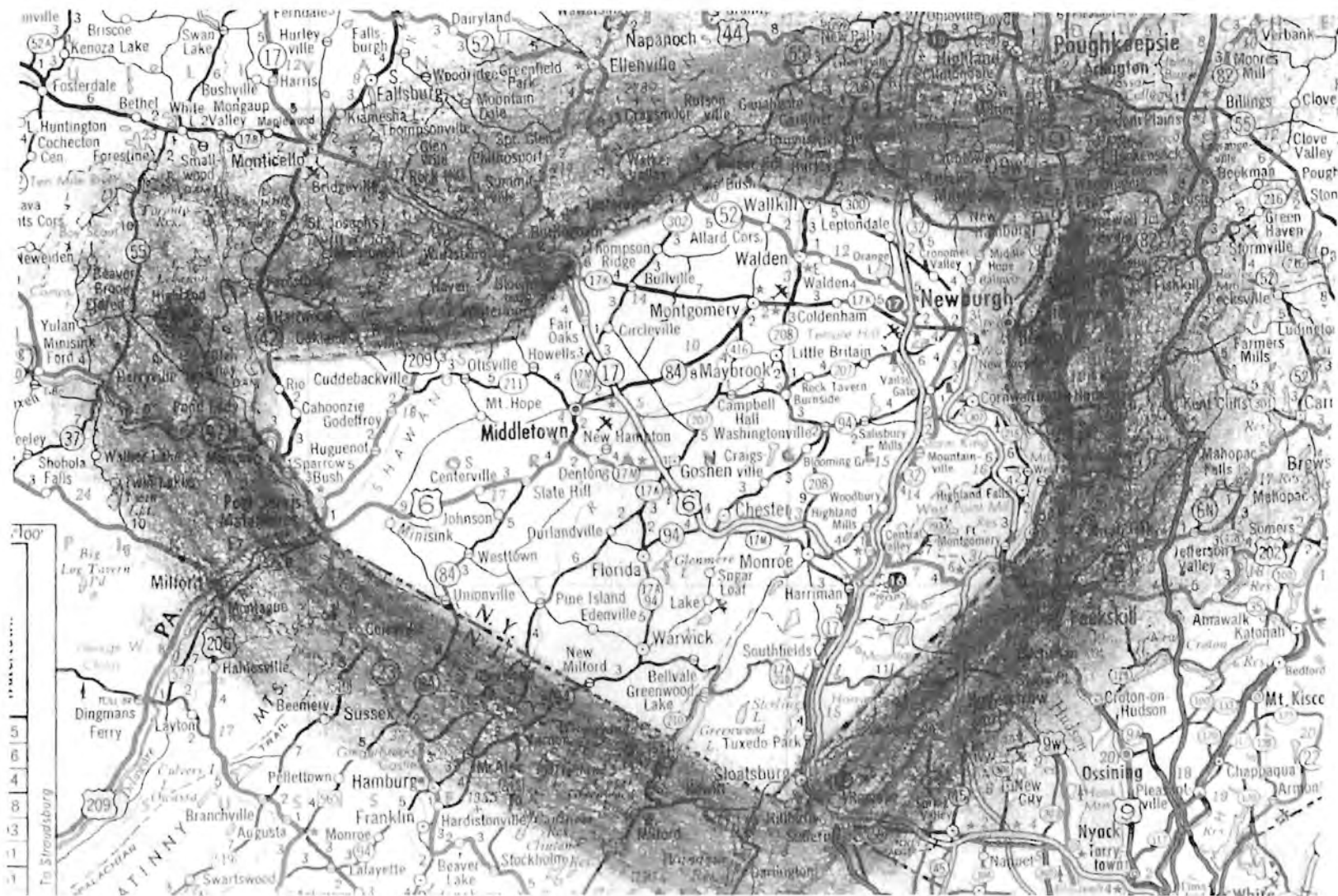


Fig. 1

Map of Orange County, New York

Middletown itself has railroad shops, foundries, a tannery and silk mills. Companies in the city manufacture shirts, hats, leather goods, handbags, files and saws, wrapping, printing and silk machinery, and paper boxes; and some companies process fur.¹

Smaller towns which Middletown serves include Goshen, the county seat, with a population of 3,700; Port Jervis with 9,441; Walden, 4,500; Warwick, 3,100; Chester, 1,215; Monroe, 1,753; and several villages with less than 1,000 population each.

Issues of both the Times Herald and the Record, and communication with residents of Middletown reveal that this community is little different from communities of like size in other parts of the country. Civic clubs and ladies' organizations are active, and school activities are varied and numerous. In the years covered by this study one of the most popular sports was bowling, with men and women's leagues in full swing during the winter months. Middletown High School also was putting forth every effort to maintain a fine record established by the school football team.

Chief Characteristics of the Times Herald

Like many small city daily newspapers, the Times Herald was the only one in town before 1956. This

¹Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer and Son, Inc., 1958).

newspaper was a conservative publication; a little stodgy, but profitable. Ralph McAllister Ingersoll, well-known figure in the newspaper field and known to others as the creator of the picture tabloid PM, a publication without advertising, in the early 1940's purchased the Times Herald in 1951 and retired to a 1,000-acre farm in Castleton, Virginia, to raise Angus cattle and to write his memoirs.²

A look at copies of the Times Herald in October of 1955, four years after Ingersoll acquired the newspaper and a year before the Record began operation, reveals a good publication marked with good news coverage and quality writing, attractive but not outstanding makeup, and a moderate sprinkling of pictures. What was lacking was controversy and color. Controversial issues were given little play and feature articles were infrequent.

Ingersoll's name was not listed in the masthead, which was prominent at the top of the first column on the editorial page. Listed as publisher was Helena S. Mauros. Editorials were printed in the first column which was one-and-a-half columns wide, eighteen picas instead of the customary twelve picas wide. A political cartoon and a cartoon comic also appeared regularly on the editorial page.

²"It's War in Middletown," Newsweek, LIII (May 11, 1959), p. 67

Columns featured regularly in the Times Herald in 1955 included Westbrook Pegler's "Fair Enough," Drew Pearson's "The Merry-Go-Round," Dick Milburn's "Bittersweet," and, always on the editorial page, a column by Othman. On the last page of each issue were columns by Walter Winchell and Louella Parsons, and scattered through the pages were Hal Boyle's features, Sam Dawson's "Business Mirror," Bob Thomas' "Hollywood," and Mary Haworth's Mail.

Two pages of each issue were given to women's features. One of these pages, called the "magazine" page, carried stories about fashions, child care, cooking and sewing, and personality helps. The other women's page included stories about social events in and around Middletown. The stories were creditably written but the makeup of the pages was poor; and although light-face headlines were used, a sameness about them made the pages uninteresting. Apparently little effort was made to secure photographs of social events, particularly weddings.

On the comic strip page nine comic strips were featured, including "Mickey Finn," "Rex Morgan, M.D.," "Big Ben Bolt," "Peanuts," "Snuffy Smith," "Etta Kett," "Steve Canyon," "Li'l Abner," and "Blondie." The cartoon comic on that page was "Room and Board."

Issues averaged sixteen to eighteen pages and a

glance through any issue suggested good advertising lineage with quarter-page advertisements common and full-page spreads not unusual. Large advertisements and multiple advertising layouts on many pages, however, forced the stories on those pages to resemble filler for the pages rather than good news coverage. A better practice might have been to use stories of local events with the large advertising layouts. Classified advertisements extended over a page-and-a-half and the pages, as well as the individual columns, were marked by good makeup.

Each week a schedule of radio and television programs was printed in a format convenient for subscribers to clip and fold for easy reference throughout the following week. The traditional church page was included each week, usually on Friday.

Although there were stories about news events in other towns in Orange county sprinkled through the issues of the Times Herald in 1955, apparently little effort was made, in the way of makeup, to appeal to readers outside of Middletown but in the trade territory of the city. Many of the area stories were found on the inside pages, while space on the front page was given to national Associated Press releases of news events likely to be of only secondary interest to readers of the Times Herald.

Physically the Times Herald resembled the average full-sized newspaper in format. The popular eight-column pages were used, each column twelve picas wide and twenty-two inches long. Gothic type employed for the headlines gave the newspaper a modern accent, although banner headlines were not as much evidenced as they might have been. Although pictures were found throughout the pages of each issue, apparently little effort was made to incorporate photography as a basic element in the coverage of news events.

Ralph McAllister Ingersoll

The man who had purchased this newspaper in 1951 and had retired to his farm in Virginia to write his memoirs was Ralph McAllister Ingersoll, probably best known for a lively journalistic experiment which failed. Ingersoll nonetheless had carried a great deal of influence in the field of journalism. His colorful career had included editorial responsibilities on the New Yorker, Time and Fortune magazines.

PM, the tabloid newspaper with the magazine format, was the experimental journalistic failure for Ingersoll, although most authorities agree that the newspaper had merit and failed only because its creator was a little too idealistic in setting up the business management through which the venture was to be sustained and

ultimately show a profit. Ingersoll, bent on convincing the world that the management of the new magazine was independent and bowed to no pressures, established PM without an advertising department and included no advertisements in the format. Ingersoll idealistically was confident that circulation from subscriptions and street sales eventually would support the enterprise.

A Yale graduate who also attended Columbia, Ingersoll was a reporter for the New Yorker, then managing editor; was associate editor and later managing editor for Fortune; doubled as vice-president and general manager for Time, Inc., and for two years was publisher of Time. After the experience with PM and a stint in the army during World War II, Ingersoll took over supervision of his third wife's financial interests.³

As manager of his wife's financial affairs, Ingersoll became the owner of the only daily newspaper in Middletown, New York, in 1951; and subsequently he became involved in circumstances which have been watched with interest by many concerned with the future of communications and publications.

Evidently Ingersoll took to heart the advice of a mining superintendent for whom he was working shortly after graduation from Yale. Ingersoll had been

"Investor Ingersoll," Newsweek, XXXIX (January 7, 1952), p. 52

recommended for a promotion but was not advanced because, as the superintendent commented, Ingersoll had been too reasonable. "A man's got to stand up for himself to get along in this world," the superintendent advised the younger man.⁴

Just as some insight to an artist is gained by looking at his paintings, so a better understanding of Ralph Ingersoll might be gained by a consideration of his brainchild PM, which incorporated much of his idealism for the field of journalism. Marshall Field, wealthy American who eventually was to gain control of the new publication, first learned of the unique characteristics of PM through his lawyer who commented on the interesting aspects of the dummies of the newspaper which Ingersoll was circulating in an effort to raise financial support. Meaningless conventions of the orthodox press were to be ignored, and the principles of American democracy were to be promoted as the newspaper interpreted the news events of the day⁵

Ingersoll claimed that he got the idea for his newspaper in 1923 when, during a pressmen's strike,

⁴"Sweet Consequence of Murder," Coronet, XL (June, 1956), p. 144.

⁵Kenneth Stewart and John Tebbel, Makers of Modern Journalism (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 416.

the New York dailies had published an eight-page daily in tabloid format.⁶ An opinion was aired, however, that the PM venture was prompted somewhat by the desire of Time Ingersoll to make a name for himself and to gain a place of distinction in the hierarchy of journalism.

Although he was a capable editor and his salary approached \$45,000 a year, Ralph Ingersoll was forty years old and in the field of journalism was considered only a modest success.⁷

Whatever his reasons, Ingersoll had in mind a new kind of newspaper with PM, an evening publication with smaller pages than the other tabloids. He was competing with four other evening daily newspapers in New York, all four with less circulation than the morning tabloid, Daily News.⁸

It was not Ingersoll's evening newspaper competitors, however, but the morning tabloid which threatened news dealers with suspension of Daily News deliveries if they agreed to accept for sale copies of PM. Ingersoll, of course, confronted Captain Patterson, publisher of the Daily News, and challenged Patterson for the pressure tactics of the Daily News on the news dealers. Patterson

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., pp. 416-417. op. cit., pp. 418-419.

⁸"Birth of a Daily," Time, XXXV (January 22, 1940), p. 38. 23, 1940, p. 38.

emphasized that he wanted nothing to happen to the Daily News, recalling that twenty years before the New York Times had predicted that the Daily News would fold. Time had shown, however, that not only had the Daily News continued publication, but the newspaper had progressed greatly--while the New York Times "remained the same." Later Patterson decided that PM was no threat to his own publication, and joined other newspaper publishers in treating the new publication with condescension rather than with open hostility.⁹

With four columns to the page and thirty-two pages per issue, PM was to contain fifty per cent art work (pictures and drawings). At first Ingersoll was interested in offset printing processes, but he decided that lithography was not ready for high-speed makeup which he needed, so the printing was done by the traditional letterpress method.¹⁰ Ironically, of course, the offset technique was "ready" in 1956 when, in Middletown, New York, Ingersoll's competitor employed offset as the printing medium for the newspaper which entered competition with Ingersoll's Times Herald.

To enhance the appearance of his 1940 publication, Ingersoll used a new cold-set ink and superior stock,

⁹Stewart and Tebbel, op. cit., pp. 418-419.

¹⁰"PM Now Sure of Its Birthday," Business Week, (March 23, 1940), p. 38.

giving the newspaper better-than-average reproduction.¹¹ The first issues were handsome, the pages stapled together like a magazine, with superior photography, fine maps and excellent radio coverage.

Rights for the publication's title, which had a double meaning for "afternoon" and "picture magazine," were purchased from a printing group which had a trade paper by that name.¹² Many of the new trends in journalism were incorporated into the newspaper, including the abandoning of the traditional summary lead for news stories which told the "who, what, when, where, why and how" of the news events. As with Time, with which Ingersoll had previously been affiliated, emphasis in the new publication was on interpretation of the news.¹³ Writers such as Dorothy Parker and Oscar Levant worked for nothing on the first stories and the dummies of the newspaper, indicating their willingness to promote anything progressive in the field of journalism.¹⁴

Like Time, again, the features of the new publication were departmentalized under such headings as "war, domestic, New York, Hollywood, radio, critical, political, services during World War II."

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 39.

¹³Mott, op. cit., p. 688.

¹⁴"PM Now Sure of Its Birthday," op. cit., p. 38.

sports, business, opinion, national, education, and useful items." All of the writers were experts in their fields. No editorial page as such was included, but letters to the editor were encouraged and the best printed along with comments pertinent to the letters written by one of the authorities or experts on the staff.¹⁵

One of the innovations was no advertising, a policy which was meant to promote and insure independence. But Ingersoll obviously recognized the importance, indeed of newsworthiness itself, of advertising because a digest of worthwhile items offered in advertisements in other newspapers was included in each issue of PM.¹⁶

Unfortunately, however, so much publicity, both gratis and paid, had advertised the new publication that people really had come to expect too much and they were disappointed.¹⁷ In addition, difficulties in the staff and the mechanical departments caused the publication to retreat on some of its uniqueness; and, finally, all of the original stockholders withdrew--except Marshall Field.

Much was made of Ingersoll's entrance into the armed services during World War II. His draft board called him in 1942 and Marshall Field attempted to get him deferred

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 39-40.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁷Stewart and Tebbel, op. cit., p. 419.

because Ingersoll was in a "position essential to public morale." Ingersoll himself wrote a 6,000-word letter which was published in PM and in which he accused the draft board of calling him because of dislike for his newspaper. He also called for a clear ruling on the status of newspapermen in the emergency. Then, with his views widely circulated and publicized, Ingersoll enlisted in the army.¹⁸

Sometime during his service with the army, Ingersoll lost his eagerness for the publication he had created.¹⁹ He used as excuse for resigning his affiliation with PM the fact that Marshall Field had decided to accept advertising; and, after Ingersoll's withdrawal, the newspaper was doomed, although attempts were made to maintain publication.

Failure is a relative word and perhaps PM could not rightly be called a complete failure, except financially, because in its short life the publication made important contributions to the cause of journalism. Editorials by Max Lerner were examples of excellent writing; coverage of medical, racial and anti-monopoly matters were notable; insurance scandals and income taxes were specialities; and the staff was brilliant.²⁰

¹⁸Ibid., p. 421.

¹⁹Who's Who, (1953), p. 1,500.

²⁰Mott, op. cit., p. 772.

Other newspapers, though few of them would admit it, were affected by the coverage and content of PM. The reforms instigated in the new publication had to be recognized by the large dailies. Reporters on other newspapers, while disgusted with the PM "do-gooders," were prodded to better their own efforts.²¹ This, then, is the background of the man who purchased the Middletown Times Herald in 1951 as a vehicle to help finance his retirement; but who rolled up his sleeves and went to work again in 1956 when newspaper competition began in Middletown with the establishment of the Record, a morning offset publication.

²¹Stewart and Tebbel, op. cit., p. 423. Kaplan, the behind-the-scenes competitor of Ralph McAllister Ingersoll in the battle of Middletown journalism, is an interesting figure in his own right. Pro- fessing an interest in democracy based upon a well- informed public, Kaplan offered three reasons for en- tering the field of journalism, which was a new departure for him despite his varied interests in the business world. His reasons were:

1. The less expensive offset machinery which made possible the establishment of a daily newspaper "from scratch" with less capital

"All It Takes To Start a Newspaper," Editor and Publisher, ACPH (December 19, 1959), p. 59.

2. An interest in the services--informing, influencing and encouraging--which only a community newspaper can perform.

CHAPTER III

THE COMING OF THE RECORD

Jacob M. Kaplan

Although Middletown, New York, seemingly was an unlikely place for the arena of a lively newspaper war, a challenger to the long-established Times Herald came upon the scene in July of 1956 in the form of the Record, a newspaper supported by Jacob M. "Jack" Kaplan, a financier who said he was "worried about the decline of newspapers in the United States."¹

Kaplan, the behind-the-scenes competitor of Ralph McAllister Ingersoll in the battle of Middletown journalism, is an interesting figure in his own right. Professing an interest in democracy based upon a well-informed public, Kaplan offered three reasons for entering the field of journalism, which was a new departure for him despite his varied interests in the business world. His reasons were:

1. The less expensive offset machinery which made possible the establishment of a daily newspaper "from scratch" with less capital.

¹"All It Takes To Start a Newspaper," Editor and Publisher, XCII (December 19, 1959), p. 59.

Kaplan believed that everyone profits when a small

2. An interest in the services--informing, influencing and encouraging--which only a community newspaper can perform.
3. His personal observation that many newspapers, particularly in the small towns, were not operating as successfully as they could or should.

Kaplan, the son of a rabbi, was born on a farm near Lowell, Massachusetts, and he rebelled against the poverty his family was forced to live in. He first worked as an office boy for the Sugar Products Company in New York. When he was only eighteen years old the company sent him to the Dominican Republic where, in ten years, he expanded the business to Puerto Rico, Haiti, Cuba and South American while advancing to the position of executive vice-president of the company. Eventually Kaplan formed his own company, which later absorbed the company for which he had first worked.

Kaplan took over and operated the Hearn Department Stores in New York for a time, but he did not enjoy re-tailing. His most publicized business achievement in recent years was the rehabilitation and expansion of the Welch Grape Juice Company, when he helped grape growers to form a cooperative.²

Kaplan's Views on Journalism

Kaplan believed that everyone profits when a small

²Ibid.

community has competing newspapers. "All it takes is money, a will to invest for the common good as a basis for deserved profits, brains to put out a newspaper with principles and integrity, and a desire to serve your fellow man," he declared.

Kaplan maintained that the Times Herald was a better newspaper because of the competition with the Record. He reported that Ingersoll had called shortly after the Record began publication to say that one of the newspapers would be out of business within five years, and Kaplan had suggested that they both would be better off with the two newspapers. "Competition is the spark of life," Kaplan quipped.³

Ingersoll had his own idea of the venture into competition, however. "The issue is free enterprise versus tax-deductible money. The Record is a 'me, too' paper," typically reflected Ingersoll's comments. When Ingersoll suggested that the Record had cut advertising rates and employed a formula of circulation at any price, David Bernstein, editor of the Record, countered with "Ingersoll once tried to prove the best newspaper was one without advertising. Failing in this, he is now trying to prove the best newspaper is one without circulation."⁴

³Ibid.

⁴"It's War in Middletown," loc. cit.

Perhaps Kaplan struck the note of truth when he suggested that many newspapers were not fulfilling their responsibilities. "I am very concerned with this drying up, this elimination of newspapers," he said. "People are not as well informed as they ought to be." Kaplan claimed that too many newspapers had lost touch with their readership, being more concerned with the business office than with the editorial department. He observed that the newspaper's product--the newspaper itself--"must be judged by the quality of its news coverage, both local and worldwide, by the quality of its features, by the talent and creativeness of its staff, by its pleasing appearance, its interest in and understanding of the communities it serves, and by the character and passion of its truth."⁵

Kaplan emphasized that a newspaper cannot "buy" circulation. Temporary spurts are possible with gimmicks, but the circulation dwindles when the gimmicks are no longer effective. He attributed growth of the circulation on the Record to the fact that the readers liked the kind of newspaper which was delivered to them each day. Kaplan also was quick to note that the increase in circulation also meant an increase in advertising lineage.⁶

⁵"All It Takes To Start a Newspaper," loc. cit.

⁶Ibid.

Chief Characteristics of the Record

Although the Record was not studied in detail for this problem, a glance at a representative issue, June 18, 1959, revealed that the newspaper played up the news events of the trade area in Orange county, and accompanied many of the area stories with pictures. Accented by large pictures, the Record emphasized good makeup throughout its tabloid pages. Double-column stories were used liberally in the five columns of each page. The wider columns and fewer number of columns on the pages gave a clean and attractive appearance to the newspaper. Style decreed that only the first letter of the initial word in each headline be capitalized.

Special typewriters had faces which resembled the Century Roman face used in most letterpress newspapers for body type. A variety of headlines also made the Record physically attractive. Issues averaged forty pages, and columns were eleven-and-a-half picas wide, sixteen inches long.

Since the Record was printed by the offset method, a process whereby page dummies were photographed and the negatives used in the preparation of printing plates, many items offered for sale in the display advertisements were accompanied by photographs, which would have been merely line drawings in a newspaper printed by the letterpress method.

Nyack pilot says Red jets used up ammo

—See story on Page 8

THE MIDDLETOWN DAILY

RECORD

VOL 3 NO 228 MIDDLETOWN, N. Y.
TODAY'S WEATHER: SHOWERS

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 1959
LATE FINAL EDITION

5 CENTS
48 PAGES

Plant employing 63 quits Middletown for Walden

Pierce blames power company

By WILLIAM E. DUKE
Record Staff Writer

Pierce Industries, a light metal fabricating firm with a weekly payroll running to between \$1,000 and \$1,000, will leave Middletown for a new site in Walden. The move will be completed by August.

Clifford F. Pierce, president, said last night that reluctance of the Orange and Rockland Utilities Co. to supply the firm with adequate electric power was the principal but not the only reason for the move. Officials of the utility firm replied that the type of power needed by Mr. Pierce had to be provided at the plant site itself unless the power drain would hurt other electric customers on the same circuit.

Mr. Pierce said the New York Electric and Gas Corp. and civic and business leaders in Walden helped make the move to that village attractive. The firm has purchased the factory of the former Walden Machine Co. The price was not revealed.

Pierce Industries employs 63 persons, 90 percent of them men, in its Middletown plant on Canal st. Mr. Pierce said he hopes to employ about 100 persons in the Walden plant by December 1. He said most of his present employees expect to work in Walden.

The firm makes household devices, metal furniture, barbecue grills and other metal products. In doing so, it uses constant welding which puts a heavy drain on electric lines for short periods. Mr. Pierce said that Orange and Rockland officials told him to stop using high-powered welding equipment last January.

Phillip J. Van Keuren, Middletown manager of the utility company, said that one of the welding machines was causing electric current to fluctuate in the Canal st. area. He added that other customers in the area had complained of the fluctuating current.

Mr. Van Keuren said his firm had sent engineers to Pierce Industries to help solve the power problem. The utility official said that the problem could have been solved by a special electric generator at the Pierce plant.

"The generator would have cost about \$13,000," Mr. Van Keuren said, and evidently the Pierce firm did not want to make that investment at this time.

Mr. Pierce said that the Middletown Industrial Expansion Corp. had offered him its new building last winter, but that he was unable to get a guarantee that adequate power would be supplied by the utility company.

Mr. Pierce said that Roscoe F. Giles, executive vice-president of the Middletown Chamber of Commerce, was one of the few Middletown business leaders who tried to help him solve the power problem so that the firm could remain in the city.

Mr. Giles said it was "regrettable that Middletown had to lose an industry employing 60 people." He added, however, that the power problem for the Pierce plant was peculiar to firms using resistant welding, and the city had adequate power for other types of industries.

A&P stores may close at 6 p.m. Saturday

Some 150 A&P employees in Orange County will be out of work after 6 p.m. Saturday if the current strike of New York warehousemen continues, according to an announcement made yesterday by E. R. Reynolds, president of the company's eastern division.

More than 100 stores in New York and seven Connecticut, including the eight supercenters in Orange County, would be affected by the shut-down. A & P stores in Sullivan and Ulster counties receive their supplies from Scranton, Pa., and will do business as usual.

Mr. Reynolds said, "We sincerely regret the necessity of taking this action—not only because of the inconvenience to our customers but also because thousands of innocent and loyal A&P employees, who are not involved, are being forced out of work."

A & P stores in Orange County are located at 8 John st., Middletown; Route 84, Silver Lake; Route 17 at Middletown; Route 30, Cornwall; Route 30, Jersey av., Port Jervis; and at three locations in Newburgh.



BACK TO LOUISIANA: Mrs. Blanche Long pulls her husband, Governor Earl Long of Louisiana, away from reporters and photographers yesterday, so that they could fly back home. Long, weakened and at least

30 pounds lighter after a stay in a Galveston, Texas, psychiatric clinic, told newsmen he had agreed to go to a New Orleans hospital but would be Governor again as soon as he crossed the state border.—UPI Photo

500 volunteers search for boy missing 5 days

PHOENIX—Undaunted by four days of tireless and fruitless search in the wild mountain region near here, more than 500 volunteers made plans last night to continue the hunt for a missing 5-year-old boy.

David Raleigh of Fayetteville disappeared into the woods near isolated Lake Windsook Saturday night. Searchers have been unable to find any trace of the stocky youngster.

Stuart Raleigh, the boy's father, continued the search last night, still expressing hope that he would find his son alive. Police and volunteers said that little hope remained of finding the youngster. They said they would continue the search.

One of the volunteers suffered

a possible broken leg in yesterday's hunt through thick underbrush made slippery by the second day of a cold, constant drizzle. Temperatures remained in the low 40s all day yesterday.

Ronnie Gale of Phoenix, a

Henry S. Donohue, scout executive of the Hudson-Delaware Boy Scout Council, issued an appeal last night to adults of the area, asking that they volunteer in the search for David Raleigh. Authorities have ruled that the terrain is too rough for Boy Scouts.

Drivers should take the Thruway to Kingston and then follow Route 28 to Big Indian.

civilian search party member, was taken to Kingston Hospital last night after injuring a leg in a fall. Friends of the local man said he is in his early 30s.

As hope waned for David's safe return to his parents, search parties fanned out in a hand-in-hand search of some of the most rugged terrain in the Catskills. They covered virtually every inch of ground in a two-mile radius of the Windsook Lake lodge.

The volunteers were bolstered yesterday by about 200 men from Sullivan County, led by Sheriff Louis Egan. These included about 150 engineering students from Manhattan College, taking summer survey courses at St. Joseph's School near Monticello.

(See pictures on Page 5)

Fig. 3

Front Page of Middletown Daily Record, 1959

Departments usually were featured on double-page spreads and, besides the two editorials featured on the editorial pages, were columns such as "Reporter's Notebook" by Robert G. Shortal, "Washington Scene" by George Dixon, "Your Money's Worth" by Sylvia Porter, and "Off the Record," a series of local interest short paragraphs. Fletcher Knebel wrote some short political comments, and cartoons on the editorial pages were the traditional political sketch and "Grain and Bear It," "Carmichael" and "Laff-A-Day."

Other columns found throughout the pages of the Record were "Food and Your Health" by Dr. Fredrick J. Stare and Jean M. Hoegger of the Harvard School of Public Health at Harvard University, "Contract Bridge" by B. Jay Becker, "Lyon's Den" by Leonard Lyons, "Under 21" by Dan Halligan, "Investor's Guide" by Sam Shulsky, and the Ann Landers column. The fourteen comic strips carried by the Record were "Beetle," "Brick," "Hi and Lois," "Mickey Mouse," "Henry," "Juliet Jones," "Rip Kirby," "Archie," "Pogo," "Buz Sawyer," "Fitz's Flats," "Scamp," "Cisco," "Mark Trail." The Record made use of the United Press International wire service more than any other.

The Record employed the cold-type offset printing process which required only half the capital investment needed for traditional printing. The Times Herald was

an evening paper, but the reason Kaplan gave for making the Record a morning newspaper was that "TV cuts into evening readership." Actually the main issues at which the two publications were at odds were the different methods of printing and the morning-evening hours of the editions. Both newspapers were politically independent and they agreed on local issues, favoring industrial development and school bonds.⁶

⁶"It's War in Middletown," loc. cit.

CHAPTER IV

THE TIMES HERALD AND THE RECORD, 1955-1959

Changes in the Times Herald

Changes in the Times Herald between 1955 and 1959 which might be attributed to the pressure of the competition with the Record were measurable rather than obvious to the casual reader. While the eye might notice more liberal makeup and a greater number of pictures throughout the pages, the real changes were an economizing of the space on the pages, making every inch count both financially and editorially.

The most obvious change in the Times Herald over the four-year period in comparing with a ruler issues in 1955 and 1959 was the number of inches allotted to area news stories. Including accompanying pictures and headlines, the number of inches for area stories during the week of October 3-8, 1955, was 945, and for the comparable week in 1959 (October 10-17) a total of 1,676 inches for area stories was measured. This was an increase of seventy-five per cent over the four-year period.

Display advertising in the Times Herald, which might have decreased with a competitive newspaper in operation, maintained the same average of thirty-nine

per cent of the total column inches in the week's issues both in 1955 and in 1959. A cursory glance at the 1959 issues indicated that some display advertising was lost, but this was due to the fact that the same percentage of advertising was spread throughout more pages which the Times Herald added by 1959 to better serve the readers.

A comparison of the October issues in 1955 and 1959 revealed more liberal makeup in the Times Herald. Large headlines and more attractive layouts accented by a wider use of double-column and even banner headlines were accompanied by more and better pictures in pointing up the visible changes in the newspaper. Style was maintained, however, in capitalizing all of the important words in the headlines.

Economy in the format of the newspaper resulted from the narrowing of the width of the columns. The twelve-pica column of 1955 had been replaced in 1959 by a ten-and-a-half pica column. The eight-column page had been retained, but with the narrower columns three inches of paper could be saved on each page, multiplying to sixty inches or five feet in an average twenty-four page issue. Five feet times the circulation of the Times Herald, which was approximately 13,000, would mean a daily saving of 65,000 feet of paper, and in consequence a substantial saving in paper expense.

This saving was further increased by the change in the length of the columns from twenty-two to twenty-one inches between 1955 and 1959.

Although stories of interest to women continued to be carried in the Times Herald in 1959 on special pages, the label of the magazine page had been discarded. Better headlines and more attractive layouts changed the appearance of the society page and more pictures of the social events accompanied the stories.

The layout of the editorial page also was changed in the years between 1955 and 1959. By 1959 the mast-head had been moved to the bottom of the first column and the editorials were carried in double-column spreads with columns measuring fifteen picas instead of the customary ten-and-a-half picas in width. The comic cartoon on the editorial page was gone in 1959 and Westbrook Pegler had been replaced by George Sokolsky. In 1959 Hal Boyle's column had gained a permanent place on the editorial page, but the other columns retained the same locations which they held in 1955. Mary Haworth's Mail was near the society page, columns by Walter Winchell and Louella Parsons were dummied on the last page, Bob Thomas' "Hollywood" and Sam Dawson's "Business Mirror" were dummied each issue but on no particular page, and Othman's column was apparently no longer carried in the Times Herald in 1959.

"Sheinwold on Bridge" had been added to the comic strip page of the Times Herald by 1959, and comic strips added included "Mr. Abernathy," "Joe Palooka," "Judge Parker," "Mary Worth," and "Susie Z. Smith." The "Room and Board" comic cartoon had been replaced by "Mr. Breger," and "Big Ben Bolt" and "Etta Kett" were no longer carried.

Perhaps the most significant change in the Times Herald between 1955 and 1959 was the boost in circulation. The 1955 circulation of 10,000 which was a good average for a city the size of Middletown, had been boosted to 13,000 by 1959. Of course, during this same period the Record had boosted its circulation from 5,244 to 18,748, an astonishing 357 per cent increase. The conservative 3,000 increase for the Times Herald was commendable, however, in that the newspaper had considered its coverage adequate at 10,000 for a city the size of Middletown; and indeed, the circulation of the Times Herald compared favorably with that of other cities of similar size at the lower figure.

A change which reflected the strong competition of the Record may be noted in the advertising lineage figures for the Times Herald between 1955 and 1959. For 1955 the total lineage was 6,348,703 while the total for 1959 was 5,651,885. The loss in revenue from this half-million decrease in lineage in the four years was

during its first three years of operation, the Record offset somewhat, of course, by the economy in paper won two Ayer awards for typographical excellence which in turn cut costs.

Curiously enough, an analysis of the Times Herald in comparable weeks of October of 1955 and 1959 belies the decrease in linage recorded in statistics. The awards earned by the Record were reasonable achievements in view of the fact that the staff was increased week of October 3-8 in 1955 brought a total of 93,548 agate lines for display advertising, and the week of October 12-17 in 1959 brought a total of 97,903. The week of October 10-15 in 1955 was a special week in Record's imaginative staff. The newspaper started Middletown with a fall festival being observed (apparently no longer observed in 1959) and the total linage was an expanded 117,897; but this could not be considered a normal week.

A further comparison of the first week of October in 1955 and the second week of October in 1959 indicates that the total number of inches given to news of the Middletown trade territory was increased in the Times Herald from 945 inches in the October, 1955, week to 1,676 inches in the October, 1959, week. This was a boost of seventy-five per cent in area coverage and is representative of the accelerated effort to satisfy the subscribers.

Progress of the Record

Besides the excellent record of progress made by the offset newspaper in circulation and advertising

during its first three years of operation, the Record won two Ayer awards for typographical excellence in the tabloid class. Ayer awards are coveted recognition for excellence in various newspaper categories. The awards earned by the Record were remarkable achievements in view of the fact that the staff was inexperienced in the offset method when the newspaper was created, and the first press apparently was not large enough and not able to satisfy the progressive concepts of the Record's imaginative staff. The newspaper started with a Waldron Trailblazer, but later purchased were a three-unit Hantscho web offset press and a Sheridan inserter.¹

The area of greatest achievement for the Record in its first three years of operation was the outstanding 357 per cent increase in circulation. Complete circulation figures were available from N. W. Ayer and Son's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals and Editor and Publisher and indicated that the Record achieved a 5,244 circulation in its first six months of publication by the end of 1956, and increased to 18,748 circulation by 1959. Stability of the increase in circulation was supported by the management's claim that the increase was the result of sound circulation promotion and not a

¹"All It Takes To Start a Newspaper," op. cit., p. 11.

result of the use of gimmicks and premiums.

Advertising lineage totals for the Record were as scarce as the circulation figures were plentiful. Only Editor and Publisher supplied advertising data, which showed the total lineage for 1959, and indicated that the Record still was behind the Times Herald. The total advertising lineage for the Record for 1959 was 5,482,624 and compared not unfavorably with the 5,651,885 total advertising lineage for the Times Herald for the same year, especially since the Times Herald was an advertising medium of long standing in the community and the Record had been in operation only three years.

Comparison of the Two Publications

Despite their different formats, the two newspapers of Middletown were similar in available space because the Times Herald, with eight-column pages of traditional size, averaged twenty-four pages per issue while the Record, with five-column pages of tabloid size, averaged forty-two pages per issue.

A look at copies of the Times Herald and the Record brings into focus the major difference between the two publications. This difference is not to be construed as a superiority of one newspaper over the other, but rather reflects the two personalities developed by these two strong publications. The comparison might be

likened to that effected by a consideration of the two cities, Kansas City and Wichita. Kansas City might be described as tight in structure, with narrow streets and tall buildings and a facade marked by historically conservative design in combination with modern radical accents, while Wichita could be labeled as liberal, with wide streets and low, modern buildings, entirely progressive in its outlook. The Times Herald, like conservative Kansas City, conformed to that which is considered conservative in newspapers: a regularity of headlines, departmental organization, routine summary leads for stories. The Record, on the other hand, featured the modernized format with five-column pages in tabloid size accented by banner headlines and horizontal layouts.

The Times Herald, which lost advertising lineage steadily after the Record began operation, nevertheless was still ahead of the offset newspaper at the end of 1959. In each of the four years from 1956 to 1959, the Times Herald dropped in advertising lineage so that there was a difference of over a half-million agate lines in the totals from 1955 to 1959. The only statistics on advertising lineage available for the Record, that of the total for 1959, also indicated that the Record was within 169,261 agate lines of matching the Times Herald's 1959 total advertising lineage of 5,651,885.

Tabulated, the advertising lineage picture looks like this:

ADVERTISING LINAGE
(Agate Lines)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Times Herald</u>	<u>Record</u>
1955	6,348,703	
1956	6,315,278	
1957	5,854,451	
1958	5,741,644	
1959	5,651,885	5,482,624

The Record won hands down in the battle of circulation with its 357 per cent increase in the three years following its first six months of publication. True, in that same period the Times Herald achieved a creditable record in increasing circulation, but not the phenomenal one marking the Record's effort. The circulation figures:

CIRCULATION

<u>Year</u>	<u>Times Herald</u>	<u>Record</u>
1955	10,290	--
1956	10,269	5,244
1957	10,297	7,654
1958	13,409	12,724
1959	13,010	10,748

A comparison of the two newspapers does not indicate any marked differences in purpose and suggests that the one real difference is one of appearance. And yet, intrinsic in that difference in appearance is, perhaps, a hint of the personalities of the two newspapers. The Record was marked by a buoyancy enhanced by its new and novel approach to newspaper publication, and the Times Herald was measured by the solidity of its conservatism,

strong but never stodgy.

CHAPTER V

EFFECT OF THE COMPETITION

Opinions of Management

Active and strong competition between the daily newspapers in Middletown and increasing circulation for both provided the situation in 1959 which Herbert Brucker, writing in the Saturday Review, used in pointing up the advantages of competitive newspaper operation. In an article intriguingly entitled, "Is the Press Writing Its Obituary?" Brucker called attention to the progressive movement in Middletown and suggested that any professional journalist would claim that a town the size of Middletown could not support two newspapers. Evidence to support the conclusion that competition was profitable, however, came from the fact that the town which three years before had only one newspaper with 10,000 circulation--about the average expected for a town the size of Middletown--now had two daily newspapers with a combined circulation of 30,000.¹ (Actually, the combined circulation of the two newspapers at the end of 1958 was approximately 29,000, and at the end of 1959, approximately 31,000.)

¹Herbert Brucker, "Is the Press Writing Its Obituary?" Saturday Review, LVII (April 25, 1959), p. 37.

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¹Herbert Brucker, "Is the Press Writing Its Obituary?" Saturday Review, XVII (April 25, 1959), p. 37.

If fairy tales ever came true, the competition of the two daily newspapers in Middletown would perhaps be the first to serve as an example. In two years, from 1957 to 1959, the two newspapers were boasting circulations which, combined, totaled over 31,000. The conservative long-time newspaper, the Times Herald, increased circulation 50 per cent in the two years, while the younger, the Record, increased circulation by 150 per cent.

The owner of the Times Herald, Ralph M. Ingersoll, and the editor of the Record, David Bernstein, during the four-year period covered by this study were equally proud of their achievements under the pressure of competition in this city of 22,000. Both leaders in the journalism profession, they looked upon the results in Middletown as a reflection of the high standards and quality sought by American journalism.

Ralph M. Ingersoll, in a letter sent from Elizabeth, New Jersey, where he is now owner of the daily newspaper, commented that the Times Herald was "quite happy with the circulation around 10,000 and it was largely sold on the newsstands on a non-returnable basis." After the morning newspaper began operation in Middletown, Ingersoll said that the Times Herald met the challenge by establishing tube routes² to

²Tube routes are newspaper routes in rural areas serviced by newspaper personnel who travel by truck or car and place subscribers' newspapers in circular metal tubes mounted beside the road.

provide same-day delivery to rural areas around Middletown.

Ingersoll admitted, however, that the coming of an opposition newspaper to Middletown "stimulated newspaper sales in general." The Times Herald did improve the physical product by buying a new press and changing to a new type font; but Ingersoll suggested, "I think it was the fact that, with another paper in town, people took a new look at the Times Herald--and found they liked it better than they thought they had."

Contacted for information, David Bernstein wrote from Binghamton, New York, where he now is president and editor of the Binghamton Sun. Commenting on just how the Record was able to boost circulation 150 per cent in two years, Bernstein indicated, "There was no great secret to our methods. The Record dispensed with all the various gimmicks and other devices, such as premiums, cook books, magazine subscriptions, insurance policies and the like."

The theory of the Record, Bernstein explained, was that "if you produce a first-rate newspaper and acquaint the potential readers with its quality, you will transform those potential readers into actual subscribers." In the light of this theory, the Record management, as soon as the quality of the publication was established, initiated a carefully planned program of route-by-route

distribution of papers to non-subscribers for one week, followed by house calls by the carrier boys accompanied by adult circulation district men.

Bernstein commented that "quality, imagination, responsibility and enterprise in the editing of the newspaper itself are the keys to survival and growth."

Thus the spirit of the two competitive newspapers was reflected in the personalities of the two men who controlled their publication.

Opinions of Subscribers

Subscribers contacted for reactions to the competition and for opinions on the benefits of the two newspapers tended to reflect their own personalities in their comments, as suggested in answer patterns to questionnaires circulated at random in Middletown with no attempt at an exhaustive survey. The more conservative-appearing citizens found the Times Herald more to their liking, while seemingly younger and more liberal readers were challenged by the modern focus of the Record. Most subscribers contacted did not subscribe to a metropolitan paper outside of Middletown; therefore, they depended upon the daily newspapers in Middletown to give them the latest in national and international coverage as well as local news. General observations made by studying the comments of the subscribers revealed that the Record excelled in photography, but some of the stories in the tabloid were

labeled as sensational; otherwise, preferences of the subscribers emphasized the difference in delivery time, the physical size of the two newspapers, and the emphasis on local and national coverage of news.

Individual comments from various subscribers actually were almost contradictory in their reasoning. On the side of the Times Herald, for instance, one subscriber thought the news in the Times Herald was "more current and accurate," and another believed the Times Herald carried better pictures as well as better news coverage. Other partisan subscribers mentioned that the Times Herald even had better carrier boys and that the evening delivery time was an advantage. One strong supporter of the Times Herald suggested that the major difference between the two newspapers was "format and reporting versus sensationalism."

Ironically, much the same reasons were given by those who favored the Record. One subscriber who claimed that the Record had better pictures and less biased reporting suggested that the Record was welcomed because people "like new things." Another subscriber referred to the "more objective reporting" in the Record, and still another cited the "better advertising" as an advantage of the Record. One subscriber gave the Record the edge for more interesting presentation and layout, and believed that the size was a big factor in the

preference of some for the offset publication; indeed, several who favored the Record commented on the compact size and physical makeup of the morning newspaper.

Some Middletown residents tried to be non-partisan and attempted to evaluate the two newspapers by comparing their strong points. One subscriber to both the Times Herald and the Record believed that the Times Herald gave Middletown news and the Record emphasized news of other localities around Middletown. This same subscriber also suggested that the Record was set up on a basis similar to the New York News in picture appeal, with more pictorial content and a tendency toward the controversial in policy. Another subscriber believed the two newspapers had the same news coverage and attributed the Record's achievement in circulation to "aggressiveness supporting a provocative paper."

Then, of course, as with most groups commenting upon anything, one person seemed to distrust both papers, suggesting that while accuracy and honesty were generally lacking in both of the newspapers, the absence "was more noticeable in the Times Herald."

A colorful comment from a prominent citizen in Middletown summed up the views of those who welcomed the new publication with its offset format and progressive outlook:

We have one newspaper of many years standing that settled into itself with security. In the past five years a lively paper of independence has come in like a catfish in a barrel of carp, stirring issues and economics on a broad front. Much creativity has come from it up and down the scale of community health.

