

# *Historiography*

in Mass Communication



Volume 9 (2023). Number 2

# *Historiography in Mass Communication*

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Essay length may vary from 500 to 5,000 words.

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# *Historiography*

## in Mass Communication

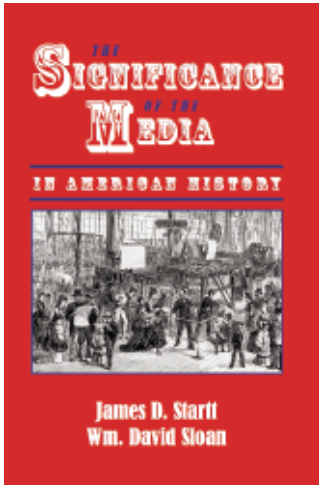
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# Forty Years Improving History

By Wm. David Sloan ©



Sloan

**T**he journal *American Journalism* observes its fortieth anniversary this year. In the context of history, forty years isn't a long time. Yet it dawns on me that, at the time the journal first saw the light of day, few of today's JMC historians had developed an interest in history. In fact, that was so long ago that many hadn't yet been born.

Yet, *American Journalism* has been of immense importance to them. From the beginning, it laid out clearly that its aim was to improve historical scholarship. It would require superior historiography. With that high standard, in its early years it had a potent impact on historical practice.

*American Journalism* appeared on the scene the first week of August 1983. Gary Whitby was its founding editor. He started it as an arm of the American Journalism Historians Association.

Gary and I had first discussed creating the AJHA two years earlier.

*David Sloan, a professor emeritus from the University of Alabama, is the author/editor of more than fifty books and is a recipient of the American Journalism Historians Association's Kobre Award for lifetime achievement and of a variety of other awards. He founded the AJHA.*

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We were returning from the AEJMC's national convention at Michigan State University when we began considering the need for more vitality in the study of media history. A couple of months later I returned from a regional conference with a new-found enthusiasm for starting an organization. I told Gary. One of the essential requirements for a new organization would be that it publish a scholarly journal. I said I would take care of the organizing work. Gary volunteered to try to start a journal.

Gary, modest to a fault, wouldn't have said so, but as the creator of *American Journalism* he was a major figure in the study of JMC history.

He was born Thursday, August 26, 1943, on a small farm near Friendship in northwest Tennessee. When he was five, his parents — Connie Corinne (Cole) and William Grady Whitby — moved the family to Memphis.

By the time he entered high school he was a big kid. When I first met him in 1974, he was 6'4" and weighed about 230 pounds. He had been an outstanding offensive lineman for his high school football squad and was named to the All-Memphis team. He was so good that he received college scholarship offers. He turned them down.

He was more interested in academics than athletics. Intellectual pursuits, particularly poetry and theology, appealed to him. He enrolled at Harding University, a Christian liberal arts school in the small town of Searcy, Arkansas. There he majored in English and worked at odd jobs to pay for his education. One of those jobs was as a deck hand on the last steamboat transporting cargo on the Mississippi. After graduation, he served stateside in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. Upon completing his military service, he earned an M.A. degree in English from the University of Arkansas. He then got a teaching job at John Brown University in northwest Arkansas.

## Forty Years Improving History

He later taught at four other schools and served as a department chair at the final two. Burned out by administration, he retired early from academia. He bought a truck-and-trailer rig and hauled freight around Dallas, Texas. He liked the work because it gave him time to write. While waiting to pick up loads, he often composed poetry. A collection of his poems, *The Weather of One Another*, was published in 2012.

After selling his truck rig, Gary taught English part-time at community colleges around Dallas, Denton, and Ft. Worth. He had a love of both the language and the students. He continued until medical problems prevented him.

He died September 3, 2021. You can find a fuller biography of him as a memorial tribute in Volume 8:1 (2022) of *Historiography in Mass Communication*. Few in our field were aware of his passing.

That's ironic — for, as Maurine Beasley, an eminent historian, has said truthfully on several occasions, publication in *American Journalism* has helped untold numbers of professors get promotion and tenure.

Yet, Gary's founding of *American Journalism* did more than help scholars advance in their profession. It was also a critical event in advancing historical scholarship.

With the ascendancy of behavioral and social science theory that came out of World War II, by the 1970s historical study in our field was impoverished. "Real" researchers in our colleges of communication either ignored the efforts of historians or looked down their noses at them. Personally, I can recall doing my graduate work in that milieu — and it wasn't a time that lent encouragement to those of us who wanted to be historians.

After completing his MFA in creative writing and then his Ph.D. in mass communication at the University of Iowa, Gary took a position at

the University of Central Arkansas. It was there that he founded *American Journalism*.

In the early 1980s, universities faced an austere economic environment. Many were reducing their spending and cutting back some of their programs. So starting a scholarly journal didn't seem to be a goal with much promise.

Gary, though, undertook it. He wrote me in May of 1982, "I sense that we may be able to get a little money ... from the administration here, although I'm not sure.... [A UCA administrator] almost volunteered some the other day."

And sure enough, at the same time that some of the biggest communication schools in the nation were tightening their belts, his little school agreed to sponsor the new journal.

*American Journalism* didn't just spring out of nowhere. Nearly two years of planning went into it.

Gary wanted to get it right. He drafted a prospectus and shared it with JMC historians around the country. He got a variety of recommendations. Sidney Kobre, who had developed a sweeping sociological interpretation of media history, proposed a list of changes. The main one was to indicate that *American Journalism* should emphasize the "mutual interaction of the press and the social environment." William McReynolds of the University of Colorado also offered detailed suggestions. He wanted the prospectus to state that the journal would favor "cultural history" and particularly wished it to emphasize the importance of "fine arts." Gary, who had come under the influence of Jim Carey at Iowa, also leaned toward a cultural perspective.

Nevertheless, he asked me to consider the various proposals and then to formulate a statement of purpose. I suggested a minimalist approach. Gary was inclined to a detailed statement. The one we finally



settled on read in part:

*American Journalism* is devoted to the historical study of journalism and mass communication in the United States. The editors invite articles dealing with the nature of the press during various periods, motivations of journalists, journalistic practices and purposes, culture, sociology, politics, geography, [etc.].... The journal places a premium on articles that contribute a significant understanding of American journalism.... The editors especially encourage articles that display superior depth of understanding of the study of history.

Gary, who confessed that he knew little about visual art, nevertheless wanted to assure that *American Journalism* had an attractive design appropriate for a scholarly journal. To that end, he recruited Sharon Bass, a professor at the University of Kansas, to create one. The early years of the journal reflected her ideas and influence. Sharon, by the way, remained involved in the AHA for several years and hosted its 1992 convention in Lawrence.

When Gary published the first issue, I was serving as the AJHA's executive secretary, and I wrote the president of UCA, Dr. Jefferson Farris, thanking him for his school's support. He replied that "You may be sure that the University intends to provide all the support we possibly can to this journal, and we expect to do everything necessary to make it a success."

Unfortunately, despite UCA's best intentions, its budget didn't allow it to continue to assist publication. After two issues, in the spring of 1984 Gary broke the news to me. He would have to give up the editorship. We were facing the possibility that *American Journalism* would

die almost before it had begun to toddle.

By then I was completing my first year at the University of Alabama, and I told Gary I would approach administrators about my taking over publication. My dean, Ed Mullins, and department chair, Charles Self, readily agreed and offered help in the form of a graduate assistant and office space. So *American Journalism* received new life.

The infant journal needed articles to publish, but it also needed to gain credibility. Acting in a counter-intuitive way for a journal attempting to acquire articles, I raised the standards for publication. Typically in mass communication journals, once two or three original reviewers recommend publishing an article, the editor accepts it, with the stipulation that its author make any necessary changes. With *American Journalism*, once our three first reviewers recommended an article, it went to a second stage. It involved assessments by the “editorial board” (Gary Whitby, Jim Startt, and me). Gary focused on writing style; and Jim, an outstanding American historian, paid particular attention to the research methodology. It was one of the most rigorous review procedures among mass communication journals.

John Ferré, a professor at the University of Louisville, was one of the historians whose manuscripts went through the process. He recently wrote me about the experience. “I received a ‘revise and resubmit,’ with the recommendation to cite a particular dissertation from 1961. ‘I’m surprised that the author did not cite it,’ one reviewer said. Anyway, I incorporated the reviewers’ suggestions and sent it back to you, the editor. You wrote back saying that it satisfied the first review round and that it would undergo a second review with different reviewers. ‘This is the toughest academic process I’ve experienced,’ I thought. I was relieved, and very proud, when you later informed me that my article had passed both sets of reviews!” His article was published with the title

“The Dubious Heritage of Media Ethics: Cause-and-Effect Criticism in the 1890s.”

*American Journalism* encouraged high standards. Yet, manuscripts that authors submitted ranged widely in quality. Some were almost ready for publication upon arrival. A few, if submitted in an undergraduate class, might have received a grade of “C” if the instructor were a humanitarian with a generous heart. Thanks to the scrupulous review process and many knowledgeable and committed reviewers, most manuscripts were improved, and many became publishable. I’m pleased to say that some articles we published were not only exceptionally well-done but were significant as well.

A review that stands out in my memory was for a manuscript from Bruce Evensen, a professor at DePaul. I didn’t know him or his work habits. All three first reviewers recommended that his manuscript, “The Evangelical Origins of the Muckrakers,” be published, and the three-member editorial board agreed — although we wanted a little more from Bruce about the historiographical setting and significance of his study. It was a job that I thought might take, at most, a couple of hours.

A month later, I hadn’t received a revised manuscript, and I was getting anxious that Bruce had decided not to submit one. His was an important work, and I wanted to assure that *American Journalism* published it. So I phoned him. Yes, he assured me, he would be sending a revised manuscript. The reason he hadn’t already done so, he explained, was that he had been working every day for the past month on the historiographical research we had asked for. When the article was published, the statement would be one paragraph — about one word for every hour of research.

Bruce may have been more meticulous than most professors, but there were other authors who also expended a lot of effort to assure that

their manuscripts met the high standards for publication.

I edited *American Journalism* until my term ended after five years. We were on a solid footing. But within a couple of years, the journal was facing a problem.

Almost as soon as the new editor took over, he got at loggerheads with the AJHA's Board of Directors. Two issues created the problem. In the light of the passage of time, they now seem as if they could have been easily resolved. But they festered. One was simply the graphic design of the journal's cover. It used a large image of an American eagle. Most members of the Board thought it didn't fit *American Journalism's* focus. But the editor liked it.

The other concern was more substantive. Shortly into his term as editor, he devoted an issue of the journal to his doctoral advisor, Jim Carey. He filled it with invited essays from his former fellow students and other of Jim's admirers. Members of the Board objected to the editor using the journal to promote his personal friendships. Publishing unreviewed essays also concerned them.

The editor didn't like the Board trying to tell him what to do. So he stopped doing the job of editor. *American Journalism* quickly fell behind schedule. Month after month, it sat dormant.

That created a serious problem, in part because publication plays an important role in university decisions about tenure and promotion for professors. The problem also was straining both the journal's and the AJHA's credibility.

After the AJHA began getting inquiries and complaints from authors, its president, Leonard Teel, appointed a small group to resolve the problem. But working with the editor was a struggle. He refused to cooperate. He wouldn't answer mail or phone calls from me or the other AJHA members appointed to salvage the journal. Finally, Leo-

nard appointed me to serve as an interim editor and publish the journal until we could return to a normal schedule.

After some effort, I obtained manuscripts from authors, along with copies of their correspondence with the editor. We published the next issue a year after he stopped doing the work. It was back-dated to 1991 so that the journal would maintain continuity. In 1992 — with Wally Eberhard of the University of Georgia and Shirley Biagi of California State University, Sacramento, working with me — we published two double issues to try to catch up. Then Wally took over as editor from 1993 to 1997. During his term, *American Journalism* recovered, and it became stable from that point on.

As it now observes its fortieth anniversary, it's hard to imagine that *American Journalism* might ever face such a predicament again, but the question does arise about how it has affected the field of mass communication history.

When Gary published the first issue, the field was beginning to increase in vitality. The journal *Journalism History*, for example, had begun in 1974. Nevertheless much still needed to be done. I'll offer a personal example to illustrate the problems.

When I began to work on my doctoral dissertation at the University of Texas in 1976 and was searching for a topic, the best advice I got was "Find a topic that no one has researched before." Such advice easily translates into "Find an obscure topic." Of course, the main reason no one would have researched a particular topic, and the reason it was obscure, was that no one was interested in it. So the advice to find an unresearched topic really boiled down to "Find a topic that is so unimportant that no one cares about it." Today, it's hard to imagine any of our outstanding doctoral history advisors giving such suicidal guidance.

Things have changed greatly since my student days. The intellectual level in the field is more sophisticated. *American Journalism* deserves considerable praise for the improvements. JMC historiography has become much more vibrant. As just one example, in 1976 the total number of books published that year about the history of journalism — whether print or broadcast — was, as best as I can tell, thirteen. Three decades later, in 2006, the number was at least forty. Likewise, many more research studies were being published. In its first six years, *American Journalism* printed more than ninety articles.

Perhaps the best explanation for why historiography has improved so much is that we have many more professors who take history seriously, who understand the principles that historical study demands, and who have taught their own students the methods of historical study. Obviously, several factors contribute to the improvement, but the availability of more outlets for research — such as the AJHA national convention and *American Journalism* — has been of inestimable importance.

The widespread sophistication today doesn't mean, however, that everything's rosy. Most professors who claim they are historians probably do take history seriously, but there's a group who don't. There's no law prohibiting people from calling themselves historians — even if they haven't mastered the most basic principles of historical study. In fact, perhaps as many as a quarter of the people who claim to be JMC historians have few credentials other than their claim to be. Their accounts about the past aren't grounded in historical sources, and they violate other elementary precepts of historical research. Some of those accounts show up as conference papers, and a few even sneak into history journals — the result of the fact that conferences and journals rely on some reviewers who aren't historians.

Paradoxically, the proliferation of outlets for research — one of the important changes that have stimulated the field — also has contributed to some bad historiography. Authors may be producing more good submissions than once was the case, but the increased number of outlets means that each conference and journal gets a smaller slice of the pie. So some manuscripts that at one time would have been rejected now turn up on conference programs and in journals. One has only to read conference papers to see how weak some are.

Journals are more selective. They accept a smaller percentage of submissions than conferences do. Thus, it is unusual for a poorly researched manuscript to find its way into a publication. Nevertheless, it isn't difficult to find published articles that violate basic principles. They use, for example, a paucity of primary sources, and are ill-founded, with such errors as present-mindedness and ideological bias.

The proliferation of papers and articles contributes to another problem. That is the insignificance of much historical research. In almost every issue of every history journal, not just in JMC publications but also in journals in other fields, one finds a majority of articles dealing with forgettable subjects. The authors seem to be working by the principle that my dissertation advisor gave me: "Find an obscure topic." Thumb through journals of any recent year, and you can find articles on such matters as a local newspaper's attempts to attract a sports team to its city, media coverage of a local crime, and a university's journalism education program. Such subjects may interest their authors, but the articles leave hardly any meaningful trace.

The problem isn't the fault of the journals, but of the authors. A truism in the world of publishing is that journals are stuck with whatever manuscripts contributors submit. Editors must choose from those they are offered. They have no others.

Despite such flaws, it's unmistakably true that some journals have had a far-reaching impact. They have made their fields better. In the case of JMC history, the importance of *American Journalism* can scarcely be measured. In its forty years of life, it has been at the forefront of improving JMC historiography.

I don't know if Gary Whitby imagined that the journal he created would last forty years, but after he retired from teaching he told me on more than one occasion that he was pleased it had done so well.

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# The Historian's Imagination

By Debra Reddin van Tuyll ©



van Tuyll

**R**obin George (R.G.) Collingwood may not have been the first to write about the historian's imagination, but he's the first I encountered. This English historian and philosopher, born in the early days of the 20th century, was unimpressed with the trendy new "scientific" approach to scholarship that was invading all disciplines. The time was not entirely unlike today where STEM dominates so much of the academic world.<sup>1</sup>

Collingwood grounded his thoughts on the writing of history in his belief that fundamental differences exist between humanities and sciences. Like most of us, he believed that using the scientific method to make sense of the natural world was a "logical, perfectly legitimate way of 'knowing' the natural world," according to historian Lynn Spear Lemisko. Observation, classification, experimentation, laws — sure, all of those could be generated in studies of plants, animals, rocks, planets, atoms, even weather and stars. History, though, was different, Collingwood believed. History of nature is impossible, Collingwood wrote,

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there can be no history of anything other than thought. He elaborated on this point by writing that even biography is “not only non-historical but anti-historical. Its limits are biological events, the birth and death of a human organism.” Biography, he concluded, is not a framework of thought but of a natural process. Politics can have a history, for it “affords a plain instance of purposive action.” Warfare, economics, morals — those are the sorts of “practical activities” that have been undertaken on purpose, and purpose can be reconstructed by examining relevant evidence, according to Collingwood.<sup>2</sup>

History does not deal with “real things” as science does, Collingwood believed. What happened in history is real — we have evidence to prove American soldiers stormed the beaches of Normandy on D-Day; we even have pictures and movies. But those are not events we can participate in. We cannot get into a time machine, travel backwards, hop a ride across the English Channel in one of those amphibious landing vehicles, and storm forward onto Utah Beach with the infantry or scale the Normandy cliffs with Rudder’s Rangers. Or travel farther back to accompany Washington as he led his bedraggled force across the Delaware on that cold, cold Christmas night 1775. Or thunder into battle on a warhorse with Scipio Africanus when he defeated Hannibal in 202 BCE. No, as historians, we are confined to dusty archives and libraries where the artifacts, manuscripts, diaries, and newspapers are kept — those materials that serve as our primary sources.

As Collingwood pointed out, there is a significant difference between knowing things as a scientist can know them and knowing history. To know history, according to Collingwood, historians must use their imaginations. Historians use their imaginations not to create fiction but to construct or reconstruct “pictures, ideas, and concepts” out of the past.<sup>3</sup> Those pictures, ideas, and concepts, of course, must be tied

to evidence that will convince a reader that the historian has seen an accurate, true picture of the past.

He called this process of conceptualizing the past “re-enactment,” a term also used by contemporary historian David J. Staley.<sup>4</sup> By that, both writers meant that historians must understand their periods, cast of characters, and their situations and roles so well that they can put themselves right in the middle of it all. They can join in the battle planning, decode the signals the young lady across the room is sending with her fan, discover secret motivations.

Take one of the characters from my research, one of the handful of women war correspondents in the South during the Civil War, Joan. Social customs prohibited women from writing under their own names then, and while Joan offered a few hints as to her true identity, they have thus far proven inadequate to lead to her actual name. We know she could be from Spartanburg, S.C. because she referred to herself as a “Spartan mother” in her 1861 letter to the editors of the *Charleston* (S.C.) *Courier* asking to serve as a Virginia correspondent. Of course, that could simply have been a reference to the fact that her son, and possibly her husband, was serving with Palmetto state troops near Richmond. Her intent was to join him at the front, but until that was possible, she proposed writing about life in Richmond, the hospitals where she likely volunteered as a nurse. It's likely she wanted to be a correspondent to have a bit of money flowing in so she could support herself until she joined her son.

For about three months, Joan wrote almost daily letters back to the *Courier*, and they often ran side-by-side with those from the paper's other war correspondent, Henry G. deFontaine. Then, she got permission to join her son at the front. Joan chronicled her travels to her son and wrote several stories about life at the front, but soon, her letters van-

ished. Did she stop writing because she couldn't get her letters from the front to the *Courier*? DeFontaine, who wrote as *Personne*, was able to, and he was usually right with South Carolina troops. Was her son killed or captured in fighting? Was Joan killed? Those are all open questions that any historian would love to get answered. However, when I was writing about Joan, my interest was her politics and her personality. I wanted to know what her political stances were and what she was like as a person — my thesis of that project was that Southern journalists' personal characteristics influenced their reporting and hence their, at least tacit, support for slavery (standard gatekeeping theory, I know, but I wanted to look into the claim by other historians that Southern journalists were cowed into supporting slavery by “planter hegemony”<sup>5</sup>).

Well, Joan's stories provided enough information for me to propose some thoughts on who she was as a person and why she took the positions she did in her stories. So, here's how I used my evidence to spur my imagination:

1. Joan was a woman in the 19th century South.
2. The social restrictions on her if she was middle or upper class would have been great. She was already violating a great many of them by abandoning home and following her son to Virginia.
3. To write publicly, presumably for money, was yet another stricture Joan was violating.
4. Joan had the means to get herself from South Carolina to Virginia and to support herself there without any obvious source of income until her employment with the *Courier*.

Using my imagination and my knowledge of women's roles and social customs of the period, what does that evidence tell us about Joan?

Well, it would seem that she was willing to take some risks and flaunt some social customs for something important to her. But, she

## The Historian's Imagination

worked in the Richmond hospitals, and nursing was a traditional role for women. So, she was willing to conform to some degree. She didn't have as much to lose by stepping beyond society's expectations as a wealthy socialite from Charleston would, but she clearly knew a woman's place within her society as well. Further, she had sufficient means to get to Richmond and to pay for lodging and food, though she didn't have unlimited means hence her offer to report for the *Courier*. That made me suspect she was middle class, but I needed to make sure that what I meant by middle class conformed to what economic historians have said about class in the Civil War era.

My next step sent me to readings about the political economy and class of the antebellum South. I had read widely in that area, and my go-to starting place is almost always Stephanie McCurry's gender-based analysis of low country South Carolina's political economy. McCurry's study of gender and political culture in low country South Carolina postulates three economic categories for Palmetto state residents: poor whites who owned neither land nor slaves; self-working farmers who owned land and up to nine slaves; and the planter elite who owned land and more than nine slaves.<sup>6</sup> Those categories correspond more-or-less to lower class, middle class, and upper class.

Joan would have to be either from the self-working farmer class or the planter elite, and the social considerations are what made me pretty sure she was from that middling class. I can't say that for sure without knowing her actual name.

I looked at other aspects of Joan's writing to see what else I could determine about her. She was among the fire-eating South Carolinians with regard to her politics, and she was a devout woman. Scripture showed up frequently in her stories. She never really addressed the issue of slavery, but that falls outside the purview of what most women would

write about. Nursing, hospital cleanliness, and everyday life in Richmond all essentially fall within the nurturing aspect of the female sphere of the day, so her stories mainly fell within her gender's sphere. Her political diatribes did not, but they offered more evidence to support the notion that Joan was willing to step outside of her sphere if she saw a good reason to do so.

Now, all that said, one unknown woman's experience as a war correspondent doesn't tell much about her profession as a group or even women in Southern society. But Joan's story does contribute to building up a preponderance of evidence that might lead to some insights about the nature of Southern journalists and how that nature influenced their coverage of the war — and of slavery.

Some may find the analysis of Joan's case tenuous due to so little being known about her. So in concluding, let me offer one other example that might be a bit more persuasive.

A Connecticut Yankee by the name of Nathan Morse served as the editor of the *Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel* from 1862 until 1866. Morse was run out of his home state of Connecticut, where he edited the *Bridgeport Republican Farmer*, for his pro-Southern sympathies. A history of Augusta describes Morse as having a huge mustache and rosy cheeks. The account maintained that Morse never left the newsroom without a Bowie knife on one hip and a bullwhip on the other. Authors of a history of the newspaper described him as having protuberant eyes and a boyish, round face and said he could strut while sitting down. Who can't picture this rosy-cheeked editor walking down Broad Street so armed — and with such interesting weapons. Most anyone who attacked newspaper editors in that period use guns of some sort. So, was Morse a crack thrower with the knife? And what good did he think a bullwhip would do if he got shot at.<sup>7</sup>

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A picture of Morse started to emerge in my mind — he must have been a bit of a rogue, and clearly an outcast, which might explain his willingness, following Gettysburg and Vicksburg in 1863, to become part of a growing peace movement in Georgia. Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens, who lived about 50 miles west of Augusta in a small town called Crawfordville, was the leader of that peace movement. Historian John E. Talmadge speculated that Morse was the journalist Stephens and Georgia Governor Joseph Brown chose as their mouthpiece for the peace movement. And Morse certainly seems as if he had the right personality to become a spokesman for a cause he was hired to support.

However, there is a better candidate, one who took the train to meet with Stephens frequently and who corresponded often with him. That candidate would be Henry Cleveland, the editorial page editor of the other newspaper in town, the *Augusta Constitutionalist*. So, the question about Morse that interested me was whether he was a propagandist as accused or whether he was a man of principle who truly believed the war had gone on too long and that the South's best chance for survival was to seek an immediate peace. I know where my historian's imagination led me. Given the evidence, where does it lead you? Email me your thoughts at [dvantuyl@augusta.edu](mailto:dvantuyl@augusta.edu).

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Robin George Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1946); Lynn Speer Lemisko, "The Historical Imagination: Collingwood in the Classroom," *Canadian Social Studies* 38:2 (2004): 332.

<sup>2</sup> Lemisko, "The Historical Imagination," 333; Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 302-304, 309-311.

<sup>3</sup> Lemisko, "The Historical Imagination," 333.

<sup>4</sup> David J. Staley, *Historical Imagination* (London: Routledge, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Debra Reddin van Tuyll, *The Confederate Press in the Crucible of the American Civil War* (New York: Peter Lang, 2013), 59.

<sup>6</sup> Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, and the Political Culture of Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Charles C. Jones Jr., *Memorial History of Augusta, Georgia*, (Syracuse, N.Y.: D. Nasib & Co., Publishers, 1890); Earl L. Bell and Kenneth C. Crabbe, *The Augusta Chronicle: Indomitable Voice of Dixie, 1785-1960* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960).

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# Roundtable: The Status of Research on Mid-19th-Century Mass Communication

By David Bulla, Debra Reddin van Tuyll, Gregory A. Borchard, Mary M. Cronin, and Katrina J. Quinn ©



Bulla

The middle of the 19th century (roughly 1835-1872) was a transformative period in the history of American mass communication, particularly because of technological inventions and both economic and political revolutions that laid the foundation for the phenomenal growth of newspapers and magazines, and then radio, motion pictures, and television in the 20th century. The period saw the invention of the telegraph, the beginnings of the photographic industry, major improvements in printing, the coming of weekly magazines that emphasized artwork (drawings), the rapid increase in the number of newspapers in the country, the movement toward a system of reporting, the rise of the Penny Press, the distribution of national newspapers via the railroads, and the near celebrity stardom of various editors, especially Horace Greeley, who wanted to be president so badly that he changed political parties to have a chance at the job.

*David W. Bulla is professor and chair of communication at Augusta University. He is the author of eight books. His latest are Gandhi, Advocacy Journalism, and the Media (Peter Lang, 2022) and the second edition of Journalism in the Civil War Era (Peter Lang, 2023), with Greg Borchard. He received his Ph.D. in mass communication from the University of Florida.*

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Of course, the catastrophic event of the Civil War overshadowed almost everything else — and in many ways it put stresses on the mass media and also provided opportunities for expansion. The research of this period has had its ebbs and flows, going back to the decade leading up to the centennial of the war with Louis M. Starr's *Bohemian Brigade* (1954), J. Cutler Andrews' *The North Reports the Civil War*



Borchard

Gregory A. Borchard, UNLV professor, has authored *A Narrative History of the American Press* and *Abraham Lincoln and Horace Greeley*, and co-authored with David Bulla *Journalism in the Civil War Era* and *Lincoln Mediated*. He edited *The Encyclopedia of Journalism*, *The Antebellum Press* with David Sachsman, and *Journalism History* for the AEJMC's History Division.



Cronin

Mary M. Cronin is a professor at New Mexico State University. Her research areas are media law and media history, with an emphasis on 19th- and early 20th-century history. She and Debra Reddin van Tuyll recently published two edited volumes: *The Midwestern Press in the Crucible of the American Civil War* and *The Western Press in the Crucible of the American Civil War*. Her Ph.D. is from Michigan State University.



Quinn

Katrina J. Quinn is a professor at Slippery Rock University. She won a 2019 Hazel Dicken-Garcia Distinguished Scholar of Journalism History award. She is an editor of *Adventure Journalism in the Gilded Age: Essays on Reporting from the Arctic to the Orient*. Her book (with David Sachsman) *The Civil War Soldier and the Press* is scheduled for publication in 2023. Her Ph.D. is in literature and criticism from Indiana University Pennsylvania.



van Tuyll

Debra Reddin van Tuyll is professor emerita at Augusta University. She writes primarily about the 19th-century press and the transnational aspects of the Irish-American press. She is the author or editor of five books. She is the recipient of the AJHA's 2019 Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement in journalism history.

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(1954), and Robert S. Harper's *Lincoln and the Press* (1959). The next great period of research comes after Ken Burns' 1990 documentary *The Civil War*. A few years later, a conference devoted to mass communication research of the era would commence at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. David B. Sachsman and several other academics founded the Symposium on the 19th Century Press, the Civil War, and Free Expression, which has led to, at last count, nine directly related books and many others spun off from the Symposium.

This roundtable brings together five of the leading historians of the media in the mid-19th century — Debra Reddin van Tuyll, Gregory A. Borchard, Mary M. Cronin, Katrina J. Quinn, and David Bulla — for a dialogue about the status of research in mass communication on the period. Their discussion places an emphasis on recent trends.

***Historiography:*** *How is mid-19th-century mass communication history relevant today? Why is it relevant and to whom is it relevant?*

**Borchard:** In my estimation, the cultural context for both the partisanship and the media messages we receive today resembles that of the Civil War era. The violence we have seen in recent years in some ways reflects the underlying tensions that contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War. We have a media-fueled partisan divide in part attributable to a recurring loss of faith in the validity of our national institutions, and as much as we have evolved as members of the United States, we continue to struggle with recurring problems in our ability to communicate. Researching data for the second edition of *Journalism in the Civil War Era*, I found, according to 2022 polling, 31 per cent of American voters believe that a second civil war within the United States will occur before 2030, while national security experts have assessed the chances of a civil

war in the next ten to fifteen years and reached a consensus that such a war has a 35 per cent chance of occurring.

**Bulla:** My take is that the massive change that the telegraph, as well as the construction of a national railway system, brought to mass communication was seismic, in much the same way as the development of the internet and the innovation of the smart telephone has turned our worlds upside down in this century. The telegraph, coming along in the decade of the 1830s, made distance much less significant in terms of transmitting and receiving information. However, the telegraph lines had to be built, and it was convenient to build them along the railroad tracks that went up in every state and across the nation. The telegraph would deliver the news back to the home office, and the railroads would be used for distribution of newspapers across the continent — as was done first and foremost by the *New York Tribune* and *New York Herald*.

**Cronin:** The mid-19th century was a crucial period of journalistic development and modernization of the press. This period saw the rise of reporters, a parallel decline in the editor as a political mouthpiece, the development of new technologies that helped speed the delivery of news, and the rise of modern business models common in today's news practices. Certainly, these practices continued to develop and evolve during the years of the Gilded Age and into the 20th and 21st centuries, however, the foundations were laid in the mid-century period. That's why I find the era such a rich area of study.

**Quinn:** In my view, journalism history offers profound lessons about the role of public communication that engages, represents, negotiates, binds, provokes, challenges, and defines its communities. The mid-

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19th-century American media, in particular, encompassing dynamic decades of geographic, socio-political, cultural, and ideological nation-building, set the stage for debates that continue to this day. As an example of this continuing relevance, I discovered that our recent book, *Adventure Journalism in the Gilded Age* (McFarland, 2021), serves as a terrific text in my freshman seminar, a class that is designed to engage students in college-level research through discussions of identity, diversity and global engagement.

**Reddin van Tuyl:** It's a period that shaped many of the conversations we are still having today. Partisan divides still exist, though they're not exactly section-based. There are reasons for those divides, and they have to do with experience and history. I think the similar political cultures of the times definitely have influenced the news media then and now, so one way in which the mid-19th-century press is relevant today is to offer a model of how an earlier version of the American press dealt with such stories. While Preston Brooks' attack on Charles Sumner on the floor of the Senate isn't exactly equivalent to the attack on Nancy Pelosi's husband, it's not all that different, either. Both were motivated by the divisive politics of the day. Even earlier, in 1850, Senator Henry S. Foote of Mississippi pulled a pistol on Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri during debates over what would become the Compromise of 1850. And eerily similar to the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, on February 12, 1861, a mob attacked the Capitol to try to disrupt the electoral college vote count. Security was able to prevent the mob from entering, but men stood outside and yelled insults at General Winfield Scott, head of Capitol security. How the 19th-century press dealt with those stories would definitely be instructive for today's media personnel who, in too many cases, are unabatedly partisan, just like those who

covered the events that led up to the Civil War.

**Historiography:** *What are some of the hallmarks of mid-century mass communication?*

**Borchard:** Based on research David Bulla and I produced for the first edition of *Journalism in the Civil War Era*, it is fair to suggest that the explosion of print media can be understood as the defining feature of mid-century mass communication. Certainly, other hallmarks exist, including the implementation of the telegraph and the proliferation of visual images, but I think we were both surprised to discover in quantitative terms the significance of the growth in print. For scale: In the early 1830s, the United States had 1,200 newspapers, most of them weeklies; and between 1870 and 1890, the number of newspapers published and their aggregate circulation increased almost exactly threefold — about five times as fast as the population was growing. The expansion of railroads and growth of cities increased the demand for newspapers, and by the turn of the century, the United States was home to approximately 25,000 of them. These numbers of course declined over the course of the 20th century through today, but there is no way to minimize the use of print as a primary source of information during the 19th century.

**Bulla:** The hallmark, in addition to the technological changes, was the national prominence of several editors — especially Horace Greeley, James Gordon Bennett, Henry Raymond, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Samuel Bowles, but also their professional heirs, journalists like Charles A. Dana, Richard Harding Davis, and Ida B. Wells. Personal journalism soared in this period and would find its

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greatest embodiment in the trio of Samuel Clemens, Joseph Pulitzer, and William Randolph Hearst. Journalism grew a cult of personality in mid-century, and it would only expand over time — to Walter Lippmann, H.L. Mencken, Edward R. Murrow, Walter Cronkite, and eventually to Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein.

**Cronin:** The importance of the reporter as an eyewitness to news and the development of news, especially the practice of seeking sources of information, were tremendously important since they signaled a shift away from the publisher as the overall voice and key influencer of the public. External influences, including rising literacy rates, increases in population and parallel increases in disposable income and leisure time also impacted the press. These external factors led to the rapid rise in the number of magazines and newspapers produced across the country, as well as a parallel increase in the topics they covered. Publications became key soapboxes for our democratic system. Inaccuracies and outright lies crept in, certainly, and debate often was messy and contentious, but publications proved a key source of discourse on so many social, cultural, political, economic, and racial issues.

**Quinn:** My recent research has focused on reporting techniques that emerged during this dynamic period, including innovative investigative, immersive, and editorial practices. Like today, journalists of the era incorporated new technologies that offered conveniences but that also posed challenges, as in the tension between timeliness and accuracy with the advent of the telegraph. Among the most notable traits of editors was their shared sense of duty to their communities and their nation.

**Reddin van Tuyl:** For me, the most interesting hallmark is the dynamism of the field in this period. Newspapers were becoming more sophisticated in their coverage and organization. Variant forms of journalism developed — partisan journalism existed side-by-side with Penny Press news that emphasized things like crime and scandal rather than politics. That means mass audiences are reading newspapers, not just political and economic elites. Technology changed to allow more rapid production of the physical newspaper and larger runs. Professionalism is making its way into the newsroom, though it won't reach fruition until the early 20th century. More journalists are college educated. War reporting is honed into a specialty, thanks to the 1848 revolutions in Europe, the Mexican-American War, and the American Civil War. News travels faster and farther. The ethnic press is expanding with more foreign-language and Black newspapers. Print generally (books, magazines, newspapers) is exploding due to demand for reading material. Journalism is maturing into a practice with set standards, fueled by the establishment of wire services once the telegraph becomes a staple.

**Historiography:** *Where has mid-19th-century mass communication history gone in, say, the last decade that you did not anticipate when you were working on your Ph.D. or working on your first book?*

**Borchard:** I have been pleased, surprised, and impressed by the ability to access primary source materials about the American Civil War through international resources. As a graduate student, it was hard to imagine events in the United States registering in the presses of Europe, let alone the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Australia, but digital archives of sources have made it possible to tap into media produced around the world that from time to time offer a holistic perspective on



history. While the English, Canadians, Irish, and Scottish clearly took an interest in the Civil War, I have been increasingly intrigued by the attention in German newspapers (among others), as the Forty-Eighters had a direct relationship with events that unfolded on both sides of the Atlantic.

**Bulla:** My feeling is that this field of study just keeps growing. We have seen wonderful research done on Frederick Douglass and Ida B. Wells. There has been outstanding work done on soldiers who wrote about the war. This is something the late Wally Eberhard of the University of Georgia had started with this research on regimental newspapers. Ford Risley of Penn State wrote about an editor from northwest Georgia who fought in the Civil War and sent letters back home to his newspapers. Those letters give us a sense of what it was like to have been a soldier — indeed, Melvin Dwinell’s “columns” to the home folks in Rome, Georgia, made Dwinell an Ernie Pyle of the 19th century.

**Cronin:** I am pleased to see more work on the diversity of voices within journalism, an often-difficult area to study because many editors and publishers (as well as reporters) did not leave diaries or letters. But I came of age where textbooks often focused on the “great men” approach to journalism, a practice that largely left out women and minorities and their impact on the country and the region. We’ve also seen more studies on the economics of journalism and on reporting practices, key issues that explore the broader issue of mid-19th-century journalism and its impact on society.

**Quinn:** I’ve been very pleased to see new efforts in the digital humanities. The use of data-driven techniques opens exponentially more ave-

nues for deep investigation across time, genre, and geography. I'm also excited to see more scholarly attention dedicated to the representation of and the voices of diverse populations in the mass media of the 19th century, though there is much more work to be done, especially in the area of ethnic, immigrant, and small-town publications. A less auspicious change, in my view, is the decline of journalism history as a field of study at the undergraduate and graduate levels — just when the time is ripe to engage these new tools and topics.

**Reddin van Tuyll:** I've seen more interest in women, the ethnic press, and individual reporters (rather than editors). I've worked in the area of the business side of 19th-century journalism, and that's a fairly new area of interest. Interest in different genres of journalism such as adventure writing, coverage of spiritualism, etc. have arisen as well.

**Historiography:** *What book, chapter, or article that you have read in the last five years do you now see as a major contribution to the history of the mid-century press?*

**Borchard:** Book review editors have contacted me with requests for several evaluations over the past five years, but I think the one that stands out as contributing valuable insight in a well-written manner was Wayne Temple's *Lincoln's Confidant: The Life of Noah Brooks* (2019). The book features a collection of sources on Brooks with a well-developed organizational style. Temple includes archival papers previously unstudied to provide another look at Lincoln from the perspective of an associate, while at the same time, perhaps more importantly, elevating Brooks as a journalist of national renown.

**Bulla:** David Blight's *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (2018), which won both the Lincoln and Pulitzer Prize, stands out for me. It is the most comprehensive biography of Douglass so far. His relationship with William Lloyd Garrison is one of the most important in American journalism history, especially their courting public opinion in Great Britain (which led to financial stability for both), and Blight lays out the break-up that led Douglass to strike out on his own as an editor and publisher.

**Cronin:** I particularly liked Katrina Quinn's "The Life Cycle and Conventions of Nineteenth-Century Breaking News: Disaster Reporting of the 1875 Virginia City Fire," *American Journalism* 35, No. 3 (2018): 298-314, because it focused on examining reporting practices, including how news was disseminated, by what means, and how quickly it occurred. It's one of the few journal articles of the past decade that examined reporting practices and news dissemination. I've used and applied what I've learned from this article for two books that I co-edited with Dr. Debra Reddin van Tuyll on the Midwestern and far-Western press during the U.S. Civil War years.

**Quinn:** One of the articles on my list is "An Embattled Terrain: Women, African-Americans, Native Americans, and Immigrants at the Margins in U.S. Newspaper Stories, 1820-1860," by Thomas C. Terry, Donald L. Shaw, and Erin K. Coyle (*Journalism History*, 47:1 89-106), which delivers a broad content analysis of newspapers by region, showing that coverage of African Americans, Native Americans and immigrants was provided in 17 per cent of all stories. Not only does it apply a data-driven approach to a large body of content, but it challenges our assumptions about the presence and absence of population groups in re-

porting by the early- to mid-century press. In my mind, however, the impact of a piece of scholarship is not only what it finds but what it offers to future research — in this case, opening a new “research terrain” for further investigation into these topics.

**Reddin van Tuyll:** I cannot choose just one. I will say I think the contributions from the Symposium on the 19th-Century Press, Civil War and Free Expression are among the most important. And by those, I don’t mean just the books the symposium editors have put out, but the books that have been conceived there as well. I would suspect that one conference has inspired close to thirty or more books across the years, and each one has illuminated some new aspect of the 19th-century press.

***Historiography:** Anecdotally, what discoveries have you made about the mid-century mass media in your research of the last half decade or so?*

**Borchard:** A discovery for me — really, just a realization — is that the images from the era are much more than artifacts for us to use as decorations in our own accounts of events. The images themselves are indeed sources that deserve as much — if not more — interpretation as text that has often been recycled ad infinitum. Our ability to discern context and the historiography surrounding each image has been aided by archival efforts, and in some ways we are just beginning to appreciate the stories embedded in each one.

**Bulla:** The biggest discovery for me came from a scholar in the Netherlands named Marcella Schute, who found an editorial in a New Orleans newspaper in 1839 that advocated for a resumption of U.S. in-

volvement in the international slave trade. To me, that was like finding dinosaur bones in South Dakota.

**Cronin:** I've found it fascinating to explore the various stages of press development as editors moved to the Midwest and far West along with other immigrants and migrants. While some cities, such as Chicago and San Francisco, had well-established presses that served as economic powerhouses and became valuable regional voices, smaller town editors often engaged in earlier models of personal journalism, but they, too, tried to serve as influential voices. And, the number of letters to the editor that were published in mid-19th-century publications demonstrates the importance of the press to the democratic system. What's also interesting to me is the fact that these Midwestern and Western migrants wanted newspapers and saw them as signs of stability for their communities. They believed that if their towns had a newspaper and, later, railroad and telegraph lines, that they would flourish.

**Quinn:** Perhaps the most significant takeaway from my research is not any single finding but the overall insight into how much of the historic record has been lost to time, weather, and disregard. Preservation and access to primary-source archives is of critical importance as we are in a race to save decaying artifacts. Making matters worse, gaps in the historical record disproportionately affect rural, small-town, ethnic, and special-interest publications. I'd like to see the academic community take a more active role in supporting and promoting preservation efforts.

**Reddin van Tuyl:** Journalists across the country have more in common than I ever expected — well, journalists in the South, West, and

Midwest. I haven't looked at the Northeast. It's just too overwhelming to contemplate. More women were involved in journalism in the Midwest than in the other regions. In fact, the Wisconsin Press Association actually allowed women to be associate members. The Western press was way more active in covering the Civil War than I ever anticipated, and much larger.

***Historiography:** We lost David B. Sachsman last fall. He was the founder and sustainer of the Symposium on the 19th-Century Press, the Civil War, and Free Expression. What did Dr. Sachsman mean for your career as a historian of mass communication?*

**Borchard:** With respect to the folks heading other national conferences and conventions, the Symposium headed by David Sachsman became for me the only annual meeting that had a relevant combination of academic, intellectual, and social values. Dr. Sachsman was a larger-than-life man, but he also cared intensely about the success of each individual participant. I am certain my career has benefited directly from participation with the Symposium and his personal guidance. It is troubling to think that there will be no one who can take his place.

**Bulla:** I have had several mentors in my career as an academic, especially Bernell Tripp and Meg Lamme. However, no one individual has meant more to my career than Dr. Sachsman, a giant in our field. When he got to Chattanooga, he realized the Civil War and its coverage by the mass media needed to be explored — that the media of the Civil War was a broad field and that scholars had a long way to go in understanding the whole picture. The range of his edited books on 19th-century journalism reflect this fundamental achievement of his symposium,

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from pre-war agenda setting by editors North and South to the literature and film that mythologized it afterwards.

**Cronin:** In my opinion, Dr. Sachsman was a valuable mentor for everyone who attended his annual Symposiums. Scholars' careers were furthered via presentations and publications in the books that Dr. Sachsman edited with other symposium attendees. But Dr. Sachsman was generous enough that many professors, myself included, were able to develop book projects and seek co-editors or chapter writers for those projects. He also allowed panel presentations on topics that helped further much research on the 19th-century press. Bringing scholars together always provides opportunities. And he was a strong supporter of emerging scholars who were finishing their M.A. and Ph.D. programs.

**Quinn:** I had the honor of working closely with Dr. Sachsman over the last two years as we prepared what would be his last book, *The Civil War Soldier and the Press*, to be published by Routledge in May 2023. Like the previous books associated with the Symposium, it features the excellent work of a diverse array of established and emerging journalism historians. Nurturing the careers of young scholars was one of Dr. Sachsman's obvious priorities in hosting the Symposium throughout its thirty-year history. He insisted on an inclusive, one-room format in which graduate students could rub elbows with the giants of the field. The Symposium thus served as an incubator for new scholarship and new partnerships.

**Reddin van Tuyl:** I wouldn't have achieved half of what I did without David Sachsman. He was intimidating and scary, especially for a graduate student (which I was when I first started attending that confer-

ence), but he was also so helpful in opening doors and creating publishing opportunities. And he became a good friend over the years, as well as a mentor.

***Historiography:** And what other mentors have you had as you have plumbed the depths of mid-century mass communication history? Why should we remember them?*

**Borchard:** David Bulla and I dedicated the first edition of *Journalism in the Civil War Era* in part to Bertram Wyatt-Brown, an esteemed history professor at the University of Florida. I admired, respected, and even adored that man — he was highly intelligent, deeply moral, and a guru on Southern honor. He understood history from multiple perspectives based on a rich background of experiences, and he was a thoughtful, helpful contributor to my dissertation.

**Bulla:** For me, it was three folks who were regulars at the Symposium: Hazel Dicken-Garcia of the University of Minnesota, Wally Eberhard of the University of Georgia, and Dwight Teeter of the University of Tennessee. Hazel gave our field status with the quality of her scholarship. Wally was always the voice of reason at the Symposium and kept us from getting too hard-headed or going off the rails. And Dwight always gave that compliment about your research that made you want to explore another facet of Civil War journalism.

**Cronin:** Various editors of two journals, *Journalism History* and *American Journalism*, have been extremely helpful in guiding my research, especially the late Michael Sweeney. And, of scholars who continue to thrive and publish, I've benefitted from wonderful collaborations with



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Debra Reddin van Tuyll and Katrina Quinn. Both of these scholars have challenged my thinking on issues and improved my analysis on 19th-century press performance issues.

**Quinn:** I had an unconventional academic career, coming at mass media scholarship from a critical literary and historical perspective. My doctoral adviser, though not a journalism historian, inspired me to draw on diverse theoretical frameworks to investigate historical media texts. With her encouragement, I found that contemporary and interdisciplinary approaches can often transform and energize historical research. I like to think that we honor our mentors as we seek to be mentors to others.

**Reddin van Tuyll:** David Sloan from Alabama was probably even more significant than David Sachsman. David Sloan didn't just open opportunities for me, he believed in me as a historian, and that gave me confidence in myself. He used to tell a story about the first paper he ever heard me present. It was at a conference in New Orleans, probably an AJHA conference, but it could have been something else. He didn't know me at all then, but later when we got to know one another, he told me that, as he listened to my presentation, he thought to himself, "She's *serious* about this! She's sounds like a *real* historian." Anyone who knows David Sloan knows that's one of his pet peeves: Too many people claim to be journalism historians who really don't get how deeply you have to work to produce credible history. His confidence in me encouraged me to strive for excellence in my research in a way that nothing else ever had. Why should we remember David Sloan? In my opinion, he's really the late-20th-century father of American journalism history. He's produced so many of the historians who are working into

the 21st century, helped them build their careers. He's our time's Frank Luther Mott.

**Historiography:** *What figure from this period do you think needs a major biography or a major updated biography, and why?*

**Borchard:** I personally would love to see a biography about Thurlow Weed. In fact, I might want to write one myself. I explored his role in the Whig and Republican parties while writing my dissertation and found that the last time any historian paid significant attention to him was in Glyndon G. Van Deusen's 1947 biography *Thurlow Weed, Wizard of the Lobby*. Weed's contributions to 19th-century journalism and politics were historic. As editor of the *Albany Evening Journal*, he published content on behalf of partisans in New York and Washington, D.C., and as treasurer of New York's Whig Party, he directly influenced the outcome of elections for state and national positions. He also formed a partnership with Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune* and William H. Seward, an influential Governor, Senator, and Lincoln's Secretary of State. Quite a bit has been written on both Greeley and Seward, but relatively little has been written about Weed, which is ironic, considering — I might argue — Weed was the most influential of the three.

**Bulla:** During my research on Gandhi as a journalist, I came across the fact that Annie Besant, who was English but spent most of her life in India, also served as a journalist. Besant, born in London in 1847, wrote for *The National Reformer* in England and would start a newspaper titled *New India* in Madras. She was the rare British voice advocating that India be given some level of independence by the Raj. Accordingly,

she co-founded the All India Home Rule League and would serve briefly as president of the Congress political party. She was succeeded by Gandhi. In Madras, she also ran the Theosophical Society, which still exists today.

**Cronin:** I would love to see a biography of Frank Leslie, the publisher of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (one of several titles that he published). Leslie's publications were widely read and influential, yet a biography would be a difficult task since there are few letters from Leslie that exist in various archival collections. Some newspaper editors, including Sydney Howard Gay, an anti-slavery activist who first edited the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* and, later, served as editor of the *New York Tribune* during the U.S. Civil War, also are deserving of attention as they helped guide their newspapers' coverage and policies before, during, and after the war.

**Quinn:** Jane Swisshelm (1815-1884) was a high-profile writer, newspaper owner and editor, with a national profile and a reputation for political activism and fiery editorials. Her diverse career took her from a girls' school in western Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh, where she wrote for several publications; to New York, where she worked for Horace Greeley's *Tribune*; to Washington, where she reported from the U.S. Senate; and to St. Cloud, Minnesota, where she edited multiple newspapers. Like other newspaper editors at the outbreak of the Civil War, she put down her pen and served her country, as a nurse on the front lines. Throughout her career, Swisshelm took a leading stance on a number of issues that continue to be debated in society, including women's rights, political corruption, and race relations — another nod to the continuing relevance of journalism history.

**Reddin van Tuyll:** Henry S. Foote comes to mind. He's not a major figure like James Gordon Bennett, but he had a major impact on the pre-Civil War South and the Confederacy. I have to admit that I love, love, love the dissenters — the journalists and politicians who decided Jefferson Davis didn't know what he was doing and that the war needed to end before more men died and the South lost all possibility of negotiation a not-horrible end to the war. Foote wasn't a journalist by the time of the Civil War, but he had been earlier in his life. He was the Congressional gadfly instead. I'd love to see a book that looks at Foote, Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens, and editors like William Holden of the *Raleigh (N.C.) Standard*, Nathan Morse of the *Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle and Sentinel*, Henry Cleveland of the *Augusta (Ga.) Constitutionalist* and other dissenters and how the politics and the journalism were co-mingled. I did a chapter on that topic in my history of the Confederate press, but I think there's room for a whole book.

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# Book Award Interview

Brooke Kroeger ©



Kroeger

**B**rooke Kroeger's *Nellie Bly: Daredevil, Reporter, Feminist* was named a 1994 NPR Best Book of the Year. She has published five other books, including *Fannie: The Talent for Success of Writer Fannie Hurst* (1998, a *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Best Books of the Year); *Passing: When People Can't Be Who They Are* (2003, a *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Best Books of the Year); *Undercover Reporting: The Truth About Deception* (2012, a finalist for the Frank Luther Mott Research Award from Kappa Tau Alpha); and *The Suf-*

*fragments: How Women Used Men to Get the Vote* (Gold Medal in U.S. History in the 2018 Independent Publisher Book Awards and a finalist for the 2018 Sally and Morris Lasky Prize of the Center for Political History). Her latest book is *Undaunted: How Women Changed American Journalism* (Knopf). It will be published this month. Ms. Kroeger is professor emerita at New York University, where she taught from 1998 to 2021 and served for six years as chair and founding director of the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute. Earlier, she was UN Correspondent for *Newsday* and deputy metropolitan editor for *New York Newsday*. With United Press International, she reported from Chicago, Brussels, London, and Tel Aviv, where she was bureau chief before returning to London as division editor for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The following interview is for her book *Nellie Bly*.

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**Historiography:** *Give us a brief summary of your book.*

**Kroeger:** Published in 1994, it was the first heavily documented biography of Nellie Bly, and was meant to be as reliant as possible on primary sources.

**Historiography:** *How did you get the idea for your book?*

**Kroeger:** In 1990, my middle school-aged daughter, Brett, had a research assignment from school to do a “famous woman” project. I suggested she research Nellie Bly, my childhood hero. In those pre-Internet days, through our local bookstore, we placed an ad in the *Antique Trader* for the juvenile book I had read, the one by Mignon Rittenhouse. Two biographies arrived; the other one by Nina Brown Baker. Brett read the books and quickly realized how much of the material must have been fictionalized since the two books differed on many points. Brett created a board game for her project (“*Bly gets a job at the Pittsburg Dispatch! Advance three spaces!*”) and told her mother, “Maybe you should write one.” It struck me as a good idea.

**Historiography:** *Tell us about the research you did for your book: What were your sources, how did you research your book, how long did you spend, and so forth?*

**Kroeger:** I prepared a proposal for a publisher, only 14 pages, double-spaced, as it was already clear the primary material available was very sparse indeed. In the text of the proposal, I said that if Bly proved too hard to pin down as thoroughly as she needed to be pinned down, the book would be about women journalists in the last decade and a half of

the nineteenth century more generally.

I spent three years, literally day and night, seven days a week. I started with a handful of letters at the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh and a couple at Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History (Smith College). I discovered letters in other collections. Syracuse, for example, had a neat stack of them from correspondence with Arthur Brisbane, but in her married name of Elizabeth C. Seaman. The library didn't know what it had. She turned out to be very litigious; there was an ample legal record. I went to Austria to the Staatsarchiv in Vienna. Records there are meticulously indexed, and I managed to find all the wartime articles she had submitted to the military censors and her correspondence with the authorities. At the National Archives, I found her passport application ("*retroussee* nose") and other valuable correspondence with the U.S. embassy in Vienna. From military intelligence records, I found records of the scrutiny she was under during the post-war talks at Versailles as she warned President Wilson's team about the threat of the Bolsheviks. In Armstrong County, Pennsylvania, with the help of a wonderful local historian, I found her baptismal record, which established her age as three years older than she claimed, and the chilling transcription of the testimony she gave at the divorce proceedings of her mother and her drunken lout of a second husband, not to mention her business debacles in later life.

City directories year by year and census records proved important. In her probate packet, I found an envelope on which she had scribbled her net worth in 1919 — almost nothing on her return from Vienna. And I found the first clue to the last living link to Nellie Bly, a per stirpes heir whom she had placed with a family in Ohio. Through the necrology files of the historical society in Cleveland, I was able to trace that family to St. Petersburg, Florida, where, with the help of a real es-

tate agent, followed them to Ashville, North Carolina, where I found Dorothy Brauer alive, in her eighties, with early dementia but with pristine memory of her early life and time with Nellie. Her own daughter had been collecting documentation on her mother in hopes of establishing that she was U.S.-born and being able to obtain a passport for her. They never did. The daughter let me copy all of the orphanage records she had from two New York area institutions. I visited both and obtained other records as well. The man who helped her in Austria, the sugar refiner Oscar Bondy, emigrated to the United States during World War II. Through his probate record and connections to his family, I was able to fill out a fuller picture of him, too.

As for Bly's husband, the industrialist Robert Seaman, I did genealogical records as I did for Nellie, and used state and local histories and New York City and Brooklyn business records to fill out his profile. Beyond all of that, there was Bly's published record and the hundreds upon hundreds of articles about her. (How nice it would have been to have had newspapers.com or newspaperarchive.com in those days!) But I have to say that in subsequent searches just for the fun of it, I don't seem to have missed much at all doing things the old-fashioned way. Scrolling the microfilm for *The New York World* took six full months, every workday, all day at the New York Historical Society, and I hired a researcher at the University of Texas (not the HRC), where the only known extant full runs of the *New York Evening Journal* and *Journal American* are (or were) housed.

**Historiography:** *Besides the sources you used, were there any others you wish you had been able to examine?*

**Kroeger:** Two things: I didn't know Harvard had pristine copies of the



*New York World*, still on paper in 1990-1994, which would have made much better images for the book than the ones I had to extract from scratchy microfilm or silver prints. Also, I did not have all of Bly's *Family Story Paper* stories, as copies of the publication in the United States are few. Kudos to David Blixt, who thought to go find their London edition in the past couple of years. It doesn't substantively change what I wrote, but of course I would have liked to have eyeballed them all. And of course, had her personal letters been preserved, I wouldn't have had so few to work with. I ended up with something like two hundred of them, having started with only six. Still — for a biography, few.

***Historiography:*** *Based on your research for the book, what would you advise other historians in our field about working with sources?*

**Kroeger:** Leave no stone unturned. Be fierce in your determination to find the unfindable. And learn to “will” things you need badly to appear. Often, they do.

***Historiography:*** *What were the challenges you faced in researching your book?*

**Kroeger:** I had some great good fortune and enormous privilege with a husband willing to take on all the quotidian duties of life together. I was freelancing at the time, so did not have a competing academic schedule yet and my daughter was in school all day, my husband was an amazing support-force, as just noted, and his children were college-aged. That book could never have been written in three years without that enormous freedom.

**Historiography:** *Is it possible to get too close to a research subject? How do historians maintain their neutrality of viewpoint when conducting and interpreting research?*

**Kroeger:** For me, it was a matter of journalistic training. There had been enough hagiography in the juvenile books about Nellie Bly. Her life was a complicated one and I was determined, even at the expense of providing too much detail, to give as accurate an accounting of it as possible. Since there was no repository with her papers and given that everything I found had be scraped together from so many disparate locales, I thought of the book as an archive for future researchers, a road map. Not to over-credit myself, but I think the record over these past thirty years indicates it has fulfilled that mission.

**Historiography:** *What new insights does your book provide?*

**Kroeger:** It filled in the gaps in her story after the trip around the world. It gives a fuller account of her journalism after the trip around the world, her marriage, her work as an industrialist, her manifold legal wrangles, the troubles with her family, her four years in Austria during the entirety of World War I, her appeals at Versailles, and her work for Arthur Brisbane at the *New York Evening Journal* until her death in 1922. Her goals and sense of mission to serve the under-served — even as her circumstances changed radically at several points — never changed. There was authenticity in her public persona.

**Historiography:** *What findings most surprised you?*

**Kroeger:** The contours of the marriage, how she spent her time in Aus-

tria and its aftermath, straight through to her days at the *Journal*. And then there was the discovery of her ward. That was extraordinary.

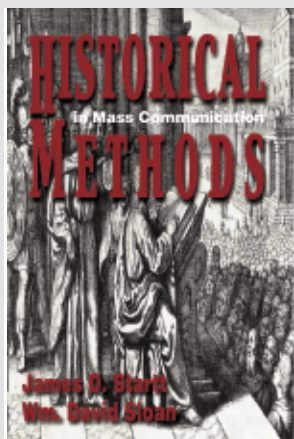
***Historiography:*** *What advice would you give to people in our field who are considering doing a book in JMC history?*

**Kroeger:** As noted above. Leave no stone unturned. Deploy the force of your will to find what seems to be unfindable. The joy of the hunt carried me. My second biography subject, Fannie Hurst, left every scrap of paper in her long life to the Harry Ransom Center. Research was lengthy for that book but easier than the work on Bly (and as an experience, less satisfying without such a heavy detective-work onus). Nonetheless, I stopped myself from being content with all that I found in one place. I made myself redeploy the strategies I had developed doing the work on Bly, especially for Hurst's early life in St. Louis.

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# Historian Interview

Pam Parry ©



Parry

**D**r. Pam Parry is the editor of *Journalism History*. The journal will commemorate its fiftieth anniversary in 2024. She is a professor of mass media at Southeast Missouri State University, where she teaches history and other mass communication courses. Previously, she taught at Taylor, Belmont, and Eastern Kentucky universities. Before going into teaching, she worked on newspapers and in public relations for more than fifteen years. She's the author of *Eisenhower: The Public Relations President*, co-editor of the series *Women in American Political History*, and co-editor of two books, *Coping with Gender Inequities: Critical Conversations of Women Faculty* and *Exploring Campus Diversity: Case Studies and Exercises*. She received her Ph.D. in mass communication from the University of Southern Mississippi.

***Historiography:*** *Tell us a little about your family background — where you were born and grew up, your education, and so forth.*

**Parry:** I was born in Rolla, Missouri, where I lived until I attended college at the University of Missouri in Columbia. My father was an associate professor and registrar at the then-University of Missouri-Rolla, and my mother was a homemaker. I have three brothers and one sister, and we all graduated from Rolla High School (RHS). I was inducted

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into the RHS Hall of Fame in February 2023 as a member of the 1980-81 Girls' Basketball team, so I still have ties to my hometown. I earned my bachelor of journalism degree, with an emphasis in magazine editing and writing, from the School of Journalism at Mizzou in 1985.

***Historiography:*** *What did you do professionally before going into teaching?*

**Parry:** I began my professional career in Jefferson City, Missouri, where I worked in the religious press. During the decade or so I was in the religious press, I earned a master's degree in religious education from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and worked as Congressional Correspondent for Baptist News Service, a national wire services accredited by the House and Senate Press Galleries. I also covered the U.S. Supreme Court and the White House during the end of the Bush and the beginning of the Clinton administrations. I witnessed Justice Thurgood Marshall retire from the bench, and the confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Stephen Breyer. The Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearing was one of the most fascinating stories that I covered in my reporting career. I was invited to participate in a group interview with religion reporters and President Clinton once in the Cabinet Room and again in the Oval Office. Bill signings, State of the Union addresses, and a presidential inauguration made for the best beat. After my reporting career, I tried my hand at public relations, working for a trade association in the D.C. area. My reporting assignments took me to Rwanda, Argentina, South Africa, Japan, and Canada. My various experiences led me to launch my own firm, Parry Communications, and I ran it as a sole proprietorship while I attended The American University on the weekends. I earned my master's of arts in

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journalism and public affairs in pursuit of a teaching career. American University hired me upon my graduation in May 1999 as an adjunct; the next year, I also taught as an adjunct in a certificate program at George Washington University. I left Washington for my first tenure-track teaching job at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana.

***Historiography:** Where, and what courses, have you taught?*

**Parry:** In addition to my adjunct positions, I taught the journalism curriculum at Taylor University, and at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee, where I taught journalism and founded the public relations program; Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond; and Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau. I began my career as a journalism professor, and I am now a public relations professor. I created the public relations major and minor at Belmont University, and I founded the Public Relations Student Society of America chapter at Belmont, as well as its student-run firm, Tower Creative Consultants. I teach Media History, Media Law, Media Ethics, Mass Media & Society, Public Relations Principles, Strategic Writing, Strategic Sports Communication, and Public Relations Research, plus others as needed like Media News, Strategic Communication during a Pandemic, etc.

***Historiography:** Tell us about your background in history: When did you first get interested in historical research? How did your education prepare you to be a historian? etc.*

**Parry:** I have always loved history, but I first got interested in historical research when I pursued my Ph.D. at the University of Southern Mississippi, where I earned two specializations in media history and public

relations. I attended USM from fall 2008 to fall 2013, graduating with my Ph.D. in Mass Communication. I consider myself fortunate to have studied media history at USM with Dr. David R. Davies, who was my dissertation advisor. I learned so much at USM, where my love of history was ignited.

***Historiography:*** *Who or what have been the major influences on your historical outlook and work?*

**Parry:** Several people have influenced my historical outlook and work. Dr. Davies started me on the path to historical research. Because of his advice and mentoring, I secured a book deal for my dissertation before I even completed and defended it. Dr. Davies and I now collaborate on a book series titled *Women in American Political History* by Lexington Books. The series, launched in 2015, has published six books with the seventh on its way later in 2023. Another person, whom I have never met, was a hero or role model: David Halberstam. Obviously, he has not had a direct or personal impact on my life, but he was the historian I wanted to emulate in terms of being a journalist turned book author. The world of journalism history misses him. I miss him, too. We were deprived of his next book much too soon.

***Historiography:*** *What are the main areas or ideas on which you concentrate your historical work?*

**Parry:** My primary areas of research include public relations history; the press and the presidency, specifically President Dwight Eisenhower; and women in American political history. I am interested in all public relations history and in the power dynamic between the Fourth Estate and



the Oval Office.

**Historiography:** *Summarize for us the body of work — books, journal articles, and so forth — that you have done related to history.*

**Parry:** In 2014, Lexington Books published my book, *Eisenhower: The Public Relations President*, and that led to an invitation to edit a book series. I accepted the challenge and created a series on Women in American Political History, and Dr. David Davies is my co-editor. It has been an incredible experience working with Dr. Davies and an amazing editorial board: Drs. Maurine Beasley, Barbara Friedman, Karla Gower, Janice Hume, Meg Lamme, and Jane Marcellus. Each of these women have had an influence on me as a media historian. The series continues to grow with a seventh book on its way this summer. I am working on another Eisenhower book about the women the president promoted to federal office; it will be a part of the series. It has been somewhat delayed while I edit *Journalism History* — the nation’s oldest peer-reviewed journal on media history. Editing an academic journal has been the opportunity and experience of a lifetime, and I am scheduled to continue that work for another year. I am excited that the journal turns 50 years old during my tenure as editor, and we are planning a commemorative issue.

I also have contributed chapters to a textbook, an encyclopedia, and a handbook, particularly as a co-author of one chapter in *The Media in America: A History* (12th Edition) by David Sloan, Tracy Lucht, and Erika Pribanic-Smith, editors. Additionally, I contributed “The Press and the Presidency: How the Executive Branch Legitimizes the Fourth Estate” and co-wrote “History of American Journalism and Journalism History,” in *The Routledge Companion to American Journalism History* in

2023. In 2022, I contributed an entry on “Lee, Ivy Ledbetter,” in the *Encyclopedia of Journalism: 2nd Edition* (The SAGE Encyclopedia of Journalism). I also am very proud to have three oral histories accessioned into the oral history collection at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

I also co-edited two books with my colleague Dr. Sherwood Thompson, who influenced my interest in diversity topics. Working together at Eastern Kentucky University, Dr. Thompson and I published *Coping with Gender Inequities: Critical Conversations of Women Faculty* and *Exploring Campus Diversity: Case Studies and Exercises* (Rowman & Littlefield).

***Historiography:*** *Of the books and articles you have written, from which ones did you get the most satisfaction?*

**Parry:** The Eisenhower book was my foray into academic publishing, and it meant the most. But the book series is something truly special. The book led to the series so these things build on one another. The acquisitions editor at the time told me that editing a book series was “social scholarship” because you work with so many people. I have found that to be true. In the process of securing authors and editing books, I have become friends with Drs. Teri Finneman, Kim Voss, Maurine Beasley, Amber Roessner, and many others. Those friends are far more valuable than the books themselves.

***Historiography:*** *We realize that it is difficult to judge one’s own work — and that the most accomplished people are often the most modest — but if you had to summarize your most important contributions to the field of JMC (journalism/mass communication) history, what would they be?*

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**Parry:** I want to say that it would be helping historians see Eisenhower differently, but the truth is the expansion of the historiography of women's contribution to American politics will turn out to be my most significant contribution. And as with all contributions, several people played a part in its success from my co-editor, editorial board, authors, editors, and the staff at Lexington Books.

***Historiography:** As you look back over your career, if you could do anything differently, what would it be?*

**Parry:** I would have gotten my Ph.D. sooner. I earned it in 2013. So I got a late start on research/scholarship. I could have produced more had I started sooner.

***Historiography:** Tell us about your “philosophy of history” (of historical study in general or of JMC history in particular) or what you think are the most important principles for studying history.*

**Parry:** I love history because its values, practices, and principles are so closely related to journalism — my first profession. Historians, like journalists, search for the truth, knowing that it is incredibly hard to find and decipher. We seek out credible sources and new avenues of inquiry in a sincere attempt to add to understanding of a given subject. Today, we have so many people challenging facts and truth that JMC history has never been more important.

