

# *Historiography*

in Mass Communication



Volume 10 (2024). Number 2

# *Historiography in Mass Communication*

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# *Historiography*

## in Mass Communication

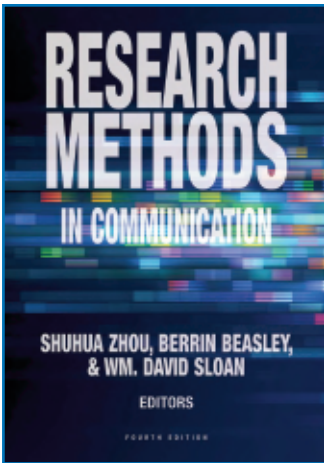
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# What Does History Expect of Us?

By Wm. David Sloan ©



Sloan

**H**istory is important. In our reflective moods, we sometimes say, in fact, that it's sacred. It's entitled not only to respect but to reverence. We would say, if it were God, that we have a *sacred responsibility* to it.

Even though it's not truly divine, yet, because of its importance, we do owe a great duty to it. Like the general public, we owe it appreciation and esteem.

But because we're historians, we have an even greater debt. We've vowed our commitment to history. It has committed its trust to us. In this compact, it has a right to exact requirements of us.

Our accord raises a question. What is it that history requires? What does it expect of us?

1. First and most importantly, it expects that we try to explain history as it truly was. That is its greatest demand.

Our search for the true past requires honesty. We must in good

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faith seek to capture accurately the thought and feeling of a time past.

There's no effectual point in arguing about whether we can render the past as it truly was. We're all familiar with doubters' squabbles and skeptics' disputes. The past, they say, had just as many "truths" as there were people. Furthermore, argue these scoffers, historians have inadequate means to uncover the past with any confidence.

I got my education in a milieu that based its postmodernist *Weltanschauung* on such a mushy mindset. That outlook has led many to go through life with nothing firm to stand on, with nothing but uncertainty, with futility. It took me ten years after my final graduate class to overcome it.

Now, I'm liberated. So liberated that I'm old-fashioned. Now that I've matured, I believe there actually was a veritable past that really happened — and that, even though we can't know everything about it, we do have methods that help us to recover and explain a real part of it with some certainty.

Clearly, explanations of history can vary, but that doesn't mean that all explanations are false or even that any explanation is just as true as any other explanation. There are relativist historians who disagree. Let them labor in their fruitless belief. We might just as well say that everything — objects, artifacts, people, memories ... everything — came into existence two minutes ago, and be done with it. That would save us a lot of wasted time arguing whether it's tuh-MAY-toe or tuh-MAH-toe, or GAY-luh or GAL-uh or GAH-luh.

To argue that we cannot come to an accurate understanding of the past, or at least a part of it, is to deny to history the first duty that we owe it.

2. Next in our obligations to history is a responsibility to method-

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ology.

Without the proper use of the methods of historical research, we have no chance of coming to an understanding of history as it truly happened. We must be dutiful in using them. That means that we can't have a cursory knowledge of them or employ them as if we were dabblers. Historians have a duty to learn them and to use them.

Modern methods, with their emphasis on source-based research, go back to the early 19th century and have been refined continually ever since. Their purpose is to provide a way for historians to attempt to recover the details of history as they really existed. They deal with such matters as finding and evaluating evidence, using primary sources, and doing the job of research with thoroughness.

We must understand methods, appreciate them, and apply them. Without a competent commitment to using them rightly, historians fail history.

3. Historians must be familiar with the literature that other historians have already produced.

Our research must be bibliographically sound. Building a full bibliography may be the job that, of all the requirements of good methodology, appeals least to many historians. After all, it can require a lot of mechanical preliminary work before the real research begins. Investigation into sources is exciting. But the job of putting together a bibliography can seem as if it only delays getting into the investigation. So it's easy for historians to do little more than a cursory bibliography.

Yet, exhaustive bibliographical work helps historians get a full picture of the subject they are investigating. Often, the work discovers overlooked facts, connections among individuals and events, and perspectives that will help the historian understand and explain his or her own subject. Scholars in our field who are serious about history build a

library of knowledge of all the major works, and they then study all the literature about the subject of their own particular research.

4. We must avoid present-mindedness.

Reflecting on my own experience with historical study, it's hard to believe that just forty years ago most JMC historians had never heard the phrase "present-mindedness." Much less did they know what it meant. Yet it's one of the most important principles in historiography.

Through the efforts of a few informed methodologists — the most important of whom has been Jim Startt — such essential precepts as present-mindedness now are a matter of everyday discourse. JMC history professors are better informed than they were in the 1980s, and they have taught the principles of historical research to their own students. Many of those students are now professors, and they likewise have taught their students well, so that today many excellent JMC historians understand as a routine to avoid present-mindedness.

Yet its danger still lurks. It's so serious that it deserves elaboration.

The issue of present-mindedness begins with the principle that historians must try to understand the past on its own terms. To the extent that they judge the past by the values of their own time, they do a disservice to history. They distort it and our understanding of it.

We can see present-mindedness at work with historians in dealing with such matters as ideology and political biases, the role of materialism and economics as motivating forces, gender or racial concerns, 21st-century concepts of freedom of expression, and "proper" JMC professional practices, to name just a few.

Those concerns can lead to a misunderstanding of the past. If historians are more interested in, for example, today's press and its relationship to government than in history for history's sake, their concern



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with the present can translate into efforts to impose the views of our own time on the past. The result is that historians explain the past simply as a confirmation of their own views about what the press-government relationship should be today. They judge the past by today's principles. When they do, they fail to understand the people, events, and times of the past.

The principle for the historian is simple: Don't skew history to present a modern view.

5. Historians must place individuals within the context of their time.

Most of us have been in sessions at research conferences when a speaker quoted an early source and the audience sniggered at its quaint attitude. The problem arose because the speaker and the audience approached the source with the values of today and failed to understand it within the context of its own time. They viewed history only through a present lens.

Historians fail history when they don't set people within their own times and situations.

This principle of context is related to the problem of present-mindedness. Historians must try to understand individuals of the past within the eras in which they lived. If we can comprehend people of the past only through the monocle of our own time-determined ideas, we can never understand the past or the people who occupied it.

Historians must recognize people of the past as individuals influenced by the conditions in which they lived and motivated by their own reasons. Historical context includes cultural, political, social, geographic, economic, and religious norms, as well as ideas, values, and perspectives of a time past — in fact, anything that helps us to understand how

people thought and why they acted as they did at a certain time and in a certain place.

If a JMC historian should think the principle of context is overdone, all he has to do is ask how he would like to be judged by historians a hundred years from now. How would any of us like to be condemned by the biases of the future?

To fulfill our obligations to history, we must have a true appreciation of the people of the past and be interested in them on their own terms.

#### 6. Historians must avoid bias.

Biases — ideological and other — are an ever-present hazard in the telling of history. They're one of the greatest dangers historians confront. Partisan political bias is the most obvious. But historians need to be particularly aware when writing about any topic — such as gender, race, and ideology — on which a particular view is dominant today among historians or that the individual historian holds particularly strongly. Because bias is such a threat, historians must make Herculean efforts to recognize it and keep it under control.

Every human is biased on most matters. Fortunately, many of our biases are good. We tend to favor — in our better moments — altruism over avarice, kindness over malevolence, justice over corruption, compassion over cruelty, generosity over stinginess, tolerance over prejudice, service over selfishness, honesty over deceitfulness, democracy over despotism.... The list could go on and on. They are biases that most people in our time and culture can agree on. They reflect the best of humanity, and it isn't wrong for the historian to hold such biases.

Other biases are a threat for historians. The most dangerous are those we hold strongly about things that don't fall neatly into right and

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wrong — the ones on which good people honestly disagree, such as whether they are Methodists or Presbyterians, Republicans or Democrats, or lovers of cats or of dogs.... Again, another long list.

Consider political bias. Presidential elections, even though in their heat seeming akin to war, provide an example of honest disagreement. Since America's first one, in 1788, the winning candidate has received, on average, approximately 53.8% of the popular vote to the loser's 46.2%. Since 1988 the numbers have been similar. The winner has averaged about 52.3%, and the loser about 47.7%. Polling for the 2024 election indicates as of now that the percentages will be even closer. With American voters so evenly divided, a fair historian won't allow bias on such a matter.

Nevertheless, partisan bias is a lurking threat. It may be the most dangerous because it's so widespread and we can so easily adopt it. In fact, partisans who claim to be historians will even offer arguments to justify their bias. The argument typically goes something like this: "I support the side I do because it's the better one." Paraphrased: "My bias is good because it favors my side."

Overcoming such bias isn't easy. It's difficult for any of us, when we know we are absolutely right and the other side appallingly wrong, to accept the other side's views and motivations as being just as reasonable and justifiable as our own. So it's hard for zealots, when they take up the mantle of historian, to magically transform into fair-minded observers. Hence, anything they write that even slightly touches on politics becomes suspect.

It's difficult to be a fair historian. In our divided culture, it's easy to take sides. When ideologues are screaming on each side, remaining unbiased takes self-control. But one must decide whether to be a partisan or a historian.

7. Historians mustn't use history to promote their own views.

This rule resembles that of bias. The historian's own prejudices shouldn't guide the research or determine the interpretations.

The goal of historical study is to provide an account that accurately represents the past. Historians fail when they try to use history to support their own causes.

Scholars who enlist history to advocate their *parti pris* aren't really historians but are activists. Perhaps most of us know some historians who are just that. Even among JMC historians there are those who succumb to their enthusiasm for causes in ideology, politics, gender, race, and other matters.

We know a historian is promoting his or her own view when we can guess the conclusion before we get two paragraphs into reading an article or listening to a conference presentation. Unfortunately, that happens too often.

To be true to history, historians mustn't skew it to present a personal view. They must love history for its own sake.

8. Historians must be judicious in dealing with material and fair-minded in dealing with people.

Historians have a universe of material available for their research. How they use it is critical. They must subject sources to the standard rules of evaluation. The portion they select must, for example, fairly represent the whole. They mustn't select portions of a source that inaccurately characterize it. They must render a source faithfully.

Similar principles of fairness apply to the historian's dealing with people. Historians come across all kinds of people. Some are admirable, and some disagreeable. Some are principled, and some disreputable. Historians may agree with what some said and did, but think others

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were narrow-minded scoundrels. Historians like some people from the past but would never want to speak to others. It's not easy to be fair to all of them.

Yet it's the historian's responsibility to treat subjects evenhandedly. Yes, some people in the past behaved infamously, even wickedly, while others thought and acted honorably. Historians must be impartial in dealing with them, in the sense that they mustn't exaggerate their attributes. They have a duty to treat them as real people, not as cardboard cutouts. Otherwise, historical accounts will amount to little more than morality plays.

9. Historians must offer well-informed, honest explanations.

Finally, in our list of what history expects of us, comes explanation, fair, judicious, insightful explanation.

Meaningful explanation requires much of historians. They must clearly grasp the purpose behind the investigation: What is the essential question they're trying to examine? They must be familiar with the historiography of the subject and with the explanations that other historians have given. They must avoid bias and present-mindedness. They must understand their own point of view.

Providing insightful explanation requires mature, critical judgment, for the historian cannot rely on simple formulas. Drawing conclusions in history is not as mechanical as in, for example, arithmetic, where the researcher works with recipes and laws.

The historian must recognize that life in the past — just like life today — was complex and hardly ever admits of a simple explanation. Simple explanations usually are simplistic explanations. Historians thus should be cautious about suggesting causation from a single cause. Rarely is an individual motivated by just one factor. That is why good

historians shy away from monolithic explanations such as economics or politics or gender or critical theory. Explanation usually is concerned with multiple, rather than single, causation. And, obviously, there must be supporting evidence for any statement of causation.

Indeed, even though meaningful explanations come from thoughtful historians, all explanation must be based on facts. Since historical research is concerned mainly with a search for truth about the past, explanation cannot be merely opinion. It must rely on comprehensive primary sources. In fact, explanation can come only from primary sources. But even when primary sources are abundant, the historian must be cautious about assuming too much. Explanation must originate in the sources themselves.

Finally, conclusions always must be tentative rather than final. We never can be certain we have the complete evidence or the final answer. Tomorrow, another historian may uncover sources never before seen or use an improved technique for analyzing evidence. Our understanding of the past can always change. That is one reason why history and historical research continue to fascinate so many people.

Yet when we offer an explanation, we hope that it holds true for a long time. And that is another reason why historians must be true to history.

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# Reflections on the Decline of Student Interest and Achievement in History

By James D. Startt ©

**T**hat there has been a decline of student interest and achievement in college history courses in recent years is a truth that most professors of the discipline would acknowledge. It has troubled higher education for decades. How did this decline happen? The present essay was written in response to that question. It makes no claim to be based on extensive research. To the contrary, it reflects only my own observations based on thirty-five years as a college professor and on reading what respected authorities have commented.



Startt

First a caveat. During my career, mostly at Valparaiso University, I taught a variety of history courses, chief among them was Twentieth-Century European History, offered each year and sometimes twice a year. Some years ago, I added occasional courses in journalism history. Since the major courses were in political and diplomatic history, this essay focuses on them. However, the situations it discusses are common to all history courses, and it is hoped that professors

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teaching journalism and mass media history will find them interesting.

The troubles of historical studies in higher education today have deep roots. The years 1968-1975 represent the logical point of departure to explain them. It was then that a decline of students' grades in my classes, those introductory courses in Western Civilization in particular, were first noticed. These were years wh

en American participation in the Vietnam War caused serious divisions in national attitudes toward that intervention, resulting in long public debates and numerous protests on college campuses. They, in turn, provided the grounding for later demonstrations, which became, more or less, a traditional part of college life.

Furthermore, a series of national tragedies at this time made a deep impact on America's young men and women — the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. (April 4, 1968) and Robert Kennedy (June 5, 1968), coming so soon after that of John F. Kennedy. Each of the slain figures had been a source of inspiration for the generation of students in college. The year 1968 was also when Richard M. Nixon received the Republican nomination for president and when street riots occurred at the Democratic convention in Chicago. Amid this turbulence, a counterculture movement emerged that championed women's liberation and that of other alienated social groups. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that a cultural revolution was underway, especially for the nation's college students.

Student protests took a sharp upward turn two years later when the president and his national security advisor Henry Kissinger took a fateful step, which they hoped would end the war. However, their so-called "incursion" into Cambodia backfired. Far from ending the conflict, it extended it. Their critics were outraged, but anger at their protest was just the beginning. In May 1970, four students were killed in a con-



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frontation with national guardsmen at Kent State University in Ohio, and two Black students were killed at Jackson State College in Mississippi. Protest was immediate. Over one hundred thousand gathered in Washington to demonstrate against what became known as “Kent-Cambodia.” Campuses across the country suddenly became alive with protests, some turning violent. Students at 350 colleges and universities went on strike. Many colleges closed down to avoid further violence.

Even Valparaiso University, known for its moderate temperament, was no exception to the wave of student protests. Antiwar demonstrations were held there, and students blockaded classes. The administration building was burned to the ground, after which classes were cancelled for several days. Confusion was common. No one knew what might occur next. Nevertheless, classes resumed as calm returned to the campus. But students’ readiness to protest remained and was soon again tested. In June 1971, the *New York Times* began publishing *The Pentagon Papers* that proved the government had misled the public about its war plans and actions. Criticism of the Nixon administration was confirmed. Profound disillusionment and protests among students were immediate, and they now demonstrated not only against the war but also against the men who lead Americans into it.

It is often assumed that antiwar student protestors shared a common outlook about the conflict. This is only partly true. There was general agreement among them that the war was wrong, that American imperialism was wrong, that American troops should be withdrawn from Vietnam, and that the government in Washington had lost credibility. Nevertheless, differences prevailed. Some, at least at Valparaiso, kept their thoughts to themselves and did not engage in active demonstrations. Another group, basically liberal in spirit, was particularly interested in civil rights, the draft, and closing various gaps in society. The final

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and most vocal group, the radicals, was adamant in its disdain of political liberalism and sought to divide society between “Us” and “Them.” Members of this group were extremists committed to using violent means to achieve their ends.

Most interesting of all, an idea coalesced among many antiwar protesters that they were members of a new generation that rejected most of the traditional social orthodoxies. The new generation had its own style, its own music, its own idioms, and its own heroes. Its members were self-certain and cynical. They nurtured the idea that society’s elites were useless and were incapable of relating to real people. Accordingly, they claimed to represent a generation, one that had little respect for the institutions that sustain the modern state, including higher education.

The new generation concept was the most significant legacy of the Vietnam War protest movement. But it was not the only one that affected higher education. Starting in the mid 1970s, global and domestic socio-economic policies thrust the country into a severe economic recession, an energy crisis, rising inflation, and increased unemployment. College and university budgets, consequently, experienced immediate financial pressures. The strain was worse for small private universities that had only modest endowment funds. Such schools depended on full enrollment to retain their financial stability. Nevertheless, the enrollment of new students declined as many young men and women chose careers that did not require a college degree; others decided to attend state universities; yet others opted for community colleges or technical schools. College administrators implemented policies to retain admission standards and enrollment figures, but the decline of both was inevitable.

Along with these financial difficulties, student grades underwent a sharp decline. In fact, they plummeted. In introductory courses such as

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Western Civilization, I observed an additional decline in basic skills such as writing and note-taking, as well as an apparent decline of interest in learning. It must be stressed that these are only generalizations. They did not apply, for instance, to my junior and senior students whose scholarship remained high. But the number of students in these courses was dropping (20-25 instead of 30-45), and the number of “A’s” earned declined sharply. It should also be noted that even in introductory courses many capable students did above-average or excellent work. Yet, it was difficult to dismiss the fact that too many students during these years were ill-equipped to excel at their studies. High schools were at least partially responsible for this situation. Freshmen during these years had an appalling lack of geographical knowledge, and what they knew about history in general was fragmented at best. However, I usually found most students to be respectful and, in most cases, eager to improve their performance.

The challenge of falling enrollments and performance figures was met by simultaneous efforts to inflate grades. This trend was doubly disturbing. It was dishonest, and it worked against students having the opportunity to build the self-respect that comes from receiving a well-earned grade. Nevertheless, the question remained: What could be done about low grades? This question became more complex with the democratization of higher education then underway. One solution adopted by many private college administrators, including mine, was to urge faculties to take steps necessary to enhance student grades. The implication was clear. No student should be allowed to fail, and a “D” grade was unacceptable. Poor performance might cause students to withdraw from school, a result that was as dramatically opposed to the goals of administrators as it was to the reputation of their colleges. Retention, therefore, became sacrosanct.

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Also, with the increased attention paid to recruiting and retaining students, the number of administrative positions at colleges and universities increased. More deans, more deans' assistants, and more secretaries peopled the ivy halls. Even a university the size of Valparaiso now had four vice-presidents. Each office, of course, created more committees, more surveys, more evaluations, which meant less time for class preparation. "Accountability" became the new buzz word on campuses.

In addition, professors were urged to keep students' self-esteem in mind. Poor grades could damage self-confidence. Those in charge of the student health center at Valparaiso, as one instance, reinforced the message that stiff reading and writing assignments could cause students to become "stressed out." Consequently, when Alan Bloom's provocative book *The Closing of the American Mind* (1989) was published, some professors worried that it might impair student self-worth. Bloom's claims, in fact, were scathing. For example, he warned that relativism was undermining critical thinking, that students no longer sought pleasure from the pursuit of learning, and that popular culture had contributed to the dull, lazy minds present in today's American universities.<sup>1</sup> A caustic critique to be sure, but were there not elements of truth in it? Regardless, student self-esteem became a matter of concern in the college life of the 1980s. This was unfortunate. Genuine self-esteem comes from "doing something well."<sup>2</sup> It results from doing honest work and being rewarded for it. However, too many students were proving that Alan Bloom's depiction of American students was often justified.

By the end of the century, the status of history at colleges and universities failed to improve. The number of history majors continued to decline. Frequent articles in the press such as "Why Did I Ever Major in Literature?" (or history) made the situation worse. Moreover, admissions offices at some colleges even refused to mention history, or any

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liberal study, in their publicity. In short, little was done at the local, national, or university level to make students feel, as they did some years ago, that history was an important subject, one vital to the understanding of the institutions of a democratic society and to knowledge of the interdependent world. History students themselves seemed to reflect these conditions. Increasing numbers of them were now inattentive in class and indifferent to excelling at their studies. They complained, more than what would have been expected, about the length of lectures and grading standards, and they requested to have their grades be based on a curve. Were they there, as the saying goes, perhaps only for the college experience?

While the foregoing conditions prevailed to the detriment of history, various groups of historians introduced three new interpretations aimed to expand their discipline's borders. The first of these innovations, social or scientific history, began with the publication of G.M. Trevelyan's *History of England* (1949), and in his words it was "history with politics left out." In the 1960s, social history became dominated by a number of young, mainly leftist, historians who began investigating, aided by computers, into the long-ignored records of birthrates, marriages, and subaltern groups such as workers and immigrants. By the 1970s, the number of doctorates awarded in social history had "quadrupled and overtook political history." Social historians claimed that historical research "could be rigorously tested by quantitative means" and that "traditional" history was flawed because it rested on implicit assumptions.<sup>3</sup> So compelling was this new interpretation of history that one National Endowment for the Humanities report "stopped just short of attributing the recent decline in the number of history majors to social history itself."<sup>4</sup> This new interpretation of history, however, had major problems. It was too fragmented to integrate

into the discipline in general. The teaching of history, at any level, demands a synthesis that social history failed to provide. Complaints about its fragmentation claimed that it gave students “no idea when anything had taken place or in what order.”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, social history, like history itself, is vast, too vast to master. Critics also charged that it was too specialized and relied too much on quantitative techniques. Not the least of the problems it encountered was the fact that many, perhaps most, professors were unwilling to desert political history and the student interest it attracted. By the 1990s, the hope that social history would realign the discipline into a new structural or quantitative basis had failed to overtake the main body of history.<sup>6</sup> It remained only as a sub-division of the discipline.

Postmodernism, the second new interpretation that affected the study of history, claims that “we apprehend the world through language and nothing else.”<sup>7</sup> With that declaration, it rejects historical truth, objectivity, and the canons of modern inquiry. Some postmodernists accept the idea that a text changes each time someone reads it. Accordingly, fact and fiction become indistinguishable from one another as texts could be interpreted in different, even multiple ways. Such interpretation of texts opens the way for “pseudo scholarship,” to the “indeterminacy of truth.”<sup>8</sup> Some postmodernists, moreover, embraced relativism of historical knowledge, the view that ethical truths depend on the understanding of the individual or group holding them. They reached absurd conclusions that falsify sound history. Believing, as they do, that any interpretation of past events is as valid as any other, they have advanced, for example, “Holocaust denial” literature. “Both sides of the picture,” they assert, “should be heard” and both have equal value. It follows then that the Holocaust never happened and the death camps are mere fabrication. Professor Deborah E. Lipstat, the leading

authority on the Holocaust, denounced this type of history as mere “antisemitic ideology” that has no place in “responsible historiography, which it is not.”<sup>9</sup> Postmodernism, therefore, is a slippery interpretation and a danger to the study of history.

Multiculturalism represents a third effort to broaden history in the late twentieth century. It is no exaggeration to say that the ending of the Cold War had a huge impact on history. For forty years it had preoccupied every president, and for forty years it controlled the foreign policies of the Soviet Union and the United States. During that conflict, Americans argued over many issues, but the vast majority of them shared a common world view. Communism, especially communist imperialism, was wrong and the United States and the Western democracies were right to oppose it. “At the height of the Cold War,” historian George C. Herring reminds us, “Americans expressed greater trust in their government than any other people in the world.”<sup>10</sup> That consensus began to unravel with the revelations of the Johnson and Nixon administrations. But, with the ending of the Cold War, it opened new spaces that would be occupied by pressures of the Right and Left in national politics.<sup>11</sup>

These two forces were instrumental in producing a new debate on America’s national identity that was destined to affect both academe and society in general. It involved two groups; traditionalists, who perceived that identity as a single narrative, and multiculturalists, who challenged that perspective. To many of the latter, multiculturalism simply meant acceptance of the nationalities who have come to live in the United States. Historian Robert Hughes, for example, writes: “Multiculturalism asserts that people with different roots can co-exist ... that they can and should look across frontiers of race, language, gender and age without prejudice or illusion....”<sup>12</sup> However, some multiculturalists

reject his definition. They demand that more attention now be paid to separatism. Extremists among them even consider national fragmentation a “virtue.” To them, “history has become an adjunct to ‘identity politics,’ which seeks to realign political forces according to voters’ ethnic, social, and sexual identities.” One extreme Black multiculturalist favors “reorienting the entire Western historical record by insisting that Greek philosophy and art originated in Africa.”<sup>13</sup> Multiculturalists in general scorn the idea of a united American people and “by implication, the competitive *élan* of American capitalism.”

Multiculturalism, which dates from the 1970s, seems destined for long life. The debate between it and the traditionalist single-nation narrative persists in Congress, on local Boards of Education, and in the media. Nevertheless, it is obvious to any impartial observer that the creation of a new national narrative is needed. Patience and humility will be necessary in designing it, for there is much in the single-nation narrative that fair-minded educators do not and should not want to lose. Multiculturalism, of course, is already here. What can be done, therefore, to temper the debate about it? Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob answer that question with this sound advice: “People who call for pride in the group often minimize the importance of engendering pride in the nation, but the two stand or fall together. It is the nation that sustains and protects the array of particular identities in the United States.”<sup>14</sup>

It is hardly surprising that the debate over multiculturalism has influenced college life. For instance, the American history curriculum of a generation ago has already become divided by the appearance of numerous courses in women’s and minority studies. The democratization of higher education since the 1970s made these curricular additions inevitable, and their popularity attests to their success. However,



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whether or not they have splintered the previous common campus culture remains a question for time to answer. Yet, even among faculty members, a certain change in “colleagueship” is now detectable, particularly in regard to Black and women colleagues. But of greater consequence is the question: Are Black and women’s studies fostering a special type of knowledge that might be difficult to integrate into the type of education universities are expected to produce? Or, is multiculturalism, in a university setting, at work breaking down the identities and parochialism of youth? The future of history in higher education depends on the answers to those questions.

Of the many abuses that have damaged the position of history in higher education, the mass media are far from the least. The social media, for instance, are famous for their invention of news and history. Media outlets that circulated those ever-present conspiracy theories do a great disservice to history, which countless numbers of people believe is the search for truth. Some national news commentators are known for politicizing their reports apparently with the assumption that a large number in their audiences are either ill-informed or anti-intellectual. Perhaps they assume their audiences simply have scant knowledge of the actual past and, therefore, no means of comparing it against whatever invention of history they hear or view. And, not to be overlooked is the baneful influence of television on the minds of students or students-to-be. Years ago students began complaining about having to listen to lectures for more than fifteen minutes without a break. No wonder they found forty-five or fifty minute lectures tedious. In addition, the claim is often made that television leads students to believe that history should be entertaining. If that is so, and it surely could be, they would do well to contemplate the historian Margaret MacMillan’s observation about the old West. “Billy the Kid,” she writes, “was a charming and cold-

blooded killer. Miss Kitty Russell, the warm and attractive saloon owner in ... *Gunsmoke*, would have looked quite different in the real old West. Women of her sort on the frontier were miserable, low-paid prostitutes frequently drunk and riddled with disease.”<sup>15</sup>

In addition, consider the role television plays in image-managing presidents and presidential politics. The modern rhetorical presidency, which began with Theodore Roosevelt, experienced a dramatic decline in recent decades, starting with President Richard Nixon if not earlier. In fact, “the greatest loss from the evolution of the rhetorical presidency,” writes professor Carol Gelderman, “has been the decrease in the integrity of the word.” There can be little doubt that history is ill-served by such a decline or that students entering college hold views of presidents shaped by their spin-masters’ duplicity.<sup>16</sup> Their success is a serious danger that can put the nation at risk. And, it can fix opinions in students’ minds that are difficult to dislodge with historical knowledge.

In many respects, the problems that history has encountered in higher education have not changed much over the years. Students continue to demonstrate in protest of political actions. Grade inflation continues as an ever greater problem in colleges as well as in high schