

Publishing *in west chester*

1797-2014



A brief, amusing and mostly accurate overview of the history of publishing in West Chester: **Kate Chadwick** pays tribute to some of the publications that have paved the way for *The WC Press*.



Staff of *The American Republican* newspaper, circa. 1870. photo courtesy of Chester County Historical Society

Once upon a time, humans placed a high value on communicating with one another through words and pictures. Okay, they still do, and you probably need look no further for proof of that than the person nearest to you right this minute, who is no doubt texting, messaging, or emailing someone on his or her phone or other device.

The written word has been a compelling part of the human experience for approximately 5,000 years. And while actual publishers didn't come along quite that early, they've been around for some time, too, as we discovered when we took a look back at the history of publishing in the borough of West Chester.

While this fine publication you're holding—or reading on your tablet—is no doubt your favorite West Chester periodical, there are many that have gone before, as well as a couple that have stood the test of time. We present here a brief overview of the history of select periodicals published specifically here in our town, from some of the key players to the one-hit wonders.

The Pioneers: Sailing into uncharted waters

The Literary Museum or Monthly Magazine

Established in 1797, this was the first attempt to bring periodicals to the local masses. It was printed and published in an office on South High Street, held 56 pages of "excellent read-

ing material," and sold for 25 cents an issue. Sadly, it was evidently ahead of its time and lasted just six months.

West Chester Gazette

Established in approximately early 1799, the *Gazette* was the borough's first attempt at a weekly newspaper. Published by local printers Jones, Hoff and Derrick, the *Gazette* ceased publication after just a few issues; there are no copies of the publication believed to still be in existence.

The American Republican

In researching this article, we consulted the *History of Chester County, Pennsylvania*, by Futhey & Cope, published in 1881, a book that dizzily details the constantly changing cast of characters (dozens) who published *The American Republican* and its subsequent and various incarnations (also dozens) over many years (technically, from 1822-1878). In the interest of brevity, we will simply point out three interesting facts: 1. In 1839 an interest in the paper was sold to one Nimrod Strickland (best name ever); 2. It was a weekly, then a semi-weekly, followed by a daily published in the morning, and then a daily published in the afternoon; 3. It was published in a building on the south side of Gay Street, between Church and Darlington. (Then on Market Street; then on Church, between Gay and Market; then on North High Street, near Chestnut, and finally another office on Market, opposite the southwest corner of the courthouse yard.)



Typesetters at work at the *Daily Local News*, circa. 1905 photo courtesy of Chester County Historical Society

Chester and Delaware Federalist

First published in West Chester by Dennis Whelen in 1809, it was sold to Charles Miner in 1817, who changed the name to the *Village Record*, making "Chester and Delaware Federalist" a sub-heading. He also enlarged the size of the paper from 10x16 to 12x18 inches. In 1825, Charles Miner's brother Asher came on board; in 1830 the paper was enlarged yet again to 14x19 inches, and the sub-heading changed to "And General Advertiser." Charles Miner was considered an excellent writer, and under his editorship the paper gained "a high character, and did much to promote intelligence among the people." The brothers successfully ran the weekly before selling it in 1834.

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The Fly-by-Nighters: They came, they saw, they disappeared in less than a year.

1867-68 – Commercial Advertiser

A monthly, published by Taylor & Hickman

1864-64 – The Chester County Chronicle

A weekly published by Alfred Galliner

1856-57 – The Independent Herald and Free American

A weekly, published by W.L. & E.F. James

1834-35 – The Whig

A weekly, published by Simeon Siegfried

The Creatively Named: No, we didn't make these up.

The Independent Journal and Working Man's Advocate

A weekly published from 1841-42 by A.M. Wright and A.J. Creyon (Or, was it just a diary by one ambitious guy?)

Crystal Fount Reformer

A weekly published from 1846-48. You might not have thought crystal fount reformation would support a weekly, but you'd be wrong.

