

Historiography

in Mass Communication



Volume 6 (2020). Number 3

Historiography in Mass Communication

Editor

Wm. David Sloan

Editorial Board

David Copeland
Elon University

Bruce Evensen
DePaul University

John Ferré
University of Louisville

Therese L. Lueck
University of Akron

Erin Coyle
Louisiana State University

Thomas A. Mascaro
Bowling Green State University

Michael D. Murray
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Erika Pribanic-Smith
University of Texas at Arlington

Leonard Ray Teel
Georgia State University

Bernell Tripp
University of Florida

Debra van Tuyll
Augusta University

Yong Volz
University of Missouri

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

The contents of this website, including the contents of the digital journal *Historiography in Mass Communication*, are copyrighted.

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 historiography.jmc@gmail.com

We place importance on the credentials of authors and normally expect an author to have published at least one history book. As you consider submitting an essay, please note that *Historiography* does not go through multiple “revise-and-resubmit” stages. In essence, we expect authors to have an expertise and to “get it right” from the beginning.

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 6 (2020). Number 3

Contents

From the Editor: "History Utopia"	page 1
Historian Interview: Reed Smith	page 5
Book Award Interview: Jeffery A. Smith, <i>War and Press Freedom: The Problem of Prerogative Power</i>	page 13
Jerilyn P. Tinio, "Preserving Diverse Print and Doing Better History: An Interview with James P. Danky"	page 21
Roundtable, "Internationalizing Media History: The Curious Case of China" Yong Volz, Chin-Chuan Lee, Changfeng Chen, Qiliang He, Sei Jeong Chin	page 39

After you download the pdf of this issue, you can go directly to an article by clicking on its title.

Terms of Use: The essays in *Historiography in Mass Communication* may be used for personal research purposes and for classroom teaching material. Multiple copies may be made for classroom teaching. However, no essay may be sold or be part of any collection that is sold. Violations of copyright are subject to prosecution.

NOW AVAILABLE!!!

The 11th edition of the field's leading textbook **THE MEDIA IN AMERICA**

For more than twenty years, **THE MEDIA IN AMERICA** has been the leading textbook in the field of JMC history. Previous editions have been used at as many schools as all the other textbooks combined.



The reason for its success is simply the high standard it uses for the study of history. For example, it is the only textbook that relies mainly on primary sources.

And your students will appreciate the **price**. **THE MEDIA IN AMERICA** costs less than half the price of other major textbooks in the field and, in fact, is lower than for *used* copies of most of them.

The 11th edition is now available for consideration. To request an exam copy, please email the publisher at

vision.press.books@gmail.com

Thank you for considering it as your textbook.

History Utopia

By Wm. David Sloan ©



Sloan

Imagine a fantasy place named “JMC History Utopia.” And imagine further that you get to teach in it!

In this place, every course you teach is history. Nearly all your students are more interested in history than any other subject. In fact, several of the undergrads are majoring in JMC history, most of your grad students are specializing in history, and they all love to do historical research!

And it doesn't stop with students. Every member of your department faculty is interested in history. [Gasp!] When they get together, they talk, not about communication theory or social media or presidential politics but about history. You are expected to write books about history — but your department chair knows that researching and writing a book takes at least five or six years. So promotions and pay raises don't depend on the number of conference papers you present each year.

What a place!

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

© 2020. The author owns the copyright to this essay.

And such a place (except for the JMC part) actually does exist.

It's called the "History Department."

Teaching there must be the best job possible, and doing good history surely comes easy. Who couldn't be a magnificent, proliferant historian in that place?

So how should JMC historians react when "real" historians, who live in History Utopia, look down their long noses?

One could slink into hiding and swear silently, "I'm not going to let anyone ever again know that I once worked in journalism."

Or one could get snippy and ask, "I got my degree from the University of XXX. Where did you get yours — out of a Cracker Jack box?"

In fact, JMC historians might have justice on their side if they get snarky. After all, they face greater challenges than history professors do.

Whereas history professors get to focus their entire teaching load on history, for most JMC historians history accounts for only a small part of their class time. History professors, it is true, might have to teach courses on a range of historical topics, but the fact remains that they are teaching *history* courses.

Most JMC historians, on the other hand, must teach a variety of courses — reporting, copywriting, law, and so forth — unrelated to history. When one's time is so diffused, it's hard to concentrate on history.

In fact, some JMC historians never get to teach a single history course because their schools offer *no* history courses. A person who continues to be a good historian in such circumstances demands our admiration.

But teaching non-history courses is not the only hurdle.

Many JMC historians work in a nescient slue, where colleagues think the world of knowledge is a small flat Earth, formed of the basic elements of theory, critical studies, and experimental methods. Know-

ing little about history, they look down on it nevertheless, assuming that it can't be important because it's not in their own narrow, confined specialty areas. Working as a lone JMC historian in that milieu can sap the spirit.

Besides that, most JMC historians have to overcome their own educations. "Real" historians typically spent most of their Ph.D. programs studying history. That's not the case with JMC historians. Those who did their Ph.D. studies in JMC programs had to devote much of their time to non-history course work. Even if they were allowed to specialize in history, they had to take courses in a variety of other areas, such as behavioral and social science theory and methods. If they were lucky, they perhaps got to spend half of their time in history. Many were not so fortunate.

Not majoring in history, they still must master its methods and mindset — even while, after becoming professors, they must devote much of their time to non-history.

The marvel is that we have as many excellent historians as we do. In fact, we have many who can stand with the best of historians.

Unfortunately, some JMC professors who say they are historians never rise above the difficulties. Some are unwilling to take the time required to do historical work. Others remain more interested in professional practices, today's concerns and controversies, and even partisan politics. Our field has a ponderous percentage of professors who claim to be historians but never move beyond the superficial research required in professional fields such as journalism.

They might get a few conference papers from their dissertation, one or two articles, and perhaps even a book out of it, but then they never do any additional significant historical research. They're content to get tenure — which at some schools is bestowed if after six years a professor

is breathing. Tenure is their great goal in life, for after that they no longer have to do anything.

And many don't. They may show up for academic conferences or even serve on committees or panels — activities that require little work but that they can list in their annual reports in hopes of getting a pay raise — but for the most part they're content to hibernate or spend their academic lives as lichen or squander nearly all their time in the present while pretending they are historians.

It's not surprising that real historians look down their honkers at them.

Some JMC historians, on the other hand, perform exceptionally well despite the disadvantages. They are productive because they want to be and because they revel in history and relish all the research it requires.

In fact, our field has historians who are better at what they do and are more prolific than the majority of “real” historians are. They've compiled research records that would be exemplary even in History Departments.

And they are the ones who are most responsible for making and keeping JMC history vigorous and vital — if not a Utopia, then close to it.

In this issue of *Historiography*, we have two interviews that demonstrate the quality of JMC historians practicing today — Reed Smith and Jeff Smith — and we follow those interviews with another one with the renowned archivist Jim Danky. Then we top off the issue with a roundtable among five exceptional historians discussing the study of the history of the news media in China.

[CLICK HERE TO
RETURN TO TABLE
OF CONTENTS](#)

Historian Interview

By Reed Smith ©



Smith

Reed Smith, a professor in the Department of Communication Arts at Georgia Southern University, is the author of the books *Samuel Medary & The Crisis: Testing the Limits of Press Freedom* and *Cecil Brown: The Murrow Boy Who Became Broadcasting's Crusader for Truth*. He also has written a number of journal articles on JMC history and presented more than a dozen conference research papers. He has received a variety of awards for both his research and his service activities. He received his

Ph.D. from Ohio University.

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

Smith: I was born and raised in a working-class family in southeastern Ohio and was the first college graduate in my family. I went to school in New Concord, Ohio (hometown of astronaut John Glenn). Because I was an underachieving high school student, I began my academic career at the Ohio University-Zanesville regional campus, before earning a BS in Telecommunications from Ohio University-Athens, an MA in Speech from Bowling Green State University, and a Ph.D. from the

© 2020. The author owns the copyright to this article.

E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio U.

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

Smith: I was a radio DJ, broadcast news reporter/anchor, social worker, video producer and NPR station manager.

Q: Where, and what courses, have you taught?

Smith: I currently teach courses in media ethics, mass communication history, announcing, audio news production and sports reporting at Georgia Southern University, where I have been since 1994. Previously, I have taught courses in public speaking, film and field video production. Prior to moving to GSU, I taught at the Ohio University-Zanesville campus, where I was the Director of the Radio-TV Department.

Q: 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.

Smith: I have been interested in history my entire life (mostly war-related in my early years). I began doing historical research in mass communications to produce my master's thesis at Bowling Green (though I knew little about proper historical research techniques, I utilized oral history interviews). When I returned to school for my Ph.D. in my late-30s, I focused on developing historical research skills in journalism and film studies. Pat Washburn encouraged me to research a Civil War Peace-Democrat publisher in Columbus, Ohio, by the name of Samuel Medary, for a paper in his historical research class. Medary's accom-

Historian Interview

plishments regarding press freedom were briefly mentioned in Ed and Mike Emery's *Press and America* book. The paper later became my dissertation, and then my first published book. These experiences taught me how important it is to conduct thorough research, what is required to write a quality narrative, and instilled in me a passion to learn more about and practice historical research and writing.

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

Smith: Washburn most influenced my work as a doctoral student, but I also have learned a great deal from reading the work of David McCullough and Stephen Ambrose and viewing Ken Burns' documentaries. I have been impressed with how they "personalize" history and pay attention to the details and greater meaning of history's activities in a variety of fields of interest. Most importantly, however, Washburn helped make historical research achievable and fun.

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

Smith: Broadcast journalism, radio history, biography, and 20th century news coverage of U.S. events.

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

Smith: I have published two biographies: the one about Medary and another about one of the unsung members of the renowned CBS

Murrow Boys World War II team, Cecil Brown. My *Journalism Monograph* case study about newspaper coverage of the 1904 Statesboro, GA. lynching, that shed new light on newspaper reporting and editorializing about lynchings, won the AEJMC 2006 Covert Award for Best U.S. Journalism History Paper. I have had two book chapters, and eight journal articles published in broadcast and journalism journals, and I have just finished coauthoring the 5th edition of the *Broadcast Announcing Worktext* that is being published this year.

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

Smith: The recent biography about Brown. It was a four-year project that allowed me to research through his personal papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society and interview his 100-year-old wife and others who knew him. Because of the thoroughness of the research and my development as a writer, I believe it is my best work so far. Because Brown's career spanned forty years and he reported major events from around the world, I learned a great deal about historic national and world events.

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?

Smith: I have enjoyed producing projects about what I would call “small-man” or “under-the-radar” topics. My work attempts to expose the significance of individuals or media developments that other histo-

rians either have overlooked or considered insignificant.

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

Smith: I would have started my historical research and writing career earlier. I spent several years as a practicing broadcaster and college teacher before earning my doctoral degree and becoming a productive scholar. The years since have been among the most rewarding of my life. I also would have joined AJHA earlier. Being involved with the organization has enhanced my career, acquainted me with new friends, and enlightened my perspectives regarding the discipline of history and life.

Q: 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.

Smith: My philosophy is to attempt to “secure the truth” about a historical figure or activity to the best of my ability, regardless of whether it is flattering or critical. I also believe it is important to “tell a good story” that readers will enjoy, and to contribute to knowledge that has previously been unavailable. I read a criticism of scholarly history a few years ago in which a commentator said most academics write history only for “each other to read.” That struck me as a sad commentary. Therefore, I believe it is important to write history that not only possesses scholarly integrity but also makes for an “interesting read” for a non-academic person. I attempt to abide by McCullough’s standard of not including any statement in my work that cannot be verified via two credible sources.

Q: How does your worldview impact your historical research?

Smith: I am a practicing Christian, which encourages me to abide by the “servant” model of historical research. Although few of my projects have focused on religion in media, I am drawn to studying individuals in history who demonstrate how they have sought to improve humanity and the JMC professions. My view is that history represents the playing out of a great moral drama that documents mankind’s struggle to understand, navigate and improve humanity. Many mass communication practitioners have seen their job as a special calling to social responsibility. Regardless of their religious beliefs, they believed they could make a difference in the world’s wellbeing by practicing their craft. As a result, they were idealists who demonstrated an admirable devotion to sacrifice and serving the Greater Good. These traits encourage me to tell their stories.

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

Smith: It is a mixed bag. There are many high-quality projects being produced, but there also are projects that are either superficially researched, poorly written or that fail to grasp and interpret historical meaning. Quality history cannot simply be the chronicling of an event or the telling of a person’s life but should employ analysis of meaning and contextualization. History does not occur in a vacuum. It is impacted by events taking place in the world around it — and can have an influence on those events as well. Therefore, it is imperative that historians read broadly, so they can contextualize and interpret events or an individual’s activities in the context of the time period in which they

Historian Interview

occurred. This gets to the fallacy of “present-mindedness.” Too many historians fail to grasp and include in their project the tenor of the time or relevant influences. All humans are flawed, but despite their flaws, many have acted courageously and with professional integrity. Thus, they are made up of complex characteristics, and sometimes contradictions. The historian needs to give the complete picture of that person’s life or the event’s circumstances. If the historian does not do so, s/he shortchanges the reader and behaves unethically.

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?

Smith: Because of my background, I am biased. I believe an area of JMC history that does not receive enough attention is broadcasting. This may occur because print journalism history is more easily researched than broadcast. Many of broadcast history’s audio or video recordings have either been discarded or disintegrated. Nevertheless, the personal papers of many notable broadcast figures do exist and can be mined. Neglecting broadcasting as a subject may also be a result of a prejudice against broadcasting by scholars who believe it is unworthy of investigation because it lacks the integrity of the print media. This is an unfortunate view. Radio news has dominated journalism since the 1940s and television since the 1960s. More broadly, JMC historians need to make the case with the larger academic community — via the depth and breadth of their work — that many JMC studies demonstrate research integrity and quality writing. Dating to the 1700s in the US, and earlier internationally, JMC activities have played an integral role in not just reporting upon but often impacting events. Each study

we do needs to make that case with readers.

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

Smith: Convincing communication departments and college administrators of the importance of offering courses in and respecting media history and historical research. The study of history constitutes the foundation of all academic disciplines, but quantitative research is currently the darling of academe in terms of financial support and visibility. Academic journals also tend to give history short shrift, which is shortsighted. Although my own department has supported my projects and has consistently offered a course in mass communication history, I am the only faculty member who employs historiography as a research tool. New faculty entering the department have for the most part not been exposed to historical methods as part of their graduate programs. Thus, historical research is not something they prioritize. Regarding the practice of research, the current dominance of email and other electronic forms of communication are going to make it more difficult for the historian in the future. The paper trail that serves as the primary source for most of us today when researching JMC events and figures, will be more difficult for future historians to access.

[CLICK HERE
TO RETURN
TO TABLE OF
CONTENTS](#)

Book Award Interview

By Jeffery A. Smith ©



Smith

Jeff Smith received the 2000 Best Journalism and Mass Communication History Book Award from the AEJMC's History Division for *War and Press Freedom: The Problem of Prerogative Power*. He is a professor emeritus from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he taught in the Department of Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies, and where he specialized in the early American press, legal history of freedom of expression, media and war, and media and religion. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Q: Give us a brief summary of your book.

Smith: Research can analyze a problem rather than just describe something. *War and Press Freedom* asks how we could have so much wartime secrecy, censorship, and repression in American history if the nation has a First Amendment and a right for citizens to know what their servants in government are doing. While closely examining the rationales for sedition statutes and presidential-military decisions, I could see that officials often tried to justify silencing critics and suppressing embarrass-

© 2020. The author owns the copyright to this article.

ing information by saying that the higher law of survival could overcome the words of the Constitution which calls itself the “supreme law of the land.” Are assertions of necessity or safety enough to sweep away carefully written and democratically ratified principles of government?

The government has powers and the people have rights. Attempts to balance freedoms against national security are likely to be affected by inordinate fears. The best approach is for officials to be as open and frank as possible and for the press to agree to reasonable cooperation with authorities. Everyone should be responsible and willing to choose options other than repression. The Constitution can be respected as long as people have enough courage and integrity to do what is right.

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

Smith: I had written two books about the eighteenth-century press. *Printers and Press Freedom: The Ideology of Early American Journalism* maintains that the First Amendment was the outcome of many years of thought and experience rejecting government restrictions on journalism. *Franklin and Bache: Envisioning the Enlightened Republic* is about how some journalists advocated Jeffersonian democracy. I wanted to study how the constitutional guarantee and the faith in popular sovereignty fared in the following centuries. The focus for *War and Press Freedom* was quickly established as I realized that most of the major issues were related to war and national security issues.

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?

Smith: I try to research long time periods to observe trends and pat-

terns. The downside is that seeing the big picture takes time. I spent at least eight years on the *War and Press Freedom* project. I had to sift through statutes, court cases, government records, correspondence, memoirs, and media content. I wanted to read as much of the relevant scholarship as I could. The footnotes became so extensive that the editor insisted that I remove any that were not necessary. I cut approximately a third of them, mainly just ones that told readers where to find more information.

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

Smith: On page 190 I refer to news reports that said the Reagan administration had secret contingency plans for suspending the Constitution and imposing censorship in the event of a national emergency or mass protests. Oliver North admitted the plans existed and some were leaked. I tried to use the Freedom of Information Act to find out more, but the responses said nothing like what I was seeking existed. You do not have to be paranoid to believe that officials hide things they do not want us to know.

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

Smith: Historians need to regard official statements with the degree of distrust shown in I.F. Stone's journalism. Prudential rationales for secrecy and censorship often do not stand up to scrutiny. As I looked behind national security scares and ostensible reasons for hushing up information, I saw many cases of self-serving nonsense. After the humil-

iation of the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, for instance, American authorities tried to stop coverage of the extent of the damage. The supposed purpose was to keep useful facts from the enemy, but Japanese pilots and others knew what had happened. People in Japan were better informed than people in the U.S.

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

Smith: Managing thousands of sources was time-consuming. I organized many files and piles of paper both topically and chronologically. Useful findings were annotated on the first pages of copies and on note-cards in books. I tried to put the latest discoveries in the manuscript as soon as possible so that I did not have to recall them later. Having an outline was helpful for knowing where sentences could go, but adjustments in the plan were necessary.

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

Smith: As someone who values civil liberties and thinks the Constitution was meant to control future actions, I cannot say that I was neutral on the subject of the book. I just tried to be scrupulously accurate and fair. Presidents, the military, and the news media have often failed to follow democratic principles in wartime. We need to know how that happens and how to avoid future mistakes. Well-informed reasoning is especially important in times of danger, but often decreases under pressure. Looking back at journalists being censored, jailed, and denied information that should be known, we have to ask

ourselves how free we have been and how we can prevent attacks on press rights.

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

Smith: The founders recognized that legitimate military secrets could exist, but they did not want government to decide what the press could publish. The Constitution says Congress shall make “all” laws and “no law” abridging press freedom. As I try to show in the first chapter of *War and Press Freedom* and in a law journal article, “Prior Restraint: Original Intentions and Modern Interpretations,” the First Amendment means what it says. Government, as Hamilton, Madison, and others stated, simply has no power to control expression. They left the decisions to citizens.

I and others, most recently Wendell Bird, have published plenty of evidence that the eighteenth-century democratic understanding of press freedom was not suppressive as some, following Leonard W. Levy, have claimed. People were to retain a right to sue each other for libel, but prior restraint and seditious libel were supposed to be eliminated. Of course, as *War and Press Freedom* shows, things did not always work out as planned. Congress has passed sedition laws against expression and the military has imposed involuntary censorship.

Such actions have become hard to defend. Too much unwarranted secrecy now seems to be the biggest concern. Releases of important information are often too little and too late. News organizations sometimes have good reasons to publish classified documents and usually do not suffer any serious legal consequences. Security breaches show that no one can count on secrets being kept secret.

Slapdash rationales for suppression need careful analysis. Consider

the “clear and present danger” test that was deployed against anti-war opinions in *Schenck v. U.S.* (1919). Justice Holmes used a “falsely shouting fire in a theater” analogy to support punishment for political heresy. A lie might cause mindless panic and be illegal in some way, but people should be free to make arguments they consider moral and logical. Holmes later took a marketplace-of-ideas approach that made more sense and was closer to what the founders had in mind.

Another example of a questionable rationale is in *Near v. Minnesota* (1931). The Supreme Court said that censorship could be justified to stop publication of the sailing times for troop ships in wartime. If a journalist is willing to commit such a self-damning act and provoke public outrage, the enemy could not be sure the information is reliable anyway because the military uses deception on movements. If the information is correct, then a secret was not protected adequately and could be known already to an enemy. Changing plans might be necessary if details are revealed, but should government have the authority to punish the publication of facts, especially ones that are easily obtained? How many misdeeds would be concealed? Officials should work out voluntary agreements with the press and protect bona fide whistleblowers rather than conduct unconstitutional censorship.

More concealment can mean more wrongdoing. American forces may accomplish good things with great sacrifices, but also have wasted vast sums, harmed the environment, and tortured and massacred human beings. The United States has used nuclear weapons and propped up malodorous regimes. The military’s high level of public support is largely the result of its communication strategies and tactics. Few people realize, for instance, how the Pentagon gets favorable treatment from the entertainment industry in exchange for permission to use its equipment and expertise.

Q: What findings most surprised you?

Smith: The chapter on the rise of presidential-military actions against the press in the nineteenth-century was the most eye-opening. James Madison, a First Amendment absolutist, was not interested in any restraints during the War of 1812 even though the country was invaded. He did not see any legal justification for Andrew Jackson's military actions against the press. Abraham Lincoln, who took an expansive view of his wartime powers, often accepted repressive measures by his generals. Political and practical calculations could be a factor. Strict military censorship was normal during the Spanish-American War and its aftermath. Blunders and misconduct were covered up.

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

Smith: I spend far more time reading than writing. Historians, like reporters, need credible sources. Digging into primary materials, with a critical eye, can produce fresh insights. Having a knowledge of high-quality research helps us understand topics better and avoid just repeating what others have already done.

As a manuscript reviewer, I have often noticed that very relevant citations are missing. Authors have to point out what has been published and how they are advancing knowledge and understanding in some way. The work of others can be located not only in library databases, but also in Google Books and Google Scholar. Worldcat.org lists books and archival collections.

Much of what can be said about writing books can also be said about writing articles. I have summarized my thoughts on article writ-

ing in a March 2015 *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* essay, “Writing Media History Articles: Manuscript Standards and Scholarly Objectives.” There I discuss constructing narratives, choosing interpretive approaches, and making significant contributions. I could not stress enough the importance of being guided by a research question that emerges from gaps and debates in previous work. I frequently helped authors locate literature and refine questions when I was the *Quarterly*’s associate editor for law and history submissions from 2002 to 2013.

Writing a legal history book or article requires solid foundations in both law and history, something that few people acquire. History is used and abused by attorneys, justices, and law professors to support their contentions. Capable legal historians, though, can present nuanced and perceptive interpretations that take both legal processes and historical contexts into account. Legal historians who write on journalism topics can bring in media studies perspectives. Interdisciplinarity has practical limits, but the more we take into account the more sophisticated our work can be.

No substitute exists for reading as deeply and widely as possible. When the late Jim Baughman, my dissertation adviser at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, picked up a book, he looked at the citations first to get a sense of the quality and quantity of the research. He told me that a historian could not do more than four or five significant books in a career because of the time involved in each one. I have completed the manuscript for my fourth book, one I am calling *Principles and Press Freedom: Moral Imagination in American Journalism History*. Like *War and Press Freedom*, a massive amount of research was done, but the results can be worth the effort.

[CLICK HERE
TO RETURN
TO TABLE OF
CONTENTS](#)

Preserving Diverse Print and Doing Better History: An Interview with James P. Danky

By Jerilyn P. Tinio ©



Tinio



Danky

The Illinois Newspaper Project (INP) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign identifies, preserves, and digitizes Illinois newspapers. The INP's most recent work, funded by the National Digital Newspaper Program, aims to diversify statewide and national newspaper collections by digitizing newspapers published by historically underrepresented Illinois communities. In March, several new titles were added to the *Illinois Digital Newspaper Collections*, including newspapers published by Illinois African American communities, labor unions, and temperance organizations. These titles will also soon be on *Chronicling America*, the Library of Congress's text-searchable database of selected U.S. historical newspapers.

In recognition of these recent additions, the

Jerilyn Tinio received her Ph.D. in philosophy from The Ohio State University. She is earning her M.S. in Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she also works as the National Digital Newspaper Program Outreach and Instruction Graduate Assistant.

© 2020. The author owns the copyright to this article.

INP interviewed James P. Danky, editor of the indispensable reference tool *African-American Newspapers and Periodicals: A National Bibliography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998). Danky is renowned for his 40 years spent expanding and diversifying serial collections at the Wisconsin Historical Society. For this work, he received the 2019 American Journalism Historians Association's Distinguished Service to Journalism History Award.

Over the course of this interview, Danky speaks to future stewards of the historical record about the research value of newspapers, how libraries can collect everything, and the importance of collecting diverse print for incorporating underrepresented voices into the telling of history.

On Newspapers

INP: In the published version of your acceptance speech, you wrote “historians need to consult the widest possible array of sources, including any and all possible journalism.”¹ Do you think journalistic sources are essential to the accurate telling of history?

Danky: I do think journalistic sources are essential to the accurate telling of history. You need to read the local newspaper, the college newspaper, magazines, et cetera. I don't distinguish between newspapers and magazines. I know that's an important distinction for some. But I've never met a researcher whose interests were articulated as that they wanted to see a newspaper on a subject, or for an area. They're interested in all the publications from there; it's an ecology of publications that exists in a particular community.

INP: Is there anything special about newspapers as sources for research?

Danky: Along the lines of what Clarence Brigham of the American Antiquarian Society said: if you can have only one source to do the history of a community, you want to choose newspapers, and that's simply because it's the source that has the greatest detail.

The *Chicago Tribune* doesn't devote much to, say, Niles, Illinois (home to The Leaning Tower of Niles a half-size replica of the Leaning Tower of Pisa.). It shouldn't. It has other issues it should highlight. But the local newspaper is the one that will have the greatest density of coverage. It's with the local, small-town, suburban newspapers — that is, the non-national papers — that you get the admonition to the editor to mention as many names as possible. It has a picture of the girls' volleyball team. They make sure they identify every single member of it because their parents are going to read the paper; team members are going to read the paper. They want to see their picture and then their name in the newspaper.

That kind of density of coverage is what makes newspapers so essential, because you never know when the genuinely prosaic, repetitious kind of item is exactly what you're going to want to use. It's what sets newspapers apart from all other kinds of serials.

That's why digitizing them and then providing full-text searching à la *Chronicling America* and *Illinois Digital Newspaper Collections* just changes everything. It used to be that you'd have to go to a library that had the bound volumes of a paper. You'd have to say: "Well, the person I'm interested in was active in approximately this period." You'd just have to start reading.

INP: What else could provide that level of coverage? Government docu-

ments?

Danky: Think about a community that you're familiar with. You can get a lot of information from large government data sets like the U.S. Census and others. These are great resources, but they really only get you the bare bones of the people that you're looking for. If you're looking for them collectively, prosopography, a collective biography of people who live in Niles — sorry, just using that as my example today — in order to really get beyond the sort of bare bones of their lives, when they were born, what their family structure was, you need to go look at the newspaper.

INP: Newspapers definitely seem like a good bet for genealogy research, but what other types of questions can they answer?

Danky: Here's a question: "When did the soap factory get built in Niles?" There are lots of government documents, public records, that might lead you to that but there's probably a news story the day that Bubbles Forever opened in Niles, and on the people that were going to be hired to make soap. It'll amplify those kinds of things, and you'd say, "Oh, but that would only be of interest to a local historian of Niles, Illinois, or historian of soap." But it could be of interest to a historian of technology, a historian of public health.

In my career at the Wisconsin Historical Society, I selected and added to the collection over 75,000 serial titles. A bunch of newspapers, but then tons and tons of periodicals, from scholarly journals to zines. For each and every one of those titles, I made it a point to — and, I did this very, very quickly — make sure that I could answer a question that nobody ever asked me, except maybe once or twice: "How could this be

used?”

My answer wasn't prescriptive. It's not how it *should* be used but just so that I had an answer in case anybody ever asked me. Because I collected a lot of very outrageous things.

INP: This seems important for justifying including things in the collection.

Danky: Absolutely, exactly right. It is important. There was one title that a cataloger, and I had the privilege of working with two wonderful catalogers, brought back to me and said, “This is not about anything.” I said, “I know, but I thought we should have at least one title in the collection that was not about anything, at all, kind of like *Seinfeld* [laughs]. But it's from Racine, Wisconsin. We should have that. Because we're the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.² It's enough of a rationale, that it was produced here.”

On Public Libraries as Local Print Archives

INP: What collection development philosophy do you think is required for building a truly diverse and comprehensive collection, keeping in mind, of course, that not everything can be collected?

Danky: I disagree with the second part of your question. That is, I do think everything can be collected. And that makes me a follower of Antonio Panizzi of the British Library. He didn't found the British Library but he made it great in the 19th century and built the original building that now houses the British Museum. I do think it can happen.

By that, I mean it needs to be a decentralized approach. If you are that librarian in Niles, Illinois, then everything that is produced in Niles

should be in your library. You can't collect everything in Niles, but you can collect Nilesiana. You can have everything from Niles. Someone says: "That's a boring book." The response is: "Yes, but the imprint says Niles so that's why we have to have it."

Almost all public libraries have local history rooms so if you found something that was socially and politically repellent to a lot of people you can just shelve it there. That's fine. It doesn't have to go out on the bookshelf. You don't have to goad the public and get yourself fired. But you can have those kinds of materials there. And you would be doing everybody a great service because they can count on you to have everything about Niles.

Now, most public libraries do not do this. They don't think of themselves as a local print archive, and they should. Because in Champaign-Urbana you can't collect everything produced in Illinois because you won't even know about it. It's a big state and all the states are big. You have to depend on local public libraries, the same way that with the Illinois Newspaper Project a lot of titles that have been digitized, that will be digitized, have been collected by other libraries in Illinois.

The mantra for librarians in more recent decades, maybe not today anymore, used to be "access, not ownership," and the first time I heard that, I said: "Well, that's great, provided somebody owns it." There isn't going to be any access, otherwise.

On Diversifying Collections through Community Awareness

INP: So, this would be to see public libraries as cultural heritage institutions. I'm not sure if public libraries see themselves as playing this sort of role in the community.

Danky: They should. A community is only going to support so many

cultural institutions and we want them to support the library because we're librarians. It's self-interest. But in most communities, there'll be a local history society. Public libraries should want to partner with those people. They can share the responsibilities of doing something like that.

But when it comes to the print of the community, I think that it's best handled in the library. Librarians know what to do. It's, like, fun and easy, and if you do it you will learn a lot more about your community. Because most of us, oh, even if we were born in the community, we went to school there, or whatever, it turns out that we don't know very much about the community.

We know about our neighborhood, we know our commute routes, et cetera. But sometimes we don't even notice the neighborhood changes or the city changes. It happens all the time. And we come up with these preposterous notions that, I don't know, gosh, that Latinx communities only live in the Southwestern states. They aren't the dominant group in, say, Pilsen in Chicago. Okay, well, you know, if you get out more, you'll see that that's just not true. And if you drive through small towns in Wisconsin and Illinois you will find all kinds of Latinx businesses, you just have to look for them. When you do that, you can also look and see if there are any publications and you pick them up and you put them in your library.

INP: I think what we're hearing from you is a call to action.

Danky: Absolutely. You've heard me correctly.

INP: But, besides information professionals, it seems that community members should also want and advocate for that. Is that right?

Danky: But a lot of community members have — well, the same way:

if you go into a store, just any kind of store, and they don't have what you want. Do you go back to that same store and ask for it again?

INP: [laughs] No.

Danky: [laughs] No. Almost nobody does. So, consequently, community members, even those that produce these said publications, they may have gotten the unmistakable message that their work is not welcome in the public library. It's important to hold the mirror up to librarians and say: "Okay, who are we?"

You know, I gave a lecture in Champaign-Urbana decades ago, and I think its title was actually "Libraries: They Would Have Been a Good Idea."³ They need to be different than the ones we have and, by that, I think I want to start with the people who choose to become librarians. It's not an obvious calling or career path. But the kinds of people that become librarians, let's ask questions about them, how they're recruited, and what they think this is all about.

A practical way of answering your question is to start with library education and say: "Okay, what does U of I's library school teach and what does it advocate for?" Well, it's not just a series of factoids or something; it's a whole outlook about what you're going to do. Because the only thing I know for sure about information is that it has radically changed in all ways, and it will change all over again in your career, the rest of my life, too. I mean, I've watched it change. It's unbelievable.

On Promoting Non-Mainstream Materials

INP: Throughout your career, you didn't just collect these non-mainstream materials, you also promoted these materials to potential users. Any advice

for those currently working in research libraries, or soon to be working in them, on effective ways to promote the use of non-mainstream materials?

Danky: You promote them by constantly giving talks to library school students, or, when you're on the other side, when you have a professional job, to local library associations, ILA or WLA for Wisconsin, et cetera. I can't remember how many of those I gave, but it's tons-aroo-nio.

I arrived once at the Minnesota Library Association to talk about non-mainstream materials. I'd never been to Rochester, Minnesota, where they were meeting, where the Mayo Clinic is. So, I just went to the public library, which was next to the convention center, and I used the phone book — because it was that long ago — and I talked to a reference librarian that was not very helpful. I picked up things on the free rack when there was an avalanche of print in those racks instead of the thin things they are today. And I used all examples of print in Rochester, Minnesota, a city I had never been to and had known nothing about, besides the Mayo Clinic.

And I remember one of the lines I used was that if I was there, and I was developing community information sources, I noticed there are two or three Hmong churches listed under religion in the yellow pages. I said, "Yeah, okay, that's interesting." So, you call them up and then you say, "Do you publish anything?" The person that you're speaking to will say, "Oh, yeah, but all of that's in Hmong." And, I'll say, "Well, that's okay, we want that too. We want Hmong library materials in our library."

That's how you address the Niles hardware store question. You have those materials there. They're not going to be, like, bestsellers or hot videos, but they can be in your local history collection, so that when

someone says, “I wonder who lived in Rochester, Minnesota, in the 1980s?” Well, the answer is that it includes Hmong people, and, “see, we have these examples of their church bulletins and they don’t take up very much room and they’re free.”

But you should show the community that you’re interested in them, and then you catalog their materials under appropriate subject headings, as well as getting them to come in and help translate the materials for you, or you might try and use Google Translate, today.

INP: Are you saying the best way to promote these materials is to make them available?

Danky: Yeah, exactly. Your best public information source is the online catalog. I was about to say the card catalog; that’s because I’m old. And if someone comes up and says that this isn’t cataloged well, then you ask, “How can it be better cataloged? How can we improve access?” Because changing those things is pretty easy by comparison to when you had to pull all the cards and retype them.

On Usage Statistics and Creative Networking

INP: In the meantime, what if one of these items isn’t getting used? How do we justify keeping it? Should we be making the argument that it’ll get used in the future?

Danky: I do make that argument, that people will use it in the future, and we don’t even fully understand which ways they might use it. I think the impulse to weed probably comes from a certain kind of perspective.

If you need to create space, then go in the stacks, go in the Z's and get rid of all the commercially produced indices that have been superseded by electronic ones. Get rid of the New York Times Index. If you do that alone you'll probably clear dozens and dozens of shelves. It's a giant thing.

And this can be done in the Niles public library too. You can have obscure materials that, for sure, don't get used right away. You have to ask some practical questions, like, "How much room are they taking up?" I think that in most cases they don't take up all that much room. They don't impair the institution's ability to do the things that seem more pressing.

Everybody can always do more. That's what I said.

INP: So, be more creative, and don't use circulation or usage statistics to measure the value of an item?

Danky: Don't use them in isolation. It's an opportunity to take advantage of something libraries do better than most groups, and that's to network. It's in our DNA. Every library is part of some various and multiple consortia.

U of I Library has a campus consortium that it's part of, that's Main Library and all other libraries on campus. But it's also part of all the libraries in Illinois. And then it's, in turn, part of the libraries in the U.S. and around the world. It's a global institution. So, let's take advantage of that and let's not get hung up on how we can't have our serial collection grow from 20,000 to, I don't know, 40,000, because it just depends on what those other 20,000 titles would be. Maybe you could. You don't know. Not until you look into it. So just beware of anyone that tells you that one size fits all.

Everything I'm telling you will only get you in trouble, that's for sure. But everything that I'm telling you are things I've done. So it's not just theory, it's practice.

On Preserving Diverse Print and Doing Better History

*INP: In your introduction to African-American Newspapers and Periodicals: A National Bibliography, you suggested many periodicals published by historically underrepresented communities suffered from archival neglect and exclusionary collection development patterns favoring “the Great White Man view of history.”*⁴

Is it fair to say that only a small fraction of these resources has been identified, located, and made accessible?

Danky: Yes, that was obviously the rationale for doing the African American bibliography and to see it as a start. My late colleague Dick Newman said, “Jim, when you get done, we’ll have a pretty good list to get started with.” I just laughed; I said, “That’s true.” The bibliography is not an endpoint. You can really see that in the work of Randall Burkett and his colleagues at Emory.⁵ They have compiled a long list of titles that are NIDs, N-I-Ds (Not in Danky’s).

Randall told me it’s over 800 titles now, and that’s a substantial percentage of the 6,500 or so that I identified, and it will only grow. But that’s a good thing because it does two things: it reminds everyone that there’s a world of black print out there that’s not been identified or collected, and it urges others to go forth and identify and collect it.

INP: Do you think there’s a trend towards including more diverse perspectives in the telling of history?

Danky: I do think there's been a giant flowering of African American historical scholarship, that's for sure. But probably, if you look at an area like Vietnamese or Hmong people in America, a sizable population, that we're just beginning to understand those communities in our country and we should make sure that we gather all those materials. It can't just be the job of UC Irvine to do that.

There are other communities, in Minnesota, Wisconsin, California, Northern California, et cetera, maybe in Illinois. It's why the most important event for librarians will be the 2020 Census. Not just as citizens, but also to begin to get the numbers about who it is that lives in their service area. I think librarians will be surprised by who lives there, by ethnicity, by race, by economic status, all kinds of things. It will be important for librarians to look at those numbers and figure out how they can, in this case, collect materials to serve those communities.

INP: In your introduction, you also observed that more recent historical scholarship reveals a "drive for more authentic and more particular voices." Can you speak more to that point?

Danky: Good historians are going to bring out somebody who exemplifies whatever it is that they're interested in. Because, in fact, people who read history want to read about individuals. Today they won't all just be presidents and generals, they'll be other people, which is good because most of us are other people. They used to stop with presidents and generals.

Take, for instance, the postmaster general of the United States. That's a boring job to read about. They'll say: "He was an important person that was appointed to that position." That's fine. But that's pret-

ty uninteresting. Let's talk about what it meant to get mail service across the country, if that's our interest, and how that was carried out, or, the role of unionization, public employees. There are a zillion different things that can make that interesting.

But the uninteresting way that was presented for decades and decades was that there was a consensus about things in America, when we're a country where there's never been a consensus about anything. To show the diversity of opinion and experience within America definitely leads to better history.

On Digital Technologies and Print Culture

INP: Digital preservation initiatives seem to be a promising way to showcase this diversity. But do you see any pitfalls with relying on digital technologies to help the work and mission of research libraries?

Danky: In terms of reliability, no. I don't think so. I think it is a given that the digital world is so overwhelmingly integrated into our lives. No, I think we're okay. I think one of the challenges will be for materials that are behind paywalls versus those that are free. The difference between free and paid materials is a very important one. The library's job is to help make information freely available if they can; to maximize the amount of things that are free. And I'm on both sides of the issue simultaneously. I want things to be free, and when I edit things for ProQuest, I want it to be paid for so I get royalties. How's that?

INP: Yes, it seems like the funding has to come from somewhere.

Danky: Exactly. There are things I want to see happen, and no public

source is providing the money, and ProQuest might, so we pitch it to them. But public initiatives like the National Digital Newspaper Program let you put more Polish, and now Czech and Hungarian, newspapers online. Private companies aren't going to do it because they don't think there's a market. But public initiatives can do things for which there's not an obvious market, or a large market.

INP: *You were cofounder of the Center for the History of Print Culture in Modern America at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, now known as the Center for the History of Print and Digital Culture. What is a central question addressed by the history of print culture that you think we should be asking ourselves in view of the proliferation of online publishing?*

Danky: A central question is, "What is the experience of print and the digital for people?" It's reception theory. There's a whole group of active scholars interested in how print gets used.

What the center has as one of its hallmarks is that we've always been extremely democratic when we considered print. We didn't say, "It's enough to read the Declaration of Independence or the book-of-the-month club," not that there's anything wrong with those things. But you tell me what kind of print you're interested in. Polish American newspapers? Cool. Zines? Fine. It doesn't matter what it is, you make the case for it.

Other bibliographies edited by Danky:

Danky, J.P., ed. *Undergrounds: A Union List of Alternative Periodicals in Libraries of the US and Canada*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1974.

Danky, J.P., M.E. Hady, N.E. Strache, and B.C. Noonan, eds. *Women's Peri-*

odicals and Newspapers from the 18th Century to 1981: A Union List of the Holdings of Madison, Wisconsin Libraries. Boston, Mass.: G.K. Hall, 1982.

Danky, J.P., and M.E. Hady, eds. *Native American Periodicals and Newspapers, 1828-1982: Bibliography, Publishing Record, and Holdings.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984.

Further reading:

Baughman, J.L., J.P. Danky, and J. Ratner-Rosenhagen, eds. *Protest on the Page: Essays on Print and the Culture of Dissent Since 1865.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015.

Danky, J.P., and W.A. Wiegand, eds. *Print Culture in a Diverse America.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998.

Danky, J.P., and W.A. Wiegand, eds. *Women in Print: Essays on the Print Culture of American Women from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.

Danky, J.P., and D. Kitchen, eds. *Underground Classics: The Transformation of Comics into Comix.* Harry N. Abrams 2009.

Pawley, C., and W. A. Wiegand, W.A., eds. Special Issue: Alternative Print Culture: Social History and Libraries [Special issue]. *Library Trends* 56:3 (2008).

NOTES

¹ J.P. Danky, "Exploding the Canon of Journalism History," *Historiography in Mass Communication* 5:5 (2019): 27-33.

² The State Historical Society of Wisconsin changed its name to Wisconsin Historical Society in 2001.

³ Talk given by Danky, April 17, 1997, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Published in Sanford Berman and James Danky, eds., *Alternative Library Literature 1996-97* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1998).

⁴ J. P. Danky, "Introduction: The Black Press and White Institutions." In J.P. Danky and M.E. Hady, eds., *African-American Newspapers and Periodicals: A National Bibliography*, pp. xxxi-xxxv (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

An Interview with James P. Danky

⁵ Randall K. Burkett, “The Joy of Finding Periodicals ‘Not in Danky,’” *Library Trends* 56:3 (2008): 601-617.

The original version of this interview appeared in the Illinois Newspaper Project blog, February 29, 2020. It has been edited for length and clarity.
— Jerilyn Tinio

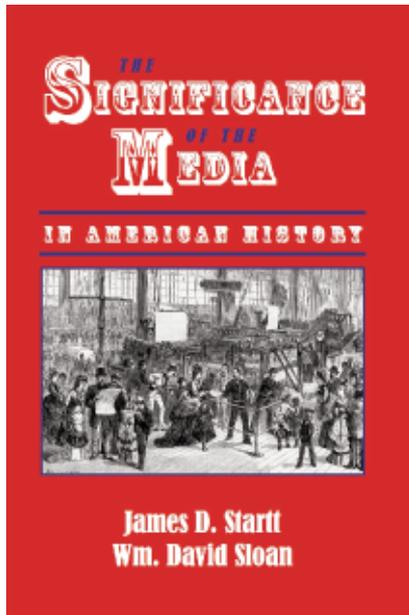
[CLICK HERE
TO RETURN
TO TABLE OF
CONTENTS](#)

PRAISE FOR
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MEDIA
IN AMERICAN HISTORY

“...a masterful job of exploring the subject through a range of well-chosen and representative essays...” — *Choice*

“...set[s] a standard for media history...” — *Journalism Quarterly*

“...compelling, fresh, ... thought-provoking ...” — *Journalism Educator*



To purchase a copy, or to learn more about this important book, click on the cover image.

Historical Roundtable: Internationalizing Media History: The Curious Case of China

By Yong Volz, Chin-Chuan Lee, Changfeng Chen,
Qiliang He, and Sei Jeong Chin ©



Volz

In the last two decades, there has been an increasing call among American media historians to internationalize media history and to pay attention to cross-national connections and comparisons of media systems and media cultures in order to re-think some of the broader theoretical and historical questions. In an earlier article I wrote for *Historiography* (3:4 [2017]: 5-15), I described the considerable institutional and individual efforts to promote international media history but also noted that “in the current English-language scholarship, international journalism history seems to

Yong Volz is Associate Professor and Roger Gafke Faculty Fellow at the University of Missouri and Vice President of the Chinese Communication Association. Working primarily in the tradition of historical and comparative sociology, she centers her research on journalists and their place in history. She has examined empirical cases spanning three centuries from both the United States and China, including the history of Pulitzer Prize winners, American women journalists in the post-feminist era, Western missionary publishers in late 19th-century China, and U.S. foreign correspondents in China, among other topics.

© 2020. The authors own the copyright to this article.



Chen

*Changfeng Chen is Professor and Executive Dean of the School of Journalism and Communication at Tsinghua University in China, and President of the Chinese Association for History of Journalism and Communication (2014-2019). She is a leading media historian in China, specializing in social and comparative history of mass media. She has written the award-winning book *A Crisscrossing History of Hong Kong Newspaper Publishing (1997)*, in addition to a number of other books, including *History of Chinese News Communication: A Media Sociology Perspective (2007)* and *Journalism Education from the U.S. to China: Heritage and Evolution (2006)*.*



Chin

Sei Jeong Chin is an Associate Professor of International Studies at Ewha Womans University. She received her Ph.D. in Chinese History from Harvard University and was a visiting scholar at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. She specializes in the history of media in the 20th century and writes extensively about the media culture in Shanghai from the 1920s to the 1950s. Her new project explores Chinese propaganda during the Korean War and the Cold War culture in East Asia.



He

*Qiliang He is an Associate Professor of History at Illinois State University, where he received the 2019 Janice Witherspoon Neulieb Award for Outstanding Scholarly Achievement. He writes extensively on cultural and media history in 20th-century China. He is the author of *Newspapers and the Journalistic Public in Republican China (2018)*, *Feminism, Women's Agency, and Communication in Early Twentieth-Century China (2018)*, and *Gilded Voices (2012)*, along with many other scholarly works.*



Lee

*Taiwan-born Chin-Chuan Lee is Professor Emeritus at the University of Minnesota, Chair Professor Emeritus at the City University of Hong Kong, and currently the Yushan Scholar at National Chengchi University. A leading world-class scholar in global communication, Lee is also renowned for his transformative work on Chinese media history. He has published more than 20 books in both English and Chinese, including *Crisscrossing Communication Research: Historical Context and Global Perspective (2019)* and *Intellectuals and the Press in Republican China (2008)*.*

heavily gravitate toward topics on Euro-American histories” and “we media historians seem to have little knowledge of — and have barely investigated — journalism histories in Asia, Africa, South America and the Middle East, and thus lack an empirical foundation from which to address important historical questions concerning the role of media in the process of modernization in non-Western countries.” I very much appreciate the response by Leonard Ray Teel published in a following issue (3:6 [2017]: 9-16), who shared his experience and insights into developing a historiography for the Middle East and eloquently argued that “the early history of Western journalism in the Middle East exemplified the processes of local and hybridization of foreign concepts.”

To continue the conversation, I invited four distinguished scholars to join this roundtable, focusing primarily on the case of China. All of them have written extensively on Chinese media history, but do so from different academic backgrounds and informed by a rich variety of cultural and life experiences. Among them, three received their Ph.D. training in the U.S. and one from China; two were trained in mass communication and two in history; two were originally from mainland China, one from Taiwan, and one from Korea; they also represent three different generations of scholars. This is a rare opportunity to experience in one discussion such a variety of informative and intriguing perspectives on historiography on Chinese media and how it speaks to historical writing in general.

***Volz:** Historians have long argued that given the interconnected nature of human history, historiography should be a cosmopolitan and international enterprise. In the specific field of media history, there is an increasing call for internationalizing historical scholarship beyond national boundaries. Yet in practice, there has long been a tendency to nationalize history writ-*

ing. What are your thoughts on the tension between nationalization and internationalization as two different approaches to media historiography?

Lee: The Third World's press came into being largely as a result of national awakening to the conquest of western imperialism and colonialism. In today's age of globalization it is increasingly more difficult to talk about a nation's media history without reference to the world. Recall Liang Qichao (梁啟超), one of the most influential enlightenment scholars and journalists in modern China. He opined a century ago that the writing of Chinese historiography should be adjusted from the perspectives of "China's China," through those of "Asia's China," to eventually take the lens of "the world's China." What amazing foresight! This was, however, easier (actually, never easy) said than done. To infer, I think the internationalization project implies at least three things: (a) using the world as a context to locate how and where national media history is constituted; (b) focusing on the dynamic interaction between the global and the national, including the impact of global forces, ideas, technology, and trends on the development of a nation's media history; and (c) providing national history as a case for broader and comparative understanding.

Chen: First off, I want to say, media historiography is different from general historiography. Media historiography is not a disparate branch or a mere domain of general historiography; instead, it is an intersection between history and media studies. If you place media history within the broader context of human history, perhaps you can approach it using the framework of internationalization (especially after the emergence of the global history perspective). That being said, media history, as part of media studies, is in fact a study of "objectification" from

Hegel's phenomenology. It studies the media-mediated process whereby ideas and ideologies objectify themselves into different material products and social and political institutions. From that perspective, studies of media history cannot easily go beyond the localization and nationalization framework.

He: History has conventionally been about national boundaries, for the birth of modern history as a discipline was intimately related to the rise of nationalism. Media history is a somewhat different species, particularly that of China because things like newspapers, radio, and the Internet are clearly foreign imports, to begin with. To study media history in China means to explore the flow of information, capital, and technology between China and the rest of the world. However, historians in China are eager to “nationalize” media history, for example, to trace the history of the newspaper back to two millennia ago. It is vital to understand that such an attempt to “domesticate” a foreign media itself is a response to the ever internationalization of studies on media history. So, I don't see the tension between the two, but I am more curious to know how those two approaches complement each other.

Chin: From my point of view, nationalization and internationalization do not have to be in conflict in history writing, and both approaches can be beneficial for each other. Media history from the nationalistic historical perspective often focuses on the issues of modernization, state-building, nationalism, political communication, mass culture, etc. However, even when exploring those issues, it becomes very fruitful to provide transnational perspectives. In fact, I think it is critical to internationalize media history, especially because throughout the 19th and 20th centuries there emerged transnational connections through wire

services, and the presence of foreign media in colonies in the context of empire-building, colonization, nation-building, and technological development. In the case of China, foreign media (in addition to the Chinese news media) also played an important role in the context of increasing the influence of foreign powers in China. In the study of international news networks and public diplomacy, it could be also enlightening to have a good understanding of local media at the national level. In the case of China, for example, China's international propaganda during the Cold War can be better explored with the understanding of the Chinese propaganda mechanism at the local level.

Volz: *You have all written about Chinese media history. How did you first get into this area of study? What inspired you? And can you tell us why you chose the case of China as your historical scholarship?*

Lee: I dare not claim to be a media historian; just an amateurish fan of history. My impression is that Chinese *media* historiography — partly because its narratives are most severely controlled — has always lagged far behind the general status of Chinese historiography in terms of scope, depth, and sophistication. Frankly, I have long been frustrated with the sorry state of Chinese media history writing, which I would characterize as a laundry-list approach that simply offers lifeless and dull accounts of what happens and when. It is analytically so thin and ideologically so “correct” as to be devoid of rich insight and various layers of meaning, not to speak of perspectival or methodological consciousness.

While teaching in Hong Kong, I thought I would organize several key conferences to provide a vibrant platform for cross-fertilization. I then invited two dozen leading Republican-era historians — i.e., mostly historians from the departments of history whose work nonetheless

must draw heavily on press archives—to develop more thoughtful essays on various aspects of the press in relation to the larger contexts. I decided to zero in on the Republican press for three reasons: first, archival materials are more readily accessible; second, the Republican press saw cross-currents of uneven, more varied, and even contradictory development that seem riper for analysis; and third, a “bygone” era is generally seen as somewhat less “sensitive” than today’s Communist era.

In preparing for the conferences I also felt obliged to contribute something, and thus tried my hand, rather gingerly, at media history writing. In this journey, you have been a major collaborator and mentor. As part of my own value commitment and cultural concerns, I have always been interested in exploring the interplay between journalists and their life-worlds: How do the tumults of modern Chinese politics impinge on journalists to make difficult choices at key moments, all with profound and often unpredictable implications for their life and career?

Chen: Some thirty years ago I was living in Nanjing, once capital of China for various dynasties and governments. I had a chance to visit the No. 2 Historical Archives of China, which houses a rich body of materials from the Nationalist Party (or Kuomintang, KMT) during the Republican era. I remember during my visit, I was so immersed in the archives that I couldn’t put them down, and was filled with new questions regarding press history. I eventually pursued my graduate studies in Beijing, where I found even more abundant historical resources. My doctoral advisor was Dr. Fang Hanqi, China’s best-known journalism historian, and his academic pursuit and historical approach have had a huge impact on my historical scholarship.

He: I write about Chinese media history primarily because of my family background. My father worked for two magazines as an editor for decades back to the 1980s and 1990s when China was undergoing democratization (but failed) and globalization. I heard of a lot of stories about how my father and his colleagues had to deal with Communist censors in Shanghai. I developed two thoughts or fantasies because of that. First of all, I believed that the society-state relationship could be boiled down to that between journalists and their censors. Second, periodicals are the best source material for historians and contemporary observers. I could get practically every piece of information about a given society by reading and studying newspapers and magazines. Those beliefs finally led me to focus on the media — not just the print media — as a historian.

Chin: During my college years, I learned about the Dreyfus Affair in France, which inspired me to reflect on the role of intellectuals and media in influencing government policy-making and checking the state power. I began to wonder what was the role of intellectuals and media in checking state power in Asia including Korea and China. I thought it might be interesting to see the case of China as one of the influential countries in East Asia.

***Volz:** It is commonly understood that history produces local knowledge. How then, can the study of the Chinese media history transcend local boundaries to be more relevant for historians of other countries?*

Lee: I agree that history produces local knowledge whose visions should, however, illuminate wider horizons that speak to the core concerns of intellectual community at large, whether at home or abroad.

The aim is, in Weber's terms, to achieve the dual goals of "causal adequacy" and "meaning adequacy." Ho Ping-ti (何炳棣), a noted historian, recalls that all history students at Tsinghua University in the 1930s were expected to be acquainted with fundamental knowledge of social sciences. I take this to mean that social science concepts and frameworks, if used wisely, are assumed to be capable of helping to throw sharper light on, and add interpretive coherence to, a mountain of the seemingly scattered and chaotic historical facts. By no means, however, are we to endorse the practice of hewing uncritically to certain overarching concepts or frameworks in such a way as to obfuscate, subsume, or sacrifice the gem of historical specificity. I have therefore taken exception to a group of Heidelberg sinologists, led by Rudolf Wagner, for their attempts to distort historical details of the Shanghai press in the Republican era, just to fit neatly into Habermas's alluring grand narratives of "public sphere."

In writing about internationalizing "international communication," I proposed a Weberian approach to establishing links between "local experiences" and "cosmopolitan theories" in ways that fully respect and preserve cultural relevance: "At a certain point we are bound to tie the specific to the general when we meet, consult, and confront a larger body of literature, take advantage of cosmopolitan concepts, and construct more cosmopolitan arguments. But as a matter of priority, we had better begin with the specific and move to the general through critical assessment, modification, and absorption of relevant literature to reflect on our experiences.... Cultural experiences are the horse and general theories the cart; we do not put the cart in front of the horse."

I realize that historians may have a difference of opinion over how generalizing their work has to be, while social scientists tend to take such generality for granted as a central element of cognitive interest. My

question is: How aptly, do you think, the same spirit may apply to the goal of internationalizing media history writing?

Chen: This is an excellent question, and is also something we need to constantly remind ourselves of in our research: how to make our scholarship more valuable. First, I believe in “the more local, the more global.” Media histories are deeply rooted in local cultural, political and social settings, and thus exhibit unique properties and characteristics. Together, these local and national media histories, though diverse and widely different, are what constitute global media history, making global history rich, meaningful, and less abstract. Second, media are a common means of communication in human history. Its birth, development and transformation, as well as the structural relations between its function and the social system in which it resides, followed similar trends and experienced similar tensions. Studying a particular local media history, therefore, is meaningful to those open-minded historians from other countries. Third, modern Chinese media history consists of media of different languages and from different cultures, which is similar to many other countries.

He: As I have stated, media history in China is by nature a translocal or global one. I’m reluctant to use the term “transnational” to describe early media history (By early I mean the mid- and late 19th century) because China was not yet a nation-state but a multi-ethnic empire. Newspapers in China, for example, came into existence in port cities under heavy foreign influence. In a sense, those cities, like Shanghai and Hong Kong, bore a greater resemblance to New York and London than to China’s hinterland. The modern media industry in China developed in such a cosmopolitan context. In consequence, a close look at the his-

tory of modern media in China would help to destabilize the category of “China,” a geopolitical concept we take for granted.

Chin: The study of media history has been under the strong influence of theoretical frameworks based on a liberal model of media developed out of the historical experience of the liberal West. These studies often focused on the question of whether China ever had media independent from the state. However, we now know that the liberal framework does not fit into the case of China. Throughout the 20th century, the Chinese media system became increasingly dominated by the state. By studying the specific historical trajectory of Chinese media, one can develop a new theoretical framework and provide insights on how a state-dominated media system can emerge in the context of state-building, war, and revolution. Further, we can have a better understanding on the role of media in politics in the authoritarian regimes without applying a liberal framework of media.

***Volz:** What are key themes in Chinese media historiography that might particularly illuminate the role and development of journalism and media more broadly? (e.g., cultural identity, national crisis, etc.)*

Lee: Your question calls for more thoughtful consideration than what I am ready to answer at present. But in the interest of enhancing coherence for the conferences I organized, I did draft a preliminary framework to anchor the participants’ discussion, consisting of five broad themes and 27 topical questions. The list is, of course, suggestive rather than comprehensive. In any case, the five themes identified include (a) the Republican press and the practice of liberalism; (b) western influence and Chinese adaptation; (c) the impact of press commercialism

and professionalism on liberalism; (d) the Nationalist government's press policy and the Nationalist-Communist press struggle; and (e) exemplary models of the press and journalists. Your conceptual themes such as cultural identity and national crisis are embedded in those questions.

Let me just cite a sample of three examples to give your readers a flavor of such themes. First, after the abolition of the Imperial Examination in 1905, how did Confucian literati seek to transform themselves as modern intellectuals, with some of them resorting to the press as a way to re-enter the political center? How did they negotiate Confucian ethos with the imported norms of journalistic professionalism and, later, Communist dogma? Second, how did Shanghai come to develop itself as the most vital hub of press dynamics in modern China — thanks to the multicultural setting and colonial protection of freedom in the Concession, as well as Shanghai's being a bridgehead of early capitalist development and China's modernization efforts, even though this “island city” was engulfed in a vast ocean of local Chinese population and governance? Third, you and I did a paper to analyze how the Missouri model of journalism education was so successfully transferred to the Republican China, largely through what Thomas Kuhn calls “paradigm shift” in terms of both a constellation of ideas and exemplary practice for emulation. On top of that, the Missouri journalism dean, Walter Williams, was a tireless and unparalleled empire builder who played an instrumental role in funding-raising for Chinese institutions, transferring a program of curricular activities, as well as bringing up a generation of Chinese journalism educators.

Chen: In Chinese media historiography, some themes are more universal and long-lasting while others are tied to the political and ideological

needs of a particular time. Some key themes include: media and Chinese modernization; media and national identity; media and cultural identity; the interplay and mutual influence of media and politics (for example, the role played by Chinese media in each of the political movements after 1949; and vice versa, the impact of those movements on the development of Chinese media).

He: When studying China's journalism and media history in the past century, most scholars might state with much certainty that the buzzwords are "nationalism," "enlightenment," and "revolution." I'm not saying that they're wrong. But they're clearly biased — in an elitist way. This has been the case in China ever since the first-generation journalism historians began to produce their history works. Periodicals published for profit, such as tabloids, have long been ignored or dismissed as insignificant, if not detrimental to Chinese journalism. In my view, didacticism and commodification are two keywords that define journalism in China. We have seen the oscillation between the two in the past 150 years. In a sense, Chinese journalists — and politicians — keep emphasizing the media's didactic function itself as a manifestation of cultural elites' anxiety to regain their privileges when the rise of modern, commercialized journalism effectively diminishes their ability to monopolize information and opinion.

Chin: There are numerous themes that are relevant for Chinese media historiography. Chinese media history can be examined in the context of revolution, state-building, modernization, war, imperialism, Cold War, and reform. By doing so, we can shed new light on political communication, transnational news networks, domestic propaganda, international propaganda, political economy of media industry, technological development in media, and so forth.

Volz: How would you describe the nature of Chinese media history? Does Chinese media present a case that developed along a unique trajectory? Or, do you see it more as an integral part of global media development?

Lee: Both, I guess. Some topics are, by nature, more suitable for national treatment. In such cases, the global factors may serve as a context in which national development occurs, while the national experience may provide a case for comparative landscape. Many other topics must address a confluence of dynamic interaction, parallel or overlapping developments, as well as crucial interpenetration, creative intervention, and articulation between the national and the global. This is where Chinese media history may become, as you put it, “an integral part of global media development.” Whenever possible, however, we should always look for such points of contact and interconnecting nexuses.

Chen: For a very long period of history, Chinese media was part of the political system, or was highly political in nature. From being the government’s platform to publicize policies and regulations in Ancient China, to China’s anti-imperialist nationalist movements in the 19th century, and to the Nationalist government in the early 20th century, the press primarily served a political function, and the commercial press only existed for a very short period of time. In the post-1949 era, the press was even more unequivocally political in nature. Following the 1978 Reform and Opening Up policy, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, there was an effort to commercialize the press and enhance journalistic professionalism. From the long historical view, however, Chinese media has been more political than commercial and professional. Chinese media are a unique institution in the global media system.

He: Before I can answer the question about the nature of Chinese media history, let me clarify “China” or “Chinese” first. As I have stated above, we’re accustomed to classifying history research along the boundaries of nation-states. In the world of media, this line is more artificial than real. It’s imperative to understand that the early history of “Chinese” journalism was characterized by desires and efforts to transgress such boundaries. *Shen bao*, the time-honored Chinese-language newspaper for example, was established by the British in Shanghai (a very un-Chinese city at the turn of the 20th century). Sun Yat-sen’s anti-Manchu, revolutionary journal, whose intended audience was predominantly Chinese, was actually published in Tokyo. So it’s really difficult to define what “Chinese media” was at the least before 1949. When the online media triumphs over the traditional, printed ones in this globalized world, those boundaries once again become problematic, although the communist government is desperate to block information from outside by erecting the “Great Firewall.” I think I’ve answered the final part of this question. Yes, the media in China and the Chinese-language media are an integral part of global media development.

Chin: Ever since recognizing that a liberal framework does not fit the Chinese case, historians have explored Chinese media history as a unique or exceptional case. However, if we acknowledge that the liberal model of media in the West is not an archetype of the media and is one of many models of media, Chinese media are no longer a unique case, but simply a different case. I think it could be more useful to think of Chinese media history as an integral part of global media development.

Volz: *From your own research experience, what were some of the inherent*

and unexpected challenges of doing research in the area of Chinese media history?

Lee: The subtitle of this Roundtable is “The Curious Case of China.” Indeed, how curious is China? Political control is undoubtedly the No. 1 obstacle under Communist rule; media history is more tightly watched over by the authorities than perhaps any other fields of the humanities and social sciences. The Communist regime accords utmost importance to the role of propaganda and ideological purity, and regards the media as an essential arm of its party-state ideological apparatuses. Alternative (occasionally oppositional) historical interpretations may sometimes slip through the gates of censorship and get published, especially in times of relative relaxation (such as in the 1980s). Media history writing, however, enjoys no such luck as it is constantly under the watchful and suspicious eyes of the party’s Central Propaganda Department. If historians do not have to contend specifically with the Department of History (which does not exist), media historians are beholden to abide by the rigid standards of ideological correctness set by the Department of Propaganda (which is omnipotent).

There is one more reason — immediacy — to account for media history’s ill fortune. The media having existed in China for less than a century and a half, media history research is prone to reveal the behaviors and motives of Communist leaders in their shifting alliances and betrayal during the relentless rounds of brutal struggles. Such embarrassing revelation pokes huge holes in the straitjacket of authorized narratives.

This partially explains why those who could pass as credible role models (free-spirited and independent-minded) in the field of media historiography have been in such a short supply. I would therefore

strongly advise aspiring media historians who live in China to walk out of the narrow and wrongly idolized cocoon of Chinese media historiography and, instead, seek inspiration from some of the country's (even the world's) best historians at large.

Chen: For one, some aspects of Chinese media history, even topics of historical research from fifty or seventy years ago, can still be taboo. Also, some of the historical materials are not accessible or easy to acquire. Without open access to information, it is difficult to obtain comprehensive historical materials and to establish the validity of historical evaluations. In addition, communication studies has introduced social science, even quantitative and computational methods, into media history studies, which requires historians to have more academic training and to develop an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary vision.

He: First of all, as I have pointed out, the elitist tendency to treat the media in history still dominates the field. The vast majority of researchers in mainland China and many outside China tend to ignore lowbrow periodicals that might have a greater impact on the general population given their wide circulation than highbrow ones. Second, scholars seem to pay more attention to producers than consumers of the media. I understand that it's extremely difficult to know what readers think about certain news stories, but some efforts must be made to enhance our understanding of the other side of journalism in China. Third, the Chinese newspaper has been characterized by its multiple purposes since its inception. In other words, a Chinese reader expects to read not just news stories from a newspaper, but serialized fiction, ads, information about entertainment, and so on. It is thus important to give the Chinese newspaper a new definition and to develop a new approach for

research. Finally, while most scholars do a wonderful job in analyzing the contents of Chinese periodicals, I call attention to the format. I have tried to address how changes to the newspaper's format (sizes, fonts, page layouts, etc.) influenced the Chinese audience in history, but with limited success.

Chin: Although Chinese media history has been actively studied since the 1990s in the West, few scholars specialize in the media history of China. In China, media history has been studied by scholars in journalism departments, although recently scholars in history departments also are paying attention to media history. In Korea, very few scholars work on Chinese media history. Thus, it has been quite challenging to find an academic community to share my findings. It will be great to see the growth of the field in the future.

Finally, getting access to the archives was one of the most challenging parts of my study. For example, archives of Shanghai newspaper offices before 1949 are quite scarce, and post-1949 archives at the national level are not available except for the printed version.

Volz: As you write about Chinese media history, which books and works have most informed your work or your approach to your historical writing?

Lee: I have not received formal training in the writing of media history. All I have done springs out of some sort of amateurish interest. I am more of a media sociologist, but I have read seriously — yet not systematically enough — some of seminal historical analyses that interest me. My role models do not come from within the small circle of Chinese media historiographers. But, rather, I have profited enormously from such scholars as Edward Said, who provides alternative and even oppo-

sitional reading to the prevailing literary texts of European and U.S. imperialisms, and dissects how these powers construct “Orientalism” to maintain cultural hegemony and how the colonized peoples wage resistance to domination. His methodological approach, “contrapuntal reading,” is highly instructive.

I have also learned so much from an assortment of scholars ranging from Raymond Williams, Clifford Geertz, to F.H. Cardoso, all of whom tackle cultural specificity but cast it in a larger theoretical light. So far as Chinese historiography is concerned, I have been chiefly inspired by a wide-ranging array of path-breaking works of Professor Yu Ying-shih, whose intellectual craftsmanship finds no peers among his generation. Acutely aware of the tension between historical specificity and theoretical generality, I believe that historical writing can be aided by general concepts but should not be subsumed as a branch of social sciences.

Chen: There are quite a few: 1) the brilliant work by Fernand Braudel, a French historian and leader of the Annales School; 2) Fang Hanqi’s *A History of Modern Chinese Journalism* (in Chinese, 1981); 3) James Carey’s 1974 essay, “The Problem of Journalism History,” published in *Journalism History*; 4) Chin-Chuan Lee’s *Literati cum Political Commentators: Intellectuals and the Press in Republican China* (in Chinese, 2008); 5) Michael Schudson’s *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (1981); 6) Yong Volz and Chin-Chuan Lee’s 2009 article, “American Pragmatism and Chinese Modernization: Importing the Missouri Model of Journalism Education to Modern China.”

He: I’m still a fan of McLuhan. His argument, “the medium is the mes-

sage,” continues to resonate well with me. As I have stated in my answer to the previous question, I call attention to how the changes to the newspaper’s format altered not only the readers’ reading behaviors but also their understandings of the external world at the turn of the 20th century. It is also the right time to think how interactivity, simultaneity, and spontaneity that characterize the Internet make the world a different one. Frankly speaking, the development of the Internet deviates from the road it was initially designed to be. In an era of “fake news” and alternative truth, the Internet falls short of creating a more united community globally. On the contrary, it divides people. The users are subscribing to online channels and following accounts they are willing to believe and thereby get only information they desire to read. I want to know how technology contributes to setting people apart.

Chin: Habermas’ work on public sphere inspired me to explore the issue of state-media relations and the role of media in checking state power. Of course, we now know that the theory of public sphere cannot be applied to the case of China. Nevertheless, Habermas’ work led me to examine the structural transformation of the Chinese media in the 20th century.

Volz: *For people who are interested in or considering research in Chinese media history, what readings or resources would you recommend for them to start with?*

Lee: See my answer to your last question.

Chen: I would recommend to start with 1) Chen Jiyong’s biography, *Journalist Zhang Jiluan* (in Chinese, 1957); 2) *Selected Works of Fang*

Hanqi (in Chinese, 2013, which includes many interesting case studies and an explanation of historical research process); 3) Chin-Chuan Lee's *To Serve the Nation: Journalists as Prisms of Chinese Press History* (in Chinese, 2013, which provides a broader historical view), and 4) Michael Schudson's 2015 book, *The Rise of the Right to Know: Politics and the Culture of Transparency, 1945-1975*.

He: Chin-Chuan Lee's works both in English and Chinese are must-read readings for anyone who's interested in journalism in China. Tim Weston has a number of important articles on journalism history. For information about early Chinese journalism, there're some classical works published almost one century ago, such as Roswell Britton's *The Chinese Periodical Press, 1800-1912* (Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Company, 1966), Wang Ying Pin's *The Rise of the Native Press in China* (M.S.J. thesis, Columbia University, 1924; repr. Whitefish, Mont.: Literary Licensing, 2013), and Lin Yutang's *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968). Beyond China, I recommend works by Marshal McLuhan and Michael Schudson. Moreover, I think Peter Fritzsche's *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998) and Richard Terdiman's *Discourse/Counter-discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989) can lend inspiration to readers.

Chin: Works written in English by Joan Judge, Rudolf Wagner, and Barbara Mittler could be a good start. As for Chinese scholarship, survey books written and edited by Fang Hanqi and Ma Guangren could be useful. My article entitled, "Understanding China's News Media in Historical Perspective," in Oxford Research Encyclopedia in Asian

History could be useful to understand the overview of Chinese media history.

Volz: *In your view, what might be some initiatives that could help to internationalize media history in general and enhance the relevance of Chinese media historiography in particular?*

Lee: Infusing the visions from global studies into historiography would provide a strong impetus for internationalization. More comparative projects should be encouraged. But the global structures and processes must be taken seriously in order to illuminate historical continuities and rupture of the Janus-faced realities through the prisms of commonalities and differences.

There is also no substitute for students to be immersed in the seminal work of national and international media history. Can Chinese media historiographers, especially those among the younger generation, try their best to get rid of the corrupting influences of official Marxist orthodoxy that foster intellectual laziness and stifle creativity? I hope so. The sooner, the better. It may be difficult, but not impossible.

Chen: I see three research directions as part of the effort to internationalize Chinese media history. First, to focus on media and media people of early 20th century China, where journalism professionalism began to take root, and when various Western theories of the press were introduced, adopted, reformed and transformed in China. Second, we can also study the Chinese introduction and practices of Western media ethics in the early 20th century. Third, study the interplay of media and politics in modern Chinese history in order to identify more structural factors and seek theoretical insights. These kinds of projects can bring

broader relevance to historians in the international academic community.

He: Media history has to be international. Research about early Chinese journalism, for example, invariably focuses on the relationships and interactions among Chinese cities and cities in other parts of the world. It doesn't make any good sense to put emphasis on the so-called "Chineseness" in studying the development of the modern media in China. Rather, it is imperative to understand that cities in China were nodal points in a global network of information and capital. As I have stated, Shanghai and Hong Kong in the first half of the 20th century were more similar to Tokyo or London than China's hinterland. An emphasis on globality and translocality could be a new focus for anyone who plans on studying the media in China both in late imperial and early republican times and at present.

***Volz:** Is there anything else you would like to add?*

Chen: I would like to add that Chinese media historians are making strenuous efforts to go beyond descriptive histories to self-consciously ask the questions "how" and "why," and to develop theoretical perspectives in answering those questions. Our historiography is expanding from a narrowly defined "revolutionary paradigm" to include a "modernization narrative" and "social history perspective."

He: I have yet to mention Mao's China and the impact of Maoism on journalism. I would like to offer some thoughts for future research. We have plenty of works that give new interpretations of propaganda and the media/popular culture. I have always felt curious whether newspa-

pers in Mao's China underwent complete "partification." Namely, did the Communist Party succeed in bringing about a sweeping change to the nature of newspapers by transforming them into propaganda instruments? Moreover, how do we understand China's media in terms of an alternative type of globalization orchestrated by Moscow? We have works about literary cosmopolitanism in the Socialist Bloc. How about "journalistic cosmopolitan?"

[CLICK HERE
TO RETURN
TO TABLE OF
CONTENTS](#)