The Public Ledger:  
An Independent Newspaper

On March 25, 1836, William M. Swain, Arunah S. Abell, and Azariah H. Simmons, three young and energetic journeymen printers from New York, presented to the readers of Philadelphia the first number of the Public Ledger. This newcomer among the daily papers of the Quaker City, a small affair of four pages eleven by fifteen and a half inches, garnished its meager news items with sensational police court reports and sold for only one cent, while all other Philadelphia newspapers with a single exception cost six cents a copy. With it was soon merged the Transcript, the other penny paper, which had been established earlier in 1836. The object of the proprietors, as they had announced in the first issue, was to publish a "vehicle of general and useful intelligence, adapted to the wants and interests of the community generally," a journal which would "worship no men, and be devoted to no parties," a promise faithfully kept. The opening address voiced the crusading democratic spirit abroad in the days of Andrew Jackson:

The common good is its object, and in seeking this object it will have especial regard to the moral and intellectual improvement of the laboring classes, the great sinew of all civilized communities. While this paper shall worship no man, it shall vituperate none. It will be fearless and independent, applauding virtue and reproving vice wherever found, unawed by station, uninfluenced by wealth.

The proprietors of the Public Ledger employed the able pen of Russell Jarvis, a son of New England who after graduating from

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1 Philadelphia Public Ledger, March 25, 1836; Frederic Hudson, Journalism in the United States from 1690 to 1872, 338, 506-507; John W. Forney, Anecdotes of Public Men, I, 428-29; R. C. E. Brown, "Arunah Shepherdson Abell," Dictionary of American Biography, I, 27-28; Ellis P. Oberholtzer, Philadelphia, A History of the City and its People, A Record of 225 Years, II, 221. The size as stated by Hudson and Brown differs from the measurements of the first issue; by 1850 it had increased to seventeen and a half by twenty-four inches, which dimensions it kept into the Civil War, when they were slightly reduced by the mounting cost of paper.

Dartmouth College and taking a turn at the bar had become a writer for Duff Green on the United States Telegraph. According to Forney's recollections Jarvis was "a writer of vast ability, a little too personal and trenchant, but possessing a style of rare force and fascination." In the Ledger his fiery pen abused the United States Bank, then being destroyed by Jackson, and defended the right of freedom of speech and assembly by abolitionists. When his outspoken editorials aroused a threatening mob against the Ledger and involved his employers in a suit for libel, Jarvis left the paper in 1839, but later returned as a contributing editor, possibly until his death in 1853. While losing some of its crusading zeal in later years, the Public Ledger pursued an editorial course looking toward civic betterment. Upon selling the paper to George W. Childs in December, 1864, the proprietors recalled in a farewell to their readers the causes they had sought to promote with the paper. The unexceptionable list included the movement to unite the city into one municipality, the system of street railways, the concentration of public buildings, the introduction of steam fire engines in the city fire department, the use of the telegraph for police and fire alarm purposes, all projects to connect Philadelphia with the interior by railroad, opposition to all disorder and mob violence, and finally, "every useful public improvement in Philadelphia during the last quarter of a century."

With their civic-minded editorial policy the proprietors of the Ledger combined from the outset unusual enterprise in securing news of important events at the earliest possible moment. Thus, for example, in December, 1838, private couriers brought President Jackson's annual message to the Ledger enabling it to publish the document before its contemporaries, who had relied upon the mails. "Pony Expresses" were also employed either for the Ledger alone

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4 Forney, Anecdotes, I, 428-29.
6 Appletons' Cyclopaedia of American Biography, III, 406-407. While he did not name Jarvis, Hudson apparently referred to him when he said that for about fifteen years the chief editor of the Ledger—whom he described as "a short, dark-complexioned man, with quick movements and a pugnacious mind"—lived in New York city while he wrote daily editorials for the Philadelphia paper. Hudson, History of Journalism, 508.
7 Public Ledger, December 3, 1864.
or in cooperation with newspaper publishers in other cities; such an arrangement during the Mexican War beat the mail by sixty hours and therefore was relied upon by the authorities at Washington for news. When the telegraph was still in the experimental stage Swain and his associates were among its patrons, and materially aided in its development as a news transmitting agency.\(^8\)

While taking care to supply their readers with fresh intelligence, the proprietors of the *Ledger* also employed an able staff of writers. In addition to Russell Jarvis, there was Joseph Sailer who on July 1, 1840, began to write a money article for the *Ledger* which he continued for over forty years.\(^9\) In 1844 William H. Fry, an accomplished amateur musician, became its editor, but two years later he left for Europe where he acted as the Paris and London correspondent of the *Public Ledger* as well as the New York *Tribune* and other papers. In 1852 Fry joined the staff of the *Tribune* as an editorial writer and music critic.\(^10\) Possibly the ablest member of the staff was the Washington correspondent, Francis J. Grund, whose letters were signed “Observer.”\(^11\) There was also Thompson Westcott, a Philadelphian who after being admitted to the bar in 1841 began a long career in journalism as law reporter on the paper in 1846. During his connection with the firm which lasted until 1851, he frequently acted in an editorial capacity both on the *Public Ledger* and the *Dollar Newspaper*, as the publishers called the weekly edition of their paper.\(^12\) Another native of Philadelphia, Washington L. Lane, joined the staff of the *Ledger* as a reporter in 1837 and became managing editor the next year, continuing at this post until his death in 1865. Except for service on a school board, Lane’s long career in journalism was notably free from involvement in public office. Of excellent judgment and unimpeachable integrity, it was, according to the *North*

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\(^9\) Oberholtzer, *op. cit.*, II, 224.


\(^11\) Forney, *Anecdotes*, I, 108. The materials on Grund do not indicate the dates of his connection with the *Ledger*, but it probably extended from about 1845 to 1860.

\(^12\) Biographical article on Thompson Westcott in *Appleton’s Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, VI, 422. In addition to his newspaper work Westcott wrote several books on Philadelphia, possibly the most important being with J. Thomas Scharf, *The History of Philadelphia, 1609–1884*. 
American, "mainly owing to his labors that the Ledger attained the large degree of influence and usefulness that it so long possessed and became so universally looked up to as the leading penny paper of the country."\textsuperscript{13}

From the outset the circulation of the paper grew rapidly. When it was established in 1836, the combined circulation of all Philadelphia daily newspapers was said to have been between seven and eight thousand,\textsuperscript{14} but by 1840 the Ledger claimed that it alone printed an edition of fifteen thousand copies.\textsuperscript{15} Five years later it was considered to have by far the largest circulation of any paper in the state.\textsuperscript{16} As a result of the heavy demand for its issues, the firm bought in 1846 the first type-revolving cylinder press manufactured by Robert M. Hoe.\textsuperscript{17} By 1850 the paper claimed a circulation of forty thousand,\textsuperscript{18} and during the Civil War its rivals conceded that the Ledger had the largest sale in the city. Indeed, it was said that Swain, who had the management of the paper, accumulated a fortune of three million dollars,\textsuperscript{19} a detail possibly significant in determining some of the editorial attitudes of the paper.

Under Swain the Ledger continued to profess its independence of parties, but it was criticized by the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin in 1856 for attempting to justify the "frauds committed by its friends at the late election in this city," and for its "extraordinary faith in the immaculate purity of the Democratic party."\textsuperscript{20} Likewise the Philadelphia...
Philadelphia News, a partisan sheet then managed in the interest of the People's party, insisted in April, 1860, that the Public Ledger was "the most active and energetic organ of Mr. Buchanan, in this city." Renewing the charge of Democratic partisanship a year later, the News roundly declared that the Ledger had spent "a lifetime of devotion to the fortunes of the Loco Foco party," and added: "For journalistic pirates, who deceive ignorant people by professing independence, while they labor with all their might to sustain a corrupt and debased party, we can feel nothing but contempt."22

On other occasions, however, the News offered a different analysis of the dynamics of its rival. Hence it declared early in 1862 that the New York Herald and the Philadelphia Public Ledger, "two of the most depraved papers in the country," were "ever ready to help quacks, fortune-tellers and courtesans to deceive the simple-minded who are made the victims of such despicable cheats."23 Not hesitating to brand its contemporary as the tool of larger predatory interests, the News proclaimed that the Public Ledger was nothing less than "The Pander of Avaricious Corporations," and amplified this lurid editorial heading with the explanation: "It is just as natural for the Public Ledger to do the dirty work of debased monopolists as it is for a duck to swim."24 When the Ledger, alarmed at the high wages necessary to employ workmen, began in 1863 to advocate government encouragement for the immigration of European laborers, the News dryly commented that the Public Ledger was "ever the advocate of measures to enrich sordid capitalists at the expense of those who earn their subsistence by the labor of their hands."25

No party fealty vied with the Public Ledger's devotion to vested interests. Its proprietors, in rather marked contrast to most of the other newspaper owners in Philadelphia, were never active in politics. Neither did the Ledger receive government advertising except the printing of lists of unclaimed letters left at the post office, work

21 Philadelphia News, April 23, 1860. In support of the News' contention it should be noted that the Ledger had supported Buchanan's position on the Kansas question in 1858. See Public Ledger, February 5, 1858.
22 Philadelphia News, April 18, 27, 1861.
23 Ibid., February 22, 1862.
24 Ibid., April 5, 1862.
25 Ibid., February 14, 1863.
awarded by statute to the local paper with the largest circulation.\textsuperscript{26} Fewer editorials as well—occasionally there were none—indicated that the \textit{Public Ledger} was less concerned with public opinion than the typical party organ. Indeed, Frederic Hudson, recalling that Swain's chief concern had been to make money out of the \textit{Ledger}, stated that the paper sometimes appeared with no other reading matter but advertisements.\textsuperscript{27}

The independence of the \textit{Ledger} revealed itself in editorial comment upon political campaigns. In the exciting canvass of 1856 it merely advised its readers to "take it all calmly," while it ridiculed its journalistic brethren for their rash predictions of success; "If the newspapers of each party are to be believed, Buchanan, Fillmore, and Fremont will all be elected President."\textsuperscript{28} Four years later the \textit{Ledger} was not only without any favorite candidate, but moved by the "political excitement" commented upon "Partisan Politics:" "If there were no offices to distribute, no spoils to be gathered, we should hear but little publicly said of matters which are now dinned in our ears as issues upon which national life depends."\textsuperscript{29}

When the victors began to divide the booty, the \textit{Ledger}, revealing its own scruples, preached a sermon to the effect that the conductors of the press should refuse to recommend appointments lest they incur obligations which would poison the hidden springs of editorial policy.\textsuperscript{30}

The newspaper publisher or editor has also a public duty to perform, which should keep him from intermeddling with official appointments. If he conducts an independent paper, he may have a necessity to comment, not only upon government measures but upon the acts of government officials. He therefore should take care to incur no obligation on the one side which would be likely to bias his judgment, or, on the other, to put himself in a position which would

\textsuperscript{26} For samples of these lists see the Philadelphia \textit{Public Ledger}, November 19, 1860; September 30, 1861; October 5, 1863; March 6, 1865. The law under which this was awarded is mentioned in James M. Lee, \textit{History of American Journalism}, 305. The absence of important patronage is illustrated by the fact that while in the period from September 30, 1863, to September 30, 1865, the War Department paid the \textit{Press} $4046.70, the \textit{Inquirer} $4520.56, and the \textit{North American} $4184.74, the \textit{Public Ledger} received only $36. \textit{United States Official Register}, 1865, p. 218, et seq.

\textsuperscript{27} Hudson, \textit{History of Journalism}, 508. The writer never saw such an issue when he examined the Civil War files of the paper.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Public Ledger}, September 3, 11, 1856.

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Dollar Newspaper}, September 20, 1860.

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Public Ledger}, March 6, 1861.
require him to be blind to official delinquency. Every applicant for office knows what influence newspapers are likely to possess, and that recommendations, from publishers and editors, are likely to command favor, because those in office desire to secure the support, or silence the opposition, of the press, and a personal obligation conferred upon editors would tend to have this effect. But this is the strongest reason why publishers and editors of newspapers should not personally sign any recommendations to office. They compromise their own independence, and that of their journal, by the act, and surrender to individuals what belongs to the public. So, instead of being free to direct public attention to measures or official conduct inimical to public interests, they are bound by favor, or their own recommendation, to keep silence when their public duty demands them to speak.

Entertaining these views of duty as journalists, we decline to put our names to any recommendations to public office, however worthy or deserving we may believe the applicant to be, or how much soever of personal regard or friendship we may have for the individual.

