Historiography

in Mass Communication

Volume 1 (2015). Number 2

Historiography in Mass Communication

Editorial Purpose

This journal publishes essays dealing with the study of mass communication history and of history in general. (It does *not* publish articles about historical events, episodes, people, etc., as one finds in, for example, historical research papers.)

Copyright

Essays

This journal invites historians to submit essays. They may be original ones written specifically for this journal, or they may be from material that the authors already have (such as classroom lectures, AJHA presidential addresses, etc.).

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

To submit an essay for consideration, email a Word file to the editor at wmdsloan@bellsouth.net.

We place importance on the credentials of authors and normally expect an author to have published at least one history book.

If you have an essay accepted for publication, you will be required to affirm that you are the owner of it and that it violates no law.

Your essay will include a copyright notice that you are its owner. However, you must agree that your essay may be used in accord with the following policy: The essay may be used for personal research purposes and for classroom teaching material. Multiple copies may be made for classroom teaching. However, no one (other than yourself) may sell the essay or include it in any collection that is sold.

Historiography
in Mass Communication

Volume 1 (2015). Number 2

Contents

You may click on a title to go directly to the article.

How To Submit Essays to *Historiography*

To submit an essay, email it to the editor, David Sloan, as an attachment to this address: wmdsloan@bellsouth.net.

If you don't have a completed essay, you may inquire with a proposal. Email the editor at wmdsloan@bellsouth.net.

We assume that authors proposing ideas or submitting essays will be familiar with *Historiography*. In particular, you should have read essays in *Historiography* that are related to your topic.

The journal focuses on essays dealing with the *study* of mass communication history and of history in general. (To be sure this description is clear: The journal will *not* publish accounts about historical events, episodes, people, etc., as one finds in, for example, historical research papers. We will include only historiographical essays.)

The essays may be original ones written specifically for the journal, or they may be from material that authors already have (such as classroom lectures, conference addresses, etc.).

There is no particular requirement for how long essays must be, but the length needs to fall between 500 and 5,000 words.

As for authors' credentials, we especially favor essays from historians with a track record of accomplishments. For example, we expect authors to have published at least one history book. When you submit an essay or an inquiry, provide a list of the books you have authored or edited.

We publish a new issue of *Historiography* about every six weeks, and essays usually will be published in the journal issue immediately following acceptance of an essay. With that schedule in mind, here are the deadlines for submission of essays.

February 1, 2016
March 15, 2016
April 30, 2016
June 1, 2016
July 15, 2016
August 31, 2016
October 1, 2016

We welcome your inquiries and submissions.

Billy the Kid and JMC Historians

By Wm. David Sloan ©

You may have seen that recently a tintype has been authenticated as being a picture of Billy the Kid. When the National Geographic channel televised a program about the photograph, I suddenly sat up and listened when it mentioned a young woman named Sallie Chisum.

As the owners of the tintype were trying to determine if one of the young men in the tintype was Billy the Kid, they relied heavily on Sallie Chisum's diary. Sallie was a friend of the outlaw, and in 1878 she had recorded numerous entries about him.

The reason my ears perked up when Sallie was mentioned is that she was my cousin — a distant one, to be sure, but my cousin nevertheless. Here's the connection. My mother's maiden name was Wright. Her great-great-grandfather, James G. Wright, moved to Texas in 1830. He and his wife had three sons and one daughter, Ira Josephine. Ira married Jim Chisum, brother of John Chisum of cattle-trail fame. Ira and Jim had one daughter, Sallie — the very same Sallie Chisum in whom Billy the Kid had, apparently, a romantic interest. In the tintype, she is the young woman standing near the middle.

So when I realized that it was my cousin in a rare photograph of Billy the Kid — so rare that it is valued at $5 million — I naturally took a heightened interest in the National Geographic documentary.

Wm. David Sloan, a professor emeritus from the University of Alabama, is the author/editor of a number of books and is a recipient of the American Journalism Historians Association's Kobre Award for lifetime achievement.

Through my genealogical research, I had known of Sallie's acquaintance with the Kid, but seeing that she was the key figure in the attempt to authenticate the tintype has given her added importance in my mind.

All of that is to say that the owners' efforts to determine if they had a tintype that really did show Billy the Kid should serve as a lesson for us mass communication historians. Experts on Billy the Kid are naturally skeptical anytime anyone claims to have a photograph of him. Since an authentic photograph could be of great value, a heavy burden of proof rests on the claim maker.

The owners' efforts make for a fascinating story, and when National Geographic rebroadcasts the documentary — as it already is doing — I recommend you watch it. Over five years, the owners traveled thousands of miles to interview Billy the Kid authorities, had experts conduct facial-recognition analysis of people in the tintype, drove all over Lincoln County, N.M., trying to locate the terrain that is in the background of the tintype, and scoured my "cousin" Sallie Chisum's diary to try to determine if Billy the Kid and his gang of Regulators had been in the location where the tintype was made in August or September 1878. You can imagine the tintype owners' euphoria when they found an entry in the diary that not only named the members of the Regulators but recorded that they had gathered for a friend's wedding at the location where the photograph was taken. The picture was made during the Lincoln County range war and shows Billy the Kid and the others playing a game of croquet in front of a schoolhouse. The owners' efforts paid off — and they are now millionaires.

The work of us historians is unlikely ever to make us rich. But it is, nevertheless, important. Without a knowledge of history, every generation would be lost. "Not to know what has been transacted in former times," wrote Cicero, "is to be always a child. If no use is made of the labors of past ages, the world must remain always in the infancy of knowledge." To call oneself a historian thus imposes weighty obligations. One of those obligations is to take history seriously. We must be

Retur
Table of C

willing to invest in it the time it requires. That includes time devoted to both research and writing. If we want to think of ourselves as historians, history deserves our best efforts.

In this issue of *Historiography*, you will find articles by five historians who take history seriously. We have Q&A interviews with Mike Murray, a winner of the American Journalism Historians Association's prestigious Kobre Award for lifetime achievement, and with Meg Lamme, winner of the AJHA's 2015 award for book of the year. In a third article, Pat Washburn and Mike Sweeney, both of whom have received the Kobre Award, tell of their work over thirty years to determine how the *Chicago Tribune* got its information for a story about the Battle of Midway during World War II — for which the U.S. federal government tried to prosecute it for violation of the Espionage Act. The discovery by Profs. Sweeney and Washburn of a key document may remind you of the discovery by the Billy the Kid tintype owners of the key entry in Sallie Chisum's diary. To complete this issue of our journal, Julie Williams — one of the most meticulous researchers in the field of mass communication history — implores historians to take all of the material they have gained through their research and then to *make the telling of it interesting*.

As all the authors can tell you, there is great satisfaction in researching and writing history. Even if you don't get $5 million for doing history right, the rewards for all the work can be great.

rn to
Contents

Solving a Historical Cold Case: A Thirty-Year Odyssey

By Michael S. Sweeney and Patrick S. Washburn ©

(*Pat Washburn and Mike Sweeney wrote separate parts of this essay. Prof. Washburn wrote the first and third sections; and Prof. Sweeney, the second and fourth.)*

When I [Pat Washburn] was a doctoral student at Indiana University from 1979 to 1984, a book edited by Robin W. Winks, *The Historian as Detective: Essays on Evidence*, was invaluable in teaching me how to be an historian. After a discussion of the importance of not only asking *what* happened in history but *why* things happened, various historians wrote about how they solved historical mysteries. As the title of the book indicates, historians and police detectives are a lot alike in the way they go about seeking the truth.

I did not know when I read the book that I would be applying what I learned to an historical "cold case" that scholars had been unable to solve in large part for more than forty years, and it would be another thirty years until I was able to crack the case with the help of Mike. It all

Michael S. Sweeney and Patrick S. Washburn have both been recipients of the American Journalism Historians Association's Kobre Award for lifetime achievement. Dr. Sweeney, a professor and Associate Director for Graduate Studies at Ohio University's E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, has written a number of books and is a recognized expert on the history of the press and war. Dr. Washburn, a professor emeritus at the Scripps journalism school, is a recognized authority on the history of the black press and has been a historical advisor for two award-winning PBS television documentaries on the black press.

started with my dissertation on the federal government's investigation of the black press during World War II. One of the major themes was the Justice Department's deliberation of whether to seek an Espionage Act indictment of black newspapers in 1942 because what they wrote was supposedly hurting the war effort. Eventually, Attorney General Francis Biddle decided against an indictment and held in check the FBI and the Post Office Department, which adamantly wanted to go to court.

In researching my dissertation, I occasionally noted references to the government unsuccessfully seeking an Espionage Act indictment of the *Chicago Tribune* in the summer of 1942 for an article about the Battle of Midway in the Pacific Ocean. After completing my dissertation, I read what historians had written about the *Tribune* case and was surprised to find huge gaps in what was known. The case had three parts. The first was in May and June, when war correspondent Stanley Johnston gathered information for the story and wrote it. Historians could only speculate about how he had gotten his information, which had remained unknown for more than forty years. The second was in June to August, when the Justice Department, the FBI, and the Navy conducted extensive investigations of Johnston and the *Tribune* and considered whether a violation of the Espionage Act had occurred. This was the part that historians knew the most about and the gaps were the smallest. The third was in August, when the Justice Department presented the case to a federal grand jury, which refused to indict the *Tribune*. Historians knew virtually nothing of what the grand jury was told and how close the newspaper had come to being indicted.

After reading what historians had written about the *Tribune* case, I was convinced extensive research could fill in some, if not most, of the gaps, and I could get a conference paper and probably a journal article from the effort. At that point, I made an important decision — I was determined to look at *every* piece of evidence that I could find, no matter how long it took, before I wrote anything. Quite simply, I wanted to

do the definitive piece on the *Tribune* case, and leave little for anyone else to add to it, just as I had done in my dissertation. It never occurred to me that it would be a thirty-year project.

What follows is how we did the research and decisions that we made in writing the study. It was the first and only time that I tackled a cold case that had stumped historians — my other research has been on topics that others had not examined in depth — and I probably will never attempt this type of study again. It turned out to be far tougher, and at times more fatiguing mentally and physically, than I ever imagined, but the exhilaration in the end of solving the mystery was among the high points of my experience as a historian. And I consider the article that came out of it in *Journalism & Communication Monographs* to be among the best things that I have done. I believe Mike feels the same way.

When I researched my dissertation, I used the Freedom of Information Act to obtain documents from the Justice Department and the FBI, and the latter told me that I was the heaviest user of the FOI Act in the country at that time in terms of the media. Therefore, it was natural for me to begin my research on the *Tribune* case by filing FOI Act requests with the Justice Department, the FBI, and the Navy, which were the three principal federal agencies involved in the investigation. Over about three years, I received thousands of pages of documents, some of them with large portions of the type blacked out by FOI censors. Since the three agencies sometimes shared documents in 1942 because of their overlapping investigations, it was not rare to get the same document from two or three of the agencies. From using the FOI Act in my dissertation, I knew that was highly advantageous for me. Because each agency censored the documents from its files, and the censors at one agency might black out different things from another agency, I could compare identical documents from two or three agencies and frequently see more than if I had gotten them from only one place. In addition, some of the documents were at the Roosevelt archive

in Hyde Park, New York, and since it did its own censoring, that was another source that I could use to compare documents.

I skimmed the documents as they arrived and could quickly tell I had information that none of the other historians had who had written about the *Tribune* case. That convinced me that I definitely would be able to fill in some of the gaps. One particular gold mine in the FBI documents was a lengthy compilation of what the U.S. press wrote about the government's investigation of the *Tribune* and the grand jury result. The press' reaction to what was a clearly a First Amendment challenge was an important component to our study. If we had tried to look up what each publication wrote, we would have missed a lot.

Immediately after filing the FOI Act requests in the mid-1980s, I began interviewing anyone that I could find who had been involved with the *Tribune* case in 1942. By the mid-1980s, these people had become old, and some of the important figures (such as the publisher and the managing editor of the newspaper as well as Biddle) had died, so I knew it was imperative to do the interviews as soon as possible.

I did five interviews, becoming like a reporter or a detective as I asked those I interviewed to whom else that I should talk. The archivist at the *Tribune* suggested the first interview. He noted that Johnston had died but said his wife still lived in the area and gave me her telephone number. She was happy to talk to me because she felt her husband had been wrongfully maligned for writing a story that subtly revealed a major military secret (the U.S. had broken the Japanese naval code), and she gave me the phone numbers of two former *Tribune* reporters who had known her husband in 1942. Both provided useful information. One was at the newspaper on August 19, 1942, when the grand jury refused to indict the *Tribune*, and he recalled what it was like as the publisher, the managing editor, and Johnston spoke about the victory in the city room to 500 to 600 people. I have always believed that historians occasionally get lucky if they work hard, and that certainly was true with another person that I interviewed. He was the dean of my college

at Ohio University. I knew that he had worked for the *Tribune* in World War II, and when I asked him about the case against the newspaper, he produced his private diary, which talked about the day that the newspaper was not indicted and what the mood of the staff was like in the days leading up to that.

The most memorable interview was with Frank Waldrop, who had been the foreign and political editor of the *Washington Times-Herald* in 1942. As we sat in the den of his Washington home, he talked about putting the Midway story, which came off the *Tribune*'s wire service, in his paper. That resulted in him being interviewed by the FBI as well as being called before the grand jury, and with my tape recorder running, he talked about those experiences at length. It was invaluable. At one point, I asked him a question, and he immediately said gruffly, "I can see that you do not know much about the press and the government in World War II." Even though I knew at least as much as he did, and probably more, I quickly apologized for being so clueless: "Well, you're probably right. Tell me how it was." He quickly calmed down, and the interview continued. I did not hesitate in thinking about my response to his challenge, which if handled incorrectly by me might have ended the interview. Instead, I became a chameleon, which came naturally from doing thousands of interviews over more than ten years as a newspaper reporter and columnist. Act however you have to, do whatever you have to do, to keep an interview going. The end justifies the means.

What was surprising about the five interviews was that none of the historians writing about the *Tribune* case had talked to any of those people. It reinforced the fact that mass media researchers, and particularly non-historians, frequently and inexplicably avoid interviews. That can be a big mistake. Quite simply, they can be an important source of historical information.

I also contacted the federal court building in Chicago, seeking the grand jury transcripts from the *Tribune* case, but was informed quickly that the files were sealed, eliminating what would have been a valuable

source of information. (I was surprised in June 2015, seventy-three years after the *Tribune*'s Midway story, that an Illinois federal judge unsealed the transcripts after a petition by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press.)

Besides reading everything that historians had written about the *Tribune* case, using the FOI Act, and doing interviews, I gathered material from nine archives. I found some of them by carefully examining the note citations that historians used, others were located by using the Library of Congress' National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections, and some I knew from my previous research. The archives included: three universities (Notre Dame, Virginia, and Yale) and Lake Forest College; the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and the Roosevelt archive; and the Naval Historical Center and the Naval War College. I visited all but the latter in Newport, Rhode Island, which I asked to mail me one document that another historian had cited.

