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The Monterey Gazette, 1863-1869 : goals, rigors, and rewards of publishing a pioneer newspaper

Deborah Lorenz McDevitt
San Jose State University

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THE MONTEREY GAZETTE, 1863-1869:
GOALS, RIGORS, AND REWARDS OF PUBLISHING A PIONEER NEWSPAPER

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Journalism
and Mass Communications
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
Deborah Lorenz McDevitt
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Dr. Dennis Brown

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ABSTRACT

THE MONTEREY GAZETTE, 1863-1869:
GOALS, RIGORS, AND REWARDS OF PUBLISHING A PIONEER NEWSPAPER

by Deborah Lorenz McDevitt

This thesis provides a narrative history of the Monterey Gazette, a newspaper published in Monterey, California from 1863 to 1869. It addresses the possible reasons for the Gazette's publication and its ability to survive for six years in an era when most newspapers lasted a year or less. Possible explanations for the Gazette's demise are also explored.

Analysis of all extant issues of the newspaper suggests that promotion of Monterey County and advocacy of the county's development were the main functions of the Gazette. Contents of the paper also suggest several secondary goals, including support of the Republican Party. Research points to an increase in Monterey's English-reading population, transportation and communications developments, and lack of local competition as contributors to the Gazette's longevity, while insufficient funds and the eventual publication of a competing newspaper contributed to its demise.

To Hugh

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE VALUE OF NEWSPAPER RESEARCH

The study of early newspapers provides an historical snapshot of the evolution of journalism and the community in which a periodical was published. "Not only was the newspaper vital to the frontier reader, it is also an indispensable tool to the modern researcher."¹ Analysis of frontier newspapers aids the understanding of the social and political conditions of the era, and serves as a reflection of the overall climate from which they emerged. Many state repositories contain published bibliographies and histories of their newspapers, but little information is available on the subject of the California press.² Even less is written on the topic of early Monterey newspapers. In general, "published historical material on Monterey County after 1850 is extremely sparse."³

¹William H. Lyon, "The Significance of Newspapers on the American Frontier," Journal of the West 19 (April 1980): 5.

²California State Library Foundation, Newspapers in California (Washington D.C.: National Endowment for the Humanities, 1985), 17.

³Augusta Fink, Monterey County: The Dramatic Story of Its Past (Santa Cruz, Calif.: Western Tanager Press, 1982), 253.

A search of various indices, including the Cumulative Book Index, Books in Print, the California Information File, Historical Abstracts, Poole's Index to Periodical Literature, Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, and the Master's Index compiled by University Microfilms, turned up no historical accounts of Monterey papers beyond 1855. And although newspaper articles cannot treat the subject in the same amount of depth as a thesis or book, queries were directed at personnel in the libraries and newspaper morgues of Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, but produced nothing detailing Monterey's early journalism history.

In light of the town's important role in California and journalism history, and to examine the question of its ability to provide a stable publishing environment, the city's early newspapers warrant attention. However, examining every paper Monterey gave rise to during the latter half of the nineteenth century would fill many volumes and extend beyond the scope of a graduate thesis. Taking preliminary findings into account and working in consecutive order, the town's third paper, the Monterey Gazette, published from 1863 to 1869, is the focus of this study.

The absence of information on the topic of early Monterey newspapers is even more surprising considering that

much of California's history is traceable to this coastal city. In particular, the period following the town's American occupation in 1846 was one of many significant changes, both for the community and the growth of mass communications: California's statehood in 1850⁴, the development of overland mail routes in 1858⁵, hookup with the East Coast via the transcontinental telegraph in 1861⁶, and with the railroad in 1869⁷. In fact, California's first newspaper, the Californian, originated in Monterey on August 15, 1846, little more than a month after the Mexican-governed town surrendered to United States forces.⁸

Less than a year after it appeared, the Californian relocated to San Francisco on May 6, 1847. Monterey's second newspaper, the Monterey Sentinel, traveled a similar

⁴James Miller Guinn, "The Civil War: Loyalty and Disloyalty," chap. in History and Biographical Record of Monterey and San Benito Counties (Chicago: The Chapman Publishing Company, 1910), 204.

⁵James D. Hart, A Companion to California, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 369.

⁶John P. Young, Journalism in California (San Francisco: Chronicle Publishing, 1915), 10.

⁷Hart, 584.

⁸George P. Hammond, foreword to The Californian, Volume One: Facsimile Reproductions of Thirty-eight Numbers, a Prospectus, and Various Extras and Proclamations, Printed at Monterey Between August 15, 1846 and May 6, 1847 (San Francisco: John Howell Books, 1971), i-iii.

route. After publishing at its place of origin from June 2, 1855 until June 14, 1856, the Sentinel moved to Santa Cruz,⁹ clinching for Monterey the reputation as a poor place to nurture a newspaper. After witnessing the start-up and relocation of these two papers, then-contemporary editor Edward Kemble had this to say: "The atmosphere of that part of the coast is decidedly deleterious, though not fatal to newspapers. It causes not their death but their removal."¹⁰

Yet collections preserved on microfilm prove that, after publication of the Californian and the Sentinel, at least six papers originated in Monterey before the turn of the century.¹¹ One of these papers, the Monterey Weekly Cypress, ultimately became a daily paper which, after a succession of twentieth-century mergers, became Monterey's present-day newspaper, the Herald. The others, beginning with the Gazette, published within the community longer than

⁹Ibid., xiii-xiv.

¹⁰Edward C. Kemble, A History of California Newspapers 1846-1858, ed. H. H. Bretnor (Los Gatos, Calif.: Talisman Press, 1962), 66.

¹¹Microfilm copies of the Monterey Gazette (1863-1869); the Monterey Democrat, later the Salinas Democrat, (1867-1896); the Monterey Weekly Herald (1874-1876); the Monterey Californian (1876-1881); the Monterey Argus, formerly the Monterey Californian, (1881-1889); the Monterey Weekly Cypress (1889-1901); and the Monterey New Era (1890-1909) are available at the Monterey Public Library and the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

either of their earliest forerunners--anywhere from two years, in the case of the Weekly Herald, to thirteen years of printing the Monterey Californian/Argus. The Monterey Democrat stayed in the county for twenty-nine years.¹² But despite the accessibility of these papers, there exists no thorough documentation of their histories, leaving a sizeable gap in knowledge of Monterey's pioneer newspapers.

Journalism historian William Lyon suggests that the lack of histories chronicling pioneer papers is attributable to the fact that, individually, most papers did not experience the longevity needed to provide enough information to fill an entire book.¹³ The Monterey Gazette published for six years, a period long enough to warrant treatment and reveal something of its own history. Of all of Monterey's pre-turn-of-the-century newspapers, the Gazette was the most consistently and carefully preserved, with nearly all issues intact on microfilm. It is hoped that this study will begin to fill the gap, not only in this period of journalism history, but in this era of Monterey's history as well.

¹²Marianne Leach, comp., Newspaper Holdings of the California State Library, (Sacramento: California State Library Foundation, 1986), 67-69, 284-286.

¹³Lyon, 7.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Examination of the Monterey Gazette yielded a portrayal of newspaper publishing during the mid-nineteenth century, while addressing some specific questions as well. First, what were the functions of the newspaper and how were they carried out? Was the Gazette, for example, established to promote a political party?¹ Did it serve as an instrument of public instruction?² Was it intended to boost the community?³ Or was it, perhaps, a catalyst for change and development?⁴ Second, did the Gazette's functions shift with changes in ownership or the evolving needs of the community? Third, what accounts for the Gazette's ability to sustain publication in one location for six years, where its predecessors lasted for a year or less before their

¹Lyon, 12.

²Young, 5.

³Barbara Cloud, The Business of Newspapers on the Western Frontier (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1992), 5.

⁴Oliver Knight, "The Frontier Newspaper as a Catalyst in Social Change," Pacific Northwest Quarterly (April 1967): 74-81.

removal to alternate locales? Finally, what led to the Gazette's demise?

Survey tactics included in-depth analysis of all 266 surviving issues of the Gazette in an attempt to set forth as accurate and complete a composite history as possible. In addition, a cursory look at all existing issues of the Californian and the Sentinel provided general knowledge about the two papers. Closer examination of the Californian and the Sentinel entailed using content analysis methodology put forth by Budd, Thorp, and Donohew. In this manner, issues falling into a "constructed time period"⁵ provided the sample necessary to assess the Gazette's longevity in relation to its forerunners. This method served the purpose of "representing the time period equitably,"⁶ and was conducted in the following manner: Evaluation of the Californian and the Sentinel began with the first issues available. From this starting point, implementation of a rotation system, moving ahead one month plus one week, allowed for a more detailed examination of a representative newspaper from each month of the publications' duration. Also following the methodology of Budd, Thorp and Donohew,

⁵Richard Budd, Robert K. Thorp, and Lewis Donohew, Content Analysis of Communication (New York: MacMillan, 1967), 25.

⁶Ibid.

where a research sample copy was defective, the next closest issue provided the representative paper for study, and the cycle resumed from that edition's date.

Regrettably, research of this nature cannot be considered definitive. Without supplemental resources such as diaries and personal papers left behind by the editors, it is impossible to know with certainty the motives of each publisher in taking the helm of the Gazette, or the reasons for each man's severance from it. Fortunately, as mentioned above, an ample supply of issues survived for transcription to microfilm and, for the most part, there were no large consecutive breaks in the file.⁷ Where interruptions occurred, the gap was generally only missing an issue or two spread over many months.

Consultation of secondary sources, including the works of California historian Hubert Howe Bancroft, Monterey historian Robert B. Johnston, California journalism historian John P. Young, and mid-nineteenth century California journalist Edward C. Kemble, furnished the state, regional, and journalism background information corresponding to the Gazette's period of publication. Where

⁷The April 1865 issues of the Gazette, presumably containing stories about the end of the American Civil War and Lincoln's assassination, are missing from the microfilm file. See pages 106-107 for further explanation.

available, resources detailing Western frontier publishing, such as works by journalism historians Barbara Cloud and Robert F. Karolevitz, and California pioneer journalist Frank A. Leach, supplied greater understanding of the many challenges intrinsic to the occupation. By laying a foundation of highlights in California and Monterey history, including their journalism histories, it was possible to better comprehend the circumstances under which the Gazette operated. The assimilation of this knowledge with that extracted from the Gazette's extant issues, formed the basis to make suppositions about the intentions of the paper's editors, the Gazette's ability to accomplish its purposes, its capacity to publish in one location for six years, and the events precipitating its collapse.

The importance of such a study is best described by Kemble, who wrote, "In the fickle character of our population, and the revolutions which have swept the path of our young State [sic], they [newspapers] constitute not only the landmarks in her history, but the only faithful surviving tablets from which this history may be written."⁸ The following is a narrative history of the Monterey Gazette, printed from December 1863 until October 1869, the first paper to publish in Monterey for more than one year.

⁸Kemble, 45.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

To understand the significance of the Monterey press in its infancy, it is important to understand how the town and the entire California territory existed in the early to mid-nineteenth century. During this period, the territory consisted of two sections: Upper California above present-day Tijuana, Mexico, and Lower California from starting at Tijuana and extending to Cape San Lucas, Mexico.¹ In 1822, California severed long-standing ties to Spain² and declared its allegiance to Mexico. Under Mexican rule, Monterey served as the entire territory's capital and was the center of activity in California's northern section. Trade and farming were prevalent during this period, attracting foreign and American entrepreneurs, particularly to the port of Monterey. Here, with access to the harbor, foreign trade was enticing and prosperous for those who ventured to launch businesses.³

But despite California's growth and development, the

¹Hart, 30.

²The Spanish period of California began in 1533. Ibid., 489.

³Fink, 54-61.

state was not problem free. The first appointed governor during the Mexican regime, Jose Maria Echeandia, proved detrimental to California's foreign trade operations as well as its missions. Upon his arrival in 1825, Echeandia placed a heavy tariff on all traded goods and limited foreign trading to the ports of Monterey and San Diego.⁴ The new governor also paved the way for Mexican secularization of the California missions, their subsequent deterioration, and the resulting downfall of the Indians they were intended to benefit.⁵ Secularization also led to distribution of large land grants to California's native-born and naturalized citizens. From these "ranchos" developed a pastoral lifestyle based on raising cattle for the hide and tallow trade and providing an important boost to the economy.⁶

Dissatisfaction with Echeandia finally erupted in a short-lived, bloodless revolt in 1829. Those who participated in the two-day confrontation were severely punished. And, because many in California felt that the rebellion against Echeandia was justified, harsh treatment of its instigators brewed resentment and unrest.⁷

⁴Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of California (San Francisco: History Company Publishers, 1886), 3:8-11.

⁵Laura Bride Powers, Old Monterey, California's Adobe Capital (San Francisco: San Carlos Press, 1934), 94-103.

⁶Hart, 315. ⁷Fink, 62-63.

A string of governors appointed by the Mexican government tried, but failed, to administer law and order amidst rebellions and rumblings for reform.⁸ The people of Monterey grappled with the issue of whether California should be governed by men bound to Mexico's centralist rule, or men appointed from their own territory. In 1836, a short revolt led by Juan Bautista Alvarado succeeded in convincing the current governor of the upper portion of the state, Nicolas Gutierrez, to make a hasty retreat to Mexico. Finally independent from Mexico, Upper California elected Alvarado governor, retaining Monterey as its capital despite Mexico's declaration of Los Angeles as such for the entire territory.⁹

Alvarado's governorship, however, was not immune to opposition. Mexico still appointed governors to the capital it recognized in Los Angeles--one against whom Alvarado prevailed, the other, Manuel Micheltorena, to whom he yielded in 1842, but managed to oust three years later.¹⁰

Amidst all this shuffling, an incident occurred which offers a glimpse of the prevailing, haphazard state of communications. On October 20, 1842, troops commanded by Thomas ap (son of) Jones, erroneously forced Monterey to

⁸Ibid., 62-73. ⁹Ibid., 70-78.

¹⁰Hart, 12.

surrender to United States jurisdiction. They raised the American flag for a day but swiftly lowered it upon discovery that the message Jones received, announcing that the United States and Mexico were at war and ordering him to gain control of California before the British did, was a miscommunication.¹¹

Although Alvarado never resumed the position of governor after forcing Micheltorena back to Mexico, he appointed Pio Pico to the vacated post. Pico moved his administration to Los Angeles, giving authority over Monterey's customs and treasury to Jose Castro. But Pico proved a little too generous when it came to parceling out land grants, and the resulting friction between the governor and Castro produced a region that was ripe for American infiltration.¹²

At first, intervention was subtle--simply stepping up promotional measures designed to draw American immigrants to California. United States sympathizers living in the territory joined the effort of passive persuasion by warning Californians of aggressive actions plotted by the British and French as each country attempted to gain possession of the province.¹³ Intervention intensified when the United States offered its assistance to California to declare and

¹¹Fink, 78-79. ¹²Hart, 386. ¹³Fink, 84-86.

maintain independence from Mexico. Finally, after a disagreement concerning the annexation of Texas, President James K. Polk declared war with Mexico in May 1846.¹⁴

Again, poor communications hampered the course of events--two months passed before Californians were even aware that there was a war on.¹⁵ In part, this lack of dependable communication helped trigger the Bear Flag Revolt in which, prior to learning that their country had declared war on Mexico, General John C. Fremont and William B. Ide led a group of American settlers to capture Sonoma and establish their own republic. Less than a month after the start of the uprising--and once apprised of the war with Mexico--the settlers disbanded to lend support to their allies in Monterey.¹⁶

On July 7, 1846, the Mexican government at Monterey surrendered to Commodore John Drake Sloat, who issued a proclamation declaring California a United States territory.¹⁷ By the end of the Mexican period in California, Monterey's population was approximately 700, with about 900 more inhabitants in surrounding areas. The

¹⁴Hart, 269-270.

¹⁵Marion Fisher Murphy, Seven Stars for California: A Story of the Capitals (Sonoma, Calif.: Sonoma Print Shop, 1979), 27.

¹⁶Bancroft, 3:106-107. ¹⁷Fink, 88-89.

Indian population had dwindled from around 3,500 to 1,250.¹⁸ Monterey had neither the manpower nor the ammunition to defend against the United States invasion, and surrender came quickly. Besides, many of Monterey's residents were more in favor of becoming a United States territory than remaining subject to Mexico's whims. Those in the lower portion of California, however, were not inclined to give in so easily; their allegiance to Mexico was unshaken.¹⁹

On August 15, 1846, less than six weeks after the American occupation of Monterey, Walter Colton and Robert Semple peeled California's first newspaper--all 8 1/2-by-12 1/2 inches of it--from their handpress. At last, inhabitants of the capital city had access to information "from all important military ports,"²⁰ including "the complete declaration of war with Mexico, and an abstract of the debate over the war in the United States Senate."²¹ Tailored to the population of Monterey, the Californian was printed mainly in English, with some material translated into Spanish.

But the town did not have the paper for long. Semple moved the Californian to San Francisco after publishing its May 6, 1847 issue--nine months before the February 2, 1848

¹⁸Bancroft, 3:667. ¹⁹Fink, 87-90.

²⁰Ibid., 91. ²¹Ibid.

signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the war and made all of Upper California a territory of the United States. Once again Monterey was without a newspaper, and word of peace did not reach the town until six months after the fact. And despite such a monumental and long-awaited occurrence, California's new status as a United States territory was overshadowed by rumors promising even more opportunity and greater wealth--the discovery of gold along the American River.²²

Monterey grew rapidly following American occupation, in part because squatters fragmented many of the large ranchos which for so long impeded settling there.²³ But the gold rush quickly stunted the town's development. As fortune seekers made tracks to the gold fields, Monterey, left nearly deserted, began a period of approximately twenty-five years of economic decline.²⁴ Those who were not lured to the Mother Lode made it their priority to set up a state governing system. Monterey hosted the first state Constitutional Convention from September through November 1849, Robert Semple presiding as president.²⁵ During this

²²Ibid., 92-92. ²³Hart, 407.

²⁴James Ladd Delkin, Monterey Peninsula, American Guide Series (San Francisco: Hooper Printing for the California Writer's Project, 1946), 48-50.

²⁵Hart, 92-93.

convention California's destiny was sealed: the delegates voted in favor of statehood; deemed slavery in California reprehensible;²⁶ extended voting privileges to include not only white males, but men of Mexican and/or native Indian descent as well;²⁷ established state boundaries, which are the same today; approved the California State Seal; and, perhaps most significant to the future of Monterey, officially moved the capital of California to San Jose.²⁸

Rules and regulations were not the only outcome of the Constitutional Convention. The start of the sessions, with its wave of out-of-town delegates, revealed Monterey's underdevelopment; it offered no hotels and only one restaurant. A month later, Monterey expanded commercially

²⁶Although California was admitted to the Union as a free state, prominent men in the southern part of the territory--from slave states themselves--hoped that previous divisionist leanings would lead to the creation of a slave state, thereby restoring the balance between the North and the South. From statehood and throughout the next decade, slavery advocates residing in California clung to these ideas. Guinn, 204.

²⁷Fink, 116-117. ²⁸Ibid., 92-93.

and even sported four hotels.²⁹ Unfortunately, prosperity was short-lived, declining almost as soon as the conventioners dispersed and the capital relocated to San Jose. Even its status as a city, acquired in 1851, was lost in 1853 through an act of legislature.³⁰ By 1859, "Monterey had become little more than a bankrupt village with but one industry, shore whaling." This source of income dried up within 20 years.³¹

Livestock and agriculture took up part of the slack in Monterey's economy during the 1860s. Land previously undeveloped was plowed and used to grow wheat, oats, barley, and sugar beets; pine trees were cut down for exporting as firewood.³² But thanks to elevated interest rates, high taxes, increasing land prices, and a decrease in the value of cattle (due to the large supply available and competition from better grades of stock introduced by Americans),

²⁹The year 1849 also marked two significant firsts in California history with the opening of a public library and a post office in Monterey. Robert B. Johnston, Old Monterey County (Monterey, Calif.: Monterey Savings and Loan Association in Commemoration of the Old Monterey Bicentennial, 1970), 57, 74.

³⁰After two failed attempts in 1869 and 1870, Monterey was reincorporated as a city on June 3, 1889. Rolin C. Watkins, ed., History of Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, California: Cradle of California's History and Romance, vol. 1 (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing, 1925), 285.

³¹Fink, 119, 125-126. ³²Guinn, 294.

financial gains were minimal. Extreme weather patterns, fluctuating between floods and years of drought, intermittently took their toll on Monterey's agricultural pursuits as well.³³

While the rest of the county prospered, "Monterey remained a Mexican village, speaking the language and carrying on the tradition of another day."³⁴ In the wake of the gold rush, the town's maritime supremacy gave way to San Franciscan ports, leaving the town merely on the fringe of mercantile activities and isolated by a geographical location bypassed by most itineraries. This slump was apparent in Monterey in 1861 both in its population of approximately sixteen hundred inhabitants and in its storefronts, of which more than half were liquor stores or billiard saloons.³⁵

Around the nation, meanwhile, issues that would ignite the Civil War were hotly debated. Though far removed from the origins of the dispute, California, a Democratic state

³³"County's Cattle Industry Launched in 1771," Monterey Peninsula Herald, 1 June 1970, sec. A, p. 13.

³⁴Delkin, 51.

³⁵William H. Brewer, Up and Down California in 1860-1864: The Journal of William H. Brewer, ed. Francis P. Farquhar, 3d ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 104.

since its admission to the Union,³⁶ was not without involvement. When the war erupted with the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, news of the shelling took twelve days to reach San Francisco via pony express.³⁷ And with the beginning of the Civil War most previous political affiliations within the state were dropped in favor of supporting the Union.³⁸ There were, however, those Californians who openly or secretly sided with the Confederacy, some of whom went south to lend aid in the war effort. In fact, various parts of the state, particularly Los Angeles and the San Joaquin Valley, counted Confederate sympathizers in the majority.³⁹ But in April 1865, when news of Lincoln's assassination reached San Francisco, and a mob destroyed the newspaper offices of four local Copperhead⁴⁰ sheets known for verbally abusing the president, Confederate sympathizers no longer admitted their loyalties.⁴¹

By 1869, with the War Between the States settled and the frenzy over gold dissipating, Monterey was still little

³⁶Guinn, 206 ³⁷Ibid., 209-210. ³⁸Ibid., 210.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Copperhead is the term applied to a Northerner who sympathized with the South during the Civil War. American Heritage Dictionary, 3d ed., s.v. "Copperhead."

⁴¹Guinn, 209-210.

more than an anachronistic village. Commercial enterprise was kept afloat with the addition of a wharf which attracted steamers to Monterey four times a week. But the town was dealt a final blow in 1873 when, unable to emerge from its stagnant economy, the county seat moved to the nearby farming community of Salinas.⁴²

⁴²Watkins, 304.

CHAPTER 4
MID-NINETEENTH-CENTURY JOURNALISM IN MONTEREY
AND AROUND THE STATE

Newspapering in California before the 1860s was neither easy nor profitable. Circulations were low. Weeklies averaged as small an audience as two hundred to three hundred readers and rarely attracted more than one thousand.¹ This was due, in part, to the inability of early newspapers to have widespread appeal within a varied population. Little attention was given to attracting a readership of different races and classes. Even when demographics began shifting to reflect the arrival of East Coast settlers, California editors were challenged to target a niche already filled by homeland papers delivered by steamer.² Local news, the obvious choice for creating a unique paper, was easily edged off the printed page by the ever-present and faster mode of dissemination, word-of-mouth.

Methods of obtaining news were also limiting--and limited--in the mid-nineteenth century. There were no newsgathering organizations, and transportation and

¹Young, 9-10.

²Ibid., 38.

communication systems were crude. Prior to linkage into the telegraph system, California publishers were at the mercy of slow, semi-monthly steamships bringing out-of-date news from the East Coast.³

In spite of many obstacles, Walter Colton and Robert Semple issued California's first newspaper on August 15, 1846--only 5 1/2 weeks after the American occupation of Monterey. Overland mail routes had yet to be developed, and California's links into the transcontinental telegraph and railroad were still fifteen and twenty-three years, respectively, in the offing. Even communication and transportation systems between the towns and ranchos within California were deficient.⁴ In fact, the most important news in that first issue of the Californian, an announcement of the war between the United States and Mexico, was already three months old.

Timely or not, many people in Monterey could not benefit from news on a printed page, as few knew how to read or write.⁵ The town's sparse population also hinted at the difficulty of developing a strong readership. As noted above, Monterey's population at the time was approximately

³Clifford Francis Weigle, "The Pioneer Press in California, 1846-1869" (Master's thesis, Stanford University, 1936), 85.

⁴Hammond, i-vii. ⁵Ibid., i.

700, with about 900 more inhabitants in surrounding areas, and an additional 1,250 Indians interspersed throughout the region. Just a glimpse at these statistics suggests that the community was not in a position to support a newspaper with sales, subscriptions, or advertising. Job printing, a common source of supplemental income for many newspaper publishers of this era, was equally meager.⁶

Together, widely scattered populations and inadequate transportation for distribution of the newspaper, made it difficult to attain a circulation extending beyond the bounds of Monterey.⁷ Growth of the Californian was also difficult to achieve without proper equipment. Throughout its publication, the newspaper was hindered by its worn press⁸ and a prevailing scarcity of paper. So rare was this commodity that the premier edition of the Californian was issued on the kind of paper commonly used to roll cigarettes.⁹ When newsprint was available, it was costly, sometimes commanding \$50 per ream.¹⁰ This expense, coupled

⁶Ibid., x. ⁷Weigle, 37.

⁸For a complete history of the origins of the press and type used to produce the Californian, see Katherine Chandler, "The Pioneer Press of California," Sunset, January 1906, 285-287; Kemble, 50-57; and Carl I. Wheat, The Pioneer Press of California (Oakland, Calif.: Biobooks, 1948), 1-5.

⁹Hammond, vi. ¹⁰Weigle, 86-87.

with the fact that the newspaper was printed on a hand press, made large circulations and dailies infeasible.¹¹

Working arrangements placed added strain on the Californian's publication. One or the other of the two men was often left to tend to the paper alone--a flawed strategy considering that Colton was the more established writer and Semple the well-versed printer. Despite these barriers, Colton and Semple managed to publish their paper in Monterey for nine months before removing it to San Francisco. Relocation of the paper was due partly to Colton's need to tend to other business, including his family still living on the East Coast, and to Semple's keen interest in real estate in San Francisco.

The Californian made its final appearance in Monterey on May 6, 1847.¹² From that date until July of the same year, Semple published the newspaper in the more populated city of San Francisco, where the paper's future, as well as his own, might be more profitable.

Semple sold California's first newspaper on July 17, 1847. Within a year, it changed hands again and finally discontinued publication on May 29, 1848, when interest in newspapers waned and all eyes--including those of publishers and printers--saw dollar signs in the form of gold nuggets.

¹¹Lyon, 6. ¹²Young, 5, 36.

The Californian was resurrected on November 11, 1848 and merged with its previous competitor, the California Star, a week later. The Alta California succeeded the combined papers on January 4, 1849.¹³

After removal of the Californian, Monterey was without a newspaper for eight years. During this journalistic lull, if residents of Monterey wanted news of the world outside their locale, they had to subscribe to the Honolulu Polynesian.¹⁴ It was inevitable, however, that by the time this paper reached Monterey via steamer, the news was several months old. Still, the Polynesian's editors had a distinct advantage over would-be publishers in Monterey; Honolulu was the shipping center of the Pacific, and exchange newspapers as well as verbal information were obtained from the captains and crews of visiting New England ships long before they set sail for California. And while San Francisco's early newspapers reaped a small readership in Monterey, they, too, were hampered by the practice of

¹³Weigle, 13, 16.

¹⁴The Honolulu Polynesian was published weekly from 1840 to 1862. "English-Spanish Weekly was Printed on Cigarette Paper," Monterey Peninsula Herald, 1 June 1970, sec. D, p. 25.

trading ships stopping in Honolulu before dropping anchor along the shores of California.¹⁵

Finally, on June 2, 1855, another newspaper hit the streets of Monterey for a stint nearly as short as that of its predecessor. John McElroy, a co-founder of the Los Angeles Star in 1851, established the Monterey Sentinel, sharing financial backing with local lawyer Delos P. Ashley.¹⁶

While the origin of the printing press used to publish the 24-by-30-inch Sentinel is unknown, McElroy secured the type from the Illustrated Sacramento Union.¹⁷ Already he had one advantage that the publishers of the Californian were unable to enjoy--type that was in good repair and yielded a much cleaner, crisper image. The press equipment was still laboriously hand powered, though, and paper remained costly; improvements in its manufacture from wood pulp rather than rags were just beginning to evolve and would not result in lower prices until the eve of the Civil War.¹⁸

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Mayo Hayes O'Donnell, "Matter of Jonathan Cogitation," Monterey Peninsula Herald, 10 September 1951.

¹⁷Ibid. ¹⁸Young, 56-57.

Aesthetically, the Sentinel was an improvement over the Californian, but McElroy still had to contend with many of the same problems that plagued Colton and Semple. News from the East Coast and Europe was never timely, and the Polynesian, still publishing out of Honolulu, continued to scoop California papers. By this time, too, weekly papers were springing up in San Jose,¹⁹ perhaps posing a threat to the Sentinel.

Monterey's potential subscriber and advertiser profiles, meanwhile, remained unpromising. In the years between the town's first and second newspapers, Monterey had neither grown nor advanced. Many residents were illiterate; many spoke and read only Spanish, and were not catered to by the Sentinel. In addition, a standstill in Monterey's commercial and agricultural industries stunted advertising revenue and made defrayal of operating expenses difficult.

Nineteenth-century newspapers in the West seldom enjoyed longevity in one location,²⁰ and the Sentinel was no exception. McElroy moved his paper to Santa Cruz on June 14, 1856, financed entirely by Albion P. Jordon, a Santa

¹⁹"Early Edition: The Story of Newspapers in Santa Clara County," exhibit on display June-July 1991, California History Center, De Anza College, Cupertino, Calif.

²⁰Carolyn Stewart Dyer, "Economic Dependence and Concentration of Ownership Among Antebellum Wisconsin Newspapers," Journalism History 7, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 44.

Cruz resident eager to acquire a newspaper with which to boost the community and its economy.²¹ Apparently the move was a good one, as the Sentinel remains the contemporary newspaper of Santa Cruz.

From 1850 to 1855, the press in California experienced particularly rapid growth, the number of publications increasing from about 20 in 1850 to approximately 110 in 1855. Over the next thirteen years, the pace slowed, such that, by 1869, the state offered about 160 periodicals, 100 of which were weekly publications, 27 of which were dailies, and the remainder of which published on various semi-regular schedules.²² Developments toward improved transportation and communication were also a product of this period, including the advent of overland stage routes in 1858, the Pony Express in 1860, and the completion of the transcontinental telegraph in 1861. For the many small publications that dotted California, however, the express company's initial cost of ten dollars per ounce of cargo put it financially out of reach.²³ And, while the completion of the transcontinental telegraph in 1861 should have heralded

²¹O'Donnell. ²²Weigle, 92.

²³The Pony Express, in existence from April 1860 to October 1861, covered a route between St. Joseph, Missouri and Sacramento, California, often completing the journey in ten days. Hart, 369, 396.

a major change for newspapers in the West, malfunctioning lines made for unreliable communications. Again, high rates rendered the innovation impractical for most small papers.²⁴

Specifically, San Francisco grew steadily and attained stature as California's dominant locale for newspaper and periodical publishing in the 1850s and 1860s.²⁵ A wide variety of papers sprang up to meet the needs of the city's diverse population.²⁶ In fact, more than one-third of the approximately six hundred periodicals published in California between August 15, 1846 and January 1, 1869, emanated from San Francisco.²⁷ By 1850, in addition to the Alta California, San Francisco boasted five daily newspapers: the Journal of Commerce, the Herald, the California Courier, the Evening Picayune, and the Public Balance. Daily and weekly publications continued to emerge in San Francisco during this period, giving rise to such fierce competition that few newspapers lasted more than a year or two.²⁸

²⁴Warren R. Howell, introduction to Early Newspapers and Periodicals of California and the West, Catalogue 39, (San Francisco: John Howell Books, 1970), v.

²⁵Weigle, 46. ²⁶Young, 38. ²⁷Weigle, 61.

²⁸"The First Papers: Start and Progress of Journalism in San Francisco," San Francisco Examiner, 20 October 1889, 31-36.

San Francisco's newspaper count rose to ten daily papers by 1855, and in 1858 that number grew to twelve and did not budge through the next decade. During the same time frame, publishers in the city issued approximately thirteen weekly newspapers.²⁹

In San Jose, the state's first capital, newspapering did not get underway until the end of 1850. The California State Journal and the Daily Argus were opposing partisan papers which came into being within three weeks of each other. After changing hands numerous times, both folded with only four months of publication to their credit, apparently casualties of the government's decision to move the state capital.³⁰

The town's third newspaper, the San Jose Weekly Visitor, started publication in June 1851.³¹ It, too, changed hands frequently, acquiring, dropping and renewing various names along the way. Following the yearlong lifespan of its original title, the Visitor became the Santa Clara Register, then the San Jose Telegraph and Santa Clara Register, then simply the Register, and finally the San Jose

²⁹Weigle, 46, appendix.

³⁰Gary Wayne Dunn, "Early San Jose Journalists and their Newspapers" (Masters Thesis, San Jose State University, 1977), 23, 25, 29.

³¹Ibid., 34.

Mercury.³² The paper's politics, including independence from any party, apparently kept pace with shifting leadership, and in mid-1854 spawned a competitive paper--the Tribune--when one of its editors refused to change his political stance.³³

Other papers appeared briefly in San Jose--most for terms that lasted less than a month--but the city never experienced the legion of publications that typified its neighbor to the north. Between 1850 and 1869, San Jose gave rise to only six or seven newspapers,³⁴ and from late 1862 until mid-1863, the Mercury was the town's only newspaper. But the San Jose Patriot broke that monopoly upon its publication in September 1863.³⁵ From then, until the turn of the century, the two papers locked horns frequently, ending in a merger that became a forerunner of the present-day Mercury News.³⁶

Even before Sacramento became the state capital in 1854, it was the gateway to the northern gold mines and a center of commercial activity, second only to San Francisco.³⁷ It was also the first interior city in California to have a newspaper--a newspaper that grew out of the desire of San Francisco editors to obtain mining news.

³²Ibid. ³³Ibid., 38, 45. ³⁴Weigle, appendix.

³⁵Dunn, 98. ³⁶Ibid., 111. ³⁷Hart, 425.

This 1849 paper, the Placer Times, began as a weekly, evolving to daily publication by June 1850.³⁸ Competition came in the form of the city's second paper, the tri-weekly Transcript. It appeared in April 1850, merged with its rival fourteen months later,³⁹ and relocated to San Francisco in 1852.⁴⁰

Next in line was the Sacramento Daily Union, one of the few profitable papers in California between 1851 and 1869. Begun on March 19, 1851, the Union dominated the newspaper scene in Sacramento from its inception, despite the city's support of three additional dailies in 1855. By 1864, that number decreased to only one competitive paper, but rose again to three daily publications in 1869. Many papers attempted to take on the Union, but their efforts were futile. Only the Sacramento Bee, established in February 1857, was able to compete with the success of the city's major newspaper. In 1869, both publications claimed circulations in excess of five thousand copies daily.⁴¹

To the south, Los Angeles of the mid-nineteenth century "consisted of an old Catholic church, a few stores, several wine houses, and a dozen haciendas."⁴² It was not a town bustling with publishing activity. The Los Angeles

³⁸Weigle, 26. ³⁹Ibid., 27. ⁴⁰Ibid., 57.

⁴¹Ibid., 59-61. ⁴²Ibid., 39-42.

Star, printed half in English and half in Spanish, began its twenty-eight year run in May 1851, beginning as a weekly paper and becoming a daily in 1870. It was joined by only four other newspapers before 1860--the Southern Californian, the El Clamor Publico, the Southern Vineyard, and the Semi-Weekly Southern News--all of which were short-lived. By 1869, the Southern News was still around, publishing under the name the Daily News, Los Angeles's first daily paper.⁴³

Most of the weeklies and all of the dailies at this stage of California's journalism history consisted of four pages. Many were highly political and written in a personal style that was characteristic of the era. All changed hands frequently, often with an accompanying shift in politics. Advertising rates did not waver much from an initial placement fee of two or three dollars for a square of fifteen or sixteen lines, and one and a half dollars for subsequent insertions.⁴⁴ Subscription costs were more variable. Prices for a year's subscription to a daily ranged from five to twenty-five dollars,⁴⁵ while weeklies generally sold for four or five dollars. Single copies of dailies and weeklies usually cost a "bit," equivalent to twelve and a half cents.⁴⁶

⁴³Ibid. ⁴⁴Ibid., 16. ⁴⁵Dunn, 26.

⁴⁶Weigle, 92-93.

Circulation during this period was generally low. Weekly and daily papers usually issued between three hundred and one thousand copies per cycle. Only San Francisco's most prosperous daily newspapers claimed very high numbers for their day, between ten and twenty thousand. Sacramento's daily Bee and Union also professed to have fairly wide readerships of between five and ten thousand.⁴⁷

Primitive equipment contributed to stagnant circulations. While the majority of California's early publishers used hand presses to print their papers, however, five of San Francisco's leading newspapers--the Herald, the Times and Transcript, the Alta California, the California Chronicle and the Sun--were printed on steam-driven presses by 1854.⁴⁸ In addition, one San Jose paper escaped the limitations of hand-powered printing by its 1859 acquisition of a "Ruggles Power Press,"⁴⁹ and the Sacramento Union introduced steam power to its plant in 1853.⁵⁰

By the end of 1869, San Francisco was still the publishing hub of California, boasting twelve daily and twenty-four weekly newspapers. Among the survivors were the Alta California, which published until 1891,⁵¹ and the

⁴⁷Ibid. ⁴⁸"The First Papers," 31-34.

⁴⁹Dunn, 53. ⁵⁰Weigle, 58. ⁵¹Ibid., 47.

Dramatic Chronicle,⁵² the 1865 precursor of today's Chronicle. Sacramento, by comparison, had no weeklies and three dailies, one of which, the Bee, still exists today. San Jose, meanwhile, had only one daily, but three weekly newspapers, while Los Angeles had but one weekly and one semi-weekly paper to claim.⁵³

⁵²Young, 199. ⁵³Weigle, 93, appendix.

CHAPTER 5

THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM

With its poor record for supporting and retaining newspapers, the selection of Monterey for publishing yet another weekly rag was dubious. Under what circumstances would a publisher expect a new paper to survive any longer than its predecessors?

Perhaps it was a desire for details of the American Civil War that set the presses into motion again; possibly improved accessibility to news prompted the action. But the circumstances unique to nineteenth-century Monterey evoke the notion that a combination of factors convinced Jo. K. Acklin and his financial backers that the town had been too long without its own newspaper. The result? On December 11, 1863, nearly three years into the Civil War, the Monterey Gazette made its first in a steady stream of weekly appearances during its six-year run.

While the familiar obstacles of a diverse population, expensive paper, cumbersome production equipment, and inconsistent access to news sources confronted Acklin when he set out to print the Gazette, two important components

worked in his favor: timing and a lack of local competition.

Monterey was overdue for a local sheet when the Gazette debuted. Not only had 7 1/2 years passed since the Sentinel's removal to Santa Cruz, but its distance forty miles up the coast, and its location outside Monterey County limits, rendered it a negligible competitor. The San Francisco-based Alta California announced the first and last issues of another paper emanating from Monterey before the Gazette made its first appearance, but unfortunately, there are no known extant issues. According to the Alta's November 25, 1860 edition, B. F. Ankeny printed the first number of the Monterey Union on November 23, 1860,¹ and moved it to Pajaro, near Watsonville, approximately a year later, as reported in the Alta's October 28, 1861 issue². The Union ceased publication in Monterey County before the end of 1863,³ prompting the Gazette's publisher to sum up the scenario as one that could not be passed over--by him or area professionals. "As the only paper published in the county our columns possess attractions which our business

¹"Newspapers: Monterey County," California Information File (California State Library, Sacramento), microfiche 0356.

²Ibid. ³Weigle, appendix.

men [sic] must recognize. Come up, gentlemen, and help us."⁴

Thus, with the competition out of the way and vowing to deliver hefty doses of local news to his readers, Acklin aimed to reach his audience as no other paper could. In addition, the publisher and the town needed each other. The paper, which in its very first issue openly promoted Monterey's agricultural, mercantile, and commercial businesses, in turn, offered a forum in which those same businesses could attempt to increase their own profitability through advertising.

Acklin also cashed in on the excitement and drama afforded by the country's engagement in civil war. The prospectus carried in the Gazette's first number ensured readers that "pains will be taken to furnish, so far as a weekly paper can, the general news of the war and of legislative and congressional proceedings."⁵ And, although he claimed his paper was independent, Acklin wisely sided with the political bent of the town,⁶ professing to "support

⁴Monterey Gazette, 25 December 1863, 2.

⁵Monterey Gazette, 11 December 1863, 2.

⁶In his 1860-1864 diary detailing his travels in California, William H. Brewer portrays Union sentiment in Monterey as "overwhelming," and describes the entire state of California as "eminently for Union." Farquhar, 103, 88.

the Administration [sic] and endorse the war policy, as the only means of restoring the Union or preventing its disruption."⁷

Cognizant not just of Monterey's political leanings, but also in tune with the county seat's revitalization, Acklin believed that the growing population and improving economy of the town demanded the nurturing of a newspaper. Monterey's agricultural pursuits expanded in the 1860s. Barley and wheat provided rich crops and flour was shipped to world markets.⁸ And, when livestock and agricultural trade at times waned in the wake of inclement weather, Monterey's varied resources offered alternate means of financial support. The town attracted speculators to its silver mines as well as to its commercially prosperous whaling and fishing industries,⁹ helping give rise to the county's population expansion from 1,872 in 1850 to 4,739 in 1860.¹⁰ Advertisements announcing the renovation of the Washington Hotel signified anticipation of continued immigration, while an increasing number of local mercantile and professional services, their ads sprinkled throughout the Gazette, intimated a promising business sector. Acklin summed up the situation as he saw it in the premier issue of

⁷Monterey Gazette, 11 December 1863, 2.

⁸Johnston, 77. ⁹Guinn, 295. ¹⁰Johnston, 59.

the Gazette: "The County [sic] of Monterey is a large and rich county and needs a paper, and is abundantly able to support one."¹¹

In addition, publishing at the seat of Monterey County assured the Gazette patronage encompassing all official advertisements and judicial decisions. The choice to set up shop in what appeared to be an advantageous spot is an indication of Acklin's business savvy. Such an arrangement not only provided a consistent source of income, but also helped fill columns at a time when obtaining news and ads was not an easy task.

Monterey's educational and cultural systems were progressing as well. In 1847, the city opened its first public school, and two years later founded the state's first public library. Initial attendance at the school numbered 56,¹² but by the end of 1863, 150 pupils were on the rolls,¹³ indicating a shift toward an increasingly literate society--one that could more fully appreciate a weekly paper.

Improved transportation and communications also made their way into Monterey during the 1850s and early 1860s.

¹¹Monterey Gazette, 11 December 1863, 2.

¹²Delkin, 48.

¹³Monterey Gazette, 11 December 1863, 3.

Not only did the Pacific Coast Steamship Company begin operations between Monterey, Moss Landing, and San Francisco,¹⁴ but a main stagecoach route ran through Monterey where, in 1860, Wells Fargo ventured to locate one of its offices.¹⁵ Although Monterey had housed California's first post office since 1849, the express company was a boon to the entire state, as the United States Post Office could not keep up with the demands of the burgeoning territory.¹⁶ Monterey was no longer the isolated town with which previous publishers had grappled.

¹⁴Guinn, 296.

¹⁵Warren A. Beck & Ynez D. Hasse, Historical Atlas of California (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), 51.

¹⁶Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

JO. K. ACKLIN INTRODUCES THE MONTEREY GAZETTE

The Monterey Gazette was born Friday, December 11, 1863, during the height of the American Civil War. Its front page did not shout "WAR," nor did it herald proclamations of Dr. U. Ben Had's latest cure-all potion. Instead, the Gazette was a modest four-page weekly, sporting a small banner nameplate and several minute typefaces and fonts.

Four hairline rules were all that separated five columns wedged onto each 22 1/2-by-15 1/2-inch page--a sheet of nearly unrelieved gray clutter. News and advertising kept within the bounds of the paper's prescribed columns, never breaking the monotony of its vertical layout. And with the exception of an overused pointing finger dingbat, there were no graphics to add visual spark. Lack of space rather than lack of creativity, however, was probably to blame for most of the paper's blandness. The smaller and more uniform the type, the more text that could be set onto each precious sheet of newsprint.

Most stories, if introduced at all, were generally preceded by simple tag phrases leading directly into the

text, while the leadoff story of each column was often captioned by a heading and short hairline rule hovering above its text. These unimposing approximations of headlines--sometimes set in Gothic or bold type, but rarely larger than the text they introduced--provided some visual relief, but were hard-pressed to truly alter the Gazette's sameness. Advertising was the only other element of the paper that sometimes displayed type that stood out from surrounding text. Larger point size, varying degrees of boldness and/or exclusive use of uppercase letters punctuated some ads, but not enough to really enliven the visually flat paper. Still, what may not look like much to the twentieth-century observer, accustomed to infographs and splashy headlines, was probably a very welcome sight to the Gazette's nineteenth-century audience in Monterey.

Five dollars, "invariably in advance,"¹ was all it took to subscribe to the newly introduced paper for a full year. Three and six month commitments were also accepted, carrying a price tag of two and three dollars, respectively. Single issues were probably sold as well, although no indication of cost per copy appeared anywhere in the paper.

As an enticement to subscribe, Jo. K. Acklin forwarded several initial issues of the Gazette free of charge to the

¹Monterey Gazette, 11 December 1863, 1.

general population of the county. The publisher's marketing plan called for enforcement of subscriber terms at the end of a three week trial period, at which time he extended the following reminder and plea: "We trust that those of our friends desirous of the prosperity of our journal will exert themselves to enlarge our subscription list."²

Those who did subscribe were treated to a new look in newspapers--Acklin did not turn the front page of his paper over to advertising. The long-held practice of placing ads on page one faded during the Civil War as demand for related news--timely or not--took precedence over all else.³ While not all Western editors embraced this trend, Acklin did. He typically relegated ads to the third and fourth pages of the Gazette, although small business card ads occasionally appeared along the bottom of the first two pages, presumably to fill columns that ran a bit short.

Column one of the Gazette's first page carried its masthead, including subscription and advertising terms, and two in-house ads: one promoting the paper's facilities for job work, the other proclaiming the Gazette's large circulation and the benefits of advertising therein. A directory of California's elected officials and those

²Monterey Gazette, 25 December 1863, 2.

³Cloud, 65. 65.

representing Monterey County and its township--including Joseph Lively, coroner--also appeared in the first column. The remainder of the front page was devoted to reprinted war analyses, "borrowed" letters to the editor, book and magazine extracts, international information, and humorous fillers, all of which could be printed at a moment's notice without running the risk of becoming outdated.

Acklin greeted his readers and stated his intent on the second page of the paper in two separate addresses. The first, his salutatory, appeared in column one and stated (more than once) the paper's independence from any affiliations, political or otherwise. Nearly in the same breath, the publisher deflected potential speculation that his paper was an instrument by which to carry out personal vendettas: "The Monterey Gazette has neither enemies to punish nor friends to reward. . . . It is independent."⁴ The publisher also revealed his plan to provide "agreeable mental recreation,"⁵ all the while delivering the current news. For this he appealed to his readers, requesting that anything of local interest be forwarded, for Friday publication, to the Gazette office in the Washington Hotel building at the corner of Pearl and Washington Streets.

⁴Monterey Gazette, 11 December 1863, 2. ⁵Ibid.

Acklin's agenda-setting prospectus filled nearly a third of the final column of the Gazette's second page. Here the publisher presented the paper's business hierarchy: Acklin was responsible for day-to-day management of the paper's finances, while unnamed proprietors controlled the editorial reins and supplied funds for the Gazette's start-up and maintenance. The publisher declared support of the administration and the war policy, but he was quick to reserve the right to print "such criticisms as occasion may seem to require, as to the conduct of officers or other public functionaries."⁶ In later issues, Acklin proved he was not afraid to exercise his right to speak freely, although he did so in a most polite manner. "The recent unexpected decision of the Supreme Court, disfranchising the Volunteers [sic] in the field has called forth a very general expression of disapprobation from the loyal press of the State [sic]."⁷

As far as news content was concerned, Acklin promised "to furnish, so far as a weekly paper can, the general news of the war and of legislative and congressional proceedings"⁸--in addition to local news, of course. Although he rendered gossip and assassination of character

⁶Ibid. ⁷Monterey Gazette, 19 February 1864, 2.

⁸Monterey Gazette, 11 December 1863, 2.

inadmissible, the publisher probed for "any proper communications in regard to the discharge of official duties."⁹ In closing, Acklin vowed to publish a paper that endeavored to "aid morality, and furnish such reading matter as may render it a welcome family visitor."¹⁰

Within the first issue of the paper, Acklin adhered to his plan. The Gazette's most anticipated contents, Civil War news and related stories, were interspersed throughout its four pages. Telegraphic dispatches, some little more than a week old, brought the reality of war to the small seaside town with stark statistics. "Grant's victory [at Chattanooga] involved only 4,500 casualties; he took 6,450 prisoners and 46 guns. Meade's six day's fighting, in Virginia foot up [sic] a loss of 1,650, killed wounded and missing [sic]."¹¹ Related articles included synopses of recent battles, explanations of regimental activities, changes in command, outlines of geographic locations and strategies, as well as descriptions of weapons, supplies, and other facets of the war. Only in the Gazette could Montereyans get information ranging from Lincoln's decision to oversee all war activity to a depiction of the anatomy and potential consequences of the Greek fire shell, a weapon then in use by the Union army in Charleston.¹²

⁹Ibid. ¹⁰Ibid. ¹¹Ibid., 3. ¹²Ibid., 1.

Acklin also did his best to provide variety for his readers. Sandwiched between the salutatory and the prospectus on page two, local, state, and war news appeared alongside opinion pieces and additional humorous fillers. As was the practice of the era, much of the "news" emanating from Monterey blatantly boasted the city's many resources, from its mines, "Speculators: If you desire a good thing in mines, come to Monterey,"¹³ to its abundance of whales in the bay, "several companies of whalers have located in Monterey and are pursuing their vocation with success."¹⁴ And it did not go without saying that the town itself was worth a visit or even relocation: "There is no point on the Pacific that offers so many and varied attractions to the lovers of pleasure as Monterey."¹⁵ Editorial endorsements, also a familiar sight on page two, paraded clothiers, hotels, restaurants, general stores--all kinds of goods and services--before an eager public.

If Acklin's audience did not get their fill of local news from the paper's second page, they were likely sated by the "Home Affairs" column on page three. The news briefs under this heading occupied nearly two columns and were loaded with community boosterism. Crime, fire, and accident reports provided local color, along with stories about the

¹³Ibid., 2. ¹⁴Ibid. ¹⁵Ibid., 3.

weather, earthquakes, church functions, and school activities. Additional regional news spilled into the third and fourth columns of page three, interspersed with local and federal court proceedings, Eastern news, and still more riddles, jokes, and puns.

Advertisements trickled onto the third page at the bottom of the fourth column and filled the final column of that page completely. Local attorneys, doctors, dentists, the managers of the newly renovated Washington Hotel, owners of a drug store, partners running a general store, a notary public, and a San Francisco ad agency were among those who pitched their wares in the Gazette. Wedged between the commercial advertisements, official notices alerted area residents to legal matters that might pertain to them, such as the partitioning of long-established ranchos, the sale of stocks, or the levying of taxes.

The variety of professionals and services listed in the premier edition of the Gazette gives the impression that the paper received a lot of support from the local business community from the start. Close examination, however, reveals that advertising was sparse in the first issue. Only 3 1/2 of the paper's 20 columns contained ads, and part of that space featured in-house promotions for job work and entreaties calling for area businessmen to step up their own

ad campaigns. Ads peddling bogus products, whether unavailable to Acklin or dismissed as a matter of principle, contributed little to the advertising base of the Gazette. With the exception of one questionable blurb touting "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup,"¹⁶ which promised relief from teething just as surely as it put an end to dysentery, the Gazette's initial advertisements were plausible and tame.

In layout, page four of the Gazette looked a lot like that preceding it: the first three columns presented stories, while the last two displayed advertising. But aside from the ads, the content of these two pages was quite different. There were no scoops or fresh news dispatches on the fourth page. Instead, exchanges from periodicals including Scientific American and the New York Times-- informational features without time value and easy to print on any occasion--predominated. Leftover space went to equally timeless items such as poems, song lyrics, short moral lessons, and a seemingly endless supply of satire and witticisms.

Thus, with Jo. K. Acklin at the helm, the Gazette began its six-year residence in Monterey. And although the paper was in his charge for only four months, Acklin did much to help it gain a foothold within the community. For

¹⁶Ibid., 4.

instance, the paper's contents suggest that fortifying the community of Monterey was one of Acklin's chief objectives. The publisher, himself a transplant from the mid-Atlantic region,¹⁷ used the paper to boost the town at every opportunity. Acklin then disseminated the Gazette as an exchange paper to attract permanent residents--along with their business and money--to the peninsula. In fact, it is possible that the Gazette was created largely for this purpose, and that its unnamed proprietors were businessmen willing to subsidize the enterprise to enhance the local economy. This was a paper created, not just to disseminate news, but to cater to the special interests of Monterey.

Acklin quickly proved himself a good candidate for the job at hand. He fired off plugs for Monterey and its financially advantageous attributes regularly, often multiple times within the same issue: "The Bay [sic] continues to swarm with herring--immense quantities taken every day. Seals are abundant, and easily shot from the wharves. Large quantities of rock and red fish, cod and turbot are being salted down."¹⁸

The enterprise most frequently touted in the pages of the Gazette during Acklin's tenure, however, was mining.

¹⁷Ibid., 3.

¹⁸Monterey Gazette, 29 January 1864, 2.

"We are in hopes that Monterey county [sic] will yet prove rich in the precious metals, and that when our cattle and sheep on a thousand hills have passed away, that Old Earth [sic], . . . will yet yield us rich returns from her bosom."¹⁹ Acklin packaged these promotions as news--a common practice of the era--despite the fact that they read more like enticing travel brochures than newspaper copy.

Attracting visitors and new residents was not the only type of community activism plied in the Gazette; the paper also took on the role of public watchdog and social conscience, lobbying for new and improved roads, bridges, railroads, fire departments, and schools. In one such campaign, Acklin brought attention to the need for improved classroom facilities: "We have some one hundred and fifty children . . . crowded together in a single apartment, . . . poorly ventilated and lighted, . . . and devoid of every characteristic which should render the school room attractive."²⁰ In another, the publisher first lauded local mines, then used his leverage to make a case for "immediate action in the matter of good roads into Monterey."²¹ He argued that the city would "necessarily become the shipping

¹⁹Monterey Gazette, 11 March 1864, 2.

²⁰Monterey Gazette, 18 December 1863, 2.

²¹Monterey Gazette, 19 February 1864, 2.

point for . . . mines in the county and every effort should be put forth to do away with all obstacles that may impede the future prosperity of this portion of the country."²² Thus Acklin attempted to make civic-minded citizens out of his readers, doling out opinions and guidance where community issues were involved. On occasion federal matters, too, were duked out in the pages of the Gazette, as when the publisher made a case against government involvement with the postal service. Sometimes the publisher's entreaties brought positive results, sometimes they did not. Always, however, the cause was one that intentionally garnered community backing, helping to ensure the paper's ongoing publication.

Gaining community acceptance for the paper likely played a part in Acklin's decision to pledge allegiance to the current administration as well. From a business standpoint, siding with popular public opinion was the most sensible and lucrative tactic for the frontier publisher to employ. Yet despite his declaration of support for the administration, Acklin denied formal political ties by professing the paper's independence--a rarity during the Civil War when party lines were sharply divided and partisan

²²Ibid.

sentiments ran very high.²³ This fence-sitting political stance may have been the publisher's way of letting readers know that the paper was not financially indebted to any political group.²⁴ In addition, such posturing kept Acklin's options open should the need or opportunity for party support arise.²⁵ At the very least, the tactic probably guarded against a split in the paper's audience. A pioneer publisher, after all, needed as many readers as he could get--and keep.

While Acklin did not admit to having an established political agenda, the contents of the Gazette betray that someone tied to the paper, perhaps the unnamed proprietors, did. Prior to the turn of the century, individual or group financing of a newspaper by someone other than the publisher was usually born of a desire to promote certain political or economic interests.²⁶ This might further account for the monetary generosity of the Gazette's sponsors. It may also help explain why, despite claims of independence, the

²³Frank A. Leach, Recollections of a Newspaper Man: A Record of Life and Events in California (San Francisco: Samuel Levinson, 1917), 124.

²⁴Cloud, 29.

²⁵David Fridtjof Halaas, Boom Town Newspapers: Journalism on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier, 1859-1881, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1981), 40.

²⁶Dyer, 44.

paper's contents revealed underlying party leanings. Subtleties such as use of the pronoun "we" when discussing the North, as well as less-than-subtle promotion of the Union cause--including repeated predictions of the Confederacy's demise--were common during Acklin's tenure with the Gazette.

Alignment with the North is especially apparent in the publisher's choice of news derived from exchange papers. Acklin was adept at selecting those articles that painted a rosy picture about the Union army and equally skilled at skirting those that cast it in a negative light. "Wherever our armies penetrate, the despotism that has everywhere put out the lights of knowledge is destroyed, and the church and school open wide their doors to all who choose to enter and enjoy their benefits."²⁷ Quotes from pro-Union speeches and their accompanying editorial preambles also suggest a certain political bent. The publisher regularly concurred with negative assessments made regarding the South, such as this one professed by a Union general: "People may talk about Democrats, Republicans and Abolitionists [sic] as they will--say what they will--there are but two parties--patriots and traitors--in this country at the present time."²⁸

²⁷Monterey Gazette, 15 January 1864, 3. ²⁸Ibid., 2.

Copperheads found the Gazette's hot seat particularly warm, and were frequent recipients of verbal lashings accusing that such an element, with its "despicable subserviency to slavery and the Southern Cross, merits the contempt of even Southern men, who may plead in extenuation of their conduct, self-interest, custom and education."²⁹ And, on those rare occasions when the Gazette did contain reports of rebel conquests, Acklin's editorial asides minimized their significance. For instance, following a statistical summary of the accomplishments of rebel General John H. Morgan excerpted from the Montgomery Advertiser, the publisher retorted, "Johnny has stolen horseflesh and got over quite an extent of ground--particularly in Ohio; but that killing and wholesale gobbling of 700,000 by 5,000 is rather steep and should be taken in installments."³⁰

Content was also dictated by what was available to the publisher and what he felt obligated to write about. What today might be interpreted strictly as a choice of journalism form was, in the 1860s, part of the business protocol Acklin had to employ to maintain the Gazette's viability. For instance, the paper could not be distributed if its columns were meager; it had to look established and successful, brimming with information, regardless of what

²⁹Ibid. ³⁰Monterey Gazette, 12 February 1864, 2.

that information might be. And, it did not take a business degree to determine that it was unwise to run counter to public opinion before establishing financial security. Premature outspokenness usually led to depleted subscriber and advertiser backing, and ended in the paper's collapse. With so much hinging on maintaining community support, it follows that Acklin's content selection favored articles that sparked wide audience approval.

After its first four issues, the paper established a somewhat stable format. Column one of the first page included the masthead and nine or ten business card style ads, while the second column often led with a patriotic poem followed by a magazine or book extract. Sometimes the extract stood alone. The remainder of the first page usually consisted of monographs lifted from books, encyclopedias, and personal letters, as well as news gleaned from papers from around the country. Acklin clipped liberally from other newspapers, fattening lean columns while simultaneously hoping to garner the interest of Monterey's immigrant population by keeping them in touch with their homelands. Typical front page fare ranged in topic from "The Life of Jesus,"³¹ an encapsulation of two

³¹Monterey Gazette, 18 December 1863, 1.

books on the subject, to "Cold Feet,"³² a scientific excerpt warning that "cold feet are avenues to death of multitudes every year."³³ Articles describing various agricultural techniques were among the reprints the publisher used and, given the locale and occupations it offered, were perhaps among the most awaited features printed.

Reprinted pro-Union articles, reading very much like pep talks, were also a favorite feature of the front page, as were war-related speeches of important political and literary figures the likes of President Lincoln, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and California governor, Leland Stanford. When a column ran short, jokes, anecdotes, or tiny advertisements filled the remaining space. Occasionally, Acklin seized the opportunity afforded by a scant column to remind his audience of the importance of their local paper and that it should be heartily supported.. "A family without a newspaper is always half an age behind the times; . . . Who would be without a newspaper?"³⁴

If blocks of space remained after the usual contents were placed on the front page, editorials wielding moral and partisan messages were often the filler of choice. Acklin frequently used the Gazette to promote instruction in

³²Monterey Gazette, 26 February 1864, 1. ³³Ibid.

³⁴Monterey Gazette, 25 December 1863, 1.

subjects ranging from spousal treatment and nurturing to the virtues of attending church, obtaining a good education, and techniques for developing and maintaining good character.

"Whenever you catch yourself in a fault finding remark, say some approving one in the same breath, and you will soon be cured,"³⁵ exemplifies the type of counsel the publisher gave his readers.

Pages two and three were not as predictable as the first. These were the inside pages, so called because their placement, when newsprint was folded in half vertically, was between pages one and four. Where the first and fourth pages were routinely processed as early as the printing schedule would allow, pages two and three were held open for timely stories that had to be set in type at the last minute. For instance, mail and newspapers arriving via Wells Fargo and steamer usually appeared on one or both of these pages. Incoming Eastern letters and newspapers were perused for information to carry in the paper's "Eastern News" and "Last Night's Mail" columns, which included international events, the war, court-martials and sentencings, as well as United States congressional activities and legislation (local editorial commentary supplied).

³⁵Monterey Gazette, 22 January 1864, 4.

Local news was also featured on pages two and three, covering legislative activity, economic conditions, and gossip, including the defense or defamation of someone's character--usually to hammer out some politically based argument. Doctor C.A. Canfield, who advertised regularly in the Gazette, wrote a weather summary that made scattered appearances on the second page, while the local church directory listed the area's two churches--one Catholic and one Protestant--in this page's fifth column. If a little room was left over, small ads were slipped in to fill the page, and when larger news holes loomed close to deadline, editorials, often looking more like news than opinion, provided a quick fix.

Local coverage on the third page led with a partial column labeled "Home Affairs." A somewhat gossipy feature, "Home Affairs" announced marriages, births, and deaths; detailed residents' vacation plans; and conducted bed checks of the ill. Crime reports running the gamut from horse theft to murder, and accompanied by details of vigilante reaction, were also a fixture of the third page, as was a marine journal naming individuals traveling to and from Monterey. Drought updates and shipping news mingled with other local reports which were injected with messages meant to lure tourists and permanent residents to the Monterey

area. One article of this ilk detailed the reopening of the county's third judicial district court and the magnetic attraction it had, bringing many out-of-towners to the community. As was his style, Acklin boldly stretched the news to its boosterism extreme, describing how the visitors' observation of local residents brought them "within the healthful moral influences which so highly characterize our city."³⁶

Monterey's economic picture, on the other hand, was delivered with less hype and appeared on page two or three under one of two heads: "Financial and Commercial" or "Monetary and Commercial." Acklin pulled no punches in this column; this was not a forum for community boosterism. Instead, it was a succinct roundup of the local economy and stock market. "Sales of merchandise have been light, but in marking up prices, dealers have kept even,"³⁷ the publisher explained in one issue. "The demand for money is active and in excess of the available supply,"³⁸ he assessed in another. Compared with the extensive monetary and stock exchange reports supplied in today's newspapers, those in the Gazette seem scant and inconsequential. But despite the

³⁶Monterey Gazette, 18 December 1863, 3.

³⁷Monterey Gazette, 15 January 1864, 2.

³⁸Monterey Gazette, 26 February 1864, 2.

almost comical nature of some of the entries--"the money market has been very stringent during the week, partly in consequence of the absorption by an Indian blacksmith, of two half dollars, used in plating a pair of spurs"³⁹--the information was important to area residents, most of whose financial standings were precarious. When economic news was positive, the publisher not only reported it, but expounded on it as well: "The late issue of county securities has been taken up with alacrity. . . . The able Board of Supervisors are entitled to all praise for their successful operation in maintaining public confidence in Monterey scrip."⁴⁰

The Gazette's staunch support of Monterey was not limited to promoting the town's many natural resources; it also drew attention to Monterey's commercial and business developments. The progress of various hotels and retail establishments was frequently noted on the second and third pages of the local paper and proved valuable beyond merely portraying the town as thriving and progressive. It is likely that doling out favorable press to businessmen and professionals procured or retained their gratitude and, in return, their advertising dollars. Apparently his plan was

³⁹Monterey Gazette, 18 December 1863, 3.

⁴⁰Monterey Gazette, 5 February 1864, 2.

effective, as indicated by the tag on the following entry:
 "Ed Martin, of Martin's Bazaar, Watsonville, has the good wishes of this office. By the by, Santa Claus is sojourning at Martin's. See adv." ⁴¹ Not surprisingly, advertisements for Martin's store, as well as his services as a notary public and commissioner of deeds for Nevada territory, made their first in a long-standing contract of appearances on page three of that very same issue. Occasionally, such endorsements were the publisher's way of recognizing merchants who posted a larger than required cash contribution for subscriptions or advertising.⁴² Acklin extended this tactic to include more distant business connections, too, as when he praised the New York-based periodical distributor, L. Scott and Company, for its acclaimed collection of publications. L. Scott and Company submitted its first insertion in the same issue.⁴³

Similarly, the Gazette issued public notes of appreciation thanking agencies and businessmen for various services and deeds that benefitted the paper and its publisher. Like the editorial endorsements previously mentioned, these expressions of gratitude for provision of

⁴¹Monterey Gazette, 25 December 1863, 2.

⁴²Halaas, 36.

⁴³Monterey Gazette, 5 February 1864, 2, 4.

Atlantic papers and public documents were almost certain to perpetuate courtesies and round up additional advertising clients.

One thing Acklin did not have to actively pursue was official advertising. The publisher's decision to locate at the county seat guaranteed posting of all government and legal ads in the Gazette, without plying excessive praise or door-to-door sales pitches. In the Gazette's first few issues, the balance of page three displayed official ads sprinkled around a preponderance of commercial advertising-- a haphazard approach that did not last long. By the paper's fifth number, the growing category of authorized notices was set apart from consumer ads and addressed legal matters such as estate settlements, rancho divisions and redistributions, liquidation sales, and shareholder's reports. Ads announced the formation and dissolution of partnerships. Bulletins warned of the consequences of delinquent tax payments and conducting business without a license, while summonses beckoned to those with a date in court. As the Gazette became a fixture in the community, official notices consistently filled two columns.

Commercial advertising also grew in parallel with the paper's viability, but it did not happen overnight, as might be assumed when comparing the paper's first and second

issues. A glance at the second number of the Gazette gives the impression that its advertising income nearly doubled, from three columns to six, in only one week. But of the thirty-two consumer ads in this issue, only twenty-two were non-duplicated inserts, and a mere three were newcomers. Like the doctor, general merchandise entrepreneur and the meat market proprietor who signed on after the first issue, though, others gradually saw the benefits of advertising in the local paper. Steadily, Acklin lured the professionals and retailers needed to keep the Gazette solvent. In fact, advertising increased by nearly a column in only three issues and another half column by the eighth number, after which a routine procession of retailers and professionals hawked their services and wares in print. Retail ads invited prospective customers to see the finest in new horse tack at M. Hughs's Harness and Saddlery and to sample the stock of books, stationery, cutlery, brushes, perfumes, tobacco, and newspapers available at Ed Martin's Bazaar and Fancy Emporium. Ads peddling local services were also typical: hotel accommodations, the skills of doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, notaries public, and barbers (whose repertoires also included bleeding, cupping, and tooth extraction). However, advertising from more remote locations, such as San Francisco and New York, also

contributed to the paper's revenue, usually offering a variety of books and periodicals.

The Gazette's amply padded advertising columns project an illusion that the paper attracted a moderate advertising base from its inception--an impression that was likely necessary to win the confidence of potential advertisers so that they, too, would promote their businesses in the pages of the paper. Filling space with dual insertions positioned identically on consecutive pages also cut down on composition time. Except for a smattering of news in column one, pages three and four were often identical--a real timesaver when it came to setting type. Still, the prevalence of riddles, poetry and editorials mingling with the ads cannot be overlooked as evidence that the publisher may also have been scrambling to fill barren columns. These methods were most likely employed in combination to tackle the rigors of managing the Gazette's advertising columns.

In his continual effort to ensure the Gazette's weekly publication, Acklin routinely appealed to the conscience of potential advertisers: "Business Men will do the clean thing, and conuslt [sic] their own interests by liberally advertising in the Gazette. Don't be ashamed of your business, gentlemen."⁴⁴ Unlike today's in-house

⁴⁴Monterey Gazette, 11 December 1863, 3.

advertising, Acklin's solicitations for insertions were not grouped with the other ads; they were slipped in under the pretext of news in the "Home Affairs" column, or some other current events section, where the odds of being noticed were greater.

Advertising dollars were not the only means of financial support sought through camouflaged self-promotion. Without subscribers, the Gazette was nothing. But attracting and maintaining paying customers was not an easy task, especially given the enormous size of the ranchos that made up the 2,127,296-acre Monterey County.⁴⁵ Acklin probably trudged door-to-door hoping to develop his subscriber list, but he did not limit himself to a walking campaign. As with his advertising drive, he incorporated use of the paper itself as a vehicle for attracting subscribers--although as in-house ads go, his were not recognizable as such. Tucked into the front page news on Christmas Day, for instance, Acklin printed the following: "A man eats up a pound of sugar, and the pleasure he has enjoyed is done with; but the information he can get from a newspaper is treasured up in the mind, to be used whenever his inclination calls for it."⁴⁶ Then, after appealing to

⁴⁵Hart, 329.

⁴⁶Monterey Gazette, 25 December 1863, 1.

the intellect, he tugged at the conscience: "A family without a newspaper is always half an age behind the times; they never think much, nor find much to think of. And there are the little ones growing up in ignorance, without a taste for reading."⁴⁷ Of course, once subscribers were reeled in, payment was expected to be forthcoming. When it was not, Acklin again dropped subtle hints to incite action, as when he printed a series of "impudent questions"⁴⁸ beginning with, "to ask an unmarried lady how old she is,"⁴⁹ and wrapping up with, "to ask a subscriber if he has paid the printer."⁵⁰

By the time the fifth number of the Gazette was published, Acklin had enlisted the services of three agents to help solicit subscriptions and advertising. However, the territories they covered in San Francisco, Pajaro, and Watsonville still left the publisher to deal with a sizeable portion of Monterey County on his own.

Given these responsibilities on top of trying to round up news, set type, and fulfill job orders, it is understandable that Acklin seemed to print whatever was at

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Monterey Gazette, 26 February 1864, 1. ⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

arms' reach at press time.⁵¹ Financial considerations demanded that a disproportionate amount of time be spent drumming up business and setting type, leaving very little muscle to perform reportorial duties. After just a few weeks of publication, hard news, and local items in the Gazette were displaced by poetry, riddles, editorials, and book and encyclopedic extracts, all of which fit neatly into a prescribed space. Betraying a criterion for inclusion that had nothing to do with patriotism, community advancement, or news value, these contents were deemed worthy of publication purely on their ability to plug a news hole; sensational stories were the exception and were seldom drawn from Acklin's stockpile of filler candidates. But padding the paper this way carried a price: the Gazette fell behind in its promised coverage, particularly on the home front. Sometimes there was nothing to offer at all, as noted in an apology which stood alone in the local column of the paper's seventh number: "We are extremely chagrined at our inability to jot down anything of interest under the above head."⁵² Thus augmented with clipped miscellany,

⁵¹Generally, publishers of this era had no formal training in gathering and reporting news effectively, which would also account for a shortage of local news. George S. Turnbull, History of Oregon Newspapers (Portland: Binfords and Mort, 1940), 155.

⁵²Monterey Gazette, 22 January 1864, 2.

along with just about anything else that filled leftover holes, the Gazette was typical of newspapers of its era.

The diminution of news copy in the Gazette is a symptom of several of the difficulties publishers of this era encountered. In addition to having an overload of responsibilities, news was hard to come by owing to poor transportation and communication systems. Already inadequate roads were rendered even more treacherous in bad weather,⁵³ barring receipt of exchange papers and letters, the lifeline of the pioneer journalist. Telegraph transmissions were still expensive and the lines, also hampered by the weather, were not always functional.⁵⁴

Even on the local front, not too much was going on that could not be disseminated faster by word of mouth than via the local paper. Acklin requested local submissions from his readers and generally had to scrounge for material that might come as correspondence from residents' friends from around the country--information that was notoriously inaccurate, unreliable, and biased. They had to know who in the community received what periodicals so they could be borrowed and scoured for printable items.⁵⁵

⁵³John Myers Myers, Print in a Wild Land (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), 68.

⁵⁴Cloud, 131. ⁵⁵Myers, 30.

So prevalent were these problems among pioneer publishers, that cutting and pasting from other papers was an acceptable antidote--as long as proper attribution accompanied the lifted material. Yet this solution possessed its own inherent problems. The arrival of exchange papers and letters via steamer and Wells Fargo was sporadic and rarely conformed to the publisher's printing schedule. Spotty mail delivery also made it difficult for the publisher to know what, if anything, to leave room for in his columns.⁵⁶ Generic material had to be stashed for use at a moment's notice. Editorials were an attractive alternative to the clip and paste routine. Not only could opinion pieces be cranked out at the last minute and made to fit specific gaps, they could also address topics of real concern to the publisher and his readers.

After all this information was collected and created, Acklin had to compose it into a presentable and readable form. Not an easy task in the 1860s, when the most up-to-date printing equipment available to the pioneer publisher was the hand press. True, the hand press was relatively inexpensive, but it was also slow. And before the printing stage was reached, type had to be set by hand--letter by

⁵⁶A. L. Lorenz, "Out of Sorts and Out of Cash: Problems of Publishing in Wisconsin Territory, 1833-1848," Journalism History 3, no. 2 (Summer 1976): 37.

letter. There was no time to verify whether a letter was a "p," a "q," a "d," or a "b,"⁵⁷ which explains the upside down and backward letters that appeared on a regular basis in the Gazette. Once the type was finally set, only one side of a sheet of paper could be printed at a time, and each of those sheets had to be engraved individually. As pages were pulled from the press they were hung to dry, after which the second side could be printed. Most printers could produce about fifty to sixty four-page papers per hour, meaning that a weekly paper with a circulation of five hundred could take all day to print.⁵⁸

In view of the hurdles Acklin had to jump to obtain news and advertising to fill his sheet and to prepare it for dissemination, it is incongruous that he would complain about insufficient space. But complain he did, and with a fair amount of regularity. His laments always accompanied those articles which he had apparently held in reserve until there was requisite room to print them, as in the following: "The last message of the late Governor Stanford has been before us for some time, but we have not found in our small sheet room for a notice of it before."⁵⁹ It is possible that what really hindered Acklin was a lack of large chunks

⁵⁷Cloud, 92. ⁵⁸Ibid., 90.

⁵⁹Monterey Gazette, 25 December 1863, 2.

of space in which to easily place stories without breaking them up, since jumping from one page to another was not yet an adopted practice.

The publisher was in no position to expand the paper to accommodate these feature length articles, either. Delivery of supplies was hindered by poor road conditions, weather problems, thefts, and especially the Civil War.⁶⁰ As a result, newsprint was prohibitively expensive, making dimensional or page increases infeasible. Transport of paper from back East to the West was responsible for boosting the price of paper from about four dollars to anywhere from twenty to fifty dollars per ream. The Civil War inflated the cost even more.⁶¹ In fact, one magazine distributor spelled out the rising cost of supplies right in the copy of his advertisement in the Gazette. "The cost of reprinting these periodicals has more than doubled in consequence of the enormous rise in the price of paper and of a general advance in all other expenses."⁶²

Making matters worse, hard currency, which Acklin needed to purchase supplies, was scarce. Credit was difficult to obtain. And to compound the problem further,

⁶⁰Lorenz, 37; Cloud, 136.

⁶¹Cloud, 137-139; Weigle, 87.

⁶²Monterey Gazette, 26 February 1864, 4.

subscribers, advertisers and job printing clients often paid their bills by trading whatever goods or services they had to offer--if the publisher was lucky enough to receive payment at all. Unfortunately, suppliers were not as gracious about bartering and expected cash in exchange for provisions.⁶³

The Gazette's pay-in-advance policy added to Acklin's financial woes; it was difficult to enforce and rarely heeded. But despite claims to cut off subscribers whose bills were in arrears, publishers seldom made good on their threats.⁶⁴ Such action simply was not financially sound. Publishers could not afford to lose their subscribers, yet the consequences of carrying them without payment for an extended period were equally dismal. So ensued an unspoken extension of credit, whereby patrons paid or traded as circumstances allowed,⁶⁵ and which apparently served to perpetuate the cycle and send Acklin packing.

By the time the publisher severed his ties with the Gazette, advertising had increased steadily, growing from 3 1/2 to just short of six columns per issue. Official ads, guaranteed to the Gazette by virtue of its publication at

⁶³Lucius Beebe, Comstock Commotion: The Story of the Territorial Enterprise and Virginia City News (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954), 5.

⁶⁴Cloud, 48. ⁶⁵Myers, 54.

the county seat, increased from less than a fourth of a column to nearly two columns. Understandably, Acklin threw his energy into filling ad space, the most profitable aspect of newspapering, thereby edging news out of the twenty columns available each week. Yet if extant issues suggest that the publisher had more of a head for business than a nose for news, why did he turn the paper over to a new publisher just as it appeared, from an advertising standpoint, to be moving toward financial solvency? As alluded to above, perhaps the following notice, placed in the last two issues before Acklin parted company with the Gazette, illuminates his plight: "No paper forwarded from this office after this date unless paid for. It has become necessary for the Publisher [sic] to adopt this rule, which will be strictly observed."⁶⁶ Recall, too, that collections for advertising space were commonly in arrears. Thus, with very little explanation, Acklin took leave of the paper, and on March 25, 1864, F. W. Cassell's name debuted in the masthead.

⁶⁶Monterey Gazette, 11 March 1864, 2; Monterey Gazette, 18 March 1864, 2.

CHAPTER 7

F.W. CASSELL TAKES THE HELM

"Having served the time allowed ourself, as publisher of this paper, we now bid you an affectionate farewell,"¹ Acklin informed his readers. "In your hands we leave the destiny of the Gazette, and hope, for your own welfare, you will continue to lend it the liberal support already given, and which your county paper should have."²

Regardless of the publisher's praise of community support, his threats to cut off non-paying subscribers betray his dilemma: there was not enough cash flow to sustain the paper and its publisher. Acklin's brief farewell alludes to a self-imposed time allotment, conceivably during which he hoped to achieve certain milestones. The most urgent of these goals was very likely monetary stability; yet a three-month publishing stint was hardly enough time for a new publication to gain secure financial footing. Equally troublesome was the all-consuming task of physically producing a paper during this era. Aside from occasional job work, the Gazette was probably the only source of income Acklin had time for.

¹Monterey Gazette, 25 March 1864, 2. ²Ibid.

Short on cash and long on debt, the Gazette's first publisher found himself in a predicament nearly synonymous with the profession itself during the mid-nineteenth century.

Research does not disclose whether Acklin extricated himself from the paper or if he was released by the proprietors, but a revised prospectus³ makes it clear that the paper's purse strings remained in the hands of the original financial backers. Furthermore, they were not going to allow Acklin's exit to become an excuse for delinquent subscribers to get off scot-free.

With the change in leadership came a revitalized interest in collecting outstanding bills. The paper's advance payment policy ran in a prominent spot on page one, and the new publisher's tactics included conducting "business as much as possible on the cash system,"⁴ and he hoped "by strict and careful attention to business, to make the Gazette THE paper."⁵

Cassell's takeover did not cause a shakeup as far as the paper's day-to-day operations, format, layout, and contents were concerned. Even the appearance of the paper was unchanged, despite the publisher's purchase of new

³Ibid., 4. ⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid.

printing equipment and type.⁶ The Gazette's political stance also remained the same, probably because ownership did not change. Cassell pledged to retain the paper's independence from political financing, while reserving the right to sustain support for the Lincoln administration and its war policy. Indeed, party loyalties were obvious from the first issue Cassell published, in which he ran a reprint from the Philadelphia Press predicting the re-election of the president.⁷ In a later number, Cassell again let his politics show when he recognized the resurrection of a newspaper demolished for having "secession proclivities,"⁸ and bemoaned the fact that its very talented editor sided with "such a wicked and desperate party."⁹

While political sentiments were unchanged, Cassell attempted a different style in his support of the administration. In what appears to be a move away from the personal journalism that defined the era, the new publisher stated that "no personal allusions will be made"¹⁰ in the Gazette. This precocious action was perhaps derived from the larger eastern papers in Cassell's receipt, in which

⁶Monterey Gazette, 15 April 1864, 3.

⁷Monterey Gazette, 25 March 1864, 1.

⁸Monterey Gazette, 8 April 1864, 2. ⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Monterey Gazette, 25 March 1864, 4.

personal journalism was beginning to yield to the development of the newspaper as a business. Nevertheless, it was uncommon for a frontier newspaper to incorporate this change so early in its history,¹¹ which may explain why, after just a few issues, the same personal pronouns and editorial tags previously used by Acklin snuck back into Cassell's writing. After all, this was a very emotionally heated period; Lincoln was seeking re-election and the Civil War was chiseling sharper divisions between Northern and Southern ideals. If ever there were reasons to take sides, contemporary sentiments induced doing so.

Bylines and initials, also on the cutting edge of newspaper evolution, became an increasingly familiar sight in the Gazette, particularly when attached to poems and literary pieces. And literary pieces themselves took on some new characteristics, most notably a suspenseful serial format whereby readers were lured into a story of uncertain outcome and left hanging until the next issue of the paper came out. A tactic implemented due to lack of space? Perhaps, but it was not a bad way to entice readers to buy next week's paper either.

¹¹John Tebbel, The Compact History of the American Newspaper (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1963), 252.

News of progress from around the state was another effective way to tap readership. Frontier audiences were anxious to receive news that California, particularly their town, was developing in stride with the rest of the country. Monterey residents must have been as elated as Cassell when he disclosed that a local gold mine had finally panned out. "Mr. Burns has completed a tunnel over one hundred feet in length, and tapped the lead at a depth of some seventy-five feet," the report read. "Crude assays upon the ground are of the most favorable character. . . . Monterey has at last struck it."¹² News that buildings were being constructed, that roads were being built or improved, that school attendance was high, and that new businesses were settling in town was also received with enthusiasm.

Just as Cassell hoped his stories publicizing the appeal of the Monterey Peninsula, "the most attractive seaside resort that can be found,"¹³ might land a spot in neighboring town journals, he exchanged the favor by featuring their promotional stories in the Gazette. Thus, booster news from towns around the state became an increasingly familiar sight in the Gazette. Developments in regional railroad and telegraph systems, innovative

¹²Monterey Gazette, 20 May 1864, 2.

¹³Monterey Gazette, 24 June 1864, 3.

irrigation techniques, the discovery of mines, the creation of roadways, and the publication of fledgling newspapers were among the subjects boasting California's many virtues.

The state was not without its problems, however, and perhaps less often than it should have, negative news nudged its way into the Gazette. Reports of miners' strikes, the effects of drought on farmers and ranchers, grumblings about the lack of proper transportation routes--even a San Francisco-issued petition asking the president to recall that city's incompetent postmaster¹⁴--tempered the abundance of positive press and provided a more realistic picture of the state.

Much of the local news Cassell printed consisted of information his readers genuinely needed to know. "The game law, with regard to feathered game, went into force on the 15th of this month,"¹⁵ the publisher warned in one issue. "We are to have hereafter, three terms each of the Circuit and District Courts of the United States--six in all--here in Monterey," he advised in another, and quickly commented that "the additional importance given to Monterey is a

¹⁴Monterey Gazette, 22 July 1864, 2.

¹⁵Monterey Gazette, 25 March 1864, 2.

matter of no slight consideration."¹⁶ Results of these and all court proceedings made good copy in the Gazette.

At times during Cassell's tenure, local news went beyond merely providing information, to exposing local corruption and demanding political accountability. For example, when a bill to fund a county road was introduced in the state senate and a local representative petitioned against it, the Gazette raised a red flag to alert its readers. The majority of Monterey's taxpayers favored the bill, the paper claimed, and further intimated that Senator William F. Lovett was not acting on behalf of his constituency.¹⁷ On another occasion, the local Board of Supervisors came under attack because they were unwilling, or unable, to pay to have their meeting minutes published in the paper. Cassell apologized for the absence of the proceedings, which were ordinarily printed gratis "at every sitting but two, which the law distinctly says shall be published in the county newspaper, if there be one."¹⁸ Then came the blow, swift and solid: "It seems as though there must be a leak somewhere--something wrong--if their proceedings cannot bear the light of day, and must be hidden

¹⁶Monterey Gazette, 22 April, 1864, 2.

¹⁷Monterey Gazette, 8 April 1864, 2.

¹⁸Monterey Gazette, 10 February 1865, 2.

in darkness from the inquiring eyes of our citizens."¹⁹ Was this an honest attempt to expose corruption within the local governing body, or simply a means to publicly humiliate its members for their lack of support of the paper? Probably a little of both. Certainly it voiced a warning to anyone contemplating a similar faux pas.

Raising social awareness and concern for important community issues, projects, and organizations intrinsic to the town's development were also part of Cassell's forum. Monterey's public school was a prime recipient of the publisher's attention, as were improvements in local transportation and the region's overall accessibility. Armed with editorials, Cassell's lobby for improved transportation networks was particularly aggressive and persistent. "Let us have a good road to the outer world, as the first requisite to future prosperity and advancement."²⁰ And when Cassell's unrelenting push for community advancements began to have an effect, he brought that to the attention of his readers, too. "We hear of numerous applications being made to have new roads opened for the

¹⁹Ibid. ²⁰Monterey Gazette, 27 May 1864, 3.

public convenience. . . . Great benefit to our county will be the result of such a measure."²¹

Not to be eclipsed by local offerings, national and international coverage also kept the Gazette's audience informed about happenings outside their isolated existence. Readers scrutinized speech transcripts and evaluated congressional rulings and decisions handed down from the Supreme Court. They assessed the nation's economy and marveled at the latest improvements in communication and transportation systems in the United States and abroad. They cringed at crime and accident reports and the details of Indian uprisings. And they sympathized with those affected by natural disasters and not-so-natural disasters, such as wars between other nations.

The Civil War was still the most emotionally charged subject tracked by the Gazette. But war coverage was no more consistent with Cassell at the paper's helm than it had been when Acklin was publisher. Four weeks elapsed before the new publisher printed his first battle story, and its contents were already a month old. To Cassell this was probably timely, considering that news was frequently twice that stale when he received and printed it. When war accounts did finally go to press, they were often graphic

²¹Monterey Gazette, 24 February 1865, 2.

and sensational, as in the following account of the slaughter of a company of the First Mississippi (colored) infantry: "Some of the negroes were pinned to the ground with bayonets, others had their brains knocked out, and others were shot through the head."²²

Many of these articles, particularly longer ones, were randomly placed throughout the paper. Encapsulated stories, on the other hand, were lumped together in an "Eastern News" column appearing on page two or three. These items were patterned after telegraph transmissions which were necessarily brief and succinct. Telegrams themselves made only scattered appearances in this column, owing to the as yet tenuous condition of the telegraph system. "After an interval of two days, the telegraph commenced working again last night,"²³ was the only explanation Cassell could offer when the wires did not deliver. But when the wires did produce, they chattered with news of recent Civil War engagements and maneuvers, including casualty and prisoner statistics. Cassell had "Mr. Ferdinand, the telegraph operator at this City [sic],"²⁴ to thank for receipt of dispatches.

²²Monterey Gazette, 15 April 1864, 2.

²³Monterey Gazette, 20 May 1864, 2.

²⁴Monterey Gazette, 13 May 1864, 2.

When new details about the conflict were not available, the publisher recapped and analyzed past events. Essays rehashing old battles were generic and always included rousing, positive commentary regarding a Union victory. Cassell also relied on war-related anecdotes and trivia as an alternative to the dearth of timely Civil War news. Not always as spirited and uplifting as the above-mentioned battle assessments and speeches, these supplemental items depicted the more mundane and sometimes uglier side of war. One such account explicitly related a little known fact concerning the ultimate fate of horses that became casualties of war--complete with approximate dollar amounts received for selling the various body parts!²⁵ More routine occurrences, such as command appointments and draft updates, were also noted in the Gazette and were typically accompanied by editorial commentary aligned with the general sentiments of California's inhabitants. Cassell made it clear, for example, that residents were not keen on implementing the draft in their state, yet they did recognize its imminent importance and merit. "Threats are rife of resistance to any enforcement of the draft, and, although there is no probability of its necessity in California, yet it is well

²⁵Monterey Gazette, 15 April 1864, 1.

that Government [sic] should be amply prepared for any and all emergencies."²⁶

Stories ancillary to the war, whether original or reprinted, convey the churning political emotions of Monterey's residents. Secessionists, as always, were ripe for ridicule in the Gazette, but Copperheads, "the reckless and unpatriotic men of the North, and the journals in their service, who sympathize with this wicked rebellion,"²⁷ were the favorite target. Every so often, Cassell liked to take a swing at the entire Democratic Party, too: "The day upon which the Democratic National Convention was held, the 29th August, was very appropriate, it being the birthday of Benedict Arnold, the traitor."²⁸

In addition to reflecting the predominant sentiments of the Monterey area, the Gazette's contents reveal a portion of what the publisher was up against to produce a weekly newspaper in this remote Western town. Cassell struggled to balance the fluctuating availability of material that was truly newsworthy. In some issues a preponderance of extracts and literary features--most quite long and of little merit in a newspaper--outranked hard

²⁶Monterey Gazette, 22 April 1864, 2.

²⁷Monterey Gazette, 29 April 1864, 2.

²⁸Monterey Gazette, 9 September 1864, 1.

news, while in other issues important news had the edge. The inconsistency with which significant news was published in the Gazette is indicative of one of the biggest problems endured by the frontier publisher--he was limited by the spotty delivery of publications. One week a shipment brought a wealth of periodicals from which to clip, and the next left him to ration the dregs of the previous week's delivery. The war did not help matters. Cassell's use of many inconsequential reprints representing exchange papers from around the country suggests that the problem was not confined to the frontier, but was partially attributable to the intermittent enforcement of a government-imposed or voluntary censorship.²⁹

Delivering news in a timely manner was another constant challenge for Cassell; he could only relay news as quickly as it was received. Even with improved postal service and increasingly reliable shipping routes, national news was regularly three weeks to a month in arrears. The telegraphic news intermittently seen in the Gazette was considerably more timely, but even these transmissions were usually three or more days old when published. A report of the May 11, 1864 death of General J. E. B. Stuart was

²⁹Sidney Kobre, Development of American Journalism (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown, 1969), 327-329.

recognized in the Gazette nine days after the deed.³⁰ Often the ticker was silent for weeks at a time.

It was perhaps the unpredictable delivery of news that prompted Cassell to concentrate more on local items and those with less time value. On April 22, 1864, a "Local" news column became the leading feature of the third page, replacing the paper's name and date of issue which had routinely appeared in this spot since the paper's inception. Homegrown news, which usually threaded the newspaper wherever there was room, was at last corralled in a tidy column. Not only was this section quick to locate and read, but its regularity lent a needed sense of identity and stability to the paper.

Quips, anecdotes, and, puns also received their own column, "Facts and Fancies." For several months, this collection of humor appeared as a regular feature of the Gazette's fourth page. The temporary use of such a large space for humorous material was probably warranted when nothing else was available; under these circumstances humor simply served as a large-scale filler. As for fillers of smaller proportions, humor was still a good standby. Puns were especially favored: "However much a pawnbroker's shop

³⁰Monterey Gazette, 20 May 1864, 2.

may be crowded, it is always a loan sum place,"³¹ is typical of the fare offered in the humor department. Home remedies also provided a cure for the empty news hole, as did short educational items extracted from books and encyclopedias.

Inventions were an especially prevalent filler in the Gazette, although in hindsight, some were less useful than others. England's announcement of the rubber collar, along with matching cuffs and wristbands,³² was presumably one of the more forgettable contributions. From France, on the other hand, came news that must have stirred excitement for Cassell and other publishers--a revolutionary method of making paper using wood rather than rags. The result? "A reduction in price from fifty to eighty percent."³³ Patrons of the Gazette likely welcomed this news, too, as it heralded the possibility of an enlarged newspaper or decreased subscription rates or both.

Fillers were drawn on less frequently as the presidential election and the end of the war approached. Cassell did not hold back his opinions or his advice when it came to selecting the victor in either contest. Editorials and articles favoring Lincoln and debasing his opponent,

³¹Monterey Gazette, 20 May 1864, 2.

³²Monterey Gazette, 20 May 1864, 1.

³³Monterey Gazette, 6 May 1864, 2.

George B. McClellan, were unrelenting until the votes were cast. Ten days after the balloting, Lincoln's re-election received second-page attention, the best space available in those days for last minute news.³⁴

A steady flow of war news taken from exchange papers made it easy for Cassell to spotlight the battle on any of the Gazette's pages. For the first time in the paper's history, albeit only briefly, war news commandeered three, sometimes four, columns of space. Allusions to a Union victory were pervasive and convincing. Slightly less than two months before the Confederate surrender, a reprint from the Charleston Mercury depicted the frailty of the Southern soldier who was "weakened in strength, shaken in nerve, sick at heart--his efforts all vain, his skill all vain, his success all vain."³⁵ A clip from the Virginia Union carried hopeful news that "The people are fast ranging themselves on the side of peace. This they are doing with a full knowledge of the terms that they must accept--unconditional surrender. They are prepared for it."³⁶ The finality of this article's last sentence sounded taps for the Confederacy: "Jeff Davis will either yield, flee or hang

³⁴Monterey Gazette, 18 November, 2.

³⁵Monterey Gazette, 24 February 1865, 2.

³⁶Monterey Gazette, 17 February 1865, 1.

within sixty days."³⁷ Fifty-four days later the South officially surrendered.³⁸

Cassell waved his own white flag, in the form of sarcastic hints for subscription payments, before the war ended. While most of the publisher's warnings and requests were directed at subscribers, it is probable that the pleas, although veiled, were intended for advertisers as well. Conceivably the publisher paid a bigger price for offending his advertisers, one which might translate to sparse columns bereft of any support from the business community.

Diplomacy ensured that Cassell held onto the base of advertisers that had been Acklin's mainstay. In addition, Cassell added a contingent of legitimate advertisers on his own, many of whom agreed to six-month contracts, indicated with the symbol "6m" paired with the corresponding insertion date printed directly on the ad. San Francisco's recently organized Bank of California, Monterey's newest fruit and confectionary market, and a local night school were among those making a commitment for a long engagement. Many of these ads ran longer than their stated terms, not to reap

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸E. B. Long and Barbara Long, The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac 1861-1865 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971; New York: Plenum Publishing, Da Capo Press, 1971), 673-674.

cash, but to give the impression that the town and the paper were thriving and enterprising. Unfortunately, such business tactics did not pay Cassell's bills.

Transient ads, on the other hand, were not used as padding week after week. Blurbs reminding teachers of upcoming certification exams; meeting notices for local organizations such as the Connor Guards (the local military reserve); and invitations to picnics, horse races, and fairs simply filled space till further notice--"tfn" in newspaper jargon. "Further notice" usually meant until an advertised event was tucked away in memory.

The local government continued to rattle some readers with notices announcing tax assessments on mining stock, summonses to appear in court, and occasionally ominous foreclosure or insolvency bulletins. More encouraging legal proclamations laid claim to timberland, homesteads, and mines, a healthy sign of Monterey's growth and industry. Cassell welcomed them all as a steady source of income. In fact, it seems he was willing to accept almost anything for publication if it had the potential to yield some cash.

For their day, patent medicine ads were huge, some filling entire columns. Their size and their embellished typefaces made them hard to miss and quite enticing. The potential return for Cassell proved too tempting to ignore.

On July 29, 1864 Dr. A Ball, who "is not a quack,"³⁹ signed on with the Gazette to sell a tonic touted to cure anything from gonorrhea to skin diseases, which, by the way, could be diagnosed in person or by mail. Others peddlers added their quack remedies to the advertising roster, hoping to take advantage of a gullible public.

At the time of Cassell's departure from the Gazette, patent medicine ads averaged three columns per issue. Their insertion contracts, however, indicate that they sometimes ran between three and six months beyond their termination dates without a change in paperwork. Given the amount of space these ads consumed, the publisher's apparent leniency had the potential to compound his cash flow problems.

It seemed an opportune time to publish a paper. The Civil War created an unprecedented demand for news; there was no competition worth mentioning, except a "secesh"⁴⁰ paper with a grim future; and news was generally more accessible. Yet none of these advantages could sustain the paper without proper finances. Not even the publisher's adjunct printing business could generate enough money to keep the venture afloat. Lack of funds ultimately silenced

³⁹Monterey Gazette, 29 July 1864, 2.

⁴⁰Monterey Gazette, 14 October 1864, 3.

the press for Cassell and his backers. In his last issue with the Gazette, the publisher quotes the advice of a Wisconsin editor, urging his fellow editors to adopt a cash payment system. In print, the Cassell had such a system in place from the start, but it was nearly impossible to enforce. "He is a poor patron of any place or enterprise who does not pay. Such patronage wears credit threadbare." Cassell extended credit as long as funds would allow, but in the end had "more poor debts than any other business in the community,"⁴¹ to show for his efforts. With these words and twelve months of newspapering in his wake, Cassell was gone.

⁴¹Monterey Gazette, 3 March 1865, 1.

CHAPTER 8

NEW PUBLISHER, NEW LOOK: J. SELWYN BRITTAIN TAKES CHARGE

If J. Selwyn Brittain was looking for a way to wake up a complacent audience, he found it. It was a simple thing, but one that was immediately apparent and hinted that change was afoot. On March 10, 1865, Brittain doubled the height of the Monterey Gazette nameplate. At last there was a ripple in the graphically stagnant paper.

From day one the new publisher projected a demeanor that was all business; Brittain was not only the new editor of the Gazette, he was also its new proprietor. For the first time in the Gazette's history, responsibility for publishing the paper as well as financing it belonged to the same person. Research does not definitively reveal if J. Selwyn Brittain bought the Gazette, or if Cassell and the paper's proprietors were indebted to him and forced to relinquish their biggest asset. Cassell was, however, still trying to collect money from his debtors several months after separating from the paper, indicating he was bearing the brunt of the paper's previous financial burdens. "Mr. John W. Miller, constable of Monterey, is hereby authorized to collect all unpaid bills due the undersigned, and give

receipts for the same. F.W. CASSELL."¹ The cheapest and easiest solution available to a publisher in this situation? Abandon the paper, sell it, perhaps to someone with a political stance to bolster, or liquidate.²

Given Cassell's liquid asset deficiencies along with Brittain's background as an experienced printer from the San Jose Patriot³, it's possible that the new publisher bought the newspaper from its proprietors hoping to resurrect it and solo in the publishing business. It was a job Brittain admittedly assumed "under somewhat disadvantageous circumstances,"⁴ but he assured his audience that "perseverance and energy will accomplish great ends."⁵ He also wisely qualified the paper's survival, pointing out to readers that "the onus of its support will none the less [sic] devolve upon you."⁶

Apparently Brittain felt that the Gazette had not yet hit its mark as a local paper. While he acknowledged his support of the government, he felt that the paper's past obsession with politics had whittled away its identity as a local sheet. Accordingly, the new publisher resolved to make the Gazette "a reliable exponent of the condition,

¹Monterey Gazette, 26 May 1865, 2. ²Turnbull, 141.

³Monterey Gazette, 24 March 1865, 2.

⁴Monterey Gazette, 10 March 1865, 2. ⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid.

interests and resources of the county,"⁷ and invited Monterey residents to get involved. "We solicit information of public interest from all parts of the county, and must depend upon our friends for such until a longer residence has given us a more ample acquaintance and greater facility."⁸

Brittain wasted no time. He immediately dug into the area's untapped news scene, nearly filling the paper's second page with local coverage. Where his predecessors wrote snippets of news about a narrow scope of local events, Brittain captured the town's flavor by recording a wider range of stories, many in expanded form. The publisher chronicled the local celebration of Lincoln's induction into office;⁹ Monterey's bountiful sheep shearing season¹⁰ and harvests; family reunions; the rodeoing season, "for gathering the stray cattle that roam about the plains;"¹¹ and changes in local military command. It was here that readers learned that fellow resident, George Harris, owner of the town's Washington Hotel, had been stabbed by an acquaintance.¹² And it was also here that residents

⁷Ibid. ⁸Ibid. ⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Monterey Gazette, 31 March 1865, 2.

¹¹Monterey Gazette, 26 May 1865, 2.

¹²Monterey Gazette, 10 March 1865, 2.

celebrated with Monterey's resident physician, Dr. Colbert Canfield, when his appointment to the position of army surgeon was announced.¹³

Local news, however, was frequently the first to fall victim to size and time limitations imposed by printing the newspaper on a hand press. "Two or three leading articles are pressed out this week for want of space,"¹⁴ was a disclaimer familiar to Gazette readers. Brittain's predicament was common among frontier publishers putting out four-page sheets. "A large paper is in every way easier to edit than a small one. You can throw into its capacious folds articles and documents unabridged, but one of small size has to be manipulated with the tenderest care"¹⁵ Yet, four pages did consume many composition hours and large quantities of type. "A column and a half of original matter is left over until next week for want of type to set it."¹⁶

Without assistance and sufficient supplies, the publisher could not expand his newspaper. Instead he was obliged to cut corners using preset columns that remained the same issue after issue. In light of these barriers, for

¹³Monterey Gazette, 14 July 1865, 3.

¹⁴Monterey Gazette, 10 March 1865, 2.

¹⁵Monterey Gazette, 2 June 1865, 1.

¹⁶Monterey Gazette, 16 June 1865, 3.

several months the Gazette's first page retained its compendium of masthead and general directory, encyclopedic extracts, history and civics lessons, poetry, fiction and feature stories with no time value, scientific discoveries, and philosophical dissertations. Its companion fourth page was still reserved for ads, as was the third page which, perhaps in the interest of composition time, duplicated the fourth-page ads. With these pages spoken for, all that remained for the dissemination of local and timely news was the paper's second page, and "every week something is to be left over, and somebody is disappointed, not to say chagrined and offended."¹⁷

Of course, there were weeks when Brittain's complaint was just the opposite. "There is a dearth in news of every kind. Not an item has occurred, or is likely to for an indefinite period."¹⁸ When Monterey's news offerings were slim, or when there was no time to hunt for stories, the publisher looked to regional annals to fill space while still providing local fare. Granted, the style of writing more resembled a novel or feature article than a news story, but it possessed local appeal, one of Brittain's chief objectives.

¹⁷Monterey Gazette, 2 June 1865, 1.

¹⁸Monterey Gazette, 24 March 1865, 2.

Endeavoring to squeeze every inch of space out of the Gazette's second page, the publisher added state and national news to its repertoire as well. Brittain introduced a weekly produce report, quoting the latest market prices from San Francisco. Closer to home, news from San Jose included the March 16, 1865 unveiling of a new hotel, The Auzerais House, "a magnificent three story structure, erected after the most approved and stylish mode," for a tab of \$150,000.¹⁹ In addition, the publisher kept his audience apprised of various bills and resolutions introduced at state congressional meetings, Montereyans having a particular interest in special school taxes and the various land bills proposed to readjust township boundaries and divide rancho and mining properties.

Coverage from around the nation included stories about the admission of various states to the Union, progress in the construction of the Pacific Railroad, and rampant Indian depredations. The Gazette also recorded a condensed version of President Johnson's Peace Proclamation²⁰ and the outcome of the Philadelphia Convention.²¹

¹⁹Monterey Gazette, 31 March 1865, 2.

²⁰Monterey Gazette, 13 April 1866, 2.

²¹Monterey Gazette, 24 August 1866, 2.

International news was relatively scarce in Brittain's Gazette. The publisher probably saved precious news space for timelier information culled from around the state and nation, rather than the stale tidbits tossed at him from overseas journals. Occasionally, however, Brittain included something of particular interest to him or his audience regardless of its one-month lag time. "A private dispatch from Cyrus W. Field, dated London May 17th states they had 2,200 miles of the Atlantic cable completed."²² And when that connection was made, it intermittently relayed snippets of information, including inklings of war erupting between Austria and Prussia.²³

Providing a balance of timely local, state, and national news in the five columns available on page two was evidently an unappreciated struggle. The fact that Monterey received mail on a tri-weekly, rather than a weekly, basis further handicapped the publisher.²⁴ Thus, when the Gazette's minimal news and preponderance of duplicate ads came under reader attack, Brittain responded, "we publish now as much reading matter in proportion, as any other

²²Monterey Gazette, 23 June 1865, 2.

²³Monterey Gazette, 20 July 1866, 2.

²⁴Monterey Gazette, 22 June 1866, 3.

interior weekly in the State [sic]."²⁵ He also pointed out that the paper contained "about five columns of original matter per week, so far, and when our patronage justifies us in hiring [sic] part of the work, we may do more."²⁶ To further emphasize his dilemma, Brittain listed the duties required to publish his paper: "We are our own editor, publisher, devil, carrier and--collector! . . . Develops our muscle, you see, and everything else but our purse."²⁷ Typesetting accidents added to the publisher's strife: "Our leading article got knocked into smithereens, and we havn't [sic] time to reset it, so we go to press without. We expect to have assistance at the case soon, when a slight accident will not disconcert us."²⁸

Once assistance was secured,²⁹ presumably providing the publisher with more time to gather news, more than two

²⁵Monterey Gazette, 17 March 1865, 2. ²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid. ²⁸Monterey Gazette, 12 May 1865, 2.

²⁹The Gazette contains evidence that, intermittently, Brittain had help with different aspects of publishing the paper. Some who came to his aid were probably volunteers: "I have concluded to constitute myself your local reporter, for this occasion, at least." Monterey Gazette, 9 June 1865, 3. Others were probably in Brittain's employ, albeit tenuously: "We are proud to say that Bloggs is secure for another week." Monterey Gazette, 17 November 1865, 2. Brittain also refers to his printer and devil (printer's helper). "Our printer has threatened to 'strike.' Our devil haunts us from morn till dewy eve, turning up on the most unseemly occasions with that impertinent inquiry. 'Got any change?'" Monterey Gazette, 4 May 1866, 2.

columns of the third page were set aside for the spillage from page two. Brittain heralded the feat: "We call attention to the improved appearance of this week's paper, and to the large amount of additional, interesting reading matter."³⁰ Those who previously complained that too much space was surrendered to repeat advertising now had 2 1/2 fewer columns to grumble about. Local and state news displaced many of this page's long-standing duplicate ads. Now, in addition to the local coverage supplied on page two, readers turned to the Gazette's modified third page to learn about regional matters.

Unreliable and meager still best described telegraphic news receipts. Interchangeably filed under the headings "The News," "Atlantic News," and "Eastern News," telegrams managed to bring a handful of Civil War details in clipped, fragmented blurbs, even though the wires had "been down part of the time."³¹ And as Brittain hastened to tell his readers, the wires were down a lot. "The wires are down and we have no war news."³² "There has been no news from the east [sic] of any moment, since our last. The wires are

³⁰Monterey Gazette, 2 June 1865, 3.

³¹Monterey Gazette, 10 March 1865, 2.

³²Monterey Gazette, 24 March 1865, 2.

down east of Omaha."³³ Comments such as these were more prevalent than war news itself. Whether cut by Indians, damaged by the elements, or simply malfunctioning, severed communication with the East must have been one of the publisher's biggest frustrations, particularly with the war coming to a close. Even with the war's culmination, telegraphic transmissions were erratic. In fact, Confederate President, Jeff Davis, was in prison for nine days³⁴ before Gazette readers learned of his capture--a story that meandered to Monterey via exchange papers rather than the telegraph.³⁵ The lines did come through to report the indictment of Davis and Breckinridge, but after transmitting several dispatches "the wires gave out--Blast em."³⁶ And to make matters worse, at \$7.50 per ten words transmitted from California to the East Coast, the telegraph remained prohibitively expensive.³⁷

Regrettably, the April 1865 issues of the Gazette were not preserved on microfilm. Searches of the California State Library in Sacramento, the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, and numerous archives in Monterey proved

³³Monterey Gazette, 17 March 1865, 2.

³⁴Long and Long, 687.

³⁵Monterey Gazette, 12 May 1865, 2.

³⁶Monterey Gazette, 9 June 1865, 2. ³⁷Cloud, 130.

unsuccessful at locating original editions or microfilmed copies. These issues undoubtedly contained valuable stories of the South's April 12th surrender at Appomattox Courthouse and the April 14th assassination of President Lincoln.³⁸

Surviving issues of the Gazette, resuming with the May 5, 1865 edition, include follow-up stories portraying the range of emotions elicited by these two watershed events. Reports about the search for and ultimate capture of Jeff Davis,³⁹ a detailed analysis of General Grant's many battle successes,⁴⁰ word of the viewing of the body of Abraham Lincoln as it lay in state in New York,⁴¹ news about the arrest of those "using expressions of joy at the murder of Lincoln,"⁴² the decision of then-Attorney General Speed to ban Lee and other rebel officers from establishing or re-establishing homes in the "loyal States,"⁴³ and details of plans for a permanent memorial to Lincoln helped readers understand and accept the consequences of war. "A short time ago a cloud of weariness and anxiety oppressed the

³⁸Long and Long, 673-677.

³⁹Monterey Gazette, 19 May 1865, 2.

⁴⁰Monterey Gazette, 16 June 1865, 1.

⁴¹Monterey Gazette, 19 May 1865, 1.

⁴²Monterey Gazette, 12 May 1865, 2.

⁴³Monterey Gazette, 19 May 1865, 1.

people, and yet there was no doubt or uncertainty or faltering as to the great end. . . ,"⁴⁴ reflected Brittain in a later issue. For several weeks after war's end, a sense of hope flowed through the publisher's writing: "A gentle tranquilizing sense of relief is creeping over the land and cheer and buoyancy are taking the place of anxiety and weariness."⁴⁵

The end of the Civil War in America created a new challenge for Brittain, that of maintaining reader interest without benefit of the drama that had unfolded throughout the Gazette's existence. Brittain found his new saga in Mexico. Political unrest and dissatisfaction with Maximilian, the country's French-appointed emperor, made Mexico the new hot spot to watch. "The eyes of the world are directed towards that section of the American continent with unabated anxiety, as the theatre of the next drama in the world's history."⁴⁶ Brittain seized the opportunity to shift attention to someone else's battle and latched on to the consistent, exciting news it provided. "Maximilian's position in Mexico is getting shaky. The contemplated withdrawal of the French from Mexico looks very much like a

⁴⁴Monterey Gazette, 26 May 1865, 2. ⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Monterey Gazette, 9 June 1865, 2.

virtual abandonment of a bad job."⁴⁷ Later, in an eerie foreshadowing of the emperor's fate, the publisher wrote: "Let Maximilian, and his mercenaries beware, for vengeance inevitable and too terrible to contemplate is sweeping in the van."⁴⁸ The Gazette continued to chronicle the emperor's whereabouts, citing a dispatch dated October 25, 1866: "The Emperor Maximilian left the city of Mexico on the 23rd, resigning virtually in favor of General Bazaine."⁴⁹ For Brittain, who parted ways with the Gazette soon after this report was filed, the long-running Mexican serial was over.

Editorializing also forged a stronger presence after the war. The publisher tackled the issues of Negro suffrage, reconstruction, and the quandary of what to do with those who took part in the rebellion, insisting that treason was the only charge potent enough to prevent similar uprisings. Brittain's opinion that it was best to "make such a fearful example of the intelligent, designing and wilfully [sic] diabolical leaders as to make their names the synonyms of crime,"⁵⁰ countered those of Horace Greeley and

⁴⁷Monterey Gazette, 24 November 1865, 2.

⁴⁸Monterey Gazette, 2 March 1866, 2.

⁴⁹Monterey Gazette, 16 November 1866, 2.

⁵⁰Monterey Gazette, 16 June 1865, 2.

Ward Beecher who, despite their devotion to the cause of abolition, were "ready to bury the hatchet, counsel moderation, conciliation and general amnesty."⁵¹

Brittain aspired to represent the public good at the local level as well. Accordingly, he lunged into familiar editorial territory, his approach more direct than any of the Gazette's previous editors. "We must have good roads or we cannot expect people to travel over them,"⁵² he counseled Monterey's Board of Directors. Then prodding he asked, "What will you do for us, gentlemen?"⁵³ The baton had passed to this editor to advance the many crusades already familiar to Gazette readers. Brittain introduced some new causes as well, speaking out in favor of a daily mail service and preservation of a lighthouse still located in present-day Pacific Grove. Brittain delivered support in a barrage of editorials. Often the publisher's lobbying turned up in articles that began innocently enough--meeting announcements, boosterism articles, and school progress reports--but because clear distinctions between reporting and commentary did not yet exist,⁵⁴ the two often mingled. One such editorial showed up in an article previewing the coming beach season in Santa Cruz. The story quickly shifted gears, becoming a drive for Monterey's "more

⁵¹Ibid. ⁵²Ibid. ⁵³Ibid. ⁵⁴Myers, 33-34.

commodious and adequate means of communication with the outside world,"--namely better steamer transportation--without which, wagered Brittain, Monterey's charms would remain "less known than those of almost any other place."⁵⁵

Brittain engaged in personal battles, too--one with the publisher of the Santa Cruz Sentinel. Dueling editors was a common sport during this era, sometimes heating up enough to jump off the printed page and into the back alley.⁵⁶ Fortunately, these two publishers used only verbal weapons. Barbs flew back and forth between them as they debated which town was physically, geographically, and developmentally superior. One episode went as far as the Sentinel publisher claiming that the Gazette had been absorbed by the Pajaro Times, making the latter the county's only paper and "leaving the former capital of the Californias no medium of history, to record events past, present and future."⁵⁷ Brittain's response was understandably sarcastic. "We are the foregoing intelligible morceau in the Santa Cruz Sentinel, and it is certainly a very flattering evidence of the re-lie-ability of that enterprising journal."⁵⁸ Continuing his mordant rebuttal, the Gazette publisher lobbed insults right back at

⁵⁵Monterey Gazette, 13 April 1866, 2. ⁵⁶Young, 40.

⁵⁷Monterey Gazette, 19 May 1865, 2. ⁵⁸Ibid.

his nemesis: "The editor who publishes every wild rumor that may come to his ears, or the predictions of his own morbid fancy, as absolute and unqualified fact, knows little about his business."⁵⁹

Brittain's debates with the publisher of the San Jose Mercury were more sobering. The Gazette and the Mercury went back and forth on the subject of Negro suffrage--the Mercury in favor of extending voting rights to the newly freed slaves, the Gazette against the proposal. Despite Brittain's avid support of the Northern cause, when it came to granting additional rights to the slaves, he maintained that it was a well-known fact that the Negro "is decidedly inferior in mental capacity to the Caucasian,"⁶⁰ and should not be given such important responsibilities. Brittain blasted his rival at close range, "we could say nothing good of him without violating every conviction of right,"⁶¹ and ripped into the Mercury's stance on Negro rights, calling one of its editorials "a dose that was positively nauseating."⁶² He further accused the paper of aspiring to "the leadership of a faction of fanatical extremists."⁶³

In addition, Brittain squabbled with the publisher of

⁵⁹Ibid. ⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Monterey Gazette, 2 June 1865, 2.

⁶²Monterey Gazette, 19 May 1865, 2. ⁶³Ibid.

the Watsonville-based Pajaro Times, his geographically closest rival. It began in May 1865, with a phony Monterey edition of the Times. "The Pajaro Times comes to us this week with a Monterey head on, for its subscribers in this county; with this exception it is the same as usual."⁶⁴ But a year later, Brittain revealed the "dirty and contemptible device resorted to"⁶⁵ by the Times as one by which its proprietor hoped to challenge the Gazette for its guaranteed county-government printing. As Brittain explained, however, the publisher of the Times simply duplicated his Pajaro paper, changing the banner to read the "Monterey Times," and then solicited for subscriptions and advertising. Brittain finally put an end to the counterfeit paper stating that "there is no more virtue in forbearance, and we are determined to exhibit, in the light of truth and honor, this abominable and atrocious cheat."⁶⁶ Four months after exposing the hoax, the Gazette recorded the removal of the Pajaro Times from Watsonville to Santa Cruz.⁶⁷

The Gazette's advertising portfolio was slim enough without the "Monterey Times" trying to steal clients. Consequently, Brittain rebuked the business community of Monterey for its unwillingness to help invigorate the city's

⁶⁴Ibid. ⁶⁵Monterey Gazette, 22 June 1866, 2.

⁶⁶Ibid. ⁶⁷Monterey Gazette, 19 October 1866, 3.

image. "In forming an estimate of a town, outsiders always refer to the newspaper and look at its advertising columns; and it is the only criterion of the business capacity of an enterprising community."⁶⁸ Just in case the guilt did not make a direct hit in the pocket book, Brittain aimed for the collective intellect: "Shrewd men are aware of this, and therefore, the first thing they do upon establishing themselves is to advertise extensively."⁶⁹ As was the policy of previous publishers, Brittain drew attention to those who supported the paper: "We call attention to the advertisement of L. Polaski & Co. They are among our most enterprising merchants, as shown by the fact that they advertise in their county paper."⁷⁰

To retain the Gazette's advertising-rich appearance, Brittain extended the publication of many ads past their deadlines. While most legal notices continued to rotate in and out of the paper according to their time-bound purposes, even a few of these clung to their positions beyond the dates of the events they advertised. Duplicate ads continued to fill in when new ads were hard to sell. But this was one long-standing practice that Brittain was apparently anxious to retire. "We have been promised a

⁶⁸Monterey Gazette, 10 March 1865, 2. ⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰Monterey Gazette, 12 May 1865, 2.

number of local advertisements and in the course of a month or six weeks shall have a new set entirely. Meanwhile we ask our friends to be charitable and remember that we are going uphill--trying to redeem the thing."⁷¹

Nothing, however, occurred without a tradeoff. When new advertisements did start rolling in, Brittain was strapped with the unenviable chore of resetting the type that for so long had constituted pages three and four. Often production time, not to mention the publisher, suffered. "We are late this week, . . . We have two columns of new advertisements, and we could not procure mechanical assistance for love or money, so we had to do it all alone. We have done three men's work this week. . . ."⁷² Understandably, the load was too much for the lone newspaperman, and the next issue of the Gazette contained a want ad for "a smart, active, intelligent young man, to learn the printing business."⁷³

New ads continued to filter into the Gazette office, replacing the duplicate and expired ads previously held over to fill space. Although it took him a little longer than the projected six weeks to revamp the Gazette's advertising

⁷¹Monterey Gazette, 17 March 1865, 2.

⁷²Monterey Gazette, 31 March 1865, 2.

⁷³Monterey Gazette, 24 March 1865, 2.

repertoire, on July 14, 1865 Brittain achieved his goal of printing the paper without a single repeat ad. Insertions came from Salinas and Monterey, from Watsonville and Pajaro, from San Francisco and San Jose, and even from Chicago. They announced the availability of treasury bonds and notes, attorneys and conveyancers, a Monterey blacksmith, two freshly opened bakeries, and the town's first bowling saloon. Some even did so with graphically appealing flair. The San Francisco-based Singer Manufacturing Company placed an ad featuring an embellished logo and more white space than gray clutter. Drawings of cows flanked a local meat market advertisement, and sketches of pocket watches helped peddle their product. Other ads were printed sideways or approximated an hourglass shape.

Like Cassell, Brittain adhered to the philosophy that an ad was an ad, and he accepted whatever came over his desk. As mentioned above, patent medicine ads--the most dubious of the Gazette's advertising collection--were gladly accepted for their ability to fill entire columns with single insertions. Furthermore, the quack doctors behind these blurbs usually committed to six-month or full-year contracts. Whether peddling a sarsaparilla derivative or a liquid balsam, these ads had two things in common: they all claimed to possess healing properties capable of curing

anything from pimples to a slow metabolism, and most important, they all had the power to remedy the newspaper's financial woes.

Patent medicine ads, however, did not profess to revive lagging subscription sales. But Brittain knew the prescription. A sensational headline now and then was like a beacon for rounding up readers. It did not take the publisher long to renege on a promise he had made regarding the use of ensnaring headlines the likes of "Frightful Accidents and Atrocious [sic] Murders."⁷⁴ Even after making it clear that they "charm and tantalize us with their seductive proportions, as they are presented to our imagination, only to elude the tell-tale point of our eliminating quill,"⁷⁵ the publisher caved in after only one month. Brittain had the style well in hand, using flashy inverted-pyramid, multi-deck headlines printed in bold type. At a time when most frontier editors relied on simple tag phrases leading into text, only rarely experimenting with headlines of one or two decks above the story,⁷⁶ Brittain did what was necessary to engage readers and, hopefully, turn a profit. "SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE, MILITARY ARRESTS IN LOS ANGELES, THE PROVOST MARSHAL ARRESTS THE MAYOR,"⁷⁷

⁷⁴Monterey Gazette, 24 March 1865, 2. ⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Myers, 35. ⁷⁷Monterey Gazette, 5 May 1865, 2.

exclaimed a headline emanating from Southern California. "LYNCH LAW: Juan Uguera Captured by Citizens and Hung [sic]. GREAT EXCITEMENT,"⁷⁸ shouted a local late-breaking story.