***Historiography:** How would you evaluate the quality of work being done today in JMC history — its strengths and weaknesses?*

**Parry:** *Journalism History* accepts about 30 to 40 per cent of the manuscripts that are submitted, using rigorous standards implemented by a roster of 95 reviewers. The articles we publish provide rich insights into a variety of topics. Often, the strengths are the topics themselves and the resources the authors use. The best manuscripts begin with a great research question, methodology, and reservoir of sources. The weaknesses might be that we need to develop more diverse topics on a variety of subjects, including articles on disability issues or broadcast journalism. *Journalism History* conducted a diversity study and found we have not published much on certain diversity topics.

**Historiography:** *What do you think we in JMC history need to be doing to improve the status of JMC history in (1) JMC education and (2) the wider field of history in general?*

**Parry:** We need to continue to highlight the importance of our discipline. Too many in higher education want to jettison media history when they revise their curriculum. We need to continue to educate people on our relevance and significance of our field. It helps that ACE-JMC accreditation requires a commitment to history. The wider field of history is emboldened when we advance media history, as media history is the history of this nation and requires the same dedication as history in general.

**Historiography:** *What challenges do you think JMC history faces in the future?*

**Parry:** The same challenges that academia faces as a whole: Many faculty are choosing to retire early rather than work in an increasingly diffi-

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cult environment. Fewer faculty means fewer researchers and increased workload that inhibits research and article/book production. More people will want to delete us from the curriculum, and we need to continue to fight against that possibility.

Fortunately, JMC history benefits from an impressive collegiality of the historians. The fact I can count top-level historians as my personal friends is an amazing benefit to me. So much of academia can be toxic in terms of competition, but JMC historians are generous with their intellectual pursuits, and without those networks of friends, I doubt I would have produced much of anything. I particularly am grateful for the *Journalism History* staff — Drs. Dianne Bragg, Kim Mangun, Sonya DiPalma, Erika Pribanic-Smith, and Teri Finneman — for helping me produce an excellent journal.

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# The Media and Wartime Morale

By Carol Sue Humphrey ©



Humphrey

NOTE: This is the fifth article in our series “How Media History Matters,” dealing with the significance that the news media have had in American history. We think the series will appeal especially to historians who believe historical claims need evidence to support them. It’s easy, someone has said, to suggest explanations if one doesn’t have to worry about facts.

It will become clear as we publish more essays that many ways exist to justify JMC history. One monolithic explanation won’t work. Carol Sue Humphrey’s essay focuses on one of the media’s significant roles during wartime.

**T**hroughout the history of the United States, the media have played a central role in wartime. Obviously, the media provide the major source, if not the only source, of information concerning the conflict and thus keep the people informed about military events and the overall direction of the war. However, the role of the media in wartime has gone much beyond the basic questions of who, what, where, and when. Time after time, the media have worked, through their coverage of the

*Carol Sue Humphrey is the author of five books on media history, including four on the American Revolution. She also has written a variety of journal articles and book chapters on the press and the Revolution. An emerita professor of history at Oklahoma Baptist University, she received her Ph.D. in history from the University of North Carolina.*

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conflict, to shape public opinion concerning the justifiability of the war. In most cases, these efforts have aimed at increasing support for the war by boosting the morale of the people and creating national consensus concerning the outcome of the conflict.

As the primary source of information during wartime, the media have helped to rivet American attention on the various military struggles in which the United States has taken part. By and large, the American media as an institution have generally been in favor of American military actions and have sought to encourage public support and to bolster morale through their coverage of events. Colonial newspapers praised the efforts of colonial militias to deal with the “Indian problem” while they also congratulated the British government for their victories over France in the wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During the American Revolution, both sides knew that control of the local newspapers would help them win the war because it would provide a mechanism to rouse the people. Some historians believe that Hearst’s *New York Journal* and Pulitzer’s *New York World* helped cause the war with Spain in the 1890s because of their volatile stories about events in Cuba. During World War I and World War II, the media helped create stereotypes of the enemy that are still with us today (the Germans in World War I, the Japanese in World War II). In each case, the media as a whole praised the war effort and encouraged the public to be as positive in outlook and sustaining in action as possible.

The Vietnam War seems to be an exception to the general statement that the media have been supportive of public morale during America’s wars. However, it is unclear how much of the problem during the Vietnam conflict was the result of lack of media support for the war or lack of clear communication between the media and the government. For the first time in American history, the national government did not actively and consciously try to control all of the information reaching the American people from the war zone. Rather than censoring military



## The Media and Wartime Morale

information, government officials sought to discredit the reporters who presented unpopular stories. This may have helped create confusion among the general public because of increasing arguments between the government, media personnel, and others concerning the justifiability of the war. Also, the advent of television had some impact, for it brought the war into everyone's living room on a daily basis. Although it is doubtful that the American media consciously set out to discredit the Vietnam War in the eyes of the American public, there is little doubt that their reports helped encourage doubts concerning the possibility of ultimate victory and thus lowered the overall morale of the general populace. Thus, in the case of the Vietnam War, the media had a somewhat reverse impact by depressing morale rather than boosting it, as had been true in the past. Whether this trend will continue is not yet clear, but the immediacy of television and the ongoing distrust between the media and government officials since the 1960s may mark the end of the usefulness of the media in urging support for a military conflict.<sup>1</sup>

However, at least for the present, the Vietnam experience is the exception rather than the rule. When one looks at the entirety of American history, the impact of the press in encouraging support for military conflicts seems almost immeasurable. A good example of this role of the media can be found in the newspapers of New England during the American Revolution.

### THE PRESS AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

At first glance, it would seem that maintaining New England involvement in and support for the war would be difficult. The British army withdrew from Boston in March 1776. Except for the occupation of Newport, Rhode Island, and occasional raids along the Connecticut coast, New England was free of fighting from 1776 until the end of the war. Little official government censorship or attempts at propaganda

existed, for the fledgling state and national governments proved unable to organize sufficiently to control reports of military events during the conflict. Yet, even in the absence of direct threats or organized government censorship and propaganda, the people of New England continued to support the war effort. The media helped in encouraging this support. Even without specific government guidance or instructions, the New England presses sought to use the pages of their weekly productions to shore up and maintain public opinion concerning the conflict. Throughout the war, the New England newspapers urged strong support for the war because of the need for unity and national consensus in order to achieve victory. The continual discussion of the “rightness” of the war served to boost morale among New Englanders and thus to encourage their ongoing support for events in other parts of the country.

With the disappearance of a viable Tory press in early 1775, the public prints of New England presented a unified front in the face of the British foe. Although some printers occasionally questioned specific government actions or policies, they supported the war and called for a unified citizenry. Week after week for over eight years, local publishers strove to use the pages of their newspapers to maintain morale and public support for the war. Using both essays and regular news columns covering a variety of topics, printers continually painted the best picture possible.

First and foremost, New England’s newspaper printers worked diligently to convince their readers that the colonies had ample justification for their revolt and that Great Britain was a “Monster of imperious domination and cruelty.”<sup>2</sup> Americans’ rights had been violated time and time again by the British Parliament, threatening the freedom so deeply cherished by the colonials. Independence was the only possible solution: “It is the opinion of many wise and sagacious men, that a connexion with Great Britain is an indissoluble bar to the prosperity of

these American colonies, and that independence is the only means by which we can preserve that freedom of which we are now possessed, and which is the foundation of all national happiness.”<sup>3</sup> War constituted the final recourse, turned to only after all other avenues had failed.

Furthermore, George III, the “whining King of Great Britain,”<sup>4</sup> no longer deserved American loyalty because he had failed to defend American interests against the encroachments of Parliament. In a response to a Tory defense of the British monarch, the *Boston Gazette* stated that “Tories may perhaps think the Tyrant is ill-used, but his crimes are so black and numerous, that it is perhaps impossible to represent him worse, on the whole, than he really is, or even so bad: — and the Tories may as well undertake to vindicate the conduct of the Devil, as that of the Tyrant.”<sup>5</sup> According to New England’s newspapers, Great Britain and her monarch had undermined any claims they had ever had to American support and loyalty.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to attempts to undermine loyalty to the British government, the press tried to show that the majority of the British people did not support the war. Most of these efforts came in the form of letters from Britain that attacked the ministry and the Crown for fighting the colonies. Several pieces, including one that summarized a Parliamentary speech by General Burgoyne, insisted that Britain could not afford to lose America’s commerce.<sup>7</sup> Others insisted that the government planned to enslave America first and then subdue its own people at home — “the present plan of royal despotism is a plan of general ruin.”<sup>8</sup> One British response to Lexington and Concord bemoaned that “the sword of civil war is drawn, and if there is truth in Heaven, The King’s Troops Unsheathed It. Will the English nation much longer suffer their fellow subjects to be slaughtered? It is a shameful fallacy to talk about the Supremacy of Parliament; it is the Despotism for the Crown and the Slavery of the people which the ministry aim at; for refusing these attempts, and for that only the Americans have been inhumanly

murdered by the king's troops."<sup>9</sup> As the war dragged on, some Britons expressed surprise that the island kingdom continued the effort "when all the prospects on which she so unjustly commenced it, are vanquished; and every campaign, for which she pays immense sums, only increases her humiliation, and adds to her embarrassment."<sup>10</sup> In 1782, one writer summed up the feelings of many who desired an end to the long conflict: "it would ill become me to dictate to our Ministers, but humanity, love of country, and self-interest extort from me many an ardent wish for peace and an end to this diabolical unavailing war — Give the Americans their independence — give them anything — but give us peace."<sup>11</sup>

With the first skirmishes at Lexington and Concord, New England's Patriot printers blamed British leaders for the war. They insisted that future generations would agree with them "that Britain is guilty of waging the present war against America, not only without provocation, but in defiance of entreaties the most tender, and submission the most humiliating, faithful history will in time evince."<sup>12</sup> All of them insisted that the redcoats had provoked the fighting at Lexington and Concord.<sup>13</sup> The printers criticized the British soldiers for firing first and then trying to lay the blame on the colonials. Isaiah Thomas accused the British of plotting to fix the blame on the militiamen: "Their method of cheating the Devil, we are told, has been by some means brought out. They procured three or four traitors to their God and country, born among us, and took them with them, and they first fired upon their countrymen, which was immediately followed by the regulars."<sup>14</sup> After these clashes, one printer declared "thus, through the sanguinary measures of a wicked Ministry, and the Readiness of a standing Army to execute their Mandates, has commenced the American Civil war, which will hereafter fill an important Page in History. That it may speedily terminate in a full Restoration of our Liberties, and the Confusion of all who have aimed at an Abridgement of them, should be the earnest

desire of every real Friend to Great-Britain and America.”<sup>15</sup>

### *British Cowardice and Cruelty*

As happens in almost any wartime situation, printers during the Revolutionary War filled their newspapers with accusations of cowardice and cruelty against the enemy. Upon the evacuation of Boston in 1776, the *Newport Mercury* declared that the redcoats left in such a panic that they were unable to carry all their military supplies with them. Some believed that the British feared to fight the Americans and intended to hire others to do their fighting for them. Stories of plots to emancipate the slaves for use against the colonials became common, as well as discussions of plans to hire European mercenaries, plans that later proved to be true.<sup>16</sup>

Accounts of British cruelty proved even more popular than stories of their cowardice. Tales of the redcoats’ plundering and pillaging the countryside appeared frequently — “One Mr. Beers, about 80 years of age, we are informed was inhumanly murdered by a British soldier, in his own house, and ’tis said, two children were burnt in the conflagration of Fairfield.”<sup>17</sup> One story in the *Providence Gazette* even accused the troops in Newport of grave robbing.<sup>18</sup> Officers also came under attack for their supposed attempts to spread disease, particularly smallpox, among the general populace. In a reprint of a story originating in the *Maryland Gazette*, the *Salem Gazette* affirmed that “Lord Cornwallis’s attempt to spread the small-pox among the inhabitants in the vicinity of York, has been reduced to a certainty, and must render him contemptible in the eyes of every civilized nation, it being a practice as inconsistent with the law of nations and, as repugnant to humanity.”<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps the most damaging accounts, however, concerned how the British treated American prisoners. Accusations of cruelty and lack of concern for the well-being of the captives abounded. John Carter de-

clared that many American soldiers died after the exchange “owing to the inhuman treatment they received from the enemy.”<sup>20</sup> At war’s end, Isaiah Thomas urged all of his fellow printers to publish the following charge against the British concerning American prisoners of war:

Tell it to the world, and let it be published in every newspaper throughout America, Europe, Asia and Africa, to the everlasting disgrace and infamy of the British King’s commander at New York. That during the late war, it is said, ELEVEN THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED and FORTY-FOUR American prisoners, have suffered death by their inhumane, cruel, savage and barbarous usage on board the filthy and malignant ‘British Prison Ship’ named the *Jersey*, lying at New-York. Britons tremble lest the vengeance of heaven fall on your isle, for the blood of these unfortunate victims!<sup>21</sup>

More popular than castigations of the British, however, were attacks on those Americans who remained loyal to Great Britain. Accounts of Tory woes proved very popular. One humorous piece in the *Newport Mercury* concerned a house where a large number of martins usually spent the spring. The house was bought by a Tory, but the martins continued to nest there, “hoping that he might reform; but upon their return this spring, finding that he was incorrigible, determined no longer to build under the roof of a Despot, and entertain him with their music, so, with one voice, quitted his house, and flew away to the dwellings of the Sons of Liberty.”<sup>22</sup> Rumors of plots and conspiracies also appeared frequently in all the newspapers. On one occasion, accusations of plans to ruin the paper currency while spreading smallpox everywhere resounded throughout New England.<sup>23</sup>

Although useful in spreading information concerning Tory activities, the newspapers proved most helpful as a means to label publicly

those who did not support the American cause. Lists of such people appeared regularly, along with the recantations of those who had seen the error of their ways.<sup>24</sup> In 1776 the *Connecticut Courant* declared that everyone labeled “inimical to the Country” by the Committees of Inspection would have their names published in the paper weekly “till a deep Sense of their Guilt, and Promise of Amendment, shall restore them to the Favour of their insulted Country.”<sup>25</sup>

Public attacks against specific people also became normal newspaper fare. Particularly hated by New Englanders was the former governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Hutchinson, who became a favorite target for writers in the public prints — some even placed total blame for the war on his shoulders. Upon Hutchinson’s death in 1783, John Gill insisted that he had cut his own throat for “the probability was so great, that he could never have died a natural death (having contracted at least as much guilt of any traitor since the apostacy of Adam) that without any direct information, it might reasonably have been thought that this, or something equally shocking, was the manner of his exit. — May it prove to the end of time, a solemn warning to all hypocrites and traitors.”<sup>26</sup> Many of the accusations against the British and the Tories proved groundless, but these statements helped the war effort because colonials believed them.