Opinions of Advertisers

For the most part the business firms of Middletown advertised in both the Times Herald and the Record, and many firms indicated they had increased their advertising budgets to meet the adjustment of advertising in the two publications. Reasons for the changes in the advertising budgets were varied, however, and some firms might have increased their budgets for advertising even if the new publication had not begun operation. For instance, one of the leading motor car agencies boosted advertising because of the addition of two new lines of automobiles. Another advertiser indicated that new firms similar to his forced him to increase advertising to meet the new competition.

The manager of the leading department store in Middletown summed up the opinions of most of the advertisers contacted when he concisely suggested that the increase in advertising was made to "increase sales." Influence of a national organization's inflexible budget was reflected in the remarks of the manager of a retail outlet of a well-known mail order firm. The manager

indicated that he advertised in both the Times Herald and the Record, but that his total advertising budget remained the same after the coming of the offset newspaper.

Another apparently distrustful citizen was noted among the advertisers, and he, the manager of a chain drug store in Middletown, curtly answered, "No," when asked whether he advertised in the Times Herald; and asked whether he advertised in the Record, his answer again was "No." Asked whether he had altered his advertising budget since the coming of the Record, his reply was a frank, "Curtailed all advertising. No results."

Whatever else may be said of the newspaper competition in Middletown, one definite result was the awakening of the people to the importance and the power of the press and to the fact that news events easily can be interpreted several ways. Subscribers aligned themselves behind one or the other of the two apparently different publications according to their personal interests and impressions of the newspapers, rather than because one newspaper truly excelled the other. Those who favored one newspaper generally made little effort to disparage the merits of the other publication. Many subscribers were cognizant of the forward strides made by both newspapers in the four years following the introduction of competition in Middletown.

CHAPTER VI

EVALUATION OF THE COMPETITION

End of the Competition

The closing chapter of the story of newspaper competition in Middletown, New York, began with the sale of the Times Herald late in 1959 by Ralph M. Ingersoll to Ottaway Newspapers-Radio, Inc., led by James H. Ottaway. Included in the sale was the Port Jervis Union-Gazette, which Ingersoll had purchased in 1958 and the issues of which subsequently were printed at the Middletown Times Herald plant. The purchase by the Ottaway interests marked the first venture of the organization into competitive community journalism, but Ottaway had had two independent surveys made of the Middletown newspaper and found the business to be sound and strong. The transaction between Ingersoll and Ottaway interests took place in November of 1959.¹

After the sale of his Middletown interests, Ingersoll and a group of investors purchased ninety per cent of the Elizabeth, New Jersey, Daily Journal. In commenting on the changes, Ingersoll said that he believed that independent medium-sized newspapers were the

¹"Ottaway Goes to Middletown, Ingersoll to Elizabeth, N. J.," Editor and Publisher, XCII (November 21, 1959), p. 13.

"true keepers of the faith." Not too large to lose their individuality nor their human touch, these newspapers, Ingersoll suggested, "are still large enough to defend independence of thought and action with financial strength."²

Five months after purchase of the Times Herald, the Ottaway organization acquired controlling interest in the Record. The new purchase brought the Ottaway holdings to eight newspapers and three radio stations in three states, and also heralded the end of true competition between the two newspapers in Middletown. Ottaway indicated, however, that the two newspapers would continue to be independently operated.³

Skeptics and those who knew the ways of journalism and its pressures and demands must have nodded their heads at this second stage in the development of Ottaway interests in Middletown, and perhaps they stood by anticipating the next move. They did not have long to wait.

On October 1, 1960, the Times Herald carried an eight-column banner on the front page: "Times Herald, Record Combine," with the tagline reading, "To Continue as Morning Tabloid." Thus the last chapter of the saga

²Ibid., p. 66.

³"Middletown Record Sold to Ottaway," Editor and Publisher, XCIII (April 23, 1960), p. 23.

of the experiment with newspaper competition in Middletown was being written into the annals of American journalism.

The lead story of the October 1 edition announced the merger with the promise, "By uniting the traditions and talents of the Times Herald with the new concepts of journalism and printing introduced by the Record, we can assure both reader and advertiser a newspaper without equal in local history."⁴ The statement came from James Ottaway, president of the Ottaway organization.

The combined publication was to carry a new nameplate, the Times Herald-Record, but Editor and Publisher, announcing the merger in its October 8 issue, mentioned that the Record logotype would predominate.⁵

A front-page editorial entitled, "A Statement," and bearing the signature of James Ottaway, said:

Since our purchase of the Times Herald in November, 1959, and the Daily Record in April, 1960, we were determined to publish both newspapers successfully.

Despite the loyalty and good work of both newspaper staffs, this has become impossible.

The area we serve is not large enough to support two high quality daily newspapers. This is an experience that newspaper publishers have had in cities of similar size throughout the United States.⁶

⁴"Times Herald-Record Combine," Middletown (N.Y.) Times Herald, October 1, 1960, p. 1.

⁵"One Morning Daily Now in Middletown," Editor and Publisher, XCIII (October 8, 1960), p. 15.

⁶"A Statement," Middletown (N.Y.) Times Herald, October 1, 1960, p. 1.

The lead story supported Ottaway's statement that a thorough study of both newspapers "indicated that the operation of two independent newspapers in a community the size of Middletown was not economically feasible."⁷

Apparently aware that many subscribers had a sentimental attachment to the long-time Times Herald, the editors included in the lead story announcing the merger a number of paragraphs outlining the history of the Times Herald and called attention to the achievements and awards earned by that publication through the years. Editor and Publisher caught the significance of the merger, however, in the opening paragraphs of its story about the end of newspaper competition in Middletown:

After four years and two months of prize-winning competitive journalism, Middletown became a one-newspaper town again this week.

A 25,000 population city in the heart of a large rural-industrial zone called the Golden-area for promotional purposes, Middletown lost its evening newspaper, the Times Herald, a 109-year-old product of consolidations.⁸

That the Ottaway organization was completely sold on the economy and ease of the offset process was evident in a reference made to the Port Jervis Union-Gazette, acquired with the purchase of the Times Herald from Ralph M. Ingersoll. In the lead story of the October 1

⁷"Times Herald-Record Combine," loc. cit.

⁸"One Morning Daily Now in Middletown," loc. cit.

issue of the Times Herald announcing the merger, a statement was made that the Port Jervis newspaper would not be affected by the consolidation, along with the statement to the effect that the Port Jervis newspaper had been published since September 3, 1960, in the Record building. This meant that the Port Jervis publication had been employing the offset process for a month before the merger was announced, although the Union-Gazette had been printed in the Times Herald plant after Ingersoll had purchased the Port Jervis newspaper.⁹

The finality of the relegation of the Times Herald to the past insofar as newspaper publication in Middletown was concerned was obvious in the decision that the Times Herald building, a comparatively new structure completed early in 1958, would be used merely for commercial printing to service the Times Herald-Record.

Commendation of the Times Herald

To determine whether the Times Herald really lost the battle of the competition in Middletown, a question needs an answer: Was the Ottaway organization truly convinced that the offset process and the Record policies reflected the modern trend in American journalism,

⁹"Times Herald-Record Combine," op. cit., p. 2.

1 juror selected in Stacey trial

-- Page 5

The Middletown Times Herald RECORD

LATE
FINAL
EDITION

Weather: Cool

Middletown, N.Y.