That such independence of party ties was a matter of settled policy with the Ledger later editorial comment left no doubt. When an election approached in the fall of 1861 the paper counselled voters: "When all the tickets are in the field, our advice would be to scan them all carefully, to select from them for each office the fittest man, without regard to his political antecedents." Likewise, on election day in 1862 the Ledger urged upon its readers their duty to vote according to their own best judgment, and as the political canvass of the following year opened it took occasion to deride the "Partisan Quarrels and Partisan Epithets" which filled the pages of most of its contemporaries:

Our political journals, for the most part, are engaged in the work of trying to sow as much discord as possible in the community and embittering one portion against the other, by foolish partisan criminations and low personal abuse. . . . We have on one hand the Republican journals denouncing one-half of the citizens of the Republic as "copperheads" and "traitors." . . . We have the Democratic journals, denouncing the other half of the community as "Jacobins" and "Destructives."

At the time of the October elections of 1864 the Ledger conceded that in choosing among congressional nominees, the question involved was "peace or war, as hitherto conducted," but advised the consideration of individual merit in selecting the candidates for state legislature and county offices:

31 Public Ledger, August 29, 1861.  32 Public Ledger, October 14, 1862.  33 Public Ledger, June 23, 1863.  34 Public Ledger, October 11, 1864.
Personal preferences here may be allowed their full play. The most intelligent and respectable man usually makes the most honest representative. The same rule will hold good in regard to the city and county officers. . . . To let party ties merely, then, control a man's vote is to attach more importance to party than to the good of the community in which one lives, which latter ought to be the paramount interest of every voter. The county offices are simply business departments, in which faithful attendance to the duties, intelligent performance of these and strict honesty are the essential qualifications. These are individual not partisan characteristics, and, therefore, investigation and discrimination may be advantageously used in making up one's choice.

Evidently the Public Ledger did not conform to the pattern of party propaganda and patronage so characteristic of other Philadelphia newspapers.

Nevertheless the paper sometimes sought to influence the attitudes of its readers on important public questions. Thus in the secession crisis the Ledger threw its weight on the side of compromise and conciliation. As soon as Lincoln was elected president, the Ledger warned against coercion if any southern commonwealth seceded: "Should any States, then, attempt to declare themselves independent, nothing more would be wise or necessary than to leave them alone for six months." A few days later in tendering advice on "How to Quiet the Whole Country" one editorial suggested that Lincoln might well include in his cabinet "the more moderate men of all parties, especially in the South." Another editorial welcomed the "Union Meeting" called in Philadelphia as an opportunity for the expression of "conservative feeling" which would strengthen the hands of those "patriots" who were "endeavoring to hold the Union together." The paper, however, advocated a firmer policy when South Carolina actually seceded. "The duty of the Federal Government is plain," it argued. "It is to enforce the laws in every part of the territories of the United States, without regard to the attitude assumed by any portion of the inhabitants therein."

Although in February, 1861, the Ledger disliked what it termed the "flippancy" in Lincoln's treatment of the crisis and thought that he showed "a very shallow and superficial appreciation of our difficulties," it was satisfied with his inaugural address, and generously

35 Public Ledger quoted in the Philadelphia Inquirer, November 8, 1860.
36 Public Ledger, November 10, 1860.
37 Public Ledger, December 13, 1860.
38 Public Ledger, December 21, 1860.
39 Public Ledger, February 16, 1861.
supported his course as President. In mid-July while it reprimanded "leading organs in the Republican party" for undermining confidence by urging a premature attack, the Ledger stated its own position:40

We hold it to be but fair toward any administration, that it should have the aid and encouragement of public opinion to strengthen its hands and sustain its efforts, so long as it appears to be actuated by honest motives, and is working to a proper end—the good of the country.

Accordingly, in the controversy between Lincoln and the Radicals over slavery, the Ledger took the side of the President. While the paper found no fault with Fremont’s proclamation, it commended the action of the President in countermanding the Radical general’s order:41

The true policy of the Executive is and must be to interfere as little as possible with the acknowledged rights of each State, consistently with the putting down of this unnatural rebellion. It would be well, therefore, that the least possible mention of slavery, or legislation in regard to it in any way in the States where it exists, should take place.

Continuing its conservative position the Ledger coolly decried proposals to arm the Negro:42

For ditching and trenching, for fetching and carrying, as provided for in the instructions of General Sherman, they may be useful, though even then they scarcely repay the expenditure requisite to support them and their families. As military auxiliaries in the open field, they can not be worth the muskets with which they must be armed.