But the main archive that I wanted to see at the *Chicago Tribune* was closed. I was told by the archivist that the paper was having a history written about it, and it was unclear when, or if, the documents relating to the World War II case would be available to me. Every two or three years, I would go back to the *Tribune* archivist to see if the files were available, but I always got the same answer: not yet. Meanwhile, I put everything that I had into Hollinger boxes used by libraries and waited, occasionally adding something that showed up. And I wondered if the *Tribune* archive would ever be available. I felt strongly, however, that it would be premature to publish anything until I saw what was there.

In 2010, I learned that Mike was making a trip to Minnesota and would be driving through Chicago, where he had already done research in the *Tribune* archive and knew the archivist. I immediately invited him to join me on the project when we found that he could see the paper's files relating to the 1942 case. Having him as a coauthor was an easy decision. He is an excellent historian, and his research expertise

fitted in well with mine. While I was well versed in Roosevelt and Biddle and knew about the government and the Espionage Act in the war, Mike had done his dissertation on the Office of Censorship's press division during the war and had written a book about war correspondents. So, each of us brought different strengths to what we would produce, unquestionably making the final product better than if either of us did it alone. The fact that we have similar writing styles, honed through years on newspapers, and are basically story tellers, was also an important consideration. I knew how important that was from an earlier study that I did on advertising in the *Pittsburgh Courier* during the war. I did it with a scholar whose expertise was in advertising, but she was not a historian, knew nothing about the black press, and wrote in a straight academic manner, which was totally different from the way I write. The article that we published in *Journalism Quarterly* was far better in terms of the historical insights that we offered than if either of us had done it alone, but our different writing styles resulted in a struggle about how the article was written and its tone. With Mike, however, I knew we fit together well in every way.

[Following is Prof. Sweeney's description of his research on the *Tribune* case.]

Pat is correct. My dissertation on the Office of Censorship during World War II brought a deep understanding of the domestic censorship code, which was voluntary but potentially subject to post-publication penalties, to our joint research project. I knew the code, called *The Code of Wartime Practices*, and I knew how Censorship Director Byron Price administered it: With what he called the "voice of the dove." He knew it would do him no good to order the press not to publicize certain stories because his background as executive editor of the Associated Press had made him aware of journalists' allergic reaction to government control. So, instead of bullying, he invited journalists to call or wire his office if

they had questions about whether a potential story might benefit the enemy.

In one of my trips to the National Archives, I found a document that revealed the *Chicago Tribune*, an anti-Roosevelt publication, made the most inquiries during the war of any newspaper to the Office of Censorship, in order to avoid inadvertently clashing with the federal government and opening itself to gleefully administered punishment by the Roosevelt administration. This matched with an interview I had done for my dissertation with Walter Trohan, the *Tribune* bureau chief in Washington, D.C., during World War II. He had told me that the *Tribune* recognized the need for a censorship code and was always very careful about following it, but he did not have insights into what happened in Chicago when Johnston's story was published. All of this background helped set the stage for my formulating research questions about the *Tribune*'s actions during the Battle of Midway story: Why, if the *Tribune* was so careful about censorship, did it allow a story to be published that revealed to a savvy reader that the U.S. Navy had broken the Japanese code? What were the procedures it followed to approve publication, and how did those procedures differ, if at all, from routine? And how would the *Tribune* try to justify or defend its actions?

I had the chance to probe for answers when I visited Cantigny, outside Chicago, to examine the *Tribune*'s archive on my way to an archive in St. Paul for another research project. A routine call to the *Tribune* archive in summer 2010 revealed that the newspaper's records, including its lawyers' files, had been opened to researchers. I happily booked a hotel room nearby and planned three days in the archive.

The records were organized by year and by subject. Naturally, I made sure to read everything in the records for 1942 and for the Battle of Midway story. There, I found what I was looking for, which is detailed in the monograph. Briefly, the *Tribune*'s managing editor, Loy Maloney, believed he knew the censorship rules so well that he could pass judgment on Johnston's story without having to get an opinion from the

Office of Censorship or official clearance from the Navy. It would not be the last ill-advised call from Maloney, who six years later ordered the *Tribune*'s presses to roll with a famous front-page headline declaring "Dewey Defeats Truman."

The files had a few gaps. One folder relating to the legal defense of the *Tribune* was empty except for a note that said its contents had been removed. I asked the archivist about it, of course, but his investigations came up empty. After two days, I could piece together the results of the *Tribune*'s internal investigation into how it had published the story, the *Tribune*'s public face of moral rectitude and certainty along with its private doubts and despair, and the paper's detailed plans for a spirited defense if indicted. The latter was an unexpected find and added a new dimension to our study.

What I did not have was what happened in the grand jury room that led to the rejection of an indictment. Grand jury proceedings are sealed, private, locked away from public eyes — and, almost without exception, should be. But human nature being what it is, I was curious about whether the *Tribune* had ever learned what happened behind the jury's closed doors.

This leads me to the third day at Cantigny. When I was a PhD student in Pat's historiography class in 1994, he gave his students advice about working in archives. Don't just look at the files you think you need, he said. Poke around. Follow hunches. Try to get in the heads of those who created the archive. Good advice. I noticed that the *Tribune* legal files in a particular section of the archive continued into the years beyond 1942. I decided to go through those later years on the off chance that something important related to the case had happened years after the fact and had been filed near the most pertinent documents. If you have never combed through file after file of old documents looking for something, anything, related to a narrowly defined topic, try to imagine how boring that is. Most of the time, it is a wasted effort. But you cannot catch a fish if you do not drop the lure in the

water and wait patiently. In November 1944, more than two years after the grand jury's decision, I came across a letter about the state and federal elections. The author of the letter had addressed it to Colonel Robert McCormick, the *Tribune* publisher, and asked if he would publish a photograph of a black Republican group in a county to the south of Chicago before election day. Oh, and by the way, the author said, he was the reason McCormick stayed out of jail in 1942.

Oh, sweet honey in the rock!

The author turned out to be the foreman of the grand jury. (Yes, an African American was elected foreman in 1942 — I checked the list of jury members, printed in some newspapers at the time, to verify the author's claim.) He explained the main issues that the jurors debated and how they were leaning in favor of an indictment until he intervened, made a pointed argument based on logic more than law, and swayed the jury to his side. He also importantly revealed the vote total, which none of the press knew in 1942 and no historian had discovered since then. I did a little happy dance in my chair and praised the gods of historical research.

With that, I was confident Pat and I could proceed toward publication. In the next section, he describes that process.

Having located everything that we could find on the *Tribune* case, we presented a paper on it at the AJHA's annual meeting in Kansas City in October 2011. It was highly satisfying to receive the first Wally Eberhard Award for the best paper on a media and war topic, but it also was a frustrating experience for two reasons. First, we had so much information that the paper merely skimmed the surface of a very complicated story, with many subtleties, because of the twenty-five-page text limit. It was no different than trying to condense an historical dissertation of hundreds of pages into an academic presentation. And second, while we knew far more than other historians about how Johnston apparently had obtained the information for his newspaper story, we

still did not know for sure. As I told Mike, "We don't have the smoking gun, but by God, we have the powder burns from it." Quite simply, we were tantalizing close to what everyone had wondered about, but we were stuck and were beginning to doubt that we would ever find the answer. Maybe it was just going to be one of those gaps, no matter how hard you work, that you have in all historical studies.