### *In Praise of Patriots*

While condemning the British for their plots and their inhuman treatment of the populace, the public prints had only praise for the Continentals.<sup>27</sup> After the initial fighting at Lexington and Concord, one article declared that “some future historian will relate, with pleasure, and the latest posterity will read with wonder and admiration, how three hundred intrepid, rural sons of freedom drove before them more than five times their number of regular, well appointed troops, and

forced them to take shelter behind their bulwarks!”<sup>28</sup> Throughout the war, the newspapers expressed no doubts that the American forces would ultimately prevail. By 1779, the printer of the *American Journal* concluded that “it is allowed on all hands that the American Army is now equal at least to any in the world for discipline, activity and bravery. There are no soldiers in Europe more exemplary for subordination, regularity of conduct, patience in fatigues and hardships, perseverance in service, and intrepidity in danger.”<sup>29</sup>

Most newspapers attributed the success of America’s armed forces to the leadership of George Washington. By 1777, following the victory at Trenton, the public prints had made Washington into a national hero.<sup>30</sup> He could do no wrong — “this great man was born to give a consistency and cement to the military efforts of these States, in one of the most important and honorable causes that any nation was engaged in.”<sup>31</sup> Praise for this almost perfect man filled the columns of the local gazettes and centinels. Numerous poems were written in his honor.<sup>32</sup> Reports of British efforts to bribe Washington produced ridicule and laughter.<sup>33</sup> So great was the aura that surrounded George Washington, his name alone was invoked as a reason for joining the army:

Such, my countrymen, is the General who directs the military operations of America; such the glorious leader of her armies; such the Hero whose bright example should fire every generous heart to enlist in the service of his country. Let it not be said, you are callous to the impressions of such noble considerations, but, by following his glorious example, shew yourselves worthy of possessing that inestimable jewel Liberty, and reflect that you have nothing to dread whilst you are engaged in so glorious a cause, and blessed with a Washington for a leader.<sup>34</sup>

If George Washington was America’s national hero, then Benedict



Arnold was its archfiend. Arnold's attempt to turn West Point over to the British in 1780 shocked the nation and produced a torrent of abuse in the press that has never been equalled. The newspapers made Benedict Arnold into the ultimate traitor,<sup>35</sup> a reputation that still holds today. Epitaphs attached to his name included "Judas," "the meanest & basest of mankind," and "the basest villain on earth." Reproaches and recriminations flooded the public prints. Printers took great glee in reporting that Arnold's reception among the British army was less than cordial. They accused him of cowardice for fleeing and leaving his British contact, Major John Andre, to suffer alone. Many wished that the victim had been Arnold instead.<sup>36</sup> Finally, many writers saw desperation in the British bribery of Arnold. One essayist concluded that "it shows the declining power of the enemy. An attempt to bribe is a sacrifice of military fame, and a concession of inability to conquer; as a proud people they ought to be above it, and as soldiers to despise it; and however they may feel on the occasion, the world at large will despise them for it, and consider America superior to their arms."<sup>37</sup>

Along with accusations aimed at Benedict Arnold appeared encouragements for Americans to do their utmost for the war effort: "America has yet to learn one important lesson from the defection and treachery of General Arnold. To cultivate domestick and moral virtue as the only basis of true patriotism. Publick virtue and private vice are wholly incompatible."<sup>38</sup> Such appeals had been common since the beginning of the war. In 1776 Isaiah Thomas printed the following incentive to his readers: "Let us not busy ourselves now about our private internal affairs, but with the utmost care and caution, attend to the grand American controversy, and assist her in her earnest struggle in support of her natural rights and freedom."<sup>39</sup> Benjamin Edes insisted that independence would be valued more highly if it cost dearly.<sup>40</sup> Calls for increased endeavors accompanied both victory and defeat. The victory at Saratoga produced a need for more American exertions in order to encourage aid

from France and Spain, while the defeat at Charleston, “instead of being a Misfortune, will, it is presumed from present Appearances, turn out a real Advantage,” reinstilling “the noble Spirit which invigorated these States in Seventy six.”<sup>41</sup>

The public prints insisted that God had chosen America for a special mission; its effort for independence was to be a shining example for the rest of the world to follow.<sup>42</sup> Many felt that another part of the British Empire, Ireland, would be the first to follow the American model. Interest in Britain’s troubles in Ireland increased, because “the Independence of these States, & the Efforts of our Allies, have prepared the way for the Freedom of Ireland.”<sup>43</sup> In 1782, a local essayist in the *Massachusetts Spy* urged the Irish to quickly follow the American example:

Now is the Time! Providence opened the pearly gate to America, she flew to enter, cut her way through the opposing legions of Britain, and hath taken her seat in the TEMPLE OF LIBERTY. — Shall Ireland pause, while the portals are open, and her American sister beckons her to come in and join the triumphant circle of the FREE! ... On God and yourselves depend. Let your own counsels make your laws, and your own swords defend them; then and not until then can you be free.... LET IRELAND AND AMERICA TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES!<sup>44</sup>

This interest in Irish efforts to gain their rights in the face of “British tyranny” continued in the years after the Revolution ended.<sup>45</sup>

While encouraging everyone to continue the struggle because America was meant to be a model for all, the newspapers also reminded readers not to forget their “firm reliance on the goodness of Almighty God.”<sup>46</sup> The Continental Congress expressed this idea best in 1778 in a call for unity and strength among the people:

Yet do not believe that you have been or can be saved merely

## The Media and Wartime Morale

by your own strength. No! It is by the assistance of Heaven, and this you must assiduously cultivate, by acts which Heaven approves. Thus shall the power and the happiness of these sovereign, free and independent States, founded on the virtue of their citizens, increase, extend and endure, until the Almighty shall blot out all the empires of the earth.<sup>47</sup>

The end of the fighting in 1781 promised fulfillment of these dreams of future greatness expressed in New England's newspapers. The press had played an integral part in the overall war effort by making it a national concern. The widespread reprinting of essays and letters along with accounts of actions in other colonies served to create a unity of ideas and feelings about the war. This proved particularly crucial in New England because very little fighting occurred there after the British evacuated Boston in 1776. The public prints performed a crucial task in convincing their readers that the war was everyone's fight even though the center of operations had shifted southward. The overall result was the strength of morale and solidarity of purpose needed for a successful revolt. This solidarity had been reflected in the media as the newspapers presented a united front in the face of the enemy.

### CONCLUSION

Throughout the entirety of our nation's history, the media as an institution generally have supported American military efforts, particularly during periods of actual fighting. A pro-war press can be very important, for the media encourage support for the conflict on the part of the nonfighting populace. By publishing stories that accentuate successes and downplay losses and problems, the news media build public morale by painting a nice picture that urges continued struggle until victory is achieved. The military failure in Vietnam occurred for many reasons,

but the lack of clear advocacy of the conflict from the press did not help the situation and probably hindered it greatly. The same was not true in most other American military conflicts, and it was certainly not true in New England during the American Revolution. Success proved easier for the military because local publishers used the pages of their small newspapers to push the people to keep up the fight until final victory was achieved.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Numerous discussions of the impact of the media on public opinion during the Vietnam era have appeared since the mid-1970s. For example, see Peter Braestrup, *Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1978) and Daniel C. Hallin, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> *Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester), 10 July 1776.

<sup>3</sup> *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford), 22 April 1776.

<sup>4</sup> *Boston Gazette*, 19 February 1776.

<sup>5</sup> *Boston Gazette*, 11 February 1782.

<sup>6</sup> *New England Chronicle* (Cambridge), 8 June 1775; *Connecticut Journal* (New Haven), 23 August 1775; *Boston Gazette*, 23 October 1775.

<sup>7</sup> *Newport Mercury*, 12 June 1775; *Boston Gazette*, 22 January 1776.

<sup>8</sup> *Connecticut Journal* (New Haven), 29 April 1775.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 August 1775.

<sup>10</sup> *Boston Gazette*, 10 December 1779.

<sup>11</sup> *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford), 2 July 1782.

<sup>12</sup> *Independent Chronicle* (Boston), 12 October 1780.

<sup>13</sup> *Essex Journal* (Newburyport), 26 April 1775.

<sup>14</sup> *Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester), 10 May 1775.

<sup>15</sup> *Providence Gazette*, 22 April 1775.

<sup>16</sup> *Newport Mercury*, 29 May 1775, 25 March 1776; *Boston Gazette*, 14 August 1775; *New England Chronicle* (Cambridge), 28 September 1775; *Salem Gazette*, 6 December 1781.

<sup>17</sup> *American Journal* (Providence), 15 July 1779.

<sup>18</sup> *Providence Gazette*, 10 January 1778.

<sup>19</sup> *Salem Gazette*, 6 December 1781.

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- <sup>20</sup> *Providence Gazette*, 25 January 1777.
- <sup>21</sup> *Massachusetts Gazette* (Springfield), 13 May 1783.
- <sup>22</sup> *Newport Mercury*, 19 June 1775.
- <sup>23</sup> Josiah Bartlett, *The Papers of Josiah Bartlett*, ed. Frank C. Mevers (Hanover: University Press of New England for the New Hampshire Historical Society, 1979), 158.
- <sup>24</sup> For example, see *New England Chronicle* (Cambridge), Fall 1975.
- <sup>25</sup> *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford), 8 April 1776.
- <sup>26</sup> *Continental Journal* (Boston), 19 June 1783.
- <sup>27</sup> *Essex Gazette* (Salem), 25 April 1775; *Essex Journal* (Newburyport), 26 April 1775; *Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester), 23 January 1777.
- <sup>28</sup> *Newport Mercury*, 8 May 1775.
- <sup>29</sup> *American Journal* (Providence), 16 December 1779.
- <sup>30</sup> Robert Allan Rutland, *Newsmongers: Journalism in the Life of the Nation, 1690-1972* (New York: Dial Press, 1973), 48-49; Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 255-60.
- <sup>31</sup> *American Journal* (Providence), 16 December 1779.
- <sup>32</sup> *Independent Chronicle* (Boston), 10 July 1777; *Independent Ledger* (Boston), 24 August 1782.
- <sup>33</sup> *New Hampshire Gazette* (Portsmouth), 30 July 1781.
- <sup>34</sup> *Providence Gazette*, 29 March 1777.
- <sup>35</sup> Charles Royster, "The Nature of Treason': Revolutionary Virtue and American Reactions to Benedict Arnold," *William and Mary Quarterly* 36 (1979):163-93.
- <sup>36</sup> *New Hampshire Gazette* (Portsmouth), 14 October 1780; 20 August 1781; *Continental Journal* (Boston), 20 December 1781 and 9 May 1782; *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford), 7 November 1780 and 7 May 1782; *American Journal* (Providence), 13 and 25 November 1780, and 15 August 1781; *Boston Gazette*, 6 and 13 November 1780; *Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester), 2 November 1780, and 15 February, 13 September, 25 October 1781; *Vermont Gazette* (Westminster), 9 July 1781; *Norwich Packet*, 7 June 1781; *Providence Gazette*, 29 November and 6 December 1780.
- <sup>37</sup> *Norwich Packet*, 21 November 1780.
- <sup>38</sup> *Providence Gazette*, 6 October 1781; *Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester), 25 October 1781.
- <sup>39</sup> *Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester), 28 June 1776.
- <sup>40</sup> *Boston Gazette*, 9 June 1783.
- <sup>41</sup> *Connecticut Gazette* (New London), 5, 12 December 1777, 30 January, 6 February, 6 March 1778; *Connecticut Journal* (New Haven), 24 December 1777, 7 January, 4 March, 15 April 1778; *Norwich Packet*, 5 January 1778; *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford), 24 February, 7 April 1778; *American Journal* (Providence), 13 May 1779, 12 July 1780; *Boston Evening Post*, 6 November 1779.
- <sup>42</sup> *New Hampshire Gazette* (Portsmouth), 13 July 1776; *Independent Chronicle* (Boston),

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2 January 1777; *Boston Gazette*, 2 June, 25 August 1777.

<sup>43</sup> *Connecticut Journal* (New Haven), 15 March 1780.

<sup>44</sup> *Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester), 1 August 1782.

<sup>45</sup> *Massachusetts Centinel* (Boston), 26 June, 10 July, 9 October 1784; *New-Haven Gazette*, 1 July 1784; *Exeter Chronicle*, 23 September 1784; *Independent Chronicle* (Boston), Summer, 16 December 1784; *Connecticut Journal* (New Haven), 22 December 1784; *New Hampshire Gazette* (Portsmouth), 11 March 1785.

<sup>46</sup> *Providence Gazette*, 17 May 1777.

<sup>47</sup> *Independent Chronicle* (Boston), 28 May 1778.

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## News & Notes

(Please note: Announcements are from the organizers of the activities.)