Although the Ledger consistently supported Lincoln’s opposition to Radical measures,43 when the President at last issued his famous Emancipation Proclamation, the Ledger merely summarized the document and dryly commented that how far it would “facilitate the operations against rebellion” was “yet to be tested by experience.”44

Lincoln’s efforts to recruit men, however, were considerably augmented by the editorial pleas of the Public Ledger. “Men and money,” it announced on one occasion, “will do the work. Both ought therefore to be furnished liberally for the crisis.”45 Later urging more

40 Public Ledger, July 12, 1861. 41 Public Ledger, September 20, 1861.
42 Public Ledger, December 10, 1861; August 5, 1862.
43 Specifically it praised his repudiation of Hunter’s order, his answer to Horace Greeley’s famous “Prayer of Twenty Millions,” and his retention in a cabinet crisis of the conservative Seward. See the Public Ledger, May 20, August 25, December 23, 1862.
44 Public Ledger, January 2, 1863. 45 Public Ledger, July 26, 1862.
liberal bounties to stimulate enlistment the paper did its part by painting an enticing picture of army life.\textsuperscript{46}

Let each State go to work to rouse up the popular enthusiasm as at first. Let higher honors, bounties and privileges be accorded to the brave soldier; and our Legislature, in both houses, and men of all parties, unite emulously in seeing what rewards and honors will most stimulate men to enlist, and there need be but little talk of the draft.\ldots

The care taken of every soldier now is much better than it ever was. The quartermasters and sutlers have made such arrangements that the most abundant supplies of the very best food seem always on hand at every station. No coats are made so warm and comfortable for the winter as those of the soldier. No dress is so easy, so good, or so liberally supplied. The officers too have had three years' experience, and such are the regulations for the shelter, comfort and protection of the men, that there is no unnecessary exposure and suffering now, and while the rebel army is shut up from supplies, barefooted, ragged, blanketless and wasting away, our soldiers, are more bountifully supplied, not only with necessaries, but with luxuries, than any army ever was in this world. The labors of the Sanitary Commission have no doubt tended to this state of things, an institution new in war, but arising out of the Christian spirit of the people. These comforts and considerations ought to multiply enlistments, and will do so if properly put before the people.

While filling its editorial columns with propaganda and stimulating its circulation, the war also greatly increased the cost of newspaper production. Indeed, the \textit{Public Ledger} pointed out in August, 1864, that the price of the paper on which a newspaper was printed was three times as great as at the outbreak of the war, sometimes even costing the publisher more than the reader paid for his journal.\textsuperscript{47} As a result the price of many newspapers was raised, but Swain and Abell continued to sell the \textit{Public Ledger} for one cent, persisting in this course until, it was said, they had lost more than a hundred thousand dollars.\textsuperscript{48} Feeling that the cheapness of the journal had been the principal factor in its success, the proprietors were unwilling to raise its price, and therefore sold the paper on December 3, 1864, to George W. Childs for a sum, according to Childs' recollections, slightly over one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.\textsuperscript{49}

At once announcing that the paper would be conducted "so as to effect the greatest good to the city, the State, and the nation," the new owner pledged that the \textit{Ledger} would "always raise its voice clearly

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Public Ledger}, January 14, 1864.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Public Ledger}, August 18, 1864.
\textsuperscript{48} Statement by George W. Childs in \textit{Public Ledger}, December 10, 1864.
\textsuperscript{49} George W. Childs, \textit{Recollections} (Philadelphia, 1892), 14-15.
and unmistakably in support of the Government.\footnote{Public Ledger, December 5, 1864.} He then raised the price to two cents, increased the advertising rates, and improved the appearance of the paper, previously the poorest among the newspapers of Philadelphia.\footnote{Public Ledger, December 10, 1864; February 13, 1865; Childs, Recollections, 15-16.} As chief of the Ledger staff Childs engaged William V. McKean, the veteran journalist then presiding over the columns of the Philadelphia Inquirer.\footnote{Biographical article on McKean, National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, VIII, 52.}

Unique among Philadelphia newspapermen, Childs himself had served no apprenticeship in either journalism or politics, nor did he subsequently enter public life. Born in Baltimore in 1829 he gathered his early experiences from the navy and in bookstores. In 1854 he became a member of the publishing firm of Childs and Peterson which soon brought out Dr. Elisha Kent Kane's \textit{Arctic Explorations}, a great financial success as a result of Childs' publicity efforts. Four years later he joined J. B. Lippincott and Company, a publishing house in Philadelphia.\footnote{Joseph Jackson, "George W. Childs," \textit{Dictionary of American Biography}, IV, 70-71.} Thus it was as a novice in the newspaper business that he became in 1864 the proprietor of the largest paper in the Quaker City.

Not the sole owner of the paper Childs' unseen associate was Anthony J. Drexel, a wealthy Philadelphia banker who since 1847 had been a partner in the firm of Drexel and Company, established by his father in 1838. In the era after the war Drexel became the leading director of the banking house, then world famous, and amassed a large fortune.\footnote{Witt Bowden, "Anthony J. Drexel," \textit{Dictionary of American Biography}, V, 455-56.} Although Drexel's name did not appear at the masthead of the Ledger, he was no doubt responsible for a significant change in the editorial policy of the paper. While the Ledger was still in the hands of Swain and Abell, it had assiduously aided Jay Cooke in promoting the sale of government securities, printing editorials prepared by Cooke's agents for the purpose of cajoling the public into buying the national loan.\footnote{Oberholtzer, \textit{Jay Cooke}, I, 237.} When, however, the Ledger passed into the hands of Drexel, Cooke's jealous rival in the banking field, it ceased to print any notices of the progress of the sales or anything favorable to Cooke's efforts in marketing government bonds. Angry at this treatment, Cooke personally visited the office of the Ledger...
but without avail. After the Civil War the Ledger was also hostile to Cooke’s activities in financing the Northern Pacific Railroad. During most of the conflict, however, the newspaper had cooperated with Cooke and though abstaining from open declaration of partisanship had steadily upheld the war policy of the administration. Such then was the history of the Public Ledger, a paper independent in politics yet occasionally the servant of vested interests.

Through the turbulent years of civil war the daily press of Philadelphia with significant exceptions strove to mold public opinion according to the dictates of party leaders. While mirroring the conservative attitude of the Pennsylvania metropolis by their efforts toward conciliation in the secession crisis, the Republican corps of newspapers, and their independent contemporaries as well, reflected the wishes of both the Quaker City and the federal administration in upholding heartily the cause of nationality; they displayed, however, except for the Press and the Evening Bulletin, reluctance to approve of an abolition crusade against the South. Liberally subsidized by appointments and advertising, the Republican papers defended war profiteers who were fattening off the fratricidal carnage and plead the cause of unworthy public servants before the bar of popular opinion, but levelled the charge of treason against their political rivals. Commenting upon the dynamics of such party organs, the Evening Journal could from its neutral position write of the North American, the Evening Bulletin, and the Press:

We do not think much of those newspapers which are very loyal indeed, when we discover that they are excellently well paid for their loyalty, when we ascertain that two or three of one newspaperial family have been very handsomely provided for, and will be the better off the longer the war lasts. Another paper has a first rate appointment in the Navy Department, and, of course, has brought his patriotism to a good market. And still another has a clerkship at Washington, which gives the “run of the kitchen,” and is of some little service in making the impression that “secrets” can be obtained and promulgated.

In contrast with these pampered sheets the starving Democratic press of Philadelphia virtually collapsed when patronage was lost with the demise of the Buchanan administration, but revived with the establishment of the Age in 1863, to carry on a bitter partisan opposition. From the lives of the conductors of these party organs

56 Ibid., I, 545-47, 576-77.
57 Evening Journal, February 18, 1862.
Democratic and Republican alike—emerged a number of common characteristics, indeed a veritable pattern in which was inextricably woven journalism and politics. The publishers of two Philadelphia journals, however, did not conform to the pattern, neither did their papers exhibit the usual characteristics of unmitigated partisanship. The *Inquirer*, although enjoying patronage from the Republican party, mingled its valuable support for a vigorous prosecution of the war with sharp criticism for party tricksters and unscrupulous government contractors. Likewise the *Public Ledger*, though generally upholding Lincoln's administration, disdained the arts of partisanship. While eschewing political affiliations, however, these independent papers seemed to foreshadow by their connections with banking and large financial interests the future trend of American journalism.

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