Breaking Bread, Not Bones: Printers' Festivals and Professionalism in Antebellum America

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By Frank E. Fee Jr.

*This research examines a little-studied facet of nineteenth-century jour-
nalism, the Printers' Festival or Franklin Dinner, finding in the discourse of
the many toasts lauding the craft evidence of attempts to turn an artisanal
craft into a profession. The research argues that these feasts were sites of
production for values and practices that helped create group identity and
culture that led to formal press associations by the middle of the century.*

"THE TYPOGRAPHICAL PROFESSION – Guided by the precept and
examples of the immortal Franklin, we will always have a clean *case*,
an abundance of *sorts*, a correct *proof*, and in the end be *justified*
and *registered* on high."[1] —Toast at an 1846 Franklin Dinner

Through much of the early nineteenth century, editors and pub-
lishers spiced their news columns with wars of words aimed at
other editors and publishers. Sometimes the discourse was simple

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[1]"Printers' Festival," *Rochester (NY) Daily Advertiser*, January 17, 1846. With its use
of printing terms, this sentiment typifies those offered at dinners around the country in the
nineteenth century on the birthday of Benjamin Franklin. It was one of the regular toasts at
the first of three annual Franklin Dinners in Rochester, New York, in the 1840s. Such toasts
featured wordplay drawn from printing trades terminology, which was always italicized when
published in the newspapers covering the events. Unless otherwise noted, all definitions are
from *American Dictionary of Printing and Bookmaking* (New York: Howard Lockwood,
1894), hereafter (AD), and J. Luther Ringwalt, ed., *American Encyclopaedia of Printing*
(1871; reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, 1981), hereafter (AE). *Case*—"The shallow
tray, divided into lesser boxes, in which the letters used for composition are placed." In the
United States, the compositor would have two cases, an upper and a lower, each of which
would sit at a different angle (AD, 83); *sorts*—"All the characters in a font of type. When the
letters belonging to one or more important boxes of a case are exhausted, the compositor

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using it is said to be out of sorts" (AE, 418); *proof*—"A single impres-
sion of type matter, taken for the purpose of examination and correction
by the proof-reader or author. . . . A foul proof is one containing many
errors, and a clean proof [is] one that is remarkably correct" (AE, 373);
justified—"To space out a line to any given measure so that it shall
be neither long nor short" (AD, 314); *registered*—"The adjustment of
pages so that those on the second side shall strike exactly on the back
of those printed on the first side, the edges coinciding" (AD, 486).

teasing and taunting. At other times, the interchanges were angry denunciations and vicious character attacks. For editors in changing times, the imperatives of seeking political or economic advantage fueled vituperation that could grow so strong that words led to blows, lashes, gunshots, and death. Duels were not uncommon, nor were beatings in the streets and even in newspaper offices.[2] The record clearly belies the claim of one antebellum editor that "editors in their strifes [*sic*] never broke any bones."[3]

Assuaging some of the rancor were special dinners that convened the printing fraternity to celebrate Benjamin Franklin's birthday, January 17. Called Franklin Dinners, Franklin Festivals, or Printers' Festivals, these affairs were held in various years and at various places throughout the country to honor Franklin and to celebrate printing.[4] Although virtually no scholars have examined the Franklin Dinners—and the few who have focused more on their social than their socializing nature—these affairs afford a glimpse of the development of craft identity and professionalism that helped practitioners manage change in their business. The gatherings provided forums

[2]For discussions of violence to and by printers, editors, and publishers in the nineteenth century, see, among others, Fletcher M. Green, "Duff Green, Militant Journalist of the Old School," *American Historical Review* 52, no. 2 (January 1947): 247–264; Frederick Hudson, *Journalism in the United States from 1690 to 1872* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1873); William E. Huntzicker, *The Popular Press, 1833–1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999); Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History: 1690–1960*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962); Jeffrey L. Pasley, *"The Tyranny of Printers" : Newspaper Politics in the Early Republic* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001); Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1945); Rollo G. Silver, "Violent Assaults on American Printing Shops, 1788–1860," *Printing History* 1, no. 2 (1979): 10–18; Henry Watterson, "The Personal Equation in Journalism," in *The Profession of Journalism*, ed. Willard Grosvenor Bleyer (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1918), 97–111. According to Green (251), "Prior to the Civil War an editor who had not had a personal encounter was a rare one." Huntzicker (44), discussing violence among New York City editors, reports that *Courier and Enquirer* editor James Watson Webb "beat up arch-rival [James Gordon] Bennett [editor of the *Herald*] at least three times. Not everyone's favorite editor, Bennett also received a public beating from [*Evening Post* editor William] Leggett and Peter Townsend, editor of the *Evening Star*. The *Sun* then referred to Bennett as 'common flogging property.'" Mott (309) recounts that editors of the Vicksburg, Mississippi, *Sentinel* in the years preceding the Civil War "engaged in four duels and endless single-combats on the streets; four of its editors were killed, one drowned himself, one was imprisoned, and others were wounded."

[3]"The Great Franklin Festival," *Rochester (NY) Daily Democrat*, January 20, 1847.

[4]The first Franklin Dinners apparently were held in 1802 in Boston and Philadelphia, but, "By 1825 local typographical societies had already begun tendering annual dinners on a significant date such as the anniversary of the founding of the society, Franklin's birthday, or the fourth of July." Rollo G. Silver, "The Convivial Printer: Dining, Wining, and Marching, 1825–1860," *Printing History* 4, no. 7/8 (1982): 16. In New York City, the New-York Typographical Society's committee on arrangements for the 1852 Franklin Dinner noted that it was the society's forty-sixth ("The Printers' Banquet," *New-York Daily Tribune*, January 17, 1852), and it is clear that the Franklin Dinner was not held every year in New York City. In Boston, the first Franklin Dinner appears to have been in 1802, as Boston's *Columbian Centinel* of 1803 called that year's dinner the second anniversary ("Franklin's Birth-Day," *Columbian Centinel*, January 22, 1803).

and networks with which to create social or craft capital and helped forge consensus on occupational values and norms that would facilitate formal associations of publishers and editors and discussions of ethics later in the century.

The dinners answered a need that editors around the country saw as early as the 1830s. Surveying the pernicious political discourse of the day, the editors saw the press "in too many instances . . . [had become] a vehicle of ribaldry and personal defamation."[5] At stake, printers believed, was their esteem in their communities and the elevation of their work.

"Every well wisher of society cannot but regard with pain the base ends to which this powerful engine for good [the press] is too often made sub-servient, and the consequent debasement of those connected with it," the *Wisconsin Democrat* declared in 1846. "Not only the self-respect of the edi-torial fraternity but the interests of the public demand that measure should be taken now in our infancy to guard against that licentiousness and degradation into which the press has sometimes fallen in other communities."[6]

As early as the 1830s, editors saw value in coming together informally, in settings such as the Franklin Dinners, for the good of the fraternity. While meetings were held from time to time to discuss the business of the craft (e.g., wages, working conditions, prices), these were seen as only part of the solution. In 1837, a Lexington, Kentucky, newspaperman warned that "Unless we can meet, commune, and feel for each other, we never will, as a class, be able to rank with others, or protect our own interests."[7] Even when the working conventions failed to produce concrete, lasting results, the social aspects, as with the Franklin Dinners, nevertheless were seen as beneficial. A *New-York Daily Times* correspondent concluded that after an Ohio meeting, "I am sure each editor felt that from his visit to Zanesville his pride in his profession has been elevated—his resolves for better purpose strengthened, and his friendship for his fellow-workers rendered closer and more reliable."[8]

Background

Printers' Festivals were enormously popular among printers through much of the United States and its territories during the early and mid-nineteenth century. Salt Lake City, founded in 1847 in what became the Utah Territory, saw the first of its annual Printers' Festivals in 1852.[9] It was in 1856, at a Franklin Dinner in Keokuk, Iowa, that a young journeyman printer, Samuel L. Clemens (the future Mark Twain), gave an impromptu

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[5]"Convention of Editors," *Standard* (Raleigh, NC), November 8, 1837.

[6]"Convention of Editors," *Wisconsin Democrat* (Madison), September 26, 1846.

[7]S. Penn Jr., "To the President of the Convention of Printers," *Lexington (KY) Intelligencer*, February 28, 1837.

[8]Baratom, "An Editorial Convention in Ohio," *New-York Daily Times*, January 23, 1855.

[9]"Printers' Festival," *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City, Utah Territory), March 6, 1852.

talk that historians see as the spark for his celebrated lecture career.[10] At the height of his stage career, Twain spoke at least twice at Franklin Dinners in New York City.[11]

Although Printers' Festivals could require extensive planning, others were comparatively spontaneous. On the night before departing for the Mexican War, soldiers in the First Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers held a Printers' Festival at their embarkation camp in Pittsburgh.[12] Editors and publishers might count on help from the railroads in getting to the dinners. Ohio printers received half-fare passes on the Cleveland and Columbus Railroad Co., the Little Miami Railroad, and the Columbus and Xenia Road to attend the 1851 festival at Columbus.[13] Travelers attending a printer's festival in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1856 were advised that "an extra train will run over the Eastern road, leaving Boston at 7 a.m. and stopping at way stations. Half price tickets can be procured at the offices in Boston, Lynn, Salem and Newburyport."[14]

Reports of these dinners, covered locally and disseminated nationally by the exchange press, contributed to the news columns in communities across the country. In 1847, Josiah Snow wrote a history of women in printing for a Franklin Dinner in Rochester, New York.[15] Within weeks, his speech had been reprinted in publications throughout the country, including New York City's *Christian Inquirer* and *Dwight's American Magazine, and Family Newspaper, for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and Moral and Religious Principles*.[16] Two years later, though still attributed to the same "late Printers' Festival at Rochester," the item ran in *The Child's Friend and Family*

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[10]See Edgar M. Branch, "A Chronological Bibliography of the Writings of Samuel Clemens to June 8, 1867," *American Literature* 18, no. 2 (May 1946): 109–159; Paul Fatout, *Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), 23; Fred W. Lorch, *The Trouble Begins at Eight: Mark Twain's Lecture Tours* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1968), 7–8; Margaret Sanborn, *Mark Twain: The Bachelor Years* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 101.