Admittedly, something was selling newspapers, at least according to Brittain. "In the few short weeks we have been here, we have doubled the number of our subscriptions, and in a few more weeks we shall quadruple it,"⁷⁹ the publisher boasted. But the sudden subscription upswing may have had less to do with Brittain's leadership and more to do with the paper's completion of a year and five months of consistent publishing. Generally when a frontier paper lasted at least a year, reader confidence in its durability picked up, bringing with it a considerable rise in community support and subscriptions.⁸⁰ The increase may also have been influenced by readers' enhanced appetite for news induced by the volatility of events--the climax and culmination of the war, the assassination of the president, and the indictment of those responsible for the rebellion--during this period in the nation's history.

Of all the publishers in the Gazette's history thus far, Brittain seemed the most willing to try things differently. Compared to Acklin and Cassell, Brittain

⁷⁸Monterey Gazette, 19 May 1865, 2. ⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Halaas, 34.

discussed politics the least, particularly where local matters were concerned. The reason for his posture to generally not take a stance was made explicit in his prospectus: Brittain promised to make the Gazette a local paper, not a forum for political agendas.⁸¹ Thus, when he remained tightlipped with regard to politics, he was creating the newspaper he vowed to publish. There were a few occasions, however, when Brittain preached to his audience. During an important election for United States Senators, the publisher's discourses became particularly heated and one-sided, but Brittain exhibited some objectivity by admitting counter opinions expressed via letters to the editor.

Even when the publisher ran for the position of Monterey County Auditor, he simply printed the Union ticket of county officers in the Gazette followed by a summary of the opposition. Brittain did comment that, unlike the other nominees who were "out in remote parts of the county each one hoeing his own row, and each confident of an abundant harvest,"⁸² his business demands had rendered him "unable to get out at all: so we shall take our chance just as it comes."⁸³ Of course, by virtue of owning the town

⁸¹Monterey Gazette, 10 March 1865, 2.

⁸²Monterey Gazette, 1 September 1865, 2. ⁸³Ibid.

newspaper, Brittain had the capacity to reach many people without leaving his printing press, and in this instance he did use it to rally support for the Union Party ticket.⁸⁴

"There is too little patriotism and too much utter selfishness in the Union Party of this county, and this it is that explains its uniform defeat hitherto,"⁸⁵ Brittain admonished. Concluding his speech he emphasized, "The Union Party now has the opportunity to assert its strength under auspices more favorable than ever before presented. Let us see what is the result."⁸⁶ The outcome was favorable. "With regard to the election in Monterey County, the result is much as was anticipated, and for the first time in the history of the county, a Union Republican county ticket has been elected."⁸⁷

Brittain also experimented with the format of the Gazette's front page, seeing it through several evolutions. Toward the culmination of the war, book and encyclopedic extracts diminished, finally taking a back seat to news. President Johnson's reconstruction plans, received

⁸⁴The Republican Party was renamed the Union Party in 1864 in an attempt to attract pro-war Democrats and border-state Unionists. Richard W. Murphy, The Nation Reunited: War's Aftermath, The Civil War Series (Alexandria: Time-Life Books, 1987), 16.

⁸⁵Monterey Gazette, 1 September 1865, 2.

⁸⁶Ibid. ⁸⁷Monterey Gazette, 15 September, 1865, 2.

considerable latitude, as did the addresses of other government officials, federal and state alike. The numerous and important new laws and acts adopted during the country's Reconstruction were also placed on the Gazette's front page to quickly snare readers' attention.

The conversion was gradual and likely a corollary of the resumption of transportation systems used to disperse exchange newspapers. "The line of steamers between New Orleans and San Francisco, suspended by the rebellion, is to be again in operation."⁸⁸ Likewise, "Overland [sic] communication has been resumed, and mails are dispatched both ways."⁸⁹ Bylines from various geographically clustered exchange newspapers dominated the front page on a week-by-week basis, indicating the region from which mail had been received. Of course, mail was still subject to delays, as when overland mail stages fell victim to bad weather, poor roads, and Indian plunderings,⁹⁰ necessitating Brittain's frequent reversion to the use of older material and textbook extracts. More often than not, the publisher did resort to the usual scholarly fare, but his sporadic inclusion of news

⁸⁸Monterey Gazette, 5 January, 1866, 2.

⁸⁹Monterey Gazette, 31 March 1865, 2.

⁹⁰Monterey Gazette, 29 September 1865, 2.

on the the Gazette's front page was a notable attempt to introduce a new style of newspapering.

With this change came a shift in the paper's presumed original intent. Under Brittain's tutelage, the Gazette's foundation as a booster sheet for the local community began to crumble. The paper still portrayed Monterey as idealistic, but encomiums were scarcer and their slant more tourist-inducing than commerce-stimulating. That the publisher was fed up with the lackadaisical lifestyle that gripped the townspeople is evident in his paper. "We have spoken of Monterey as being a desirable place, but we have spoken only of the natural beauties and advantages of the place; we have said nothing commendatory of the business capacity and enterprise of the inhabitants."⁹¹

Commercial interests in Monterey did not simply stagnate, they declined. Many businesses closed down during Brittain's tenure with the paper, leaving the town without a hotel or a restaurant, a livery stable or a meat market. In addition, it had only one bakery, one blacksmith, one saddle and harness shop, one barber shop, and one physician. While advertisements still regularly filled eleven columns of the available twenty--enough to warrant reclaiming three front-

⁹¹Monterey Gazette, 4 May 1866, 2.

page columns to the handle the surplus--Brittain was not without financial difficulties. In a public plea for compensation, the publisher outlined his plight: "We, like other men, have our little necessary expenses: paper, postage stamps, poll tax, an occasional indulgence in a glass of ginger beer, or soda pop--nothing strong."⁹² Then, applying ample sarcasm, he delineated the deplorable state of his bare necessities: "It will also be observed that the fig-leaf costume is out of date here, . . . a just regard for the opinions of others renders it necessary for us to be clad after the prevailing style of coat and pantaloons."⁹³

Brittain resigned the publisher's post of the Gazette sometime after November 16, 1866 and before January 18, 1867. The issues published between these dates were not preserved on microfilm, making a definite date of termination impossible to pinpoint. What is evident, though, is the publisher's need to run a paper in a rewarding and profitable environment--a place exhibiting potential for growth and development. He completed his term as county auditor and was later appointed "Assistant Assessor of Internal Revenue for the Fourth Division of the

⁹²Ibid. ⁹³Ibid.

Second District, State of California."⁹⁴ Brittain did find his mecca just down the not-yet-built road for which he petitioned so diligently, and in 1868 he established the Salinas Standard, the town's first newspaper.⁹⁵

⁹⁴Monterey Gazette, 27 February 1868, 2.

⁹⁵Guinn, 302-303.

CHAPTER 9

A PUBLISHING INTERLUDE: STEPHEN HATCH

Stephen Hatch, recorder for Monterey County,¹ farmer and ex-Union soldier² took over the editorial and financial reins of the Gazette sometime after November 16, 1866, the date of the last preserved issue bearing Brittain's name, and before January 18, 1867, the date of the first preserved issue with Hatch's name in the masthead. It may be further surmised that his arrival was closer to January, in light of a notice--a request for payments from subscribers and advertisers to be made to Hatch or one of his agents, not to Brittain--that appeared, not in the January 18th issue, but in the next edition of the paper. Its absence from the January 18th issue implies that it was making its initial appearance, not being carried over from previous issues. Had Hatch started his career with the paper two months earlier, the notice probably would have made an appearance sooner and already been discontinued.³

¹Monterey Gazette, 18 January 1867, 1.

²History of Monterey County, California (Elliott & Moore, 1881; reprint, Fresno, Calif.: Valley Publishers, 1979), 168 (page references are to reprint edition).

³Monterey Gazette, 25 January 1867, 2.

Hatch's role with the Gazette was fleeting, his brother and a partner buying him out after only a few months. Still, the new editor made the most of his short stint with the paper. One of his first acts as publisher was the engagement of the local postmaster to deliver the Gazette.⁴ Already he was extricating himself from one of the many time-consuming tasks usually performed by the frontier editor.

Receipt of daily mail in Monterey, a service for which the previous publisher lobbied, was also to Hatch's advantage.⁵ More mail meant more newspapers and letters from which to glean articles suitable for clipping and pasting. Unfortunately, it was a daily service in name only. In practice, it would be some time before all the kinks were worked out and the mail actually got through on a regular basis. "The Salinas river is so high, and the current so rapid that the mail due today could not be

⁴Ibid., 3.

⁵Daily mail delivery in Monterey began September 1, 1866, and was noted by the previous publisher, J. S. Brittain: "Hurrah! Just as we go to press we learn per telegraph that our petition for a daily mail from this place to San Jose, has been successful. It will commence on the 1st proximo." Monterey Gazette, 31 August 1866, 3.

ferried across it. The mail that left this morning had to be returned; and no mail is expected to-morrow [sic]."⁶

Perhaps Stephen Hatch's most notable contribution to the Gazette and the town was his effort to renew and nourish the paper's boosterism roots. Hatch freed himself, and the community, from the grasp of Brittain's dismal depiction of Monterey's economic potential. Where Brittain criticized residents' lack of initiative and industry, Hatch played up the positive aspects of the community and suggested means for its improvement. "Monterey is destined to be the Banner County [sic] of our Golden State [sic]. Our resources are various, rich and extensive,"⁷ the new publisher cheered. He pointed out that the "thousands of acres that heretofore have been used for grazing purposes, are now being tilled,"⁸ and promised that "this year an effort will be made to improve the roads in the County [sic]."⁹ He even suggested that Monterey County build its own glass manufactory, seeing as the county already "furnishes sand for glass manufactories in San Francisco."¹⁰ Even in his brief association with the paper, Hatch began to renew and nourish the Gazette's boosterism roots.

⁶Monterey Gazette, 25 January 1867, 3.

⁷Ibid., 2. ⁸Ibid. ⁹Ibid. ¹⁰Ibid.

He also found time to support education, rallying for passage of a tax to raise money for the purchase of new school furniture. "Eight hundred is a very small amount for the citizens of Monterey to expend for a public school. We hope those interested in education will walk up cheerfully to the Polls [sic] and vote for the measure."¹¹ This was a common bond uniting the entire cast of Gazette publishers to date--they all held education in high esteem.

Hatch began to revive the political bent of the paper as well, openly venting his opinions and promoting candidates for various offices. One such editorial favored the nomination of a former major in the Union army--under whom the publisher served as a private at Fort West--for the office of surveyor general.¹²

In fact, resurrecting lost traditions was a trademark of the new publisher. Anecdotes and tall tales, which made up very little of Brittain's Gazette, were back in style in Hatch's paper. The publisher may have re-employed fluff fillers because his resources, both in terms of manpower and news, were limited. He never mentions having assistance with any aspect of the paper, and erratic receipt of exchange papers must have taken its toll on what Hatch had to work with each week. When he did obtain exchanges, he

¹¹Monterey Gazette, 1 March 1867, 2. ¹²Ibid.

was fortunate to hit upon some riveting stories. Hatch gripped his audience with the mystery of John H. Surratt, alleged conspirator in Abraham Lincoln's assassination. Reprinted from the New York Tribune, the story traced Surratt's evasion of authorities; his flight to Canada; to Rome, where he was arrested, but escaped by jumping "over a precipice more than one hundred feet high;"¹³ and his ultimate seizure in Egypt. The publisher could not have asked for better reading if he had fabricated it himself.

Hatch's mini-renovation included the advertising pages of the Gazette as well. To make a clean start financially, the publisher announced that he had "dropped all dead head advertisements,"¹⁴ and filled the freed space with his own ad. A big ad. A full-page ad with an enormous eagle hovering above very large, bold words that ordered people to take notice of their local paper and fulfill their "patriotic" duty by subscribing.¹⁵ Hatch's other remedies for having chased freeloading advertisers from his columns included the revival of doubled ads and an influx of new patent medicine blurbs. He also put white space to good use between and within ads, and employed very large type to stretch insertions when they were scarce.

¹³Monterey Gazette, 25 January 1867, 3. ¹⁴*Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

A new batch of commercial ads eventually followed the purge, including in-house publicity for the publisher's printing business and an ad for his county recorder services. Even Hatch's Watsonville-based brother George¹⁶ placed an ad to sell several horses and coordinating tack. A New York piano manufacturer and a New York-based coffee distributor were also among the new retail advertisements. A teacher of French and German, numerous lawyers, and a stage line--running "three times per week from Monterey to Santa Cruz"¹⁷--were added to the services roster. In anticipation of additional advertising, Hatch removed the ever-present directory of federal, state and local officials from the leading column of the front page.

Ads for quack remedies still boasted cures for a wide range of ailments. They even branched out to heal household ills. "Costar's Vermin Exterminators,"¹⁸ promised that their poison-free preparations would make "rats come out of their holes to die,"¹⁹ and do in roaches, ants, bedbugs, moths, and fleas equally well. But, warned the local entrepreneur, "Beware of all worthless imitations."²⁰ For those who appreciated one-stop shopping, Costar's wares also

¹⁶History of Monterey County, California, 168.

¹⁷Monterey Gazette, 1 March 1867, 4.

¹⁸Ibid., 3. ¹⁹Ibid. ²⁰Ibid.

included elixirs for human consumption--his patrons could knock down a cough just as readily as they could knock out a rat!

More serious matters were transacted through official notices. Companies and residents applied for mining patents; the county clerk announced insolvencies; the U.S. Surveyor General recorded private land claim surveys; and Wells Fargo & Co., Holladay Overland Mail and Express Co., the United States Express Co., and the American Express Co. posted their consolidation of business interests using official notices in the Gazette.²¹

On March 8, 1867, Hatch announced that the paper would thereafter publish on Saturdays, but he did not stay around long enough to see this particular change realized. Neither did he truly have time to establish his paper as a local, political, or booster sheet. No sooner had Stephen Hatch begun to implement changes, than he was gone. But it was not the last the Gazette would see of the name Hatch in the masthead.

²¹Monterey Gazette, 18 January 1867, 3-4.

CHAPTER 10

THE END OF THE ROAD: "A LARGE SIZED FUNERAL OF A SMALL SIZED PRINTING OFFICE"

If Stephen Hatch was struggling with publishing the Gazette, he was reticent about it. Unlike the paper's previous publishers, Stephen Hatch never complained about freeloaders--he simply cut them off before they could accrue further debt. In addition, he appeared to be developing a plausible advertising base, so it is doubtful that funding alone uprooted Hatch. Besides, he was not with the Gazette long enough to judge its financial prospects. Perhaps heading a paper was a job that did not combine well with his county recorder post; after all, publishing a newspaper during this era was an all-consuming project, and he had already made a commitment to serve the community via official office. Or maybe his recent marriage needed more attention than his job left time to give.¹ Whatever his reason, Stephen Hatch relinquished the editorial reins of the paper to his brother Isaac, also a retired Union soldier,² and DeWitt Hubbell, son of Milwaukee, Wisconsin

¹According to the marriage announcements included in the paper, Stephen Hatch married on November 1, 1866. Monterey Gazette, 2 November 1866, 2.

²History of Monterey County, California, 168.

judge, Levi Hubbell.³ Stephen Hatch returned to farming,⁴ maintaining his financial interest in the paper for two months after stepping down as publisher.⁵

On March 15, 1867, the Gazette published as a two-page sheet, "in consequence of change of firm, removal of office, and a general 'reconstruction movement.'"⁶ However, reassured the new editors, "we promise our readers a good paper hereafter, but they must have patience. 'Rome was not built in a day,' or a badly demoralized printing office put to rights in an hour."⁷ The Gazette's diminished size was a first in the paper's history, and the publishers' disclaimer was the only bit of "news" in their debut issue. Ads and official notices filled the remainder of the downsized paper, probably explaining why the editors published at all that week; there was no sense aggravating steady advertisers before the new team had a chance to get started.

The paper's relocation to new facilities was a small move, just across the street, but nonetheless, an action often associated with a newspaper's growing prosperity.⁸ In

³Monterey Gazette, 5 September 1867, 2.

⁴Monterey Gazette, 31 December 1868, 2.

⁵Monterey Gazette, 9 May 1867, 2.

⁶Monterey Gazette, 15 March 1867, 2. ⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Cloud, 95.

fact, the new partnership formed by Hubbell, Hatch, and Hatch was itself an indicator that the paper was on an upswing.⁹ Presumably the three men were able to infuse more cash into the newspaper than any previous solitary editor. Partners were also better equipped than an individual to absorb any financial loss incurred by a slump in business.

After moving, the next official act of the publishing duo was to change the delivery method of the paper. Whereas Stephen Hatch solicited help from the postmaster, Hubbell and Hatch requested that their subscribers pick up their papers at the Gazette office.¹⁰ Further guidelines were specified in the publishers' "Newspaper Laws,"¹¹ which emphasized the importance of paying in advance and advising of any changes in residence or intention to cancel. The other immediate change instituted by the pair was a switch in the paper's publishing day from Friday to Thursday.¹²

Once settled into their new office, the business of editing and publishing apparently fell to Hubbell, whose name was consistently linked to the title "editor" in the

⁹Fred Endres, "'We Want Money and Must Have It:' Profile of an Ohio Weekly, 1841-1847," Journalism History 7, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 69.

¹⁰Monterey Gazette, 21 March 1867, 2.

¹¹Monterey Gazette, 18 April 1867, 1.

¹²Monterey Gazette, 21 March 1867, 2.

paper's second-page header. Isaac Hatch, on the other hand, while listed as a publisher and proprietor, was probably associated with the paper in name and money only--an association that did not last. It took only eight issues for Hatch and his silent-partner brother to realize that the newspaper business was not for them, not even as financial backers. "Notice is hereby given that Messrs. Stephen & Isaac Hatch have this day disposed of all their right, title and interest in the Monterey Gazette to the undersigned, D. W. Hubbell & Co."¹³ The "& Co." with whom Hubbell established a partnership was none other than J. S. Brittain who kept his money tied up in the paper for another seven months.¹⁴

As editor, Hubbell followed many of the Gazette's format and content routines, but he did not allow himself to be entirely bound by tradition. Following the masthead on the front page, business cards, small advertisements, and a schedule of local church services filled 2 1/2 columns. The publisher added Old English type headings to introduce the various columns on the page, including "Advertisements," "Poetry," and "Miscellany." Various encyclopedic and book

¹³Monterey Gazette, 9 May 1867, 2.

¹⁴Monterey Gazette, 17 October 1867, 2.

extracts running the gamut from farming tips¹⁵ to diamond cutting¹⁶ formed the balance of the first page. Poetry, some of it the publisher's work, maxims, anecdotes, and conundrums plugged any holes: "Why is a wife like a newspaper? Because every man should have one without borrowing his neighbor's."¹⁷ Exchanges, previously a staple in the Gazette, were not prevalent in Hubbell's paper. Instead, he reintroduced continuing sagas--many of them his own mystery stories--to the paper's front page, a maneuver conceivably intended to maintain and increase subscriptions.¹⁸

Local items provided the foundation of page two. Nothing earthshaking--with the exception of occasional temblors. Simply the usual minute chronicles of ordinary events in Monterey, the underpinnings of a local sheet. Less routine news included the founding of the Monterey branch of the Southern Relief Association, formed to help those left destitute by the ravages of war;¹⁹ glimpses of

¹⁵Monterey Gazette, 11 June 1868, 1.

¹⁶Monterey Gazette, 27 May 1869, 1.

¹⁷Monterey Gazette, 2 April 1868, 4.

¹⁸Monterey Gazette, 1 August 1867, 1.

¹⁹Monterey Gazette, 18 April 1867, 2.

local farmers' experiments with different types of crops;²⁰ reports of an outbreak of smallpox in San Juan and Castroville;²¹ and the community's growing interest in sports. "Our citizens, young and old, are becoming much interested in the game of football. It is fine sport: but there should a baseball club be formed [sic], and a regular match game be played once a week."²²

News from other locations also squeezed onto the second page, some received via telegraph, most taken from exchange papers. Hubbell pieced together whatever mediums were at his disposal to keep readers informed. There were stories about the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan,²³ the conclusion of the judiciary committee's examination of evidence aimed at, but falling short of, impeaching Andrew Johnson,²⁴ and the resulting resignation of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton.²⁵ When trains finally steamed across the United States, marking the completion of the transcontinental railroad, the Gazette recorded the historic

²⁰Monterey Gazette, 21 March 1867, 2.

²¹Monterey Gazette, 29 October 1868, 2.

²²Monterey Gazette, 2 May 1867, 2.

²³Monterey Gazette, 21 May 1868, 2.

²⁴Monterey Gazette, 14 May 1868, 2.

²⁵Monterey Gazette, 4 June 1868, 2.

event.²⁶ Even Maximilian was briefly back in the spotlight as his career came to an end: "'Max' has been captured, so says the telegraph; Miramon, his most able supporter is dead; and Queretaro has fallen. So endeth the famous Napoleonic-American Empire."²⁷

Hubbell set aside the first column of page three for snippets of local, state and, national news, appropriately labeled "Picked Bits." When the usual fare was not enough to round out the column, the publisher filled in with statistical trivia, such as the number of contemporary newspapers and periodicals in California (132), and a breakdown of that number by dailies (26), tri-weeklies (2), semi-weeklies (5), weeklies (88), tri-monthlies (1), semi-monthlies (1), monthly (8), and bi-monthlies (one). Of these, the publisher elaborated, 2 were published in French, 2 in German, and 1 each in Spanish, Italian, and Chinese.²⁸

Ads also dominated page four, just as they had in the past, but part of this page became a vehicle for something new--Hubbell's most innovative contribution to the Gazette. "Ladies' Scrap Bag"²⁹ made its first lead-off column

²⁶Monterey Gazette, 13 May 1868, 2.

²⁷Monterey Gazette, 9 May 1867, 2.

²⁸Monterey Gazette, 21 March 1867, 3.

²⁹Monterey Gazette, 25 April 1867, 4.

appearance in the April 18, 1867 issue of the Gazette, receiving its official title the next week. Sharing homemaking tips, poetry, recipes, fashion trends, and maxims, the publisher targeted a segment of the population previously untapped. Issue after issue, women could turn to the paper's fourth page seeking guidance in such matters as how to can tomatoes, how to make Indian and corn breads, how best to clean clothes, and how to achieve the latest look in hairstyles.³⁰ One tip suggested that, "Silks that have changed colors by acids can be restored by using hartshorn,"³¹ another that, "A cut finger is best protected by being encased with a rag moistened with flour and water; this will harden and remain firm till healing is complete."³² This resource was probably a welcome addition to the Gazette, and it served as a harbinger of further change. Unfortunately, the column itself evolved. Hubbell dropped its title and carried women's serial stories for a while. But ultimately, the column gave way to exchange news as well as the publisher's original poetry and fiction, which was composed as it was set in type.³³

Other modifications of the Gazette were subtle. Like the paper's previous publishers, Hubbell scrambled to obtain

³⁰Ibid. ³¹Ibid. ³²Monterey Gazette, 2 May 1867, 4.

³³Monterey Gazette, 30 January 1868, 2.

news to fill columns, entreating "any one [sic] knowing of the death, marriage, birth, divorce, suicide, murder, fight, runaway, or any other instructive and interesting items," to "confer a favor by furnishing us with full particulars of the same."³⁴ The reason: "Our office duties are such that we have no time to spare for hunting up such things,"³⁵ the editor explained. Time constraints once again necessitated reliance on untrained individuals whose submissions were prone to error, gossip, and hearsay. But Hubbell remained optimistic about establishing a better product. "With this number, commences a new and, we trust, a brighter era in the life of the Gazette."³⁶

"Don Coyote," a San Francisco resident, responded to Hubbell's invitation. "Prompted by the improved condition of your paper, and the many exertions . . . to furnish the county and vicinity with an excellent journal, I cannot refuse your urgent request to become a member of its contributing corps."³⁷ Coyote proved himself a good writer with plenty of news concerning San Francisco--sometimes an overabundance. "Glad to get your letters; but don't write so much at one time. We have had to trim you down a little

³⁴Monterey Gazette, 21 March 1867, 2. ³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid. ³⁷Monterey Gazette, 18 April, 2.

this week,"³⁸ admonished Hubbell. Space limitations still loomed over the tiny newspaper.

Although Coyote's semi-regular correspondence often ran in excess of a column and was concerned primarily with San Francisco, Hubbell vowed that his would be a paper focused on the best interests of the city and county.³⁹ To that end, he continued to solicit locally based contributors: "We would like to have correspondents in San Juan, Castroville and Pajaro, who will send us items of interest to our readers. Here's a chance for some one [sic] to distinguish himself."⁴⁰ This appeal received the response of "La Solitaire," a Salinas resident who felt that "perhaps a few items from this benighted region might be acceptable to some of your readers."⁴¹ La Solitaire covered local elections, social activities, and gossip. He even ventured to write a few poems for inclusion on the Gazette's front page.⁴²

A correspondent known only as, "Liberal," offered contributions more compelling than the synopses of everyday

³⁸Monterey Gazette, 25 April 1867, 2.

³⁹Monterey Gazette, 21 March 1867, 2.

⁴⁰Monterey Gazette, 9 May 1867, 2

⁴¹Monterey Gazette, 16 May 1867, 2.

⁴²Monterey Gazette, 6 June 1867, 1.

activities provided by Don Coyote and La Solitaire. Liberal supplied the Gazette with a series of editorials intended to show that the "introduction of Chinese, or cheap, labor, though it may throw some men out of employment for a time, yet in the end it will benefit those very men."⁴³ Given the era in which he was writing, Liberal truly lived up to his moniker: "I believe that the day is not far distant when California will hold out inducements to men, of all colors and nationalities, . . . it is not necessary to keep any people in a degraded position to insure our superiority."⁴⁴

Signing on much later than the three correspondents listed above, Robert Le Diable, an acquaintance of Hubbell's from San Francisco, supplied a column crammed with news about the city's opera, concerts, hotel and retail businesses, and visiting ships bringing visiting dignitaries.⁴⁵ Never before had a Gazette publisher used correspondents so effectively. Their semi-regular delivery of news and editorials from various points around the state supplied the paper with current information and timely

⁴³Monterey Gazette, 13 June 1867, 2. The series continued in the following issues: Monterey Gazette, 20 June 1867, 2; Monterey Gazette, 27 June 1867, 1; Monterey Gazette, 4 July 1867, 1; Monterey Gazette, 11 July 1867, 1; and Monterey Gazette, 18 July 1867, 1.

⁴⁴Monterey Gazette, 13 June 1867, 2.

⁴⁵Monterey Gazette, 12 October 1867, 2.

issues--something for which the Gazette was not previously known. Infrequent contributions from correspondents in Castroville, Santa Cruz, Hollister, another in Salinas, and one from "Washington City, D.C."⁴⁶ also floated in and out of the paper during Hubbell's publishing term.

Through his own commentary, Hubbell sought to act as the public's conscience, delivering sermon-like editorials ranging from the evils of gambling⁴⁷ and smoking,⁴⁸ to the dangers of pistol shooting in town⁴⁹ and the pitfalls of using vulgar language.⁵⁰ Hubbell frequently wrote in favor of Chinese immigration, urging his readers to acknowledge the Chinese population's contributions to California's wealth and resources. And in keeping with his desire to make the Gazette a local sheet and to speak out for the public good, the publisher quickly targeted some of the community's most urgent needs. "It is a shame that our wharf remains in its present non-utility condition. . . . If we wish to have steamers visit us regularly, we should try

⁴⁶Monterey Gazette, 15 April 1869, 1.

⁴⁷Monterey Gazette, 3 October 1867, 2.

⁴⁸Monterey Gazette, 10 October 1867, 2.

⁴⁹Monterey Gazette, 30 January 1867, 2.

⁵⁰Monterey Gazette, 22 July 1869, 1.

and make the landing . . . as convenient as possible."⁵¹ As always, the push was on to make Monterey more accessible, be it by land or by sea. In the case of the wharf, Hubbell's appeals for repairs were heeded when the structure was purchased for overhauling by the captain of a steamship making regular trips to Monterey. But, prodded the editor, "can't Monterey do something for herself? Must she ever be dependent on the enterprise of others for all good that accrues to her?"⁵²

Hubbell was certainly not one to wait for change; he was an instigator of it. He supported the partitioning of the county's large ranches, noting potential benefits for the entire community. "The more farmers and stock raisers there are in a county, the more prosperous that county will become, and the more every property owner is directly and indirectly benefitted."⁵³ In addition, Hubbell favored incorporating Monterey as a city,⁵⁴ citing the need for "considerable renovating and regulating, to prepare her for

⁵¹Monterey Gazette 2 May 1867, 2.

⁵²Monterey Gazette, 6 June 1867, 2.

⁵³Monterey Gazette, 20 June 1867, 2.

⁵⁴As noted earlier, Monterey lost its city status in 1853 and was not reincorporated until 1889.

the good fortune that is about to dawn upon her."⁵⁵ And there was still the matter of that unbuilt road to Salinas.

Periodically, traces of boosterism still forged an impressive depiction of Monterey, although Hubbell's use of the paper in this manner was much less frequent than that of any of his predecessors, with the exception of Brittain. When practiced, however, the publisher's community boosting was ostensibly another mechanism for slipping in reminders to business owners to advertise in the Gazette. "We have the most healthful climate, the finest harbor, and the prettiest scenery of any place along the coast,"⁵⁶ Hubbell asserted. But, he queried those in the town's commercial district, "Of what use is it for our merchants to lay in large and costly stocks of wares if they do not notify the public of the fact?"⁵⁷

The publisher also used his leverage to petition to increase county's quota of delegates to the Union State and Congressional Conventions from one to three. Citing outdated apportionment guidelines that left the interior counties without adequate representation, Hubbell implored those sitting on the county committee to do their duty "to

⁵⁵Monterey Gazette, 23 January 1868, 2.

⁵⁶Monterey Gazette, 23 April 1868, 2. ⁵⁷*Ibid.*

see that we are not defrauded, by a vile piece of political chicanery, of what is most justly our due."⁵⁸

As far as political stance was concerned, the Gazette remained independent but supportive of Union ideals. Yet while its editor endorsed Congress and General Grant, he gave "the decided 'cold shoulder' to Andy Johnson."⁵⁹ In any case, it was not Hubbell's intention to inundate readers with "a political crusher every week, but shall save our thunder for occasions when we think the cause we love requires it."⁶⁰

Hubbell's promise to reserve political commentary for truly crucial matters was short lived; the Gazette was consistently rife with political endorsements and criticisms. Neither did he miss an opportunity to endorse the Union Party in general. Hubbell printed the party's platform on a regular basis. He freely presented the merits of the Union Party and the demerits of Democratic Party, always arriving at the same conclusion: "The Union party [sic] should be supported by every true lover of his country and humanity."⁶¹ Favored candidates received prominently displayed endorsements and supportive editorials, and even

⁵⁸Monterey Gazette, 2 May 1867, 2.

⁵⁹Monterey Gazette, 21 March 1867, 2. ⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Monterey Gazette, 27 June 1867, 2.

J. S. Brittain, former publisher of the Gazette, received commendation when aspiring to the Union nomination for assemblyman from Monterey county.⁶²

But Hubbell's devotion to the Union Party waned very briefly after his own unsuccessful bid for nomination to the position of school superintendent, self-described as "one of the poorest offices, both in honor and profit." The publisher's response to the party's denial and lack of appreciation for his exuberant and loyal support was belligerent. The party "releases us almost wholly from our allegiance to it, and convinces us that it is so sure of success--so certain of victory--that it can afford to repudiate, kick out, and insult its most faithful servants."⁶³ Hubbell reassured the public that he would keep his commitment to publish the party's county and state tickets until the election, but stipulated that "if any candidate wishes us to do more for him, he must pay for it."⁶⁴ For all of one issue, Hubbell severed his paper's allegiance to the Union Party: "We have heretofore run the Gazette for the interests of that party alone; henceforth, we shall advocate what will pay us best."⁶⁵

⁶²Monterey Gazette, 9 May 1867, 2.

⁶³Monterey Gazette, 18 July 1867, 2. ⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

Either the Union Party turned out to be the more profitable of the two major political groups, or Hubbell's threat was simply that--a threat. The publisher continued to fill his paper with pro-Union articles up to and after the state's September election which, by the publisher's account, left the Union Party "shattered."⁶⁶ Then, in November 1867, enter the Monterey Democrat, the Gazette's first local contender and, apparently, just the impetus Hubbell needed to make his paper an official organ of the Union Party. As the editor pointed out, however, he needed the support of the community. Already the Democrat was the "recipient of more town patronage, in the shape of advertisements, than the Gazette has ever had since we have had charge of it,"⁶⁷ pointed out Hubbell. "But the question is not now as to ourself individually. It is this: is there life enough left in the Union party of the county to meet on an equal basis, and with equal weapons, its political enemy?"⁶⁸ Hubbell wanted the Gazette to be that weapon, but offered two options to the Union men of the county. "First, if they do not think us qualified to edit their paper as they would like, let them buy us out, take the Gazette into their own hands, make the necessary

⁶⁶Monterey Gazette, 7 November 1867, 2.

⁶⁷Monterey Gazette, 28 November 1867, 2. ⁶⁸*Ibid.*

improvements and run it themselves."⁶⁹ Or, the choice Hubbell presumably preferred: "Let them assure us sufficient CASH patronage to justify it, and we will put this paper on a 'war-footing' for the coming campaign, and (if our stomach will stand it) wade into politics with a vim."⁷⁰

Hubbell was still around to muster support for Ulysses S. Grant when he ran for president in 1868. The publisher placed a small placard endorsing the Republican nominee in the paper's second-page masthead, and supported him through editorial commentary. "With Grant's election, will end the troubles of our distracted Country [sic], . . . his inauguration in 1869 will deal the death-blow to the other and meaner wing."⁷¹

Locally, however, Hubbell's troubles with the Democratic Party were just beginning. He assessed the damage wrought by his new competition: "We have lost, of late, a good many Democratic subscribers."⁷² And just three weeks later, the publisher revealed that the Democrat "seduced from us our printer; in hopes to bolster up their own weak-kneed institution, and strike a death blow at the

⁶⁹Ibid. ⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Monterey Gazette, 12 March 1868, 2.

⁷²Monterey Gazette, 19 December 1867, 2.

Gazette."⁷³ Hubbell, ever optimistic, replied: "We can assure those interested that the Gazette will still flourish as usual, in spite of the terrible blow leveled against us."⁷⁴

While the Democrat lured away local advertisers, the Gazette's advertising agents in San Francisco successfully attracted new, long-distance clients--A. Kohler, a San Francisco-based importer of music and musical instruments and H. H. Bancroft & Company's San Francisco Book and Stationery business among them. But while these out-of-town ads filled columns and presumably helped keep the Gazette solvent, they failed to reflect the local business district, a detriment to the pioneer paper attempting to invite entrepreneurs to its community.

Very few Monterey businessmen supported the Gazette with their advertising dollars, but there were a handful. One large, local ad announced the servicing of Monterey by the steamship "Senator," complete with a warning that, "A gun will be fired Half an Hour [sic] before leaving port."⁷⁵ A frustrated Hubbell finally said something about the lack of patronage and its damaging reflection on the community. "It is supposed that business men [sic] are alive enough to

⁷³Monterey Gazette, 9 January 1868, 2. ⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Monterey Gazette, 23 May 1867, 3.

their own interests to advertise in their county paper, and strangers always base their opinions of a place on that supposition."⁷⁶ Monterey merchants, according to the publisher, were projecting a lifeless image of their town. In fact, according to Hubbell, they were at the forefront of the Monterey's stunted growth: "No wonder the town never goes ahead any, for who wants to settle, or risk his money in a place that shows so little business enterprise."⁷⁷

Based on a small increase in local ads, Hubbell's chiding prompted several local businessmen to add their services to those already listed in the Gazette. Yet even without a lot of local advertising support, Hubbell seldom ran duplicate insertions, although he did allow a few to appear past their expiration dates. Apparently, even official ads were not always paid for according to mandatory rates, as evidenced in a notice issued by the publisher: "Hereafter all legal advertisers will be required to pay FULL PRICE for their notices. This doing work for half-price is 'played out,' and no deductions on legal work will be made any longer."⁷⁸ This warning perhaps accounts for the gradual diminution of official ads, until only two or three appeared in each issue.

⁷⁶Monterey Gazette, 31 October 1867, 2. ⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Monterey Gazette, 18 July 1867, 2.

Hubbell needed to keep a tight rein on monetary concerns not just for his own sake, but in the interest of those he employed. The paper's various correspondents probably received some payment judging from the length of their submissions. The more verbose the report, the more money its writer received. This may also account for Hubbell's request for shorter letters from one of his contributors.

Furthermore, composition of the paper, for a time, was handled by a hired printer--the same printer who was so easily enticed to switch loyalties and serve the more prosperous Democrat.⁷⁹ The printer was not only responsible for typesetting and printing the entire paper, but for taking charge of editorial responsibilities in the publisher's absence, a task he did not relish. "The editorial duties being heaped upon us, . . . it behooves us to inform our readers, that this event is by no means calculated to inspire the Gazette with extraordinary noetic vigor."⁸⁰ There were also times when his productivity was impeded by his proclivity for playing "seven-up" at Kopple's saloon, conveniently located across the street from the

⁷⁹Monterey Gazette, 9 January 1868, 2.

⁸⁰Monterey Gazette, 4 July 1867, 2.

newspaper office. There "the lager is not only very good, but also very strong."⁸¹

In fact, the Gazette office moved again while in Hubbell's charge--not to get away from the saloon, but perhaps during a brief period of prosperity. "The Gazette office has been removed to the old Geisel building, No. 1 Boston Avenue."⁸² The new location boasted a two-story building, of which the Gazette was the sole occupant.⁸³ Moving into a two-story office during this era was considered a particularly significant upgrade. A more prosperous paper was able to situate its production department upstairs, away from distractions, while reserving the lower level for the business office and better public contact.⁸⁴ Hubbell summed up the value of his enterprise as such: "So far as our means have allowed, we have improved the Gazette office, until its value has nearly doubled since we have had the control of it."⁸⁵

But Hubbell's encounters with smooth operations were fleeting. After the loss of his printer, the publisher had difficulty enlisting anyone to fill the position on a

⁸¹Monterey Gazette, 21 March 1867, 2.

⁸²Monterey Gazette, 5 September 1867, 2.

⁸³Monterey Gazette, 16 April 1868, 2. ⁸⁴Cloud, 95.

⁸⁵Monterey Gazette, 28 November 1867, 2.

consistent basis;⁸⁶ he was usually left to conduct the business of publishing the paper alone, and a disappointing half-sheet was sometimes the result of his solitary efforts.⁸⁷

The publisher's efforts were further impeded by undependable mail delivery. "Yesterday the stage brought no mail from beyond San Juan. Cause--the downfall of rain and the uprising creeks, sloughs, rivers, and other inconveniences."⁸⁸ And Hubbell had one hindrance that was unique--someone was intercepting his newspaper exchanges! "We would feel very thankful to whoever makes a practice of taking our exchanges out of the mail bags, keeping them a week or so and then forwarding them to us, to let them alone."⁸⁹

Exchanges were nothing, however, without the paper on which to print them, and it was in short supply and of sub-standard quality. Hubbell apologized for the paper's poor appearance over a period of weeks, explaining that, "with paper thin as the blood in a miser's heart, and rotten as a decayed toadstool, it is impossible to do better. We hope

⁸⁶Monterey Gazette, 2 April 1868, 2.

⁸⁷Monterey Gazette, 25 March 1868, 2.

⁸⁸Monterey Gazette, 12 December 1867, 2.

⁸⁹Monterey Gazette, 22 August 1867, 2.

before another issue to receive a stock of better material."⁹⁰ Yet, of all the obstacles Hubbell had to overcome, none was as insurmountable as the community's nonchalant attitude toward their local paper. The apparent lack of support of members of the Union Party was especially detrimental. Without their support, Hubbell warned, advertisements demanded precedence over reading material in the limited space available. "We cannot afford to lose the revenue derived from those advertisements unless it is made up to us in some other way."⁹¹ Applying additional pressure, the publisher placed the burden of decision on those who held the power and the funds to sustain the Gazette as an official party paper. "The question rests with you, gentlemen of the Union party [sic], whether during this summer the Gazette becomes the organ of advertisers, or devotes itself to the earnest and untiring advocacy of the grand principles we all hold so sacred."⁹²

Hubbell was desperate. He was frustrated and despondent at the prospect of continuing to publish a pioneer paper "alone and almost unaided."⁹³ But the real despair derived from the indifference of the community whose

⁹⁰Monterey Gazette, 26 September 1867, 2.

⁹¹Monterey Gazette, 28 May 1868, 2. ⁹²*Ibid.*

⁹³*Ibid.*

loyalty he so much needed to win. "Influential members of the party told us to pitch in and they would stand by us. We did 'pitch in,' and have done our best to make Democratic 'fur fly;' but the 'standing-by-us' part has failed."⁹⁴

The Gazette continued to lose local advertising patronage to the Democrat. Clients attributed their fickleness to the Gazette's higher rates. But as Hubbell pointed out, the Democrat could afford to undercharge, because "every particle of Republican patronage they secure is an unlooked-for bit of gain, and it can without fear of loss do such work for half-price [sic]."⁹⁵ The Gazette's charges, meanwhile, had been static since the paper's inception.

Hubbell admitted the Democratic paper's superiority, an observation that was pointed out to him repeatedly. And in his own defense, the publisher recommended that "Union men take one half the interest in their organ that the Democrats do in theirs, and we will guarantee them as good a journal as the other."⁹⁶ In a final word of caution, Hubbell announced that he did not intend to run himself into debt to benefit any political party. "If the party want [sic] a good paper, let them show it by their action, and

⁹⁴Ibid. ⁹⁵Monterey Gazette, 18 June 1868, 2.

⁹⁶Ibid.

not attempt to crush out their own party organ by aiding to build up that of the opposition."⁹⁷

Finally capitulating to the pressure to provide more economical advertising space, Hubbell reduced his asking price by fifty cents per square. Second insertions were also discounted fifty cents.⁹⁸ Next, to pacify those disturbed by the Gazette's advertising allotment in proportion to its news space, Hubbell added an extra column to each page. "Finding that we could not do justice to subscribers and advertisers without more room, we have enlarged our paper. To get even with us, Republicans should enlarge our subscription list."⁹⁹ Hubbell apparently hoped to snag a few Democrats, too. His decision to expand the paper coincided with divisiveness within the Democratic Party and its Monterey County organ. Influential Democrats were mobilizing to support Grant, citing disenchantment with the party's revolutionary tendencies and wariness of the volatile personalities of their party ticket, Horatio Seymour and Frank Blair. The threat of another civil war if the Democrats were voted into office left no other choice.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷Ibid. ⁹⁸Monterey Gazette, 25 June 1868, 2.

⁹⁹Monterey Gazette, 10 September 1868, 2.

¹⁰⁰Monterey Gazette, 15 October 1868, 2.

With the Gazette's augmentation came the proclamation, "The Monterey Gazette has now been put in campaign trim, and it is the duty of every Grant and Colfax man to see that it is scattered all over the county."¹⁰¹ With the financial assistance of "true friends,"¹⁰² Hubbell campaigned diligently for his party, presenting many sound arguments against the Democrats and in favor of the Republicans. A vote for Seymour, he stressed, was akin to giving the nod to another war. A checkmark beside Grant's name on the ballot would give Reconstruction and peace a chance. Hubbell's persistence paid off for the Republicans.

"GLORY! GLORY! Liberty! Peace! AND PROSPERITY TO ALL!! U.S. GRANT TO BE THE NEXT PRESIDENT!!!"¹⁰³ Pictures of an eagle and a cannon stood guard of this explosive headline and its accompanying account of Republican victory. Hubbell rebuked the Democrats again, publicly celebrating that the "Kuklux [sic] assassins will be scourged with whips of fire back to their midnight lairs, and the rebels of the South taught that free speech, free suffrage and free thought, are the right of citizens of the United States."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹Monterey Gazette, 17 September 1868, 3.

¹⁰²Monterey Gazette, 10 December 1868, 2.

¹⁰³Monterey Gazette, 5 November 1868, 2. ¹⁰⁴Ibid.

Unfortunately for Hubbell, the prognosis for the Gazette's local opponent was not similarly bleak. Following the Republican victory, Hubbell reported that the Democrat "flaunts its bedraggled banner in the air, and with a seriousness and pomposity truly ridiculous, talks about the principles of Democracy living forever."¹⁰⁵ But despite what Hubbell may have wanted to believe was irrational optimism on the part of his opponent, the Democrat held its lead in one very important area. The Democrat still dominated as the local choice for legal advertising and printing. The Gazette, on the other hand, shrank to its original five-column format. As Hubbell explained, "our patronage is so small that it will not pay the wages of a 'hand,' so that, in order to keep the paper alive, we have to run it at its present size, and be our own printer, pressman, &c."¹⁰⁶

Before his paper was swallowed by the competition, Hubbell made one last effort to initiate action within the community's Republican contingent. His objective? To carry the state's upcoming general and judicial elections, and in the process to win the unfaltering patronage of his party. "UNION COUNTY COMMITTEE. Is not it about time that a

¹⁰⁵Monterey Gazette, 26 November 1868, 2.

¹⁰⁶Monterey Gazette, 10 December 1868, 2.

meeting of this committee should be called, to take the preliminary steps toward organizing the party for effective work during the coming campaign?"¹⁰⁷ Hubbell's goal was a difficult one in a county that, after the close of the Civil War, had reacquired "the miserable reputation of being strongly Democratic."¹⁰⁸ Clearly he was weary of the task: "We have kept this paper going in some shape, in order to show that some vitality still remained in the Republican Party of Monterey County, but for our pains have met with little patronage, and plenty of 'cussing.'"¹⁰⁹ To quell the complainers, Hubbell made a final promise to publish at least ten columns of reading matter every week. With that said, he chided, "If Republicans choose to aid us by their patronage, all right; if not, let them hold their peace about this paper hereafter."¹¹⁰

Hubbell engaged a printer to assist with the upcoming campaign, and for the next four months, they cast aspersions on the Democratic Party, vowing that "no dark lantern clique shall oust us from the control of this paper. We intend to run it as long as it is run; and all who don't like it will have to put up with it."¹¹¹ The publisher labeled the

¹⁰⁷Monterey Gazette, 18 March 1869, 2.

¹⁰⁸Monterey Gazette, 13 May 1869, 2. ¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*

¹¹⁰*Ibid.* ¹¹¹*Ibid.*

Democratic Party "the meanest and most contemptible organization ever in existence,"¹¹² charging that "the love of country, the welfare of society, the rights of his fellow-man [sic], and the happiness of his neighbor, are all lost in the insensate lust for office which permeates the breast of every Democrat."¹¹³ In addition, Hubbell alluded to a Republican victory months before the September election: "We congratulate Republicans upon the weakness of the ticket our opponents have set up."¹¹⁴ And when the Republican nominees were announced, the Gazette publisher proclaimed their list of contenders the "strongest and best combination of names ever made for political purposes in this county, and its vast superiority over that of our demoralized opponents, is admitted, with drooping spirits, by Democrats themselves."¹¹⁵

At the polls, the Republicans did well, but they did not carry their entire slate. "As a whole, the Republican party [sic] can congratulate itself on the result. We have elected our Clerk, Sheriff, Surveyor and Coroner--the most important offices in the county."¹¹⁶ Despite his

¹¹²Monterey Gazette, 22 July 1869, 2. ¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Monterey Gazette, 30 June 1869, 2.

¹¹⁵Monterey Gazette, 15 July 1869, 2.

¹¹⁶Monterey Gazette, 2 September 1869, 2.

enthusiastic promotion of the Republican Party, Hubbell's spirits were dampened by his unrealized ambition to include ten columns of reading material in the Gazette; on the best of days, he fell short by three columns. Additionally, of the seven columns he tried to set aside for news, nearly an entire column of material was not news at all, but rather articles directing attention to ads appearing elsewhere in the paper. This was no way to broaden the paper's subscription base.