Then, on a snowy afternoon in early 2012, I was in my office and decided to see what was on the internet about the *Tribune* case. Considering how much we knew about the story, I had never looked on the computer because I thought it would be a waste of time. As I went through file after file, I found a few new tidbits but nothing that excited me. It was a boring, tedious task, but I was determined to finish it because, like detectives, good historians check every lead no matter how unpromising it appears. After I had opened probably ten files, I found a PBS site about a high school history teacher in Vincennes, Indiana, who used the grand jury case to spark a class discussion. He would divide his class into two teams. One would present the government's case of why the *Tribune* should be indicted under the Espionage Act for its Midway story, and the other would give the paper's argument of why it should be exonerated. At the end of the PBS article, the teacher listed readings to help his students become knowledgeable about the case.

I had never seen one of the readings. It was a 1982 letter to the editor of *Proceedings*, which was a magazine published by the U.S. Naval Institute. I drove to the Ohio University library annex to see the issue that carried the letter and was stunned to find a description of how Johnston had gotten his information. A naval officer, who was with Johnston on a Navy ship that was coming back to the U.S. in 1942, saw what he did and then told the editor of the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* when they were fishing in 1975 with the promise that he would not reveal anything until the officer died. After he passed away in 1981, the editor related what he was told in a letter to the magazine in response to an article that it had run on the Midway battle.

When I read the letter, I said "holy shit" very loudly — no one else was in the reading room; so it did not matter — because what we had been searching for had been there for anyone to see before I began researching the case in 1984. And yet every historian had missed it. I hurried back to the campus, burst into Mike's office, and said excitedly, "We've got it! We know how Johnston got his information!" Loving my enthusiasm and obviously elated over what I had found, he just smiled. We had finally cracked the case.

We decided to send our manuscript to *Journalism & Communication Monographs*, which allowed the text to be about four times as long as our AJHA paper and gave us the opportunity to tell the story in the detailed fashion that we believed it deserved. We knew the journal had a low acceptance rate, but we were confident we would be accepted because of the strength of our study and overwhelming documentation.

After collaborating on the introduction, I told the story chronologically until the grand jury met, literally going day by day over almost three months in 1942. Mike took over at that point and went through the grand jury proceedings, carefully explaining the paper's defense and the aftermath when it was not indicted; and then we jointly wrote the conclusion. My biggest problem was being swamped with information from the FOI Act requests, the archives, and the interviews, and it took me a month to review everything before I was ready to write. We faced one interesting dilemma in deciding how to tell the story. Where were we going to put the information about how Johnston got the facts for his story, which was not revealed until 1982? Since this did not become public until forty years after the case took place, and since Johnston lied to the government several times about how he had gotten his facts, we decided to not use it until near the end of the monograph. It was like we were writing a mystery novel and keeping readers in suspense, and it turned out to a successful way to tell the story.

The reviewers were highly complimentary of the manuscript; and, after only small revisions, it was published online in late 2013 with the

print version following early in the next year. We were pleased to receive the Covert Award from the History Division of AEJMC in the summer for the best mass communication history article published in the past year.

I now turn it over to Mike for the conclusion.

Researching and writing this monograph was the first time either Pat or I collaborated with someone else on any substantial work of history. We were loners. When you work alone, you decide on your own what to research, where to go, what to read, what to think about (and why it is important), and finally what to write. The strengths of that method are simplicity and focus. If you sail around the world on a one-person boat, you plot the course. When (if?) you arrive safely at journey's end, the accolades are all yours. On the other hand, acting alone means you have no one to tell you "Baloney!" when you need to hear it. No one to prod you to do more when you think you've done enough. No one to say, in the metaphor of the sailboat, that the islands on the horizon look interesting enough to investigate, even if it means a delay in finishing the journey.

So it was with Pat and me.

The main take-away messages from our joint research project, for me, relate to the power of collaboration. Each of us brought strengths to the project. Fortunately, there were lots of places they did not overlap. Pat had a treasure of facts at his fingertips, leading him to a deep knowledge of where the story of the *Tribune* and the Battle of Midway had already been told, and where it still was dark and uncharted. He gave us the shape of the investigation and a map of where to look for clues. I brought my knowledge of World War II censorship and added the legal angle from the *Tribune* archives. We both brought our skills of induction and deduction. As we traded the manuscript back and forth via email, each reading the other's contribution and commenting before adding a new piece to the tale, we created a whole that was greater than

Retu
Table of C

the sum of its parts.

I have to credit Pat for not giving up. When he said he was going to do some basic Google research, I thought, "Good luck with that!" (You have to read that with a sarcastic tone, as if I had said, "I *know* you will win the gold medal in the pole vault, Pat.") How could the most important bit of evidence we sought turn up through a Google search, rather than one of the many archives we visited, the many interviews we (mostly Pat) did, or the many library databases we consulted?

But that's how it happened. Without one member of the partnership refusing to give up without running down every lead, our work would have been incomplete.

We did not agree on all things. We still talk about the state of mind of the *Tribune*'s Stanley Johnston and Loy Maloney and of the officer who gave Johnston naval secrets. Did the officer know what he was doing? Did he lie to investigators, or did he simply not remember what he did, having suffered brain injuries in combat? What about Johnston's ethics — did he do right or wrong as a journalist when he lied to investigators?

Disagreements are OK. As Pat taught me when I was a PhD student, historians should construct a narrative that tells not only what happened, but why it happened. And "why" can be a slippery fish — two historians can look at the same evidence and come to different interpretations about such things as motivation and ethics. And that is OK, too. The reader ultimately judges the work, and Pat and I kept that in mind as we talked and wrote.

Would I collaborate again? Yes. There was something in our work together, something that allowed us to feed off each other's enthusiasm and appreciate each other's insights. If this was, as Pat suggests in the title of this essay, an "historical cold case," then it was essential that two detectives — does that make this a buddy cop movie? — teamed up to solve it.

rn to
Contents

Bring 'em to Life

By Julie Hedgepeth Williams ©

Some years ago, I was appalled to hear the results of a poll on the reading habits of Americans. A pollster reputable enough to be quoted on National Public Radio had asked a random sample of Americans if they had read a novel in the past year. The on-air expert was anguished to report that only 10% had done so.

Yes, I thought, that's interesting. I waited for the next question: How many of you read a work of history last year? But no. The question never came. The expert and the reporter went on for the next five minutes, bemoaning the illiteracy of the American public.

It slowly dawned on me that I was among the 90% illiterate, in the expert's very limited outlook, because I hadn't read a novel in the past 12 months. The thing was, I had read a pleasant number of good histories, and I felt very literate, thank you.

Why did the survey leave out historical works? I really couldn't imagine for the longest time, but finally I decided that the expert and the pollsters defined "novels" as "entertaining," and they defined "history" as "dull names and dates." The poll question apparently *really* had meant, "When you want to have fun, do you read?" The word "novel" apparently stood in for the concept "entertainment," and history, being

Julie Hedgepeth Williams, who teaches at Samford University, has written four books, including two popular ones about the Titanic and Orville and Wilbur Wright. She won the American Journalism Historians Association's very first award for the year's outstanding doctoral dissertation.

nothing more than dull names and dates, didn’t make the survey. Oh, that just broke this historian’s heart!

History is without a doubt the most entertaining reading out there — at least, it should be. However, I can perceive that there’s a contingent of knit-browed, lips-pursed people who think there’s something fishy if well-researched history is actually fun to read. Those knit-browed folks (and the pouty pollster above) consider “creative writing” to mean “fiction.” I once advocated to a friend that history be described as creative writing, and she objected, “But creative writing is FICTION!”