[11]Twain's speech at the Typothetae Dinner January 18, 1886, at Delmonico's represented an informal genre of speeches to such gatherings. Titled "The Old-Fashioned Printer," the speech was a humorous recollection of Twain's days as an apprentice printer. An expurgated version of the speech appears in Mark Twain, *Mark Twain's Speeches* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1910), 182–185. What purports to be a more complete version of the speech as it appeared in the dinner program is offered by Alice D. Schreyer, ed., "Mark Twain and 'The Old-Fashioned Printer,'" *Printing History* 3, no. 2 (1981): 33–36.

[12]"Volunteer Correspondence from the Pennsylvania Regiment," *The North American* (Philadelphia, PA), December 25, 1846.

[13]"Printers' Festival—Cleveland and Columbus Railroads," *Daily Ohio Statesman* (Columbus), January 16, 1851.

[14]"Printers' Festival at Portsmouth," *Daily Atlas* (Boston), October 4, 1856.

[15]The history was reported in Rochester's three morning dailies. See, for example, "The Great Franklin Festival," *Daily Democrat* (Rochester, NY), January 20, 1847.

[16]"Selected Miscellany," *Christian Inquirer* (New York), February 27, 1847; "Female Printers and Editors," *Dwight's American Magazine, and Family Newspaper, for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and Moral and Religious Principles* (New York), March 13, 1847.

Magazine in Boston.[17] Other dinners were reported in such diverse publications as the *Prisoner's Friend: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to Criminal Reform, Philosophy, Science, Literature, and Art* and the *Massachusetts Ploughman and New England Journal of Agriculture*.[18]

The Franklin Dinners, featuring innumerable toasts throughout the evening, were the reason papers might be late the next day, or why the news columns were lighter in content than usual.[19] The number of toasts that were drunk at these affairs—frequently more than 100—could be the reason not all those attending the dinners got back at their desks and job cases in the morning. "Came home at half-past one, pretty gloriously corned," a young printer in Albany, New York, confessed to his diary in the 1830s.[20] An unidentified *Tribune* reporter wrote of the 1853 Franklin Dinner in New York City that "the regular toasts were not concluded until the preposterous hour of 1 o'clock, leaving no room for volunteers [volunteer toasts], letters, &c. . . . The Company has now mainly left for the ball-room and our reporters were obliged to depart to get even this imperfect outline into this morning's paper."[21]

More than merely the stuff of convivial outings, however, the speeches and toasts at these dinners—indeed, the performance of these dinners themselves and the recreation of them in exchange-press items—helped create and maintain craft identity. This, in turn, promoted the professionalization of journalism in the nineteenth century. This study examines the dinners not merely as social events but as social performances that produced meaning, engendered craft epistemologies, and created and maintained identity and craft solidarity.

The analysis is important in that it helps expand understanding of how the journalism of the nineteenth century moved from the small artisans' shops to large enterprises and from partisan to the commercial press that we recognize today. It also helps explain why, given choices that might

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[17]"Female Printers," *The Child's Friend and Family Magazine* (Boston), August 1, 1849.

[18]"Printer's Festival," *Prisoner's Friend: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to Criminal Reform, Philosophy, Science, Literature, and Art* (Boston), January 27, 1847; "The Printer's Celebration," *Massachusetts Ploughman and New England Journal of Agriculture* (Boston), January 22, 1848.

[19]"The Printer's Festival," *Chicago Daily Press and Tribune*, January 18, 1859. The *Tribune* informed its readers that "any scantiness observable in our columns this morning must be attributed to the 'early hours' made by our compositors, that they might 'again make early hours' this morning at Light Guard Hall," scene of the banquet.

[20]After attending the anniversary dinner of the Albany (NY) Typographical Society on March 6, 1832, Joel Munsell wrote in his diary, "Came home at half-past one, pretty gloriously corned, that is to say for me—temperate youth that I am." David S. Edelstein, *Joel Munsell: Printer and Antiquarian* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 113. Although this was not a Franklin Dinner, the model it followed was the same, and it is reasonable to assume that active imbibers and toast makers at some—but not all—Franklin Dinners went home in a similar condition.

[21]"Celebration of Franklin's Birthday by the N.Y. Typographical Society," *New-York Daily Tribune*, January 18, 1853.

have taken print journalism in different directions, these journalists chose to initiate and engage in a rules-based behavior that, in time, would produce codes of ethics and hold objectivity as the primary craft tenet.[22]

Furthermore, the study shows the role of social gatherings in promoting a sense of craft identity among these printer–editors. And it reperiodizes scholars' estimates of the start of news professionalization in the nineteenth century by showing that initial steps in the professionalizing process were under way much earlier than has generally been identified.

Franklin's birthday was not the only occasion for dinners organized by printers and, later on, editors and friends of the fraternity. Similar dinners marked the anniversaries of typographical associations, which often were journeymen's unions,[23] and of publishers' and editors' organizations formed later in the century to advance their particular interests. The Fourth of July also occasioned Franklin-like dinners among the printing fraternity. And while some printers seem to have come together only at annual banquets, others met more regularly to discuss and act on issues of professional concern throughout the year.[24]

These other occasions notwithstanding, this study focuses on the actual Franklin Dinners as a starting point in exploring the larger context of the practitioners' discourse as a socializing and professionalizing agent. Among reasons that recommend the Franklin Dinners for this exploratory research are that not only was Franklin, the early newspaper entrepreneur turned statesman, a hero of the printers—their "patron saint,"[25] his was "a name sacred to the sons of freedom; a name unrivalled in the annals of our nation's glory."[26] As newspapermen sought to improve their status and public esteem, Franklin, "the tribune of the people,"[27] was the ideal role model and craft

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[22]Extended discussion of objectivity in news is beyond the scope of this research. Provocative discussions of objectivity can be found in David T. Z. Mindich, *Just the Facts: How "Objectivity" Came to Define American Journalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978); Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity," *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (January 1972): 660–679; and Jay Rosen, *What Are Journalists For?* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

[23]Henry P. Rosemont, "Benjamin Franklin and the Philadelphia Typographical Strikers of 1786," *Labor History* 22, no. 3 (Summer 1981): 398–429.

[24]In particular, the Franklin Typographical Society of Boston often was the subject of reports on meeting resolutions and votes in support of various press freedoms during the year. See, for instance, "The Printers Speaking," *Rochester (NY) Daily Advertiser*, April 15, 1848, an account of the Boston society congratulating the printers of Paris "on the part they have taken in the late Revolution and sympathizing with their efforts for Social Reform."

[25]Randolph Goodman, "Introduction," in Benjamin Franklin, *An Apology for Printers* (1731; reprint, New York: Book Craftsmen Associates, 1955), xxiv.

[26]Adoniram Chandler, speech on the seventh anniversary of the New-York Typographical Society, July 4, 1816 (New York: J. Seymour, 1816), 11.

[27]Thomas Penn, quoted in William David Sloan and Julie Hedgepeth Williams, *The Early American Press, 1690–1783* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 63.

icon. Printers' celebrations of his life would likely attract attention available to no other organization of artisans. By continuing to keep their identification with Franklin in front of the public, the nineteenth-century printers could, by association, elevate their own station in what, during the first decades of the century, became an increasingly class-demarcated society.[28] The printers' quest to rise out of the artisan ranks during this period has been the subject of a limited but important body of research,[29] and study of the Franklin Dinners adds important pieces to the completion of that puzzle.

Franklin Dinners took place in communities large and small through much of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth. Many appear to have been open to anyone associated with printing—albeit sometimes distant "friends of the craft"—and an egalitarian spirit in which "Employer and Journeyman, Editor and Devil"[30] celebrated seems to have infused at least some of the dinners in antebellum America. By the 1820s, women, too, were welcomed at some of the dinners, and these dinners' organizers noted their participation with pride.[31] At the "first anniversary celebration" of the Franklin Typographical Society, on January 17, 1825, in Boston's Fenno Hall, "each member was privileged to bring three ladies."[32]

Hiding in Plain Sight

For all their apparent popularity with members of the craft, the Franklin Dinners have slipped into the anonymity of time. Commonly used media history texts make no mention of these celebrations.[33] More surprisingly,

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[28]See, for instance, Howard B. Rock, Paul A. Gilje, and Robert Asher, eds., *American Artisans: Crafting Social Identity, 1750–1850* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Schlesinger, *Age of Jackson*, especially Ch. 11. Printers' efforts to elevate their social class also is a continuing theme in Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers."*

[29]See, for instance, Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers"*; Rock, Gilje, and Asher, eds., *American Artisans*.

[30]"Printer's Festival: The First Ever Held in Western New York," *Rochester (NY) Daily Advertiser*, January 17, 1846.

[31]Franklin Typographical Society, *Proceedings of the Printers' Festival, Held by the Franklin Typographical Society at Hancock Hall, January 1, 1848* (Boston: Franklin Typographical Society, 1848). Historian David Waldstreicher notes that women had begun attending and participating at political banquets in the 1780s. Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 82.