### **Society of 19th Century Historians: Call for Papers**

The Society of 19th Century Historians, in partnership with the Pamplin College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at Augusta University, presents the 31st annual Symposium on the 19th Century Press, the Civil War, and Free Expression. The Society invites submissions dealing with any aspect of the U.S. mass media of the 19th century, including the Civil War in fiction and history, freedom of expression in the 19th century, presidents and the 19th-century press, the African American and immigrant press, sensationalism and crime in 19th century newspapers, and coverage of 19th-century spiritualism and ghost stories.

Since 2000, the Symposium, formerly hosted at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga by the West Chair of Excellence in Communications and Public Affairs, the late Dr. David Sachsman, has produced nine books of readings covering a broad range of subjects. These include *The Civil War and the Press* (2000); *Memory and Myth: The Civil War in Fiction and Film from Uncle Tom's Cabin to Cold Mountain* (2007); *Words at War: The Civil War and American Journalism* (2008); *Seeking a Voice: Images of Race and Gender in the 19th Century Press* (2009); *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th-Century Reporting* (2013); *A Press Divided: Newspaper Coverage of*

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*the Civil War* (2014); *After the War: The Press in a Changing America, 1865-1900* (2017); *The Antebellum Press: Setting the Stage for Civil War* (2019), and *The Civil War Soldier and the Press* (due for publication in 2023). Panel presentations from the 2020 Symposium were recorded and aired on C-SPAN.

Selected papers and panels will be presented during the conference Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, November 2-4, 2023. Papers should be able to be presented within 20 minutes and at least 10-15 pages long. The top three papers and the top three student papers will be honored accordingly.

The 31st annual conference is returning to an in-person format with exciting opportunities for graduate students and young scholars to gain valuable experience and feedback, not to mention networking and camaraderie, with in-person attendance. A Zoom option is available upon request.

The conference is scheduled for November 2-4, 2023, at Augusta University in Augusta, Ga.

It is not necessary to be a member of the Society to submit a paper or panel for consideration.

**SUBMISSION:** Please send your paper (including a 200–300-word abstract) as a Word attachment to [19thCenturyHistorians@gmail.com](mailto:19thCenturyHistorians@gmail.com) by August 21, 2023.

For more information, please contact [19thCenturyHistorians@gmail.com](mailto:19thCenturyHistorians@gmail.com)

### **IAMHIST Seeks Candidates for Its Council**

IAMHIST is managed by the **Council**, as duly elected representatives of the membership. The council consists of the IAMHIST president and



11 council members and meets once or twice a year (online or in person) to plan and administer upcoming conferences, events and initiatives. Every two years, an online election of council members is organised among the members. The results are announced at the IAMHIST General Assembly Meeting.

We are currently seeking candidates for the 2023 election. There will be six vacancies on the council. We invite applications from individuals who meet the following criteria:

### **Your profile**

- You are an archivist, scholar and/or media practitioner working in the field of media history/media and history
- You are an [IAMHIST member](#), and you have been involved in IAMHIST activities in the past
- You commit to attending council meetings and IAMHIST events
- You are available for at least four years
- You are prepared to take on responsibilities for a selection of specific IAMHIST events or activities, such as prizes, coaching activities, website administration or community management etc.

IAMHIST is an equal opportunity organisation. As the organisation is devoted to furthering the careers of early career researchers and media practitioners, we especially encourage these individuals to step forward.

If you are interested in standing for election, please get in touch before **May 15 2023** with IAMHIST president Leen Engelen ([leen.engelen@luca-arts.be](mailto:leen.engelen@luca-arts.be)) or with the IAMHIST vice president Tobias Hochscherf ([tobias.hochscherf@fhkiel.de](mailto:tobias.hochscherf@fhkiel.de)).

## **CFP: Communication and Power in Early America**

The Institute for Thomas Paine Studies (ITPS) at Iona University invites submissions for a hybrid online and in-person symposium on the topic of Communication and Power in Early America. This symposium aims to explore how communication shaped, reflected, and challenged power relations in North America from 1750-1850. The organizers have ambitions of extending this conversation through a scholarly anthology and/or a journal special edition. Participants are encouraged to consider this symposium as a potential first step toward publication and will be expected to present their work as well as read and comment on the work of other participants.

The symposium will take place **October 6-7, 2023**, with both in-person and online opportunities for presentation. The in-person component will take place at the ITPS at Iona University in New Rochelle, New York.

We welcome submissions from scholars of all disciplines, including but not limited to history, literary studies, communication, media studies, religious studies, ethnic studies, and area studies. Possible topics for submission might include (but are not limited to):

- Communication in shaping imperial power structures

- Communication as a tool of insurgency or conservatism

- New media technologies in early America

- Political rhetoric in the Age of Revolutions

- The role of print culture in shaping public opinion and establishing power structures

- Indigenous practices of knowledge-keeping

- Communication and representative government

- Transformations in communication and performance

## News & Notes

Communication networks within and beyond imperial networks

Manuscript communication and gossip networks

Censorship and other forms of repression

Communicating truth and deception

Publicity and privacy

Rumor as a form of communication

To submit a proposal, please send a single document including a brief biographical statement and abstract of no more than 300 words to [communicationandpower@gmail.com](mailto:communicationandpower@gmail.com) by **June 1, 2023**. Please feel free to reach out to the symposium organizing committee — Mark Boonshoft, Katlyn Carter, Carolyn Eastman, Nora Slonimsky, and Ben Wright— with any questions.

Accepted participants will be expected to submit papers of approximately 5,000 words by August 31, 2023. Papers will be pre-circulated and participants will be expected to come prepared to offer feedback to one another. Additional comment will be supplied by established scholars with experience in guiding research toward publication.

### **Contact Info:**

Mark Boonshoft (Virginia Military Institute), Katlyn Carter (Notre Dame), Carolyn Eastman (Virginia Commonwealth), Nora Slonimsky (Iona), and Ben Wright (UT-Dallas)

**Contact Email:** [ceastman@vcu.edu](mailto:ceastman@vcu.edu)

**URL:** <http://theitps.org/call-for-papers-communication-and-power-in-early-america/>;

## **American Journalism Historians Association: 2023 Call for Papers, Panels, and Research in Progress**

The American Journalism Historians Association invites paper entries,

panel proposals, and abstracts of research in progress on any facet of media history for its 42nd annual convention to be held in Columbus, Ohio, September 28-30, 2023.

### GENERAL RULES

The deadline for all submissions is **June 1, 2023**.

The AJHA views journalism history broadly, embracing print, broadcasting, advertising, public relations, and other forms of mass communication that have been inextricably intertwined with the human past. Transnational research is also welcomed.

Because the AJHA requires presentation of original material, research or panels proposed for the convention should not have been submitted to or accepted by another convention or publication.

An individual may submit one entry in each competition, but papers and Research in Progress submissions by an individual author may not be on the same topics.

At least one author of each accepted paper or research in progress must register for and attend the convention. Panelists must also register and attend.

### RESEARCH PAPERS

Research entries must be no longer than 25 pages of text, double-spaced, in 12-point type, not including notes or figures. Please use end notes and place figures at the end of the document. The *Chicago Manual of Style* is recommended but not required.

Papers must be **submitted via email as Word attachments**. Submissions must include the following:

- Completed paper, including 150-word abstract, with no author identification anywhere in the paper (including title).

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- A separate Word file including the abstract and author identification (email address, telephone number, institutional affiliation, and student or faculty status).

Send papers to [ajhapaper@gmail.com](mailto:ajhapaper@gmail.com). You should receive an auto-reply confirming your submission. Please check your spam/junk folder, and if you haven't received confirmation within a day of submitting, please inform Gerry Lanosga at [glanosga@indiana.edu](mailto:glanosga@indiana.edu).

Accepted papers are eligible for several awards, including the following:

- David Sloan Award for outstanding faculty research paper (\$250 prize)
- Robert Lance Award for outstanding student research paper (\$100 prize)
- Jean Palmegiano Award for outstanding international/transnational journalism history research paper (\$150 prize)
- J. William Snorgrass Award for outstanding minority journalism research paper
- Maurine Beasley Award for outstanding women's history research paper
- Wally Eberhard Award for outstanding research in media and war (\$50 prize)

Questions about paper submissions can be directed to AJHA Research Chair Gerry Lanosga of Indiana University ([glanosga@indiana.edu](mailto:glanosga@indiana.edu)). Authors will be notified no later than July 15 whether their papers have been accepted or not. If you have not heard by that date, please contact Gerry Lanosga.

## PANELS

Panels may relate to any original topic relevant to journalism history,

presenting a variety of perspectives that will draw the audience and panelists into meaningful discussion or debate. Preference will be given to panels that present diverse perspectives on their topics, and organizers should consider diversity in race and gender in selecting panelists.

AJHA accepts panel proposals through an online form that requires the following:

- A title and brief description of the topic.
- The moderator and participants' information (name, institutional affiliation, student or faculty status).

- A brief summary of each participant's presentation.

Submit proposals at this link: <https://bit.ly/3bpVwyA>.

**No individual may serve on more than one panel.** *Panel organizers must secure commitments from panelists to participate before submitting the proposal.* Moderators are discussion facilitators and may not serve as panelists.

Questions about panel submissions can be directed to Susan Swanberg of the University of Arizona ([swanberg@arizona.edu](mailto:swanberg@arizona.edu)), who is coordinating the panel competition. Authors of panel proposals will be notified in mid-July whether their panels have been accepted.

### RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

The Research in Progress category is for work that will not be completed before the conference. Participants will give an overview of their research purpose and progress, not a paper presentation, as the category's purpose is to allow for discussion and feedback on work in progress.

For research in progress submissions, send a blind abstract of your study. The abstract should include a title, a clear purpose statement, and a brief description of your primary sources. Abstracts must be no longer than two pages of text, double-spaced, in 12-point type, with 1-inch

margins, excluding notes. Primary sources should be described in detail on a separate double-spaced page.

The AJHA Research in Progress competition is administered electronically.

- Proposals must be submitted via email as Word attachments, with **author identification in the file names only**.

- The text of the email should include the author's information (name, project title, telephone number, email address, institutional affiliation, and student or faculty status).

Send research in progress proposals to [ajharip@gmail.com](mailto:ajharip@gmail.com). Authors will be notified in mid-July whether their proposals have been accepted.

Questions about submissions can be directed to Gwyneth Mellinger of James Madison University ([mellingx@jmu.edu](mailto:mellingx@jmu.edu)), who is coordinating the Research in Progress competition.

## **Sidney Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism History. Submission Deadline: May 15**

The Sidney Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism History is American Journalism Historians Association's highest honor.

The Kobre Award recognizes individuals with an exemplary record of sustained achievement in journalism history through teaching, research, professional activities, or other contributions to the field of journalism history. Nominees need not be AJHA members.

Nominations for the award are solicited annually, but the award need not be given every year. Those making nominations for the award should present, at the minimum, a cover letter that explains the nominee's contributions to the field as well as a vita or brief biography of the

## Historiography in Mass Communication

nominee. Supporting letters for the nomination are also welcome.

The Awards Committee selects the winner from among nominees and presents the award during a luncheon at the AJHA National Convention.

Send nominations no later than May 15, 2023.

Electronic submissions are preferred via email to: Dr. Willie Tubbs, Assistant Professor, University of West Florida, [wtubbs@uwf.edu](mailto:wtubbs@uwf.edu).

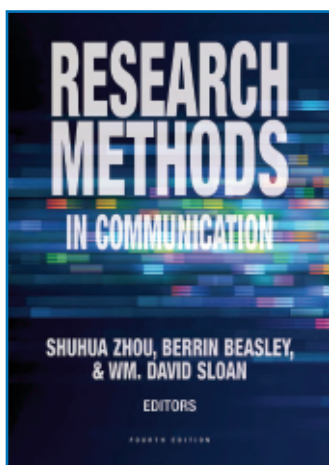
Alternatively, postal submissions may be sent to the following address:

Dr. Willie Tubbs  
AJHA Service Awards Chair  
Communication Department  
Building 36, Room 183  
University of West Florida  
11000 University Pkwy  
Pensacola, FL 32514

### **Past Winners:**

|      |                     |      |                  |
|------|---------------------|------|------------------|
| 1985 | Sidney Kobre        | 2009 | Betty Winfield   |
| 1992 | Ed Emery            | 2010 | David Copeland   |
| 1996 | Maurine Beasley     | 2012 | David Paul Nord  |
| 1998 | David Sloan         | 2013 | David Abrahamson |
| 1999 | Hiley Ward          | 2014 | Leonard Teel     |
| 2000 | Jim Startt          | 2015 | Mike Sweeney     |
| 2002 | Peggy Blanchard     | 2016 | Jean Folkerts    |
| 2003 | Mike Murray         | 2017 | Kitty Endres     |
| 2004 | Joe McKerns         | 2018 | Jean Palmegiano  |
| 2005 | Barbara Cloud       | 2019 | Debbie van Tuyl  |
| 2006 | Hazel Dicken Garcia | 2020 | Ford Risley      |
| 2007 | Wally Eberhard      | 2021 | Julie Williams   |
| 2008 | Pat Washburn        | 2022 | Janice Hume      |





## The Best General Methods Book for History Students

Research in communication offers a wide array of methods. Social science methods remain important even as methods in the humanities – such as *historical methods* – and professional studies have gained in-

creasing emphasis. Yet most textbooks barely mention the latter methods.

*Research Methods in Communication* includes them all. We think you will find that it is clearly the best book for covering the wide range of methods – not only the quantitative but the qualitative ones also – that scholars in the field use.

To make certain *Research Methods in Communication* provides your students the best instruction, each chapter is written by an expert on the chapter topic. So you can be confident that, as your students begin to study methods, they will have the very best guides.

A **teacher's manual** is available when you adopt the book. The CD contains sample syllabi, 25 PowerPoint presentations, and multiple-choice quizzes for each chapter.

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