Anti-Masonic Register and Chester County Examiner

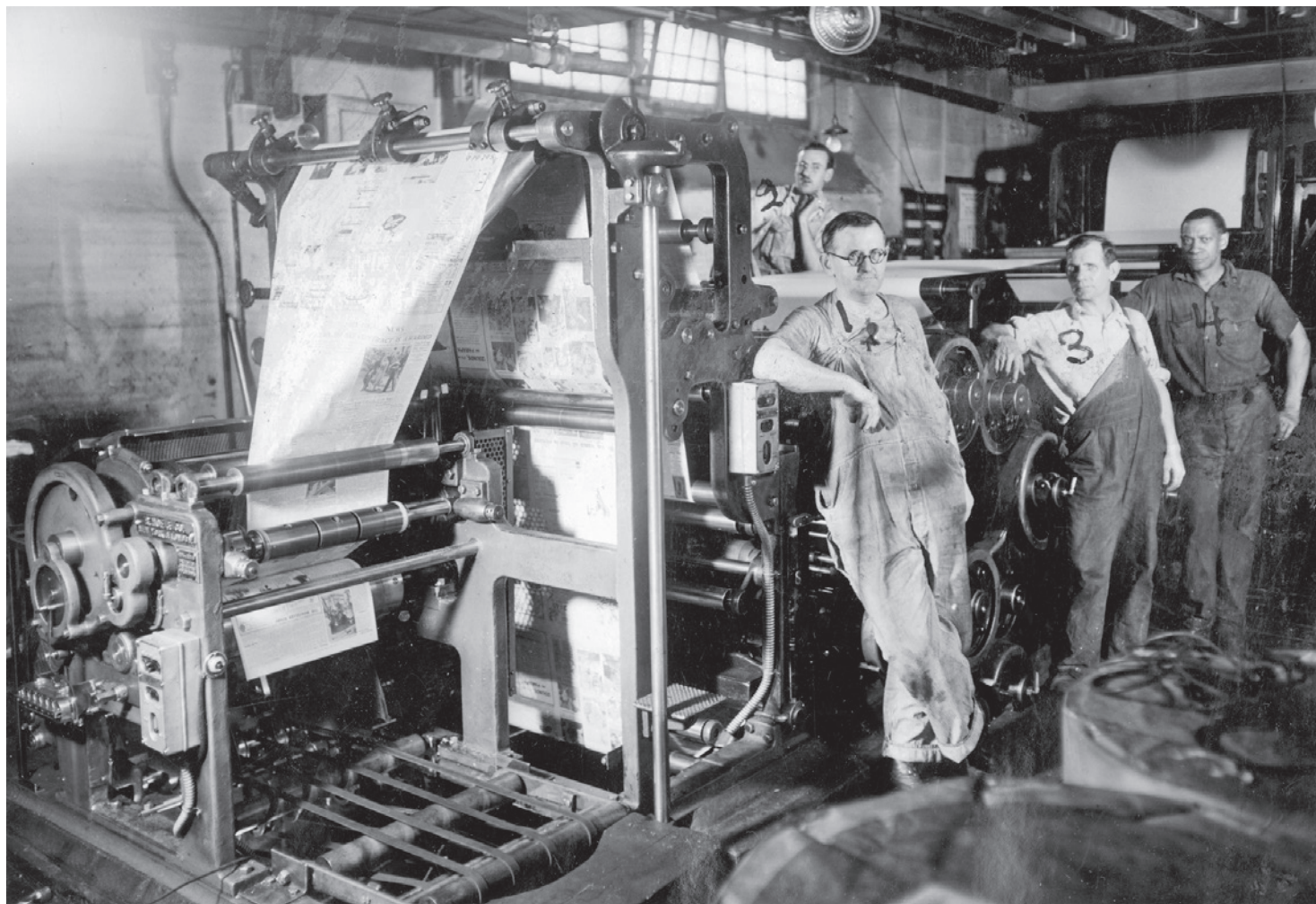
A weekly published by one Joseph Painter from 1831-35. Titriling a newspaper with the prefix "anti" seems like a bold move to us, but clearly they wanted there to be no doubt about their political leanings.

Temperance Advocate and Journal of the Times

A weekly published from 1831-35 by Simeon Siegfried. Mr. Siegfried, it should be noted, was one of the cast of characters through the revolving door at the *The American Republic*, et al.

Literary Casket

A weekly published circa 1828 until 1830 by C. Hannum and J.A. Hemphill. Our favorite creative name by far, but sadly not much other information is available about it, except that its office was located on the east side of Church Street, three doors north of Market, not far from our headquarters.



Pressroom of the *Daily Local News*, circa 1939. *photo courtesy of Chester County Historical Society*

Morning Republican

A daily, except Sunday, published by West Chester Publishing Company from 1897-1914, presumably for those who don't like their Republicans in the afternoon.

Thursday A.M.

A weekly from 1940 published by George Lilley and Raeder Huey every ... Thursday. In the morning.

The Stalwarts: Still going strong, still relevant

The Quad

The next time you hear someone lamenting about "these kids today," refer them to *The Quad*, the WCU student newspaper, which is run solely by students and has been in continuous publication since 1932. *The Quad* is currently published 20 times per year: ten Mondays each, during the fall and spring semesters.

It provides university news, opinions and sports to the campus, alumni and faculty, and to the West Chester community. We checked in with *Quad* editor-in-chief Kenny Ayers to ask about the importance of the paper's history. "I would say that in our everyday work, that factor doesn't weigh in much," Ayres told us. "The industry is constantly changing, and to hang up in the past too much would be detrimental to our readership. That being said, we do keep the history in mind for certain things. There's been a push by some over the last several years to change the name of *The Quad*, but it's something

we refuse to do based on its history. The same thing goes with print copies. It's been suggested that we go solely online, but in the interest of protecting the history of the organization, we've been very adamant about continuing the tradition of putting out a print copy."

The Daily Local

The Daily Local newspaper has been in continuous publication since 1872 as a daily (no small feat indeed), and the paper added a Sunday edition in 1986. It has a daily circulation of more than 25,000 and a Sunday reach of more than 28,000. *The Daily Local* still offers home delivery in a market where that service is declining, as well as a strong online and social media presence that offers local and national news, sports, business, classifieds and entertainment.

Our favorite fact about *The Daily Local* is that it once employed Pulitzer Prize-winning syndicated humor columnist, Dave Barry, an experience described thusly on his website: "He graduated in 1969 and eventually got a job with a newspaper named—this is a real name—*The Daily Local News*, in West Chester, Pa., where he covered a series of incredibly dull municipal meetings, some of which are still going on."

The newspaper is owned by the Journal Register Company, which is based in Yardley, but it retains the independence of its "local" name. We contacted the paper's editor for a quote to include in this story, but he declined to comment. Oh well; we're still wishing them another 140 years of success. 