[32]William H. Cundy, Bernard Orr, Hugh O'Brien, Henry J. Cleveland, and John D. Whitcomb, *Proceedings of the Franklin Typographical Society at the Observance of the Semi-Centennial of Its Institution, January 17, 1854* (Boston: Franklin Typographical Society, 1875), 6–7. Hereafter, "Cundy." Cundy was president of the Society in 1874.

[33]See, for instance, Michael Emery and Edwin Emery, *The Press and America*, 8th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996); Jean Folkerts, Dwight L. Teeter Jr., and Edward Caudill, *Voices of a Nation*, 5th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2009); William David Sloan, ed., *The Media in America*, 5th ed. (Northport, AL: Vision Press, 2002); Hiley H. Ward, *Mainstreams of*

examination of more than sixty autobiographies, memoirs, and histories by nineteenth-century journalists produces scarcely a mention of a Franklin Dinner and no discussion of what they meant to the craft. Even the first media historian in America, Isaiah Thomas, barely noted the Franklin Dinners—and then not by name—in a journal whose cryptic entries ranged in their entirety from the smallest details of his days (e.g., July 29, 1813: "Bathed this evening"[34]) to profound events (August 10, 1819: "Married this evening by the Rev. Mr. Eton (after the manner adopted by the Episcopal Church) to Miss Rebecca Armstrong"[35]). Although Thomas frequently traveled from his home in Worcester, Massachusetts, to Boston on business, he never mentioned attending the activities of printer's organizations even though the first Franklin Dinner in Boston was conducted in 1802[36] and he was expressly invited to at least two such dinners of the Franklin Typographical Society.[37] Moreover, he was a member of at least one such society[38] and in 1816 was elected an honorary member of the Philadelphia Typographical Society.[39]

Of the scholars who have taken note of these dinners, Benjamin Quarles briefly mentions that abolitionist editor Frederick Douglass and his publisher, William C. Nell, attended "an anniversary celebration of Franklin's birthday,"

American Media History (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997). Even Mott's classic media history text, *American Journalism: A History: 1690–1960*, does not mention the Franklin Dinners.

[34]Benjamin Thomas Hill, ed., "The Diary of Isaiah Thomas, 1805–1828, vol. 1," *Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society* 9 (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1909), 193.

[35]Benjamin Thomas Hill, ed., "The Diary of Isaiah Thomas, 1805–1828, vol. 2," *Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society* 10 (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1909), 26.

[36]Rosemont claims that the first organization of American printers was formed on March 8, 1788, and in 1793 adopted a constitution naming it the Franklin Society. "Benjamin Franklin," 421.

[37]Thomas Diary, vol. 2, 260. On January 6, 1827, the ailing Thomas wrote in his diary, "Rec^d. a Letter from Franklin Typographical Society to attend with them at their annual meeting and festival on the 17th instant. Could not attend. Wrote to them." Thomas died April 4, 1831, at the age of 82.

[38]For February 27, 1819, Thomas wrote, "Received a letter from Maj^r. Russell in which he writes that I am a member of the Mechanic [*sic*] charitable Association," *Diary*, vol. 2, 8. Three years later, his diary entry for February 27, 1822, reads, "I see by the newspapers, that there is a Society, in Boston, called Thomas Typographical Society—I never heard of this Society, or knew there was such an [*sic*] till I saw an advertisement notifying the members to meet &c.," *Diary*, vol. 2, 108. On August 30, 1816, Thomas had written, "I received a very polite and friendly Letter from a Committee of the Philadelphia Typographical Society, appointed for that Society, inclosing a Vote of the Society, informing me that I was unanimously elected an honorary member, etc. Also, a Certificate of my Election, elegantly engraved, and enclosed in a splendid frame," *Diary*, vol. 1, 323. On December 16, 1816, Thomas sent the Philadelphia society a gift of twenty dollars (*Diary*, vol. 1, 337). The next such financial entry does not appear until December 31, 1824, when ten dollars was paid to an unidentified typographical society (*Diary*, vol. 2, 190).

[39]Thomas, *Diary*, vol. 2, X.

put on by "the printers and publishers" of Rochester, New York, in 1848.[40] Another history briefly mentions the Rochester dinners and contextualizes them as the closest New York's country printers came to a statewide convention: "No state convention was held until the Printers' Festivals of the forties which were instituted to celebrate the birthday of Benjamin Franklin."[41] However, the author added, "These . . . were social and fraternal rather than commercial in their intent."[42]

It was the social aspect of the dinners that captivated historian Rollo G. Silver. In a brief overview of the dinners' popularity, he, too, situates the affairs largely in terms of "a spirit of camaraderie" without examining the subject for deeper implications to the progress of journalism.[43] Likewise, William S. Pretzer, in a more nuanced discussion of craft solidarity and its norms and values, only briefly mentions the dinners and does not develop their potential as contributors to the work culture.[44] Pretzer's description of the dinners as the province and product of journeymen's organizing notwithstanding, newspaper accounts show the dinners predated organizing efforts in some communities, and an authorized history of the International Typographical Union makes no mention of these dinners.[45]

Some of the few studies that do mention these banquets acknowledge them as evidence of a print culture but neglect their utility in creating and maintaining that culture.[46] In particular, the potential influence of the

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[40]Benjamin Quarles, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1997), 82. See also Frank E. Fee Jr., "Intelligent Union of Black with White: Frederick Douglass and the Rochester, NY, Press, 1847–1848," *Journalism History* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 34–45.

[41]Milton W. Hamilton, *The Country Printer: New York State, 1785–1830* (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, 1964), 92.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Silver, "Convivial Printer," 16–25.

[44]William S. Pretzer, "From Artisan to Alderman: The Career of William W. Moore, 1803–1886," in Rock, Gilje, and Asher, eds., 135–152; Pretzer, "Tramp Printers." Pretzer's claim that the Franklin Dinners were "hosted by the journeymen themselves as an assertion of their own status in the trade and in the community" ("Tramp Printers," 4) may be only partly true. Extensive Franklin Dinner coverage in three Rochester, New York, newspapers—the *Daily Advertiser*, *Daily American*, and *Daily Democrat*—publishing in the 1840s suggests the dinners were put on by committees on arrangements that included editors and owners as well as men who may have been from the production side. Moreover, the Rochester dinners claimed to represent printers from throughout western New York state, which no labor organization did at this time, and the largest Franklin Dinners in Rochester predated the organizing of newspaper production workers, which did not get under way until late in 1848. See *Rochester Daily Democrat*, December 13, 1848. The reports of 1846, 1847, and 1848 dinners also mention the presence of journeymen and even printer's devils (apprentices), some of whom gave toasts at the three dinners.

[45]George A. Tracy, *History of the Typographical Union* (Indianapolis, IN: International Typographical Union, 1913).

[46]See, for instance, Huang Nian-Sheng, *Benjamin Franklin in American Thought and Culture, 1790–1990* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1994).

discourse has remained unexamined. Silver chuckles at the wordplay—"puns which only printers could appreciate"—in the speeches and, more directly, in the toasts.[47] The overall impression in these studies, however, is that the discourse at these dinners, as reported in the newspapers, was merely an exercise of droll wit intended for the amusement of the guests. Yet, as historian Jeffrey L. Pasley points out in discussing the toasts of political dinners of the same period, such discourse had greater importance and was intended for wider audiences. Certainly, the prodigious effort of composing three or more columns of handset type detailing the dinners for the next morning's editions was not expended merely for the fun of it. And editors' notes apologizing to readers for the use of so much space on the dinners likewise suggest that the editors were not pandering to readers in presenting these reports. Thus, it can be argued that the speeches and toasts served a two-fold purpose: perhaps unconsciously, to build craft identity within the profession and, more overtly, to elevate the craft's standing with the public at large.[48]

Despite the absence of discussion among contemporaries, the published accounts of the speeches and, perhaps more importantly, the toasts and the guest lists offer persuasive evidence that the Franklin Dinners did more than simply soothe savage feelings. They promoted a sense of occupational identity that helped journalism mature through the turbulent antebellum years and later.

This research also acknowledges the growing influence of organized labor on the printing trades in antebellum America.[49] Similarities existed between the Franklin Dinners and anniversary dinners of the unions of journeyman printers and other trade associations, and some of the same claims that will be made about the Franklin Dinners' contributions to craft identity and solidarity can be made about the activities of the unions. This is especially true because of the instability of these organizations in the early years, when journeyman printers might organize to press a labor demand only to dissolve the group once the end was achieved or, as was not uncommon, yield its labor agenda and become what was known as a beneficent society, operating libraries and even homes for aged printers.[50] Keeping track of the sponsors of the various events is made difficult by

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[47]Silver, "Convivial Printer," 17.

[48]Pasley says that "many physical political events (such as party meetings and banquets) were held mostly to provide an occasion for printing a statement . . . written in advance. Like town-meeting resolutions, banquet toasts were carefully crafted to express the particular views of the gathering" and "were intended for public consumption in the newspapers," *"Tyranny of Printers,"* 6 (parentheses in original).

[49]See, for instance, Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788–1850*, 20th anniversary ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[50]Ethelbert Stewart, *A Documentary History of the Early Organizations of Printers* (Indianapolis, IN: International Typographical Union, 1907).

the fact that the sponsoring dinner organizations often had similar names.[51] Nevertheless, it is argued here that the goals and ends of the Franklin Dinners' sponsors and the labor unions were fundamentally different.