Ah, no, not as I see it. Creative writing means exactly what it says: *writing* creatively. And I believe that the truth can be written creatively — no, take that back — the truth *should* be written creatively. It should be every bit as fun to read as a novel.

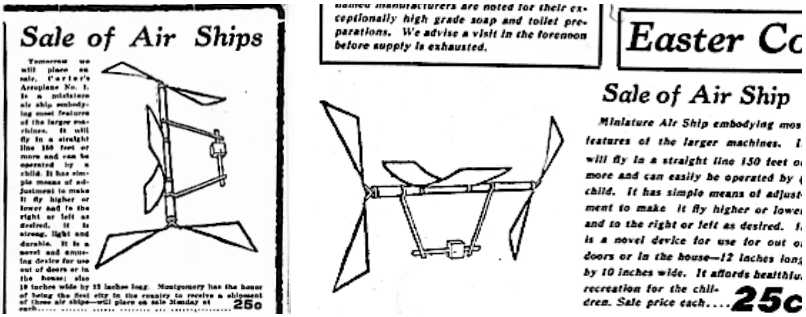
If you link the word “creative” to its linguistic cousin “creation,” you’ll understand my former colleague Liz Wells’ wonderful (and correct) approach to history. Liz for years was a librarian in the Special Collections Department of Samford University’s library. She fielded calls from professors to show off the crusty musty dusty old newspapers and diaries and so on that the university had collected over the ages. The utterly modern kids would saunter down to the library basement with glazed-over eyes, looking only half aware at the newspapers and diaries spread out on the sturdy library table before them. Then Liz got to deliver her line to students who probably grew up thinking history was boring names and dates. She’d say, “OK, kids, bring ’em to life.” Yes, bring the long-dead people in those diaries and newspapers to life. As Liz would point out, historians are the only people who can actually revive those people — put the pink back in their cheeks and restore the sparkle to their eyes.

That should be historians’ goal as they write. You can’t write history if you can’t bring people to life. The good news is that those folks in their graves are generally so willing to be restored to life in your care. They’ve left behind all sorts of clues for doing so.

To write history creatively, you'll need those clues. You can't bring people to life unless you do some good, solid research, which means reading those clues left behind. And because the final goal is creatively written history, you really need to notice all the really fun stuff about your long-dead subject that he or she left behind in the historical record. Your departed subject did indeed leave behind a name and dates, but don't stop there. Stopping there is hazardous to history and to readers, I think. You see, I had a history teacher once who gave out name-and-date memorization lists under the very scary name "shotguns." You had to know your "shotguns" for the test. I have to admit, it's hard to fall in love with history with a line of shotguns pointed at you.

Joyfully I can say that it's so much fun to bring the long-dead to life without the threat of shotguns. I remember that the first time I opened the *South Carolina Gazette* of 1732 (on dizzying microfilm), I was supposed to be researching America's first woman newspaper editor, Elizabeth Timothy. Instead of thinking much about Elizabeth at first, I instead kept marveling at the advertisements in her newspaper, which certainly brought colonial Charleston to life. It made me smile to read an ad for a "most wonderful tooth powder, which, when mixed with water makes a wonderful paste to clean the teeth," or something to that delightful effect. Toothpaste! I had thought dental hygiene was a modern invention! I don't know that I specifically used the ad for toothpaste in my paper about Elizabeth Timothy, but certainly when I brought her back to life in my mind's eye, she had properly freshened teeth.

Likewise, when the Wright Brothers showed up in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1910 and announced they wanted to start the nation's first school to train civilian pilots, a local department store hastily got in a toy airship that parents could buy for their offspring for 25 cents — and let's admit it, parents would play with it, too. The first ad for the airship ran the line drawing of the toy vertically, and no one caught it, because no one had actually ever seen an aeroplane before. Someone eventually figured out that aeroplanes flew horizontally and ran a correction.



The ads reveal how profoundly unknown and mysterious airplanes were in 1910. You can picture, then, the wonder and astonishment that Montgomery gawkers felt when they saw the real thing flying over a local cotton field. You can feel — and incorporate — how confused and awe-struck they were as you breathe life back into them a century or more later.

My further advice in bringing historical characters to life is to remember that we’re not bringing zombies to life — not just the bare bones, but real people with real personalities. Although my history teacher’s “shotguns” didn’t chase personality, it’s important to chase character flaws such as Samuel Keimer’s doleful self-pity. You just have to feel for Keimer, the printer in colonial Barbados, who mourned poetically about his non-paying customers and his resultant poverty in 1734. Keimer himself is the “he” here:

> What a pity it is that some modern Bravadoes,
> Who dub themselves Gentlemen here in Barbadoes,
> Should Time after Time, run in Debt to their Printer,
> And care not to pay him in Summer or Winter! …
> He ne’er found before such a Parcel of Wretches,
> With their Flams, and such Shuffles, Put-offs and odd Fetches…
> Tho’ working like a Slave, with Zeal and true Courage,
> He can scarce get as yet ev’n Salt to his Porridge.

Between Elizabeth Timothy's sweet teeth and Samuel Keimer's misery before his strutting subscribers, can you see these people coming to life? Any novel would be proud, I should think.

And what else do novels have that historians also need to, well, become a question on that entertainment reading survey some year? Setting. That necessary whole picture includes the rolling landscape or the storm at sea or the rickety three-legged couch in the local post office where printer's devil Joe Harris sneaked in every Tuesday in 1862 so he could read the weekly newspapers from the state capital — newspapers he couldn't afford to subscribe to. The kindly postmaster, and no doubt the subscribers, indulged him in this. Joe even remembered in a memoir that the couch was green. What a delight to know about the couch when reviving and reconstituting Joe, who in real life died in 1908. In 2015 I can describe red-headed Joe as a scrawny, gawky teenager in 1862, scarcely 100 pounds, furtively glancing up from his filched newspapers while he was slumped into the uncomfortable frayed green couch, teetering on its three good legs.

Of course a novel needs a good plot, and what better plot is there than the truth? Far stranger than fiction, right? Say you were to read this scenario in a novel: Albert and Sylvia Caldwell, fleeing their jobs as missionaries in Siam in 1912, stopped in Naples and flirted with the idea of taking the ship *Carpathia* home to the United States. But then they saw an advertising placard touting the maiden voyage of the *Titanic*, and they decided to take that ship home instead. A month later to the day, as the dreadful last hours of the *Titanic* unraveled, the Caldwells found their way to Lifeboat 13 and were picked up a few hours later in a grateful dawn, along with some 700 other survivors, by none other than the *Carpathia*, which was then on her return trip to Naples.

Now, admit it. If you read that in a novel, it would seem too preposterously coincidental. However, if you read it in a biography — and it is indeed a true story — it's amazing. Sometimes a fresh writer of history might be tempted to think, "My story doesn't have a novel-like story-

Retu
Table of

line,” but I’d argue that if you’ve found something interesting enough for you to write about, it does indeed have a story that caught your attention. It can catch everyone else’s attention, too, as a *story*. And even better, as a *true* story.

So — consider history an act of creative writing. Go into it with a goal of composing the most readable story possible based on the facts. Use those ancient newspapers and diaries and letters and other clues to understand the people, the landscape, the personalities, the uncomfortable couch, the sweetly brushed teeth, the vertical flying toy, the bravados of Barbados who utterly refused to pay their bills. Remember that your plot, being true, is automatically more interesting precisely because it *is* true.