The Gazette's last issue was nearly filled with advertising. It was not a terrible showing for local ads; they filled 3 1/2 columns of the paper. But 11 1/2 columns of advertising originated from distant locations. Worst of all, there were no official advertisements, and Hubbell had the County Board of Supervisors to thank for this, the final iniquity dealt his dying paper. In what the publisher deemed an "outrageous, high-handed proceeding,"¹¹⁷ the board arbitrarily ordered "all 'county, district or township' officers to bestow their legal patronage upon the Monterey Democrat alone."¹¹⁸

Hubbell "became connected with the Gazette, not to run it for a season, make what money out of it we could, and then give it up, nor to make it merely a 'campaign paper,'

¹¹⁷Monterey Gazette, 23 September 1869, 2. ¹¹⁸Ibid.

but to improve and build it up to render it permanency."¹¹⁹
Now Hubbell had no recourse. He had no money. He had no support. He had no paper. "Money we need and must have! If those who are indebted to us will make immediate payment, all right; if not, there will be a large sized funeral of a small sized printing office."¹²⁰ Hubbell buried the Gazette on October 7, 1869.

¹¹⁹Monterey Gazette, 19 December 1867, 2.

¹²⁰Monterey Gazette, 7 October 1869, 2.

CHAPTER 11

EPITAPH: LEAVING A PAPER TRAIL

By contemporary standards, the Monterey Gazette's six-year history might be labeled fleeting. By 1860s' standards, the paper was almost ancient. While hundreds of newspapers cropped up around the state, dying out before the printer's ink was dry, the Gazette survived for six years in one location. Furthermore, not only did it experience a longevity atypical of papers during this era, it also served several important functions within its community.

Extrapolating from what is known about pioneer publishing and using content as an indicator of the Gazette's intended purposes, two central objectives of the newspaper surfaced: boosterism and serving as a catalyst for change. In addition, analysis suggested that the Gazette's secondary objective was to promote a particular political viewpoint, a function that became more dynamic during the the Gazette's last two years of publication. It also became apparent that not all the editors possessed identical goals for the Gazette.

As was the case with many pioneer papers from around the state, boosterism fueled the founding of the Gazette. It is possible that the paper's original proprietors hired

Acklin strictly with this purpose in mind, just as Albion P. Jordon lured McElroy, along with his Sentinel, to Santa Cruz. Acklin and his backers initiated the campaign to attract people to Monterey. Articles played up the region's natural attributes in an attempt to lure visitors and immigrants to the town and improve the local economy. Most of the succeeding publishers built on this trend by bolstering the city's business district and highlighting various commercial opportunities, such as mining and whaling.

Boosterism frequently masqueraded as, and took the place of, local news. It was not until Brittain's term as publisher of the Gazette that local news made a noticeable showing in the paper. Extant issues of the paper suggest that Brittain's agenda differed from that of his predecessors, as well as those who came after him. Although all the publishers verbalized their intentions to create a local paper, Brittain was the first to follow through without the accompanying editorial asides which so often blurred the distinctions between reporting and commentary. He stripped away all the exaggerated claims to reveal the true nature of Monterey in the 1860s. In fact, Brittain's gloomy depiction of the town's depressed business district

left the next publisher with the task of trying to re-establish interest in Monterey, the future of which depended on attracting business and industry.

The Gazette's contents after Brittain vacated the publisher's seat show that Stephen Hatch did reinstate boosterism as a major feature of the paper. His term with the paper was short, however, and the last publisher, DeWitt Hubbell, for awhile, seemed to strike a balance between boosterism and unembellished reporting.

Petitioning for community development and change also emerged as one of the Gazette's dominant functions. Again, this was a common use for pioneer papers in California, particularly in small, isolated areas where a backward lifestyle deemed it necessary. This feature of the Gazette never wavered--all of its publishers rallied for various advantageous community improvements. Schools, roads, and railroads dominated the lobbying content of the paper. Whether or not the paper reiterated the views of county residents or incited their demands for action is not certain. What is substantiated is that several of the changes lobbied for were realized. As noted in the narrative, schools received funds for renovations, roads garnered needed attention, and the local wharf acquired a sponsor for necessary repairs. Brittain fostered speedier

communication by lobbying for more frequent postal service to and from Monterey, another advancement achieved and noted in the paper.

Education, perhaps the most measurable of the institutions supported by the Gazette, provides a good example of the paper's possible influence. In 1847 California's first public school opened in Monterey, and by 1853, there were two schools in the county--the initial one in Monterey and one in San Juan.¹ But by 1866 the county contained ten public schools,² perhaps partially attributable to the Gazette's barrage of editorials, which kept education uppermost in the minds of county residents. Private schools opened in Monterey in 1865³ and 1867,⁴ taking young and adult students. Of course, the Gazette's publishers probably benefitted from the additional readers generated by the county's schools, just as they probably had a stake in everything they promoted. After all, it was to their advantage to stimulate community growth as a way to garner additional readers. Likewise, quick and clear modes

¹Johnston, 67. ²Monterey Gazette, 5 January 1866, 2.

³Monterey Gazette, 8 December 1865, 3.

⁴Monterey Gazette, 24 October 1867, 2.

of communication and transportation through which to receive and disseminate news were imperative to the paper's survival.

The Gazette had several secondary roles, one of which was to provide public instruction. This function was not unique to any one publisher. All six men used the paper to provide moral guidance in areas such as the importance of attending church, proper spousal treatment, and maintaining an even temperament. Acklin stood out, however, as the editor most intent on nurturing the virtue of his readers.

Social reform, too, was attempted by two of the Gazette's publishers, Cassell and Brittain, but the paper's use in this manner was very sporadic, perhaps because in a small town such as Monterey, there was not a lot of corruption that needed correction. But occasionally these two publishers found something--such as a lazy elected official guilty of not representing his constituents--to bring to the attention of their readers.

While political messages featured prominently in the paper, their function seems ancillary to the above-mentioned purposes of the Gazette. For the most part, the publishers adhered to the principals of boosterism and instigating change, concurrently supporting the Lincoln administration. However, politics never seemed to be the main thrust of the

paper. That is, not until Hubbell's tenure with the Gazette. Under Hubbell's tutelage, the focus of the paper changed; he allowed politics, always an underlying feature of the paper, to take precedence over all else. Hubbell lobbied for a different sort of change--the reorganization of the Union Party. But in shifting the objectives of his paper, Hubbell added the Gazette to a long list of party papers, conceived for one purpose, which when met, usually spelled demise.

Yet the Gazette published in Monterey for six years before perishing. Judging from the standstill in population growth during the 1860s, and the relocation of the county seat to Salinas in 1873, the publishers' attempts at boosting the community were not terribly successful. On the other hand, as a catalyst for change and development, the Gazette served an important purpose by solidifying county residents into a community with common goals. But despite the paper's probable positive influence on the community, reciprocity was not forthcoming. As evidenced throughout the paper, community support was minimal. How then did the Gazette manage to last as long as it did, especially in a county that previously lost two newspapers to other cities after publishing stints of a year or less?

The Gazette's ability to publish in Monterey for six years may be traced to several factors. One of these components was the timing of its inception, which ultimately influenced many aspects of the paper's ability to endure. The years between the publication of the Gazette and its predecessors included progress and changes conducive to newspapering on the frontier.

First, Jo. K. Acklin and his silent partners started publication at the height of the Civil War, when demand for news was as elevated as the country's political sentiments. But that was not the only influence the war had on newspapering in Monterey. As noted in chapter three, the Civil War prompted Californians drop previous political affiliations and to cohere as a Union-supporting state. Monterey followed suit, becoming strongly pro-Union. In turn, Acklin and his successors took advantage of the unusual solidarity afforded by the war, freely siding with the Union without fear of alienating large segments of the population.

Increased population owing to the state's improved accessibility was also to the Gazette's advantage. Many events leading to the opening of the West occurred in the years between publication of Monterey's first two newspapers and the Gazette. Prospectors beat a path to California

during the gold rush, making travel easier for those who followed. Stagecoach routes multiplied and were made more manageable. Steamships no longer skirted Cape Horn; instead passengers voyaged to Panama, crossed, and connected with a different steamship bound for San Francisco.⁵ And in 1860, the Pacific Steamship Company wended its way from San Francisco to Monterey, further broadening the town's transportation resources and its accessibility. Monterey's population of Spaniards, Mexicans, and Indians gave way to shiploads of white, English-speaking immigrants who could benefit from a newspaper.⁶ In fact, increased accessibility to the state brought such an influx of literate settlers, that by 1860, California was home to more college graduates per capita than any other state.⁷

Neither the Californian nor the Sentinel had access to the larger English-speaking population available to the Gazette. At the time the Californian published in 1846-1847, Monterey's population was approximately 700. When the Sentinel debuted in 1855, the county's population stood at only 1,872. But by 1860, improved access and the lure of agricultural and mining pursuits caused Monterey's

⁵Ida Rae Egli, ed., No Rooms of Their Own (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1992), xv.

⁶Johnston, 76. ⁷Egli, xv.

population alone to jump to 1,653. Concurrently, the county's inhabitants numbered 4,739.⁸ Not a booming population, but one that was expanding and capable of supporting a newspaper. In fact, a county population of 2,500 was considered the minimum foundation for a fledgling newspaper of this era;⁹ Monterey County nearly doubled the base requirement. And while it is believed that Western publishers of the 1860s tended to exaggerate readership figures, they claimed to reach 43 percent of their population.¹⁰ Based on this percentage, the town of Monterey conceivably yielded as many as 711 readers, while the rest of the county theoretically delivered an additional 1,327 subscribers. Impressive numbers considering that a circulation of several hundred readers during this era was deemed adequate footing.¹¹

Transportation advancements not only delivered a ready-made, educated audience to the Gazette, but conveyed supplies and the news itself much faster, too. Publishers of the Californian and the Sentinel relied on months-old news brought by semimonthly steamships following the circuitous course around Cape Horn from the East Coast. The Gazette, however, was privy to a more timely, ever-

⁸Delkin, 58. ⁹Cloud, 11. ¹⁰Ibid., 48-49.

¹¹Halaas, 34.

increasing supply of newspapers from around the country and the state. This collection of periodicals was particularly useful for those times when there was no local news to report, or telegraph transmissions were knotted somewhere in the, as yet, unreliable system. The explosion of new titles was especially apparent in California. And even though clipped articles were often as close as the Gazette came to delivering news, they were better than the preponderance of laws, ordinances, and obvious fillers that often dominated the pages of Californian and the Sentinel.

Furthermore, timing was such that the Gazette was free from local competition at its inception and for the first four years of its publication. With no other papers within the county, local government ads and printing provided a guaranteed source of income. At times during the Gazette's publication, income from government printing and legal notices--even with the half price deals sometimes given--may have been the only thing keeping the Gazette alive.¹² Job printing also provided a steady supplemental income for the Gazette's publishers, who were called upon to print stock and receipt books, billheads, circulars, checks, letterheads, and business cards. The printing business was

¹²This theory is raised with regard to other pioneer papers in Robert F. Karolevitz, Newspapering in the Old West (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1965), 152.

probably particularly busy during election years when the need for posters, handbills, banners, and lists of party candidates kept the Gazette office hopping.¹³

The Californian and the Sentinel also benefitted from official advertising and legal printing, but commercial advertising in these two papers was slim. In the tiny Californian, retail advertising was nearly nonexistent, just a few squares per issue. Monterey's business sector and its agricultural pursuits simply hadn't developed. The Sentinel portrayed a livelier business and professional district for Monterey in the 1850s, including insertions from San Francisco-based firms. But, averaging little more than a page of ads per issue, the Sentinel's advertising support was surpassed by that of the Gazette, which often filled in excess of two pages with ads. An upswing in agricultural endeavors and diversification of retail and professional services created the broad-based economy needed to fill the Gazette's ad space and help sustain it for six years.¹⁴

The Gazette's most profitable advertising, however, came from a surge of patent medicine ads vying for newspaper space in the 1860s. So abundant were the nostrums competing for advertising space, that it was not necessary for

¹³Cloud, 76. ¹⁴Ibid., 6.

publishers to solicit for them.¹⁵ Previously peddled door-to-door, the moneymaking potential of quack remedies had been unavailable to the publishers of the Californian and the Sentinel.

Even with the advantages and innovations wrought by the passage of time, the Gazette's ability to sustain publication in one location hinged on its original financial backers and its procession of publishers. After a fifteen-month association with the paper, its unnamed proprietors extricated themselves from the venture, relinquishing all operations to the Gazette's first self-supporting publisher, J. S. Brittain. For the next 4 1/2 years, it was the willingness of a succession of editors to bail out the one preceding that kept the paper from an earlier trip to the morgue--a pattern repeated by newspapers around the state. The comments of the Gazette's outgoing publishers concerning overdue subscription and advertising payments, indicate that each left on the brink of financial disaster. Certainly, had one publisher, possessing one publisher's assets, attempted to keep the Gazette afloat for six years during this period in Monterey's history, the paper would have expired much earlier.

¹⁵Marc McCutcheon, The Writer's Guide to Everyday Life in the 1800s (Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1993), 165.

When the Gazette did finally suspend publication, the action was precipitated by a variety of difficulties that accumulated over time. Like a majority of California's pioneer papers, the Gazette's most pervasive problem was its lack of funding. The Gazette's publishers were chronically short of cash, and pleas for payment appeared in the paper with nearly as much regularity as its masthead. Hubbell, the last in the line of Gazette publishers, accumulated the largest debt of all: "We have got \$12,000 already due us in this county, and we need the 'kale.' In fact, if we don't get it, our paper may go in."¹⁶ It was not that subscribers did not want to pay their bills; business was simply bad throughout the community, with hard currency in short supply. And, while trading services, firewood, livestock, or food may have appeased the Gazette's publishers, payment in chickens did not go over well with the paper's suppliers.

Additionally, the Gazette's pay-in-advance policy was difficult to enforce. As a result, the publishers probably accepted whatever partial payment came their way, counting on the balance to trickle in later, as suggested by Halaas.¹⁷ That cash was seldom realized. Yet, needing to maintain a good subscriber base to attract advertisers, the

¹⁶Monterey Gazette, 9 January 1868, 2. ¹⁷Halaas, 32.

editors continued to extend credit to those who requested it, thereby contributing to and perpetuating their debt.

According to Cloud,¹⁸ advertisers often accrued a similar payment record, buying ad space on credit and letting their bills slide. This was likely the dilemma facing the Gazette's publishers. For a while they ran unpaid ads, allowing bills to stack up until settled, or, as in most cases where the Gazette was concerned, until a new editor came to the rescue. Sometimes the paper's publishers pulled ads when their contracts expired. More frequently, the expired ads remained to give the illusion of a well-supported newspaper, even when cash was not forthcoming.

Other problems stemmed from the paper's stalled cash flow, too. Something so basic to the Gazette's survival as the procurement of newsprint presented a major stumbling block. Despite each publisher's desire to enlarge the Gazette to accommodate additional advertising and news, the cost, scarcity, and poor quality of newsprint made this a difficult wish to fulfill; it was perhaps the most frustrating and perplexing of all supply problems, particularly during the war. And while the cost of newsprint steadily declined after the Civil War, it remained pricey for Western editors still relying on shipments from

¹⁸Cloud, 59.

back East.¹⁹ "The Folsom Telegraph complains of the exorbitant price of paper, and wants to know why they don't manufacture paper in Folsom."²⁰

Resulting space limitations stirred up numerous complaints from readers and publishers alike. Subscribers whined that the paper did not contain enough reading material; editors blamed the deficiency on the paper's restricted size and the need to run as many ads as possible within its confines. Advertising, the only theoretically profitable content of the Gazette, always emerged the victor when there was a squabble over news space versus ad space. "Our new advertisements crowd our reading matter somewhat this week, but they are handy to have about a printing office, and--we really couldn't refuse them."²¹ And so the paradox continued. Hubbell was the only editor who, in a maneuver to satiate his audience with additional reading material without cutting into precious ad space, briefly increased the dimensions of the Gazette. The innovation lasted only three months, probably another victim of depleted funds.

¹⁹Cloud, 139.

²⁰Monterey Gazette, 16 February 1866, 2.

²¹Monterey Gazette, 27 May 1869, 2.

Cash, or some tradable asset, was also needed to hire and maintain employees. The Gazette's publishers, possessing neither, performed most functions of the newspaper on their own. While Brittain and Hubbell employed printers for short stints, both discovered firsthand that their ilk was not reliable. Nineteenth-century printers were known for being itinerant, as well as given to heavy drinking.²² Hubbell's printer gave more attention to raising a glass at the local saloon than he did to lowering the lever on the paper's handpress, and he eventually flitted to the Monterey Democrat. With little or no help, the publishers were forced to set type letter-by-letter, print each sheet on both sides, fold, and crease the paper-- a process that easily consumed a full day. In their remaining time, there was news to gather, subscriptions and payments to round up, and a few local ads to secure--all in a county that, at the time, stretched ninety miles in length and sixty miles in width.²³

With only one person doing all the work involved in putting out a paper, there were bound to be glitches: "Our illness last week has kind of knocked our paper out of sorts, as the institution is run by one-man power. We hope that by another week, everything will be in ship-shape [sic]

²²Lorenz, 38. ²³Monterey Gazette, 1 March 1867, 2.

again."²⁴ In addition, the Gazette's publishers quickly wearied of the tedious, unappreciated routine, leaving the enterprise to be managed by someone with fresh fortitude. "Perhaps there is no other business under the sun so worrisome and so exhausting as publishing a country paper in a small country town. It is a never-ending round of dull, dreary monotony."²⁵

Some problems, however, even money couldn't solve. Despite the many advances in communication and transportation systems designed to make the publishers' tasks easier, the innovations were not always reliable. The Gazette's publishers remarked frequently that the telegraph lines were out of commission due to poor weather, Indian tampering, and sometimes simple wear and tear. Government control of telegraph wires during the Civil War probably hindered the editors as well. With news knotted in telegraph lines and red tape, the publishers had no choice but to clip more liberally from exchange papers, the contents of which lacked the timeliness of telegraph transmissions. Additionally, the telegraph was expensive. For a small, sparsely supported paper like the Gazette, paying for telegrams on those occasions when the wires were

²⁴Monterey Gazette, 4 February 1969, 2.

²⁵Monterey Gazette, 10 December 1868, 2.

functioning, was difficult. Implementation of a telegraphic rate reduction in July 1869 was of little help to the Monterey paper already burdened with debts and only three months from extinction.²⁶

Exchange newspapers, the lifeblood of the Gazette, were not always readily available either. Like the telegraph wires, mail delivery was similarly susceptible to Indian plunderings and bad weather. Roads were often impassable for couriers and stagecoaches, which not only brought exchange papers and supplies to Monterey, but helped disseminate the Gazette as well. All those editorials lobbying for improved roads and the development of railroads were not written strictly for the benefit of the community; the publishers, who relied heavily on clear modes of transport, stood to gain a lot also. Even without disruption of service, it took eleven days for deliveries to reach Monterey from the East, via a combination of railroad and stage.²⁷ Geographic isolation and irregular mail

²⁶After July 10, 1869, telegraph rates for ten words from Monterey were as follows: to Santa Cruz, thirty-five cents; Watsonville, twenty-five cents; San Juan, thirty-five cents; Gilroy, thirty-five cents; Castroville, twenty-five cents; San Jose, thirty-five cents; Santa Clara, fifty cents; Menlo Park, fifty cents; Redwood City, fifty cents; San Mateo, fifty cents; San Francisco, fifty cents. Monterey Gazette, 8 July 1869, 2.

²⁷Monterey Gazette, 26 November 1868, 2.

service often forced the Gazette's editors to pad their papers, eliciting additional complaints from readers seeking more than maxims, anecdotes, and conundrums. Sporadic receipt of mail and telegrams also made it hard for the editors to anticipate how much space to leave open for late information, exacerbating the problem of sparsely filled columns.

Local news did not abound as promised, creating another cause for subscriber disgruntlement. Granted, each publisher vowed to include large quantities of regional information, but there simply was not that much to report in the quiet, widely scattered community. The fact that pioneer publishers were not trained to gather and report news further aggravated the problem; they waited for news to come to them via volunteers who were also ill-equipped to dig up news. Their solution--plenty of cutting and pasting from other newspapers. Use of exchange material, however, further impeded the paper's growth as a local sheet. And more important to the bottom line, the shortcut may have cost the Gazette some of its immigrant subscribers who probably tired of receiving double doses of news borrowed from their homeland papers.

The Gazette's final depletion of subscribers, however, was attributable to the November 1867 debut of its fiercest

competitor, the Monterey Democrat. The Democrat took what was left of the Gazette's already diminished resources. It stole the Gazette's subscriber support. It lured away the Gazette's advertising clients. It enticed county officials to reward it with the Gazette's formerly guaranteed government printing contracts. In short, the Democrat pulled whatever financial base the Gazette had right out from under it. It was not a solo job, however; the Democrat had its accomplices, perhaps including an unwitting DeWitt Hubbell.

Throughout its six-year publication, the Gazette's editors steered clear of party financing, relying on advertising and subscriber support. When Hubbell declared the Gazette Monterey's official paper of the Union Party, he not only broke its pledge of independence, but effectively put a term limit on his own venture. Even strong party papers of this era generally lasted only one or two years.²⁸ The Gazette fit the pattern perfectly, folding almost exactly one year and six months after its designation as a campaign paper. Like so many other party papers subservient to passing interests, the Gazette, having fulfilled its purpose, may have contributed to its own obsolescence, a theory suggested by Kemble.²⁹

²⁸Cloud, 77. ²⁹Kemble, 45.

As noted above, however, there was more to the Gazette's demise than merely outliving its usefulness. In addition to the Gazette and the Democrat, the April 1869 introduction of the Castroville Argus and San Juan's Central Californian made for a total of four newspapers vying for attention in Monterey County.³⁰ While additional newspapers generally sprouted in response to a town's increased manufacturing, commercial, agricultural, or mining industries,³¹ Monterey by the end of the 1860s exhibited no advancements in these endeavors. Neither its population nor its economy was equipped to support four newspapers. Something had to go, and this time it was the Gazette. Financial resources for the paper were dry. "We are afraid this is a bad year for newspapers in this region,"³² Hubbell conceded just four months before halting publication. With no buyers waiting in the wings, and having promised that the Gazette would not be bought out and "smothered by Democratic gold,"³³ Hubbell allowed the paper to die in his possession. Yet in several ways the Gazette lived beyond its years of publication. By virtue of the paper's preservation on

³⁰Monterey Gazette, 1 April 1869, 2; Monterey Gazette, 15 April, 2.

³¹Kobre, 350. ³²Monterey Gazette, 24 June 1869, 2.

³³Monterey Gazette, 11 March 1868, 2.

microfilm and its compendium of local news, state constitutions, county laws, and town ordinances, the Gazette's publishers are today's unofficial historians. Likewise, while the paper did not directly spawn any successors, it did indirectly foster the birth of at least two newspapers within the county. The Gazette's third publisher, J. S. Brittain, went on to introduce newspaper journalism to the people of the Salinas Valley in 1868 with his Salinas Standard. The Democrat may also be considered a byproduct of the Gazette, as it was likely founded to provide the county with a paper advocating the opposing political stance. Even though the Gazette had not been declared an official paper of the Republican party prior to publication of the Democrat, the Gazette's content repeatedly disclosed its political tendencies.

Extant issues of the Monterey Gazette provided the means to record, as closely as possible, the paper's history. Examination of the paper, combined with background information concerning California history and California newspaper history, led to several plausible extrapolations regarding the paper's function within Monterey County and its ability to publish in one location six times longer than its predecessors. The story of each publisher's successes and failures, as well as credible inferences about the

circumstances surrounding the Gazette's demise, were also possible to extract from analysis. But there is more to be learned about the Gazette, including its use as a political tool; the effects of clipping from exchange newspapers on the Gazette's development as a local sheet; what constituted news during this era; Brittain's apparent attempt to introduce a truly local newspaper, neither grounded in community boosting nor bent on discussing politics, for example. Historic newspapers contain a wealth of information--lessons about journalism practices of a bygone era, about the town or city from which newspapers originate, and about the men, or in some cases, women, who created them. It is hoped that this study will be useful to those interested in pioneer journalism, California and Monterey history, and perhaps instigate and aid further research in early Monterey journalism. In particular, six additional pre-turn-of-the-century Monterey newspapers, including two years of the the Gazette's nemesis, the Monterey Democrat, are preserved on microfilm and are available for study at the Monterey City Library, the Bancroft Library located on the Berkeley campus of the University of California, and the California State Library in Sacramento. These issues could form the basis of an analysis of events leading to Monterey's first viable newspaper. The passage of time and

the advent of better, faster modes of information dissemination should not blur the contributions made by pioneer publishers, upon whose foundation modern newspapers are built.

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