Beginnings

The earliest Franklin Dinners appear to have followed a well-established form for large dinner gatherings of the period.[52] After a huge meal,[53] guests heard from a featured principal speaker, often a venerated member of the local printing fraternity or a well-known politician. After the speaker, letters would be read from well-wishers who had been invited but could not attend. Then came a round of what were called the "regular" toasts—saluting the state, the nation, Franklin, the printing press, and often the telegraph, the armed forces, and George Washington. These were solicited or drawn up by the arrangements committee and read to the assembly by one of the committeemen.[54] Next came a frequently extensive round of "volunteer"

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[51]For instance, the Boston Typographical Union, Local No. 13 of the International Typographical Union of North America was formed in 1848 as the Boston Printers Union, replacing a union formed in 1803 as the Boston Typographical Society. That union appears to have been restarted under that name in 1809 and again in 1815, lasting at least until 1826. Meanwhile, the Franklin Typographical Society, "a purely beneficial society, admitting to membership both employers and employees, and prevented by its constitution from taking any part in trade matters," was formed in Boston in 1822. Tracy, *History of the Typographical Union*, 27. See also *Leaves of History* (Boston: Boston Typographical Union, 1923), 3.

[52]Pasley, for instance, noting the extensive number of toasts at political dinners of the early 1800s, writes "banquet toasts were carefully crafted to express the particular political views of the gathering. . . . Toasts were intended for public consumption in the newspapers. Individual neighborhoods, towns, and party factions held and drew up reports of their separate banquets, and as these appeared in the newspapers . . . readers used them to assess the political scene and the state of public opinion," 6. A report of the Columbia Typographical Society's ninth-anniversary dinner on January 3, 1824, describes the same format for the dinner, including that "Numerous toasts and technical sentiments were drank, illustrative and approbatory of the Art of Printing." George G. Seibold, comp., *Historical Sketch of Columbia Typographical Union* (Washington, DC: National Capital Press, 1915), 10. See also David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*.

[53]The bill of fare for the 1848 dinner of the Rochester, New York, printers began with oyster soup, followed by roasts (beef, pork, veal, venison)—with cranberry jelly, goose, turkey, duck, chicken, and partridge, as well as chicken pie and chicken salad; boiled ham, tongue, mutton, turkey, chicken, and turkey with oyster sauce; venison steak with cranberry jelly; oyster toast and fried oysters; fish, including fresh codfish, black bass, and perch; vegetables: celery, potatoes, turnips, onions, beets, carrots, pickles, and cabbage; pastries: apple, plum, rice and flour puddings, mince apple, peach, and lemon pies, and cranberry tarts; rounded out by almonds, raisins, ice cream, and "blanch monge" [*sic*] for dessert. "Third Annual Festival of the Printers of Rochester," *Rochester (NY) Daily American*, January 19, 1848.

[54]At the 1847 Franklin Dinner in Rochester, Alexander Mann, editor of the *Rochester Daily American*, was identified as "the reader for the evening" who "announced the following

toasts offered by the guests themselves.[55] It is in the speeches and the toasts that we find affirmations of the value and values of journalism and a reification of occupational culture.

Change and Uncertainty

The antebellum period was a time when there may have been more reasons for division than unity among journalists. After decades of intense partisanship in which many newspapers were owned or financed by political parties, by the 1840s it no longer seemed necessary to the nation's politicians to have their own newspapers. Newspaper owners and editors had to look elsewhere for revenue as party ownership and lucrative patronage jobs disappeared.[56] They nevertheless produced newspapers that bore a strong personal stamp and usually were highly politicized.

Moreover, the explosion in education and literacy in this period created a public interested in a wider range of reading.[57] Should the printer–editors remain with newspapers? Focus more on book publishing? Turn to magazines, which proliferated during this period? And in whatever form of periodical they chose, should it be general interest or among the many niche publications that were springing up? Given the variety of choices facing the early nineteenth-century printers, the target audience, content, and nature of their publications were very much up for negotiation.[58]

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regular toasts, which were received with rapturous applause," "The Great Franklin Festival," *Rochester Daily Democrat*, January 20, 1847.

[55]Some of the volunteer toasts at the time may have been extemporaneous, but many others were provided in advance to the arrangements committees so that they could be included in the dinner programs and made available to the local press for publication the next day. Some even depended on graphics, using printer's marks such as stars, pointing hands, and daggers for their meaning—depictions meant to be read in a program rather than expressed orally.

[56]For a summary of party financing of nineteenth-century newspapers, see, for instance, Gerald J. Baldasty, "The Press and Politics in the Age of Jackson," *Journalism Monographs* 89 (August 1984); Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers."*

[57]See, for instance, William J. Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989); Isabel Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Thomas C. Leonard, *News for All: America's Coming-of-Age with the Press* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Ronald J. Zboray, "Antebellum Reading and the Ironies of Technological Innovation," *American Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (March 1988): 65–82.

[58]The several book, newspaper, and magazine publishing ventures of Joseph T. Buckingham in early 1800s Boston illustrate some of the choices open to printers. See Gary J. Kornblith, "Becoming Joseph T. Buckingham: The Struggle for Artisanal Independence in Early-Nineteenth-Century Boston," in Rock, Gilje, and Asher, eds., *American Artisans*, 123–134. See also Rollo G. Silver, *The American Printer, 1787–1825* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1967).

In the 1830s and 1840s, the nascent Industrial Revolution influenced many of the choices before the printer–editors as well. Until the nineteenth century, typesetting and presswork had changed little since the time of Gutenberg.[59] Suddenly, advances in printing technology began a top-to-bottom change in equipment, mechanical processes, printing capability, and labor requirements that, in turn, changed the wage-and-hour structure and created the first true division of labor in the printing industry. Although it can be argued that newspapering always has been an evolving experiment, journalism in the nineteenth century was particularly in flux as it was transformed from the small-shop artisan/partisan press to a commercial press—"its sole object . . . money-making."[60]

A New Profession: Journalism

Owing to varying definitions of *professional*, media scholars differ on where—or even whether—they place the professionalization of journalism.[61] In discussions of journalism, the term *profession* often is used as a synonym for "trade" or "craft."[62] In other uses, a "journalism professional" is measured

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[59]See, for instance, David A. Copeland, *The Antebellum Era: Primary Documents on Events from 1820 to 1860* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003); A. W. Musson, "Newspaper Printing in the Industrial Revolution," *The Economic History Review, New Series* 10, no. 3 (1958): 411–426. Musson says that "At the beginning of the nineteenth century, printing had changed comparatively little since Caxton first set up press in Westminster Abby over three centuries earlier" (413).

[60]George S. Merriam, *The Life and Times of Samuel Bowles*, Vol. 1 (New York: The Century Co., 1885), 28. The changes that were occurring in nineteenth-century news shops have been well documented by many scholars, and a complete bibliography is not possible here. However, important discussions of changes brought about by economics, technology, social pressures, and politics, among others, can be found in Gerald J. Baldasty, *The Commercialization of News in the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992); James W. Carey, "Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph," in *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 201–230; Carol Sue Humphrey, *The Press of the Young Republic, 1783–1833* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996); William E. Huntzicker, *The Popular Press, 1833–1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999); Robin Kinross, *Modern Typography: An Essay in Critical History* (London: Hyphen Press, 1992); Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers"*; Daniel T. Schiller, *Objectivity and the News: The Public and the Rise of Commercial Journalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981); Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978); Schudson, *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1998).

[61]See Marianne Allison, "A Literature Review of Approaches to the Professionalism of Journalists," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 1 (Spring/Summer 1986): 5–10.

[62]For instance, Mott talks about "professional journals," and the rise of "professional organizations" in the period 1870 through the 1890s, but these references do not use *professional* in the sense of law or medicine. Mott, *American Journalism*, 488–499. Hudson likewise mentions the later nineteenth-century press associations, where members "talk over the business of their profession, eat the most recherché dinners and suppers, plan pleasant excursions to

against the criteria of the traditional professionals—doctors, lawyers, and the clergy—such as the existence of professional organizations, specialized education, selective admission to the workplace, codes of ethics, standards of performance, and control of work.[63]

This research does not attempt to enter the debates over whether journalism is truly a profession.[64] It starts from the position that elements of professionalization, as the term is generally used, can be identified in the journalists' negotiation of what journalism would be. Whether the final steps in professionalization were achieved is not at issue; the focus here is on the attempt and the process at an early period. Moreover, as historian Mark Hampton has observed, occupational scholars are beginning to become less dogmatic about "defining 'professionalism' in narrow and fixed terms and then judging historical occupations according to such a definition."[65]

What can be said is that aspects of professionalism can be identified and analyzed as journalists' attempts to stake out and support a claim to their work's special status in the American polity. Thus, some see as a benchmark of professionalization the founding of the American Newspaper Publishers Association in 1887. If one adds formal, specialized education to the typology of a profession, the move may start with the first journalism school in the early 1900s.[66] Others, placing the impulse for professionalization in the creation

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distant parts of the country, and are happier mortals." His verdict: "None of these social circles are destined for a long life, but they are useful while they last." Hudson, *Journalism in the United States*, 665–666.

[63]See, for instance, Beam, "Journalism Professionalism"; Wilbert E. Moore, *The Professions: Roles and Rules* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970).

[64]Excellent discussions of professionalism in nineteenth-century journalism are available in Stephen A. Banning, "The Professionalization of Journalism: A Nineteenth-Century Beginning," *Journalism History* 24 (Winter 1998–1999): 157–163; Randall A. Beam, "Journalism Professionalism as an Organizational-Level Concept," *Journalism Monographs* 121 (June 1990); Hazel Dicken-Garcia, *Journalistic Standards in Nineteenth-Century America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); and Patricia L. Dooley, *Taking Their Political Place: Journalists and the Making of an Occupation* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997). Scholars tend to agree on the defining characteristics of a profession, which Beam (3–4) lists as: "systematic, theoretical body of knowledge or specialized technique . . . professional autonomy or authority . . . public service, as opposed to economic gain . . . a professional culture, which should promote values, norms, and symbols common to members of the profession," non-standardized products of the work, and a tendency for the professional's involvement "to be lifelong and terminal."

[65]Mark Hampton, "Journalists and the 'Professional Ideal' in Britain: The Institute of Journalists, 1884–1907," *Historical Research* 72, no. 178 (June 1999): 184.

[66]See, for instance, Betty Houchin Winfield, ed., *Journalism 1908: Birth of a Profession* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008); William F. May, "Professional Ethics, the University and the Journalist," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 1 (Spring/Summer 1986): 20–41. Michael Schudson states that although Walter Lippmann is credited with professionalizing journalism through legislation and through steadfast adherence to objectivity in covering the news, "The urge for professionalization in journalism did not begin with Lippmann" (152). He notes that "For several decades journalists had sought institutional means to make their

of ethics and standards for the conduct of journalism, see professionalism as a twentieth-century phenomenon, citing the Progressive Movement's reform efforts or the American Society of Newspaper Editors 1922 creation of a code of ethics.[67]

On the other hand, equating *concern* over media ethics with professionalism allows one to push back the impulse for professionalizing well into the nineteenth century. Hazel Dicken-Garcia is among scholars to look to the standards used to identify the traditional professions to study professionalization among journalists of that era. Stephen A. Banning situates the rise of professionalism in the Missouri Press Association's speeches and discussions about ethics, starting in the 1860s.[68]

A New Identity

Organizational communication theory posits that a key ingredient in cohesive work groups is a well-developed occupational identity that recognizes the work is special, requires skills not available to all, and provides to society something valuable that is not available from other sources.[69] In

occupation more respectable. Joseph Pulitzer, for instance, endowed the Columbia School of Journalism in 1904 (although it did not open its doors until 1913). Critics within the profession charged that a college of journalism would establish class distinctions in the newspaper world. Pulitzer answered that this was exactly what it should do—establish a distinction between the fit and the unfit," Schudson, *Discovering the News*, 152.

[67]Edwin Emery, *History of the American Newspaper Publishers Association* (1950; reprint, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970); Bruce J. Evensen, "Journalism's Struggle over Ethics and Professionalism during America's Jazz Age," *Journalism History* 16 (Autumn–Winter 1989): 54–63; Brian Thornton, "Muckraking Journalists and Their Readers: Perceptions of Professionalism," *Journalism History* 21 (Spring 1995): 29–41.

[68]Hazel Dicken-Garcia, *Journalistic Standards in Nineteenth-Century America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Stephen A. Banning, "The Professionalization of Journalism: A Nineteenth-Century Beginning," *Journalism History* 24 (Winter 1998–1999): 157–163. Banning offers a useful summary of the literature on media professionalism and its different "starting" points. Studying the minutes of the Missouri Press Association, he argues for moving up the start of professionalization into the nineteenth century because state newspaper associations were, as in Missouri, discussing "professional" issues such as ethics at least as early as 1867.

[69]The concept of group identification is discussed in many introductory texts in sociology and occupational behavior and communication. Treatments of the topic with particular relevance to this research can be found in Blake E. Ashforth and Glen E. Kreiner, "'How Can You Do It?': Dirty Work and the Challenge of Constructing Positive Identity," *Academy of Management Review* 24, no. 3 (July 1999): 413–434; Herbert G. Gutman, "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America, 1815–1919," *American Historical Review* 78, no. 3 (June 1973): 531–588; Hampton, "Institute of Journalists." Organizational theorist Karl E. Weick lists identity first in a seven-item list of the properties of sensemaking, pointing out that the overall understanding of the situation based on these properties need not be accurate, merely plausible enough to the individuals involved to respond in some way. If the perceptions and resulting problem-solving strategies worked the first time (whether by their accuracy or by

the commercialization of the press and the increasing specialization of work roles brought on by technology, these men could wonder whether they were still printers of old—and increasingly by mid-century, except on the Western frontier, these editors, publishers, and owners were not. But if not, what were they?[70] And if their publications were no longer fundamentally the journals of the Democrat or Whig parties, what were they, and what would or should they become?

The problem facing early and even mid-nineteenth-century journalists was whether they were willing to trade one identity for another, to see themselves as part of a craft or profession with some higher mission rather than as individuals who happened to set type for a living.[71] In other words, they needed a philosophy and worldview to go along with their intellectual skills and aspirations.[72] Many still called themselves printers even though they had not composed type in years. Some never had. Furthermore, many, if not most, printing offices relied as much or more on book printing and job work as the newspaper for their existence.[73] Although no longer directly controlling newspapers, parties could still dispense patronage to the newspaper in government advertising to publish laws and other official communications and

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coincidence), he adds, the recollection of the event and the strategies that seemed to work will be used again when the individuals or groups encounter new situations that seem similar to the old problem because sensemaking also is retrospective (Weick's second property of sensemaking). Karl E. Weick, *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Examples of how these concepts influence newswork can be found in Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual," *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (January 1972): 660–679, and Charles R. Bantz, "Organizing and Enactment: Karl Weick and the Production of News," in *Foundations of Organizational Communication: A Reader*, ed. S. R. Corman, Steven P. Banks, Charles R. Bantz, and M. E. Meyer (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1990).

[70]The complexities of the business had led to a division of labor in which production workers were increasingly compartmentalized and their status diminished. The days when a printer might be listed on the masthead as the publisher were quickly coming to an end, and with the decline of upward mobility and managerial opportunities, unions took hold in ways they had not previously in the century.

[71]Despite high-minded claims to truth and covering events of the day, for many if not most printers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the newspaper came behind job printing or book printing or both in terms of revenue. See Lawrence C. Wroth, *The Colonial Printer* (1938; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1994); Madeleine B. Stern, *William Williams: Pioneer Printer of Utica, New York, 1787–1850* (Charlottesville: Bibliographic Society of the University of Virginia, 1851). Often, too, references to a "free press" meant freedom to espouse one party's doctrine to the exclusion of all others. See Baldasty, "Press and Politics"; Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers."*

[72]Pasley discusses attempts in the 1830s by the so-called "professional editors," professional politicians hired to edit party newspapers—"to think in terms of full, literal professionalism. Calls were issued for editorial training and standards of conduct such as lawyers, physicians, and military officers had or were developing," *"Tyranny of Printers,"* 16.

[73]Hamilton, *The Country Printer: New York State, 1785–1830*. Hamilton (73–74) identifies several printing offices that in the 1820s gave up newspaper publishing for printing and selling books.

also in job work, such as government printing and stationery.[74] Book publishing also remained a major revenue source into the nineteenth century among many printers. Moreover, they were being asked—or forced by a changing political environment, not to mention the Industrial Revolution's technological advances[75]—to give up an identity of printer–politicians,[76] whose chief mission was to generate newspapers as carriers of political opinion and propaganda.[77] Inexorably, most would become printer–publishers, who would have to devise news content that would attract readership and also translate into advertising revenue.[78]

Trade Talk

One way of looking at identity is to imagine a community comprising like-minded people who, by the shared beliefs and values of their work or avocations, see themselves as unique from other elements of society. Among the essentials of such a community is a vocabulary—what sociolinguists call a register: "sets of language items associated with discrete occupational or social groups."[79] Register allows members to converse with one another, to recognize other members by their speech, to set themselves apart, and to provide a sense of group identity. Craft groups had been doing this for centuries as they named tools, processes, and job titles specific to their work. Printing was no exception.

The performance of this vocabulary was essential to the Franklin Dinners because the speeches and toasts, which featured craft-related puns and other wordplay, allowed the fraternity both to declare itself a unique group and extend for itself dominion over the important issues of the day. In saluting the printers enlisted in the ranks against Mexico, the toasts spoke repeatedly

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[74]See, for instance, Huntzicker, *Popular Press*; Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers."*

[75]For discussion of how the Industrial Revolution influenced changes in the political and social life of the new nation, see Schlesinger, *Age of Jackson*, especially Chs. 11 and 26. For examination of its effect on printers and the press, see, for instance, Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers"*; Ronald J. Zboray, "Antebellum Reading and the Ironies of Technological Innovation," *American Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (March 1988): 65–82.

[76]Pasley (*"Tyranny of Printers"*) also uses the term *printer–politician*. The same meaning of the term is intended here, along with other hyphenated forms indicating the bifurcation and saliences of their various roles as the craft evolved over the period. Examples are the printer–editor, printer–politician, politician–printer, and printer–publisher.

[77]Baldasty says that "Central to the process of party organization in the 1820s and early 1830s was the partisan editor and the partisan newspaper. Editors frequently were members of the parties' central committees or were closely tied to the committees (e.g., the committee owned the paper, or hired the editor, or committee members wrote for the paper)." Baldasty, "Press and Politics," 5.

[78]See, for instance, Baldasty, *Commercialization of News*.

[79]Ronald Wardhaugh, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 51.

of their "shooting sticks"—the composing stick being a specific tool in the printing office but here, of course, referring to rifles. The printers were playfully but meaningfully declaring the patriotism of the craft and their American identity, likening the power of arms in defense of the nation to the power of printing tools in its support.

Examination of newspapers in the late antebellum period shows that although political polemics remained important, a sense of being part of a larger enterprise—journalism—was replacing a mission that heretofore was not far different from political pamphleteering. In the new order, to be a printer—even if one did not set type—or an editor, a publisher, or a newspaper owner placed one in important company[80] whose service to the community elevated the fraternity as well.[81]

A Case Study

Three Printers' Festivals in Rochester, New York, during the 1840s provide a case study of the Franklin Dinner as a socializing agent contributing to professionalization. Extensive coverage remains available in microfilm copies of three of the city's four dailies of the period, offering a relatively complete record of Rochester's Franklin Dinners in the 1840s.[82] In some respects, the Rochester dinners typified the Printers' Festivals of the antebellum period, but in other ways they were exceptions. Where it is possible to compare details of the dinners, for instance, it appears that Rochester's dinners were more egalitarian than those of such cities as New York and Boston during the century. The published proceedings of the inland Franklin Dinners show that a wider range of workmen attended—and actively participated in—the dinners in communities such as Rochester and Syracuse, New York, than were present elsewhere. In each of the three Rochester dinners of the 1840s, apprentices, carrier boys, and other non-elites offered voluntary toasts that were published as part of the proceedings. Although they may have been welcome to attend the dinners, the level of participation of non-elites in New York and Boston does not appear to have reached Rochester's.

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[80]"Fraternity" was and continues to be used somewhat interchangeably for members of the journalism craft in general and for unionized production workers.

[81]Pasley (*"Tyranny of Printers"*), for one, offers a detailed discussion of how printer–editors' social standing changed as the role of journalism changed in the nineteenth century and argues that many of the decisions made by journalists of the period were attempts to elevate the status of the profession.

[82]Three newspapers published continuously in Rochester, New York, during the period: the *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, *Rochester Daily American*, and *Rochester Daily Democrat*. In summer 1847, a fourth daily, the *Evening Gazette*, made its debut, but it ceased publication in spring 1848. Relatively complete runs of the three morning dailies are available on microfilm for the period studied, but copies of the *Gazette* have yet to be located.

Likewise, the published proceedings of the 1860 Syracuse dinner cited toasts by journeymen, printer's devils, and some identified solely as "boy."[83]

In 1846, 1847, and 1848, printers were invited to Rochester from throughout western New York, an area from Syracuse west to Buffalo and Lake Erie, and from elsewhere around the nation. After 1848, the dinners in Rochester were discontinued for a few years, exhibiting another facet of these dinners: outside New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, they appear to have been sporadic. In their earliest years, however, the Franklin dinners in Rochester were lavish affairs that followed the model of this period.

America in Microcosm

Rochester in the mid- to late 1840s exhibited the changes that were sweeping much of the United States. These included a growing factory system, an influx of immigrants, the beginnings of urbanization, the entry of women and children into the workforce, growing wealth, growing poverty—and a growing gap between rich and poor—through entrepreneurial efforts such as companies formed to extend the newly invented telegraph, and milling of agricultural projects from the fertile farmland south of Rochester. Although agriculture would remain a major part of the economy throughout the century, the city's factories were creating the need for an urbanized labor class.[84]

Rochester supported four daily newspapers in the late 1840s—two Whig and two Democrat—vestiges of the partisan press that attested to the community's continuing political debates. And Rochesterians were in the forefront of national and state politics as new combinations emerged from the unraveling of the old Whig and Democratic parties.

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[83]"The Printer's Festival," *Daily Courier* (Syracuse, NY), January 19, 1860.

[84]Martha Montague Ash, "The Social and Domestic Scene in Rochester, 1840–1860," *Rochester History* 18, no. 2 (April 1956); Alma Lutz, "Susan B. Anthony and John Brown," *Rochester History* 15, no. 3 (July 1953); Blake McKelvey, "A History of Historical Writing in the Rochester Area," *Rochester History* 6, no. 2 (April 1944); Blake McKelvey, "Economic Stages in the Growth of Rochester," *Rochester History* 3, no. 4 (October 1941); Blake McKelvey, "The Population of Rochester," *Rochester History* 12, no. 4 (October 1950); Blake McKelvey, "The Physical Growth of Rochester," *Rochester History* 13, no. 4 (October 1951); Blake McKelvey, "Rochester's Political Trends: An Historical Review," *Rochester History* 14, no. 2 (April 1952); Dexter Perkins, "Rochester One Hundred Years Ago: The City and Its People," *Rochester History* 1, no. 3 (July 1939); Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck, "A Growing Agitation: Rochester before, during, and after the Civil War," *Rochester History* 46, nos. 1 and 2 (January and April 1984); Pat M. Ryan, ed., "Rochester Recollected: A Miscellany of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Descriptions," *Rochester History* 41, nos. 1 and 2 (January and April 1979); Dorothy S. Truesdale, "The Younger Generation: Their Opinions, Pastimes and Enterprises, 1830–1850," *Rochester History* 1, no. 2 (April 1939).

Rochester's Franklin Dinners

Looking at the Rochester dinners from sociological and organizational communication perspectives provides clear evidence of attempts to professionalize and direct the course of what not long before had been a sideline at many print shops.

The dinners often received extensive coverage in their communities.[85] It was not uncommon for the local press to publish the entire program of the dinners, including prepared speeches and the regular toasts, and then to add the volunteer toasts to the reports as well. In each of the first three Franklin Dinners in Rochester, more than a hundred toasts were presented in an evening. A course-by-course description of the meal often was included in the news reports, and one Rochester newspaper published a rough graphic depicting the tables and where each guest sat.[86] Having access to the program copy in advance enabled the newspaper compositors to set type that gave readers next-day coverage that often spanned four or more columns in the newspapers. It seems probable that the texts of even the "volunteer" toasts were provided by the arrangements committees because where comparison among several papers' reports is possible, their coverage is virtually identical.[87]

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[85]Franklin Dinner coverage in each of the Rochester newspapers that were examined never fell below three full columns, a considerable expenditure of space in a four-page sheet. Similar amounts of coverage are found in other communities. See, for instance, Seibold, who notes that newspaper coverage of the 1867 anniversary of the Columbia Typographical Society "occupied three 18-inch columns of what is now known as six point" (1), 9. In 1847, the *Daily Democrat* ended its report by saying, "Our readers will excuse us for occupying one paper with the proceedings of a Printers' Festival. It is a favor we do not often ask." *Democrat*, January 20, 1847. Similar notes to readers appeared with many Franklin Dinner reports.

[86]"The Great Franklin Festival," *Rochester (NY) Daily Democrat*, January 20, 1847.

[87]See, for instance, coverage of the Franklin Dinner celebrated January 17, 1848, that appeared in three of Rochester's dailies the next day: "Printer's Festival," *Rochester Daily Democrat*, January 19, 1848; "The Birth-Day of Franklin," *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, January 19, 1848; "Third Annual Festival," *Rochester Daily American*, January 19, 1848. Extensive reports on the dinner appeared in the *Daily Advertiser*, *Daily Democrat*, and *Daily American*. Since principals of a fourth daily, the *Evening Gazette*, were active in the evening's proceedings, it can be assumed that a report ran in that newspaper as well. The three daily newspapers reordered the toasts and deleted some, but it is clear from the three reports that each was working from the same basic material. The *Daily Democrat* alone admitted that "we have inserted . . . such sentiments as have been furnished us by the committee" ("Printer's Festival"). The *Daily Democrat* and *Daily Advertiser* appear to have rewritten the lead of the committee's report; the *Daily American* and a weekly, Frederick Douglass's *North Star*, carried identical leads that may have been supplied in the original. "Franklin's Birthday," *North Star* (Rochester), January 21, 1848. Only in the first year, 1846, do the reports differ enough to suggest that the dinner was covered independently by the Rochester newsmen. See "Printer's Festival: The First Ever Held in Western New-York," *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, January 17, 1846; "The Printer's Festival: Anniversary of Franklin's Birth Day," *Rochester Daily Democrat*, January 17, 1846.

Nevertheless, there is ample evidence of spontaneity in the coverage. Through commentary inserted in the copy or by live reporting, the newspapers also provided fresh coverage of the dinners as well. For instance, in one report we hear that the regular toasts "were received with rapturous applause" and that volunteer toasts "then flowed in thick and fast."[88]

Invitations were sent to printers and journalists throughout the country. Some who could not attend sent lengthy letters lauding the press and, usually, including a "sentiment" that, like many of the toasts offered by those present, relied heavily on printing terminology for puns and wordplay expressing heartfelt occupational emotions. A letter from Virginian John Gatewood, editor of the *Woodstock Sentinel*, contains a typical toast of this sort: "Printers: Heaven bless them! May they *stick* to the *rule* of Virtue,—live by the *guide* of Wisdom,— run well in the *chase* for Honor,—never exhibit *foul cases* nor *battered faces*,—and, finally, when they shall be laid out for *distribution* on Death's *imposing stone*, may they exhibit a *proof* free from *outs* and *doublets*, and enter into the celestial *office* of the Great *Master Printer* of the Universe!"[89]

At least in the early years, publishers and editors might be sitting beside journeyman compositors and pressmen as well as "printer's devils," "carrier boys," and "roller boys"—apprentices whose toasts were spiced with youthful impudence. In 1847, George R. Davis, a sheet boy, offered, "Franklin: Once flogged for knowing more than his *master*. May the *devils* of our day follow his example of application and perseverance; but escape the flogging."[90] An unidentified "Devil, from the Advertiser Office," celebrated his fellows with "Devils Incarnate: They claim no relationship with their ancient namesake, as he possesses neither *matter* nor *form*."[91] The trials of the circulation men were suggested by Theodore Summers, "carrier boy" for the *Daily American*,

[88]"The Great Franklin Festival," *Rochester Daily Democrat*, January 20, 1847.

[89]"Printers' Festival," *Rochester Daily Democrat*, January 28, 1847. Italics in original. Philemon Canfield, chairman of the arrangements committee, made Gatewood's letter, dated December 4, 1846, available late in January with the explanation that "The following letter and sentiment was mislaid, and not found in time to be inserted with the regular proceedings." From *American Dictionary of Printing*: *stick*—"a composing stick" (529); *guide*—"a piece of reglet or a lead, hung by a string over the capital case, beneath which the copy is placed" (246); *foul cases*—type that has been put in the wrong place in the case; *battered faces*—"type accidentally injured in a form by being smashed or struck" (38); *imposing stone*—"The stone on which compositors impose or place forms" (274); *outs*—missing letters or words; *doublets*—repeated letters or words; *office*—"the room or shop in which a printer works" (406).

[90]"The Great Franklin Festival," *Rochester Daily Democrat*, January 20, 1847.

[91]Ibid. *American Dictionary of Printing*: *matter*—"the series of the discourse of the compositor's copy" (372); *form*—"a page or pages of type in regular order and ready for printing" (201); *poles*—"a series of wooden supports used in drying printed work" (441); *bed*—"the flat part of a press, upon which the form is laid" (39).

who noted, "Morning Papers: Very pleasant to those who see them first at breakfast; but not quite the thing to make a dark rainy morning cheerful."[92]

Commerce was on the mind of Mitchel [*sic*] Hulett, a carrier for the *Advertiser*, who no doubt spoke for many in saying, "Delinquent Subscribers: May their *head-lines* be *battered* by the *mallet* of public opinion, their *forms* stirred up by the *poles* of a guilty conscience, and their *bed* be one of thorns, until they learn that there is 'no peace to the wicked.'"[93] More to the point, Thomas Marrion, an apprentice at the *Advertiser*, declared, "Newspaper Patrons: When settling day comes round, they should all remember that the *boss* has 'the devil to pay.'"[94]

Championing Democracy

Besides strengthening craft identity and pride and letting "the 'outside barbarians' . . . know that the spirit of Franklin yet dwells amongst his children,"[95] the dinners were important sites of strong sentiments affirming the value of a free press, the printers' loyalty to the nation, and their central place in the body politic. In 1846, E. T. Bridges pronounced the press "The Archimedean *lever* that moves the intellectual world," and W. H. Beach called it "the Engine of Liberty."[96] In 1848, the press was hailed by James G. Read as "The terror of tyrants and the hope of the world" and the "recording angel of modern times—entrusted with the preservation and transmission of knowledge among men."[97] Indeed, printers boasted that theirs was the "art preservative of all arts."[98]

The resonance of these themes may help explain the popularity of the dinners in the 1840s and 1850s. Although Franklin Dinners would continue to be held after the Civil War—one of the last being held in Brooklyn, New York, in 1926—the dinners appear to have reached their zenith in the 1840s and 1850s. Both decades found the United States either in the buildup to war or, in 1846–1848, actually engaged in one. As scholars have shown, press freedoms traditionally have been most tenuous in times of war.[99] Whether or not the craft assembled at these dinners was conscious of the point, the

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[92]Ibid.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid. *American Dictionary of Printing*: *boss*—"A projection. In bookbinding, brass or other metal ornamentation fastened upon the covers of books, for decoration or preservation" (64).

[95]"Printers' Festival," *Rochester Daily Democrat*, January 17, 1846.

[96]Ibid. The crank arms on early presses were also called levers.

[97]"Birth-Day of Franklin," *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, January 19, 1848.

[98]See, for instance, "The Value of the Press," *Floridian* (Tallahassee, FL), September 11, 1841.

[99]See, for instance, Donald L. Shaw and Stephen W. Brauer, "Press Freedom and War Constraints: Case Testing Siebert's Proposition II," *Journalism Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (Summer

years leading up to the Civil War were a good time for these printers to be making public displays of allegiance and centrality to the nation, to affirm their patriotism and their essential role in civic society.

Promoting the Craft

Guests at these dinners raised their glasses to a range of values, principles, and sentiments they held important. From the texts of these dinners, it is clear that they were forums for affirming to the world the craft's importance and for building identity and solidarity among its practitioners.

Contemporary accounts also highlight the dinners' contribution to craft identity and solidarity, not to mention their ability to pour oil on waters troubled by internecine, interparty warfare the rest of the year. A toast at the 1847 dinner offered, "The daily occupation of the craft is a feast of reason. It is but right they should enjoy, once a year, a flow of good."[100]

A printer at the 1846 dinner offered, "Our gathering: A joyous and intellectual feast; may it continue to *bind* the *craft* in Western New York, in bonds of more social fellowship; may our souls be knit together as brothers in fact, as well as brothers in profession, and may nothing *mar* or *break* that union, save our final exit to that 'bourne from whence no traveler returns.'"[101]

The retired editor Frederick Follett, writing in early 1847, argued, "Such a gathering of the Craft—entertaining as they do, various and discordant opinions on many of the exciting topics of the day—is calculated to do good. It tends . . . [to] soften the asperities of party strife—gives them better conceptions of one another, and leads to the cultivation of a personal good will, that cannot fail to exhibit itself in the prosecution of their individual businesses."[102]

Toasts and Temperance

Although much liquor could be consumed at banquets of the era, and the lubricating power of alcoholic toasts on a festive occasion was noted

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1969): 243–254; Frederick L. Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England: 1476–1776* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952).

[100]A toast attributed to "A. Bennett." "Printers' Festival," "The Great Franklin Festival," *Rochester Daily Democrat*, January 20, 1847.

[101]"The Printers' Festival." Rochester *Daily Democrat*, January 17, 1846. *American Dictionary of Printing*: bind—"To place a cover upon a book or pamphlet" (45); *craft*—printing; *break*—"To pi or smash type" (69).

[102]Frederick Follett, *History of the Press in Western New-York* (1847; reprint, Harrison, NY: Harbor Hill Books, 1973), 65. Follett's history appeared in March 1847 and included the proceedings of the 1847 Printers Festival. The 1973 reprint omitted the proceedings. However, these appear to have been covered comprehensively by the Rochester press shortly after the dinner.

by contemporaries as well as historians,[103] the published proceedings of the Franklin Dinners show that not all the events were fueled by alcohol.

Not surprisingly, the beverage of the Salt Lake City Mormon printers' toasts in 1852 was water,[104] but in Richmond, Virginia, that year, "no popping corks, no sparkling champagne, were required to enliven the scene, these and all that can intoxicate were laid aside."[105] Accounts of the 1848 Rochester, New York, dinner were careful to point out that "the festivities were conducted, as is the wont of the craft in this region, strictly on temperance principles."[106] The Rochester printers were even criticized when they held their 1854 dinner at a hotel that had not declared itself a temperance house. (Their first dinner, in 1846, had been at the Champion Temperance Hotel.) A defender, signing himself as "Justice" in the *Northern Christian Advocate* in nearby Auburn, pointed out that the printers had no choice—no temperance houses existed in Rochester at the time—"but they very wisely banished all intoxicating drinks from their tables."[107]

Water was also the beverage of choice in sophisticated New York and Boston. The *Proceedings* of the New York Typographical Society's Franklin Dinner of 1850 called attention to "the Toasts and Responses – the genial flow of wit and eloquence – *the absence of Wine* – the presence of Women – the Music and the Singing – and the finale of the Festival, the union of four or five hundred in the pleasures of the dance, agreeably diversified the amusements and seemed to afford the fullest enjoyment to every one [*sic*] present."[108] A volunteer toast offered by George W. Moore at the dinner identified what satisfied for wine in the many toasts that night: "COLD WATER.—Its substitution for wine on this occasion will prevent our *matter from getting off its feet*."[109] In 1855, the Association of New York Publishers likewise met for a "teetotal event," to honor authors and celebrate the contributions of their business to American society.[110]

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[103]See, for instance, Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers"*; Waldstreicher, *Perpetual Fetes*; Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*.

[104]"Printer's Festival," *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City, Utah Territory), March 6, 1852.

[105]"Anniversary Celebration," *Richmond (VA) Daily Republican*, January 19, 1852.

[106]"The Printers' Festival," *Rochester (NY) Daily American*, January 19, 1848.

[107]"'Veritas' and the Rochester Printers' Festival," *Northern Christian Advocate* (Auburn, NY), February 15, 1854. Ironically, the Blossom House, where the 1854 dinner was held, burned a few weeks later.

[108]New York Typographical Society, *Proceedings of the Printers' Banquet* (New York: New York Typographical Society, 1850), 4. Italics supplied.

[109]George W. Moore, "Cold Water," in *Proceedings of the Printers' Banquet* (New York: New York Typographical Society, 1850), 61. Italics in the original. *American Dictionary of Printing*: *off its feet*—"The very bottom of a type, opposed to the face. It is sometimes called feet, because it is divided in two by a groove" (199).

[110]Zboray, "Antebellum Reading and the Ironies of Technological Innovation," 65.