Thursday, June 8, 1961

7 Cents



-- TH- Record Photo by Larry Mulvehill

Johnson speaks at West Point

Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson warned yesterday that the world will look to other systems for leadership if the U.S. fails

to meet the demands of the 20th century. He spoke at commencement exercises at West Point. See story on Page 2.

Phoenix 'Hamlet' coming to Middletown October 3

See related pictures and story, Page 17; editorial, Page 46.

MIDDLETOWN Oct. 3 in Middletown will be the first night of a history-making tour of upstate New York communities by the Phoenix Theatre's production of "Hamlet."

The first performance of the state-supported "Hamlet" on-tour will take place at 8:15 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 3, in the Middletown High School auditorium under auspices of the New York State Council on the Arts. In the afternoon the Phoenix players will present "Androcles and the Lion" primarily for high school and college students.

The appearance in Middletown is being co-sponsored by the Middletown school system, Orange County Community College, and The Middletown Times Herald-Record.

The Phoenix tour and later ones in other cities by the City Center opera company, the City Center ballet, and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra were made possible by a \$450,000 legislative grant in support of the state arts council.

Because of the state support, designed to encourage and expand cultural interest and activity throughout the state, tickets to the "Hamlet" and "Androcles" are being sold at the lowest possible prices.

"Hamlet" tickets will be sold at \$1.50, \$2, and

\$2.50. "Androcles" tickets will cost \$75.

The Phoenix "Hamlet" is closing a record-breaking run in New York City Sunday.

The Phoenix Theatre Council, representing the three Orange County groups sponsoring the Oct. 3 presentation in Middletown, comprises Dr. Thor Krogh, superintendent of schools, and Mrs. Shirley Scully, director of dramatics -- of the Middletown school system; George Shepard, director of student activities, and Herbert Sussman, assistant director of the evening division -- of Orange County Community College; and A.N. Romm, editor, Marian Feman, drama and music critic, and Caryl K. Rivers, family editor -- of The Times Herald-Record.

All net profits from the two performances -- beyond expenses and the guarantee to the Phoenix Theatre -- will be set aside for a Fund for Adult Performance Art, which will be administered by a local Council for the Performing Arts.

The fund will be designed to bring professional presentations in the performing arts to Orange County.

Tickets for the Oct. 3 performance are going on sale immediately.

Live and fraternal groups are being invited by mail to support the theatrical production.

Anyone wanting a ticket may fill in the blank on Page 17 or the editorial page, Page 46, and mail it to this newspaper.

JFK defers decision on Geneva

WASHINGTON (UPI)

The United States has protested new violations of the cease-fire in Laos, but has no immediate plans to withdraw from peace talks in Geneva, officials said last night.

President Kennedy was said to be withholding a firm decision on the Geneva negotiations until the Russians have had an opportunity to bring pressure on the Laotian communists.

The State Department drew a sharp distinction between the apparent "suspension" of the 14-nation Geneva conference and any "walkout" by the United States.

After several quick shifting policy statements, officials said the United States still would try to reach a solution of the Laos problem at Geneva but outside formal conference sessions. They said the U.S. delegation would stay in Geneva.

First statement retracted

In the first statement of the day, a U.S. official told reporters that one of the things to consider in view of the new communist military victory in Laos was whether the United States "will stay in the (Geneva) conference."

A few minutes later, he retracted his statement and said he did not mean to imply a U.S. walkout.

A little later, at noon, State Department press officer Lincoln White said the United States still wanted an independent and neutral Laos, with an enforced cease-fire. He said: "These objectives we will continue to pursue at Geneva."

White added that the United States would not engage in any "obstructive tactics to bring about a collapse of the Geneva conference."

U.S. will still try

Still later, officials who declined to be identified elaborated further, declaring this country would still try to reach a solution to the Laos problem.

"But apparently there will be no more conference sessions until the question of cease fire violations is settled," an official said.

He indicated a general western agreement not to call the conference back into session until the question is settled. At the start of the Laos conference last month the United States refused to agree to formal sessions until progress on a cease fire was made.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk, appearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the communist offensive was not encouraging since it came so soon after Nikita Khrushchev agreed with President Kennedy on the need for a cease-fire.

He said the fall of Padong was of "serious import" and "we must look at it very hard indeed."

Loss of Padong a shock

The defeat at Padong shocked U.S. officials. The president said in his report to the nation that Laos was one area of his discussion with Khrushchev that "afforded some immediate prospect of accord."

(The Pathet Lao radio, as quoted by communist China's New China News Agency and monitored in Tokyo, claimed victories in "wiping out bandits and rebel commandos" inside the Padong area. It claimed the "bandits" were under the command of U.S., Thai and South Vietnamese officers.

(The rebel radio also accused royal Laotian government troops of 37 violations of the cease-fire. It added that a "U.S. airplane" was shot down May 11 southwest of the rebel stronghold of Xieng Khouang, "leaving evidence of the U.S. air intrusion into the air space of the liberated areas." It gave no further details.)

Fig. 6

Front Page of New Times Herald-Record, 1961

or was the management influenced only by the economy of the offset process in newspaper publication?

When he authorized the construction of the new Times Herald building, Ralph M. Ingersoll must have foreseen a good future for the long-time conservative daily newspaper which had served the community for a century. The obvious tone of appeasement in the October 1 issue of the Times Herald also revealed that the Ottaway organization was cognizant of the strength and the following of the Times Herald. Although the fresh approach of the Record cannot be denied, the Times Herald had been recognized as one of the leading small city dailies in the East. Recipient of many awards from various organizations in testimony to its service to the community, the Times Herald also was known for its journalistic excellence. The newspaper had, in addition, provided off-campus training for students of the Graduate School of Journalism of Columbia University for twenty-two years, a stamp of approval of its policies and achievements.

Another Look at Brucker

The outcome of the experiment with newspaper competition in Middletown would seem to bear out Herbert Brucker's contention that newspapers have grown "costly beyond the reach of a single individual." Brucker

further concluded that large newspaper corporations tend to be controlled by businessmen, not by journalistic prophets, and that "businessmen prove their worth by producing dividends, not by crawling out on editorial limbs or risking their own or other people's money in experiments that may fail."¹⁰

J. R. Cominsky, publisher of the Saturday Review, expressed much the same view when he addressed the Rochester Junior League of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce:

It is no longer enough to be a good newspaper or a good magazine of high standards, of dedication to high ideals. The life or death sentence will come from the mechanics of operation. This is one of the prices we have paid for our inflationary spiral, for apprentice limitation by labor unions, not in keeping with our economic growth, and for the resultant vast capital for investment now necessary for any publishing enterprise. So mechanics are calling the tune for survival, and it is inevitable that people concentrate on what permits them to survive.¹¹

Evidence indicates that the die is cast, that for journalism the pendulum has swung widely from the professional journalist to the industrialist to satisfy the basic need for survival--money. But this very penchant for profit, not service, may be a force which may jeopardize the traditions of the press which have

¹⁰Brucker, loc. cit.

¹¹J. R. Cominsky, excerpt from an address, Editor and Publisher, XLIII (April 25, 1959), p. 10.

been powerful in the United States for three hundred years. However hackneyed the label, "champion of truth," the ferreting out of the truth still is the richest responsibility of the journalism profession, perhaps more so now in an era where there is a discernable shifting from objective to interpretive reporting.

Although the new Times Herald-Record in Middletown, New York, may be a commendable publication and serve the Goldenarea well, the light of enterprise which was brightened by a lively experiment conducted so nobly for over four years has been sent flickering by cold economy. And some who watched the experiment--and hoped--are chilled by the result, a foretoken of the end to which American journalism seems to be rushing.

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