My master’s thesis was about Peter Timothy, Elizabeth Timothy’s son who took over her newspaper in colonial Charleston, and who suffered mightily at the hands of a rival newspaper editor determined to put him out of business. In the end the thesis won the university’s award for the year’s outstanding thesis.

The head of the committee who judged the master’s theses that year was thrilled to have read the story of the beaten-down Peter Timothy. That judge said to me what I hope all of you will have said about your works of history: “It was so readable, but scholarly as hell!”

Yes, consider yourself a *creative* writer. Bring ’em to life!

rn to
Contents

Kobre Award Interview: Michael Murray

Mike Murray won the Kobre Award for lifetime achievement from the American Journalism Historians Association in 2003. In addition to that Award, he has received a variety of other honors, including the Broadcast Education Association's (BEA) highest award, the Distinguished Education Service Award (DESA) ; the AEJMC's Electronic News Division's Ed Bliss Award; and the Mass Communication & Society Division's Distinguished Educator Award. He also received a Goldsmith Research Award from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and the International Radio & Television Society's Frank Stanton Fellowship, which he received from Dr. Stanton, CBS President Emeritus.

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

Murray: I grew up in the suburbs of St. Louis, Missouri, in a predominantly Roman Catholic community — mostly populated by second- or third-generation Irish, Germans, Italians and Poles, who moved to the suburbs from the city of St. Louis. My education was in Catholic schools, taught by the dominant religious orders: Sisters of St. Joseph (grade school), Sisters of Mercy (high school), and Jesuit priests (undergraduate). The suburban city in which I grew up is named St. Ann, and most of the streets in that city (except for cross-streets) are named after the saints. If I ever write a memoir, it will be titled "Life Among the Saints." The advertising professor who occupies the office next door to me, Dr. Dennis Ganahl, has written about growing up in that same community. He dubbed it "The City of the Saints," and he had frighteningly similar experiences — at least with the nuns. And I mean frightening. Kidding!

One of my eighth-grade nuns was at Pearl Harbor when it was bombed. She showed us a *New York Times* headline she had kept. It did get you thinking seriously about history.

My grandparents (mother's parents) lived with us growing up. They helped my parents raise four kids because it seemed like our father and mother were always working — but they were tremendous role models. You might call them, "energizer bunnies." My mother worked for a big film company, Universal International, where she met my dad.

My siblings sometimes joke that we were raised mostly by my grandmother, of German heritage: a great cook, talented seamstress, and strict disciplinarian. She made us "toe the line." Both my father and grandfather were also big influences on my views about the importance of journalism. My father was a voracious reader — an inveterate "news nut." Our enduring image was him with a newspaper in his hands while listening to CBS-owned KMOX Radio. He read *both* of the daily newspapers published in St. Louis at that time, the liberal *Post-Dispatch* and conservative *Globe Democrat*. And he dissected the contents for us daily. My other big influence, outside of the family, was the Boy Scouts. In trying to advance to become an Eagle Scout — which I did — a kid has to interact with adults from specialized fields to accumulate all of the required badges. I was kind of a shy kid growing up, but those interactions with adult experts — and the confidence that brought — turned out for me to be very valuable, early interview-exercises, helping me overcome reticence.

Q: What did you do professionally before going into teaching?

Murray: I worked in radio as a reporter and was also the news director for our college radio station, KBIL. My first serious, professional job was working for CBS News and the News Election Service. I was recruited to it by two Saint Louis University Law professors — a husband and wife team — on the recommendation of my journalism professor,

Charles Patterson, who was the careful overseer of our radio station. I was covering political events during the 1968 election cycle, including the local appearances by the presidential candidates, and I think Professor Patterson saw what a kick I got out of doing that. I was totally "hooked." I would file my stories and then check-in with him. The CBS network assignment really didn't amount to much — it entailed gathering and reporting election results or result summaries from around the State of Missouri — using those old-style, very noisy teletype machines. But the operation was being managed by CBS News in New York, as opposed to our local network affiliate, KMOX, and so I took it all VERY seriously. I enjoyed pointing out that I wasn't working for the "local yokels" on this assignment but the "big-timers" in New York City. In the newsroom, I was teased as "Edward R. Murray."

What I didn't understand — at the time — was that this job helped me later to connect with folks and get some important material and interviews for my dissertation topic on Ed Murrow (and Fred Friendly) and their now famous *See It Now* program about Senator Joseph McCarthy, including kinescopes of those programs. I can recall interviewing the *See It Now* crew, who by then had moved on to *60 Minutes*, and, later, talking to them about their "war stories" from election coverage half a dozen years later in 1968, most of which I missed. I was working! But this provided a common denominator — a reference point.

Q: What courses have you taught? Where?

Murray: "Media History," "Media Law" and "Broadcast Writing and Reporting" at Virginia Tech, University of Louisville, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and back here on the St. Louis campus of the University of Missouri. Because I was in "program development mode," helping to establish degree programs and departments a lot of that time, I was able to put those courses "on the books" at two of the four schools: Virginia Tech and Louisville. It's a point of pride to think there are folks we

know still teaching those courses there.

Q: Tell us about your background in history. When did you first get interested in history? How did your education prepare you to be a historian?

Murray: My undergraduate school had had some major media-related figures on the faculty, namely Marshall McLuhan and Walter Ong. McLuhan had gone back to Canada before I arrived in the mid-sixties. But I think his ideas had an influence. Of course, there's some debate about how much of Father Ong's work influenced McLuhan. And many of their examples were drawn from media history. McLuhan used the JFK assassination as a prime example for his "global village." But St. Louis University always had a distinguished History and Political Science faculty, including, by that time, Kurt Von Schuschnigg, the former Chancellor of Austria — until the Third Reich annexed his country. You may recall, he opposed Hitler, resigned from office, and then was arrested by the Nazis and kept in solitary confinement, until liberated by the U. S. Army. He then joined the faculty at SLU.

With the legacy of the Pulitzers, there is a lot of interesting journalism history in St. Louis. When I returned to my hometown in the eighties, I was recruited by the first Pulitzer television station to write a forty-year anniversary history. I had already written a series about TV news pioneers for the *St. Louis Journalism Review* (now *Gateway Journalism Review*) and interviewed about three dozen of the pioneers who put that NBC station on the air back in 1947. Because of the timing and my association with the AJHA, I heard about other stations taking similar steps. So I put together a history of local television, *Television in America*, with Don Godfrey of Arizona State University. That was an interesting project and an eye-opener in terms of the overall importance of the subject, how local history was treated — and the timing of it was also important. I followed up with a book about women in local

broadcasting, *Indelible Images*, with Mary Beadle of John Carroll University.

Within about a decade or so, many — if not most — of the people I interviewed for the station history had passed away. Of course, the first person they hired at KSD-TV, Keith Gunther, died only recently. He lived to be almost 100. In any case, it gave me added incentive to talk to people who might have some nuggets of wisdom to share. I was working on the premise that I could not rely on their memory, but just that they might know about some important things — including landmark programs and people — that we might have otherwise missed.

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

Murray: My research has always focused on innovations and innovators in the field of broadcast news. I've always been fascinated by what motivates people to innovate and the standards used at the beginning of something new, including the standards to establish television news and those at the start of the old, long-form television documentaries. I wrote my doctoral dissertation in 1974 at the University of Missouri on *See It Now* and Senator McCarthy. You recall that the key *See It Now* broadcast took place twenty years earlier, in 1954. And I published my book on that subject, *The Political Performers*, in 1994, twenty years after completing the dissertation. It sounds very calculated in terms of the timing of it all, but it just worked out that way. I also edited two books on journalism education: *Teaching Mass Communication* and *Mass Communication Education*. I wrote a chapter for David Sloan's history text, *The Media in America*, now in many, multiple editions, and also have a basic textbook with Roy L. Moore, *Media Law and Ethics*.

In terms of journal articles, those have dealt mostly with the broadcasts of two important broadcasting figures: Edward R. Murrow and Alistair Cooke. I received an NEH grant many years ago to work with

Michael Schudson one summer out at the University of California-San Diego. Our daughters, who now have kids of their own, still remember that summer "on the beach" in La Jolla. I wrote a short piece for *Journalism Quarterly* on Alistair Cooke's *America* series. And Schudson suggested that I contact Cooke —and to my surprise, he responded. Later on, I used Cooke's papers at Boston University to write some other articles about his work as a media critic and his use of Hollywood related to political figures. I got to travel to England on many occasions in search of Cooke material at the BBC, and met and later interviewed Alistair and his biographer, the late BBC presenter, Nick Clarke, who was also a great help. I made a lot of requests for scripts and other material, and Alistair made a habit of telling me that he was sorry but that he was "disorganized and never kept anything." After he died, I was able to visit his papers in the Mugar Library at Boston University on many occasions and learned that the opposite was actually true. He was super-organized and kept just about everything.

Q: Of the books you have written, from which ones did you get the most satisfaction?

Murray: I have a little book of interviews with some course notes that I just developed for our students. It contains a dozen or so interviews. Barbara Cloud encouraged me to create it years ago. So I had been thinking about it. And then I got disgruntled with the publishing situation for textbooks a year or so ago and put together this course book of mostly interviews and class notes. We had been using a basic text, and the authors told me that they would not be revising it because the book costs too much for their own students to use. That's nuts. So the one I developed is printed internally here on our Columbia Campus by Mizzou Publishing, not to be confused with the University of Missouri Press. Because of the nature of this book, it is "hyper-local," and it includes a lot of local journalism history, including the Pulitzer Publishing

operations and how they interacted in terms of their first broadcast stations, KSD Radio and Television (now KSDK). The goal is to try to update the material every so often and try to address new issues with some historical perspective. The royalties go to scholarships in our unit here. It's keeping me busy. The next printing will include a short summary of media coverage of what happened nearby in Ferguson, Missouri.

Q: 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 history, what would they be?

Murray: I edited *The Encyclopedia of Television News*, which turned out to be a logistical feat with over 100 contributors — a book, my daughters like to point out, that actually made money, since almost every library in America purchased a copy. I also helped Peggy Blanchard as a member of her editorial advisory board for *The History of the Mass Media in the United States* with Barbara Cloud, Jean Folkerts, and Pat Washburn, for which I wrote the sample entries on broadcast news, including both "Walter Cronkite" and the "Huntley-Brinkley Report." I'm also very proud of interviews I've done. To do them properly takes an incredible amount of work. And we all know the tricky issues oral history brings into play — in terms of accuracy.

Some of those interviews turned out to be pretty interesting — and different, in terms of the kinds of questions they raised, specifically addressing issues from journalism history. Most of the major broadcast news figures of the last era — and all three of the legacy television news networks: CBS, NBC and ABC, meaning the work of Cronkite, Brinkley, and Tom Brokaw — were all "interview victims" of mine, at one time or other. Walter let me interview him a couple of times; and some of his bosses, CBS News Presidents, namely Fred Friendly and Bill Leonard,

were also generous with their time. Dr. Frank Stanton provided me with primary source material and original scripts from the *CBS Reports* series and also helped me connect with some other CBS News people, like Ed Bliss. You recall that Ed was the news writer for BOTH Murrow and Cronkite. He also did a great, extended interview with me for the *Political Performers* book. Much later, I also interviewed Byron Pitts, now at ABC News and *Nightline*, for *Television Quarterly* about his career as a leading African-American network correspondent and especially his coverage at the scene of the infamous attack on 9-11.

Ironically, I was just recently — just within the past few months or so — part of another NEH program and visited the new offices and the archives of *The New Yorker* on the 34th floor of the Freedom Tower in Manhattan. Condé Nast had just moved their operations down there from Times Square, and I got to go up and look down and also photograph the memorial, the footprint of the historic 9-11 attack — the one that Byron Pitts had described to me first-hand in our interview. It seems more than a little surreal now because, as journalism historians, we all know that really not very much time has passed at all. But some things are like night and day, in terms of the way reporting has changed, especially with respect to new technology and citizen participation. The iPhone that I used to photograph the footprint of the attack from the 34th floor of the Freedom Tower wasn't even available then — at least to me — on 9-11.

Beyond that interview with Byron Pitts, my last major published conversation was with his CBS mentor, Dan Rather, and it appeared in a recent *Journalism History*. Of course, the new Robert Redford film about Dan, *Truth*, was just released here in North America. In our interview, he got very personal, laying out his thoughts about what he thought had happened with the story that got him fired, at least as best he could. It's an interesting contrast to the movie theme in *Truth*. But for me, it's just another odd coincidence that makes you think about the importance of doing journalism history.

Q: Tell us about your "philosophy of history" or what you think are the most important principles for studying history.

Murray: Without question — with the timing of this question coming right after we recognized some 30-year veterans at our organization's AJHA meeting in Oklahoma City — you can't help but reflect on Sid Kobre's legacy, in terms of his emphasis on the basics of doing historical scholarship. When we honored Sid with the first Kobre Award, he stressed how the best journalism historians really needed to be great reporters first. It's an obvious analogy, making comparisons in terms of the importance of the goal of objectivity, offering as much context and perspective as possible. Easier said than done. But a great goal.

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

Murray: We are so far along today because the parameters and people involved in our field have widened considerably. When David Sloan, Maurine Beasley, and Leonard Teel spoke at the recent panel about the early years of the AJHA, Leonard credited Harold Davis for getting him going on the history of Atlanta journalism, a research line Leonard has followed with many publishing projects. The work of those three people has been fabulous for the growth of journalism history.

On the downside, I would say that one weakness for folks in our field is that we have sometimes made ourselves vulnerable to getting a lot of different kinds of assignments, potentially taking us away from what we might view as our "core mission" — an overused term, but very true. Maybe we are asked to try to do too much? In starting out in the field years ago — and in a number of job interviews — I would sometimes be asked if I could handle a wide variety of assignments, including even technical courses, like media production. I think that it showed how far afield you could go, if you get pushed in a direction that

may make no sense for you and that could be both very time-consuming and not very well rewarded.

Having served in the U.S. Army, as a reserve officer in the Signal Corps, for a total of eight years, I always felt that I could handle some of those kinds of assignments. But looking back on it now, it would have been more rational to try to communicate something better like: "Yes, I can probably do that, if that's how we want to spend our time and money," with the knowledge that being on a tenure-track, time would be better devoted to trying to get research published. But realistically, it's hard to deal with those kinds of pressures when you are first starting out or when a unique opportunity arises. I produced a half-hour, public affairs program at the University of Louisville for the NBC-TV station there (WAVE-TV) for three years, simply because a vice-president asked me to do it, and the station gave us the airtime. It was probably a mistake for me in terms of the time and effort it required — but the university certainly loved it, some of our best students enjoyed producing it, and the U of L Library archives recently accepted dubs of some of the historic programs, which I had produced.

Communicating a negative message requires some informed support and understanding by your senior faculty — if you happen to have some of those — and also takes some nerve. As David Brinkley used to say: "You have to do what your bosses want you to do ... or what they tell you to do." But as a non-tenured assistant professor or an ambitious associate professor, it's obviously a mistake letting people get you seriously side-tracked. And of course, letting that kind of thing happen really doesn't help you — or the institution — in the long run.

Q: 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?

Murray: To me, and this also relates directly to the last question, one of

the most interesting aspects of what we do in JMC education — especially in some of smaller units in which I started and then served — is the fact that we are maybe in some instances too welcoming of the chance to do a lot of different things. I have always enjoyed teaching the so-called "skills courses," like "Broadcast Writing and Reporting," which I've done almost everywhere I have ever been, except at UNLV. But we could always benefit from more specificity in what we do, especially in terms of teaching history, when it contributes to our research and advances the agenda of the field.

I've always admired History Departments in which there were highly defined faculty specialties — in terms of the areas under study and the periods of study. In the context in which many of us work, primarily Colleges of Arts and Sciences, no one would ever question the need to provide some major focus of that kind. You might say we have developed as a discipline — or related disciplines — with a lot of expectations and many different things to do. That might keep it interesting. I guess it depends. But I do think you also become much less productive if you are trying to do too many things. Of course, it's worked out pretty well. Given some added perspective of course, you can see a "downside." But overall, I think we've made great progress.

Retur
Table of C

Book Award Interview: Meg Lamme

For her book *Public Relations and Religion in American History: Evangelism, Temperance, and Business*, Meg Lamme won the AJHA's award for the outstanding book of the year in 2015. She received her ph.d. at the University of Alabama, where she now a professor of public relations.

Q: Give us a brief summary of your book.

Lamme: This book traces the influence of religion on the development of U.S. public relations through early American evangelicalism, faith-based reform, and business. P.T. Barnum is featured as bookends to this study because his life (1810-1891) spanned a good portion of the time frame.

Many works have examined how *religion employed* public relations and how others *employed religion* as a public relations strategy. This study, however, examined how religion, specifically evangelicalism, *informed* the development of public relations in the United States. I cut a narrow channel of inquiry across three centuries of American history to seek evidence of the intention to bring about change, to persuade or convert groups of adherents or opponents, or even a single soul, to embrace that which a particular advocate intentionally presented in a particular way for a particular anticipated outcome.

My research revealed a rich vein of intentional communication strategies in evangelicalism (via George Whitefield, his protégé William Seward, and Charles Grandison Finney, who acknowledged the influence of Whitefield's promotional methods in his own revivalism), in faith-based social reform movements and their leaders, specifically in temperance (via Oberlin, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union,

rn to Contents

and the Anti-Saloon League of America), and in business (via Ivy Ledbetter Lee).

In the process, a common set of values emerged across people and time, such as the importance of authenticity, action, faith in public opinion, transparency, pragmatism, and an understanding of human nature and business. For example, while Finney held the Gospels to be true, he nonetheless advised that specific passages be pulled to better target different people and groups. Sin, he said, lay in "*deliberate* deception." Ivy Lee was quite open about advocating for "agreed-upon" truths for his clients. Truth, he said, could be found in math only, because the spoken or written word was subject to interpretations, and statistical data could be selectively used as well. Both men, though, like Barnum, espoused the virtue of public opinion, of believing in the public's ability to ultimately decide the veracity and value of a truth.

Q: How did you get the idea for your book?

Lamme: This book was a natural culmination of my work in faith-based reform and public relations history since 2002. Then, in our 2010 study, *Removing the Spin*, Karen Miller Russell and I found that scholarly inquiry had uncovered many, many examples of pre-1900 public relations, the point at which, traditionally, U.S. public relations history was said to have begun. In our analysis, we found evidence that education/ reform, politics/government, and religion all were employing public relations well before business (including Barnum). So I delved further into religion, exploring new avenues of inquiry, and found so much evidence that, of the eight chapters in this book, only two were grounded in my previously published academic works. The others consisted of original research for this volume.

Q: 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?

Lamme: The book is largely written around two kinds of sources: archival collections and original published works by the historical actors. Thanks to the generosity of the AJHA, I was able, as a recipient of a 2012 Joseph McKerns research grant, to immerse in the Ivy Lee papers at Princeton. I'd already done a good deal of research in the Anti-Saloon League papers in Westerville, Ohio, and still had a lot of untapped materials that I was able to inject into the chapter on the League. I also was quite fortunate to find many digitized and open-access works that complemented these two kinds of sources, such as William Seward's 1740 published journal, Barnum's mid-1800s works, and Asa Mahan's reform philosophies in the 1850s *Oberlin Evangelist*. I accessed many historical databases via the University of Alabama library, and, finally, I found a good many primary sources in the library stacks.

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

Lamme: I would like to have spent time in many of the places featured in the book, not only to conduct research on site but also to experience the same places that the historical actors in this study did, such as Oberlin, Ohio; Bethel, Connecticut; and New York City (the site of Five Points, Finney's Chatham Street Chapel, and his Broadway Tabernacle).

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

Lamme: In a book-length project, it's even more important to know what you need and what you don't — even while staying attuned to new evidence and insights. But because many archives now allow digi-

tal imaging without a flash, it's easy to shoot too much without first weighing the value of the artifact. Additionally, with each digital image you also need a system for capturing all the required information for a source citation, and you need to understand the context for that document. I found that some evidence took on new significance as I got deeper into the project. So it was important to be able to locate one document multiple times for multiple reasons.

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

Lamme: In addition to the challenges of setting up a catalog system for my digital images, I also had the challenge of attempting to weave together a number of different threads in this project. So it was important to provide enough background for understanding without getting too deep and veering off track.

Q: What new insights does your book provide?

Lamme: What I offer in this book is a new explanation of how public relations developed in the United States. The players and institutions might be familiar, but the frame is new — built according to their own declared and intentional strategies to effect change among individuals and groups.

Q: What findings most surprised you?

Lamme: I was often struck by the connections I continued to find between and among the people and institutions in this study. For example, Aaron Burr, an early president of Princeton University, which was founded as a New Lights Presbyterian college, was the son-in-law of famous Northampton, Massachusetts, evangelical Jonathan Edwards, Whitefield's contemporary and inspiration. Burr was also the father of

U.S. Vice President Aaron Burr, who fled south after his ill-fated duel with Alexander Hamilton. When Ivy Lee's father, Rev. James W. Lee, visited the South Georgia coast in 1907, he wrote to his son about his travels, noting that Burr had visited there, too, 103 years before. Ivy Lee was an 1898 Princeton graduate whose influences included the *Atlanta Constitution's* Henry Grady and, from Princeton, Woodrow Wilson. Lee would later counsel evangelist Billy Sunday, who had spent part of his boyhood in the orphan's home that had been established by the WCTU's Annie Wittenmyer.

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

Lamme: Think big. Think broad. Get a bit biographical. Then give yourself time to think, to chew on your findings and insights, along the way. Keep a notebook with you at all times to jot down anything related to your research that comes to mind or comes to your attention. Once you commence your project, be sure to write something every day that works toward completion of your book — even if it's entering bibliographic information. End each writing session with a note to yourself about the direction you plan to take the next day so you can avoid confronting a blank screen. Insist that your publisher allow a notes system for your citations. That enables historians and our readers to more fully engage with our subject and that avoids the interruptions in narrative flow that in-text parenthetical citation styles can create (especially when trying to adapt archival evidence into that format). A final thought: Many of us have had prior lives as professional writers for other people and/or institutions; and, as academics, we are mindful of the standards of writing needed to convey rigorous research in our journals. So be sure to attend to your own voice in writing your book. This is your story. Tell it your way.