Responding to a salute to him at the Franklin Typographical Society's 1848 dinner in Boston,[111] Gov. George Nixon Briggs touched off a brief seminar on temperance when he referred to "the presence of the ladies and the absence of wine."[112] Former Boston Mayor and state Lieutenant Governor Samuel T. Armstrong, introduced as "a practical printer,"[113] then singled out among Franklin's character traits that he was "a pioneer in the Temperance cause. By example and precept he promoted that cause."[114] The theme was picked up by Thomas J. Gill of the *Boston Post*, a former secretary of the society:

> His Excellency the Governor and His Honor the Mayor, in the warmth of their congratulations on account of the absence of the wine-cup on this occasion, have allowed some expressions to escape, which might, though not so intended by those distinguished gentlemen, induce an inference that there has been an *unexpected*—an *extraordinary*—change in the habits of printers, a class represented by the Franklin Typographical Society. Now, I should have been very much astonished at the *presence* of wine at your table. Your Society has flowed silently on with the current of improvements,

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[111]"Speeches, Etc.," *Proceedings of the Printers' Festival, Held by the Franklin Typographical Society at Hancock Hall, January 1, 1848* (Boston: Franklin Typographical Society, 1848), 81.

[112]Gov. Briggs, in *Proceedings of the Printers' Festival, Held by the Franklin Typographical Society at Hancock Hall, January 1, 1848* (Boston: Franklin Typographical Society, 1848), 82.

[113]Men who had graduated from the apprentice system and had set type were known as "practical printers," as opposed to the professional editors who began to enter the business in the 1830s based on their writing skills. The debate over practical and professional printers occasionally grew heated.

[114]Samuel T. Armstrong, in *Proceedings of the Printers' Festival, Held by the Franklin Typographical Society at Hancock Hall, January 1, 1848* (Boston: Franklin Typographical Society, 1848), 86. As Armstrong's response indicated, there was historical foundation for sobriety at the Franklin Dinners. In the printing house where he worked in London, Franklin claimed to be known as the "Water-American" for his personal preference for—and proselytizing of fellow printers over—drinking water on the job rather than their "detestable custom" of drinking beer. Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree et al. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), 99–100. In his *Autobiography* and various other writings, Franklin criticized intemperance, satirically with his Silence Dogood essay "On Drunkenness" in his brother James's *New-England Courant* but more savagely in the pages of his *Pennsylvania Gazette* and in his *Autobiography*. J. A. Leo Lemay, *The Life of Benjamin Franklin, Volume 1, Journalist 1706–1730* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Cedric Larson, "The Drinkers Dictionary," *American Speech* 12, no. 2 (April 1937), 87–92. "Eat not to dullness. Drink not to elevation," Franklin wrote in putting temperance first among thirteen virtues identified in his *Autobiography*, 149.

maintaining its relative respectable position by progressing steadily from a good starting-point.[115]

Gill specifically identified the society's founders as "sober, industrious, and intelligent men," stressing that the society "enforced its discipline and constitutional requirements upon its members, and never tolerated them in intemperate habits."[116]

Gill's comments underscore two additional, related reasons why Franklin and his celebrants preferred temperance to association with the vice of alcohol in the public mind: concern for the craft's public image and for the printers' reputations in the community. The orderliness of post–Revolutionary Era public events increasingly became a marker of class and class separation. As historian David Waldstreicher notes, after 1783, "Associating drunkenness and riot with the increasingly delegitimated crowd, accounts of the Fourth of July portrayed the order and decorum worthy of virtuous republicans."[117] In the 1820s, historian Sean Wilentz says, New York City's association of tradesmen, "itself given to considerable toasting and drinking in the early years of the century—suddenly came to endorse its own version of the well-regulated life, blending professions of piety and maxims on thrift, sobriety, and commercial adaptation."[118] In attempting to climb a socio-political ladder in antebellum America, printers sought to exemplify behaviors commensurate with their lofty sense of their importance to the Republic.

Rhetorical Power

Rhetorically, in a group setting in which each person attending might and often did speak for the profession, these dinners resulted in the social negotiation of what constituted craft values. Members reified norms, first for the practitioners present and then, through the news columns, for the community at large. In doing so, they helped internalize values that have guided journalists to this day. The rhetorical power came, first of all, from a setting in which participants were asked and expected to relax their normal defensive postures as well as hierarchical distinctions between the owner of a newspaper and his apprentices. Voluntarily suspending hierarchy, individuals subscribed to a larger craft identity. Making a toast was a declaration of where one stood on important craft and social values, whereas drinking the toast provided individual affirmation and group ratification of the value offered—an act of communion.

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[115]Thomas J. Gill, in *Proceedings of the Printers' Festival, Held by the Franklin Typographical Society at Hancock Hall, January 1, 1848* (Boston: Franklin Typographical Society, 1848), 90.

[116]Ibid.

[117]Waldstreicher, *Perpetual Fetes*, 71.

[118]Wilentz, *Chants*, 40.

The performance put each on record before other practitioners and before the public as members of a unique, civically vital institution. By their ability to apply narrow craft language playfully stretched to non-craft issues and events, they could display for their fellows and for the public their intellectual skills as well as mastery of trade tradition and lore. Their wordplay prompted competition among those offering toasts that more deeply ingrained the sentiments they were espousing.[119]

The dinners coincided with and drew from the same impulse as the editorial conventions that flourished during the same period. In effect, the dinners and the conventions were opposite sides of the same coin. The dinners were a playful counterpart to the editorial conventions, and although usually separate from the conventions,[120] the dinners responded to the same perceived needs of the newspaper proprietors. Whereas the conventions' debates, resolutions, and enactment of "rules" provided, in Aristotelian terms, the rhetorical *logos* of the arguments for professionalism, the playful dinners with their camaraderie and relaxed atmosphere supplied the *ethos*.

The Franklin Dinners and similar assemblies allowed expression and affirmation of craft values around which members could join as a precursor to professionalization of the field. Trade jargon, playfully used, provided a sense of unity and an affirmation of journalism. Printing, "the art preservative of all arts," was being redefined to the more narrow area of newspaper journalism as the art preservative of freedom and American values. Thus, in the toasts we find a celebration of such values as dissemination of information, truth, service to the community and the nation, craftsmanship, preservation of order, honesty, integrity, and patriotism.

There were also appeals to craft unity and, in the accolades to Franklin, reinforcement of values associated with him. The toasts also celebrated upward mobility and elevation of the group's status beyond mere artisans. By stressing the intellectual attainments they held and their importance to the free flow of ideas, and by frequent references to former printers who had risen to high government or business positions, they created a vision of journalism as a repository of intellect and ability. These dinners allowed men of the press to present themselves in the best light—erudite, good-humored, principled, and vital to democracy.

Bridges to Associations

In the end, the Printers' Festivals were a bridge between the artisanal print shops and political press of the early nineteenth century and formal

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[119]In Rochester in 1847, for instance, a woman, identified only as the daughter of a printer, won the prize for best toast. "A Sweet Press," *Philadelphia North American*, January 27, 1847.

[120]On occasion, conventions and Printers' Festivals did overlap. See, for instance, "The Editorial Convention," *Ohio State Journal* (Columbus), January 27, 1858.

associations that began emerging by mid-century. Technology and economics were changing the nature of the printing business for all time, sharpening and hardening the division of labor in the traditional printing office. The once fraternal and egalitarian spirit that prevailed at many of these dinners in the early part of the century was giving way to new organizations based on their different interests. Although ad hoc committees might put on the dinners in the early days, the trend in the 1850s was toward formal organizations of printers. Salt Lake City had a printers' association by 1863.[121] In Rochester, New York, after successful Franklin Dinners in 1846, 1847, and 1848, there was a hiatus in the celebrations. When the dinners returned in 1850s, they were put on by a formal association of owners and editors, first as a western regional organization and, in 1858, as a statewide association.[122]

The impulse for formal organizations underscored that technology and economics were rapidly changing the nature of the printing business for all time, sharpening and hardening the division of labor in the traditional printing office. Whereas in 1846, the Franklin Dinner was described as "a first step . . . to more intimate fellowship" among members of the craft,[123] at the end of 1848 journeymen printers were organizing into craft unions that would remain a part of the business ever after.[124] By then, too, the city's newspapers were coming into the ownership of men who had not grown up in the craft and might never have touched type, further rupturing the line of succession that once had united all.[125] The journeymen joined other workingmen for their own dinner December 28, 1848, where such toasts as the edgy "May the time speedily arrive when the laboring classes shall cease to kiss the hand that smites them; when they, knowing their rights, will provide for them in their own way" predominated.[126] The journeyman printers formed their own Rochester Typographical Union in 1854.[127]

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[121]"The Printers' Festival," *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City), February 18, 1863.

[122]"The State Editorial Convention," *New York Times*, June 11, 1859.

[123]"Meeting of the Craft," *Rochester (NY) Daily Democrat*, January 9, 1846.

[124]"Meeting of the Journeymen Printers," *Rochester (NY) Daily Advertiser*, December 25, 1848. This organization succeeded an earlier union, formed in 1839. See Tracy, *History of the Typographical Union*, 97, 112. The community's developing labor identification had seen activism and even a newspaper, *The Rochester Craftsman*, devoted to the workingmen's movement of the 1830s, and labor issues had been discussed at the first women's rights convention in nearby Seneca Falls in 1848. See Blake McKelvey, "Women's Rights in Rochester: A Century of Progress," *Rochester History* 10, nos. 2 and 3 (July 1948): 6.

[125]Whereas the 1846 Franklin Dinner was attended by the city's surviving pioneer printer–editors and men who boasted of having served apprenticeships under this cohort, by the early 1850s men such as H. G. Warner, a lawyer, had acquired or started newspapers of which they were either executives or absentee owners.

[126]"Mechanics Festival," *Rochester (NY) Daily Advertiser*, January 1, 1849.

[127]"The Printer's Banquet," *Rochester (NY) Daily American*, January 19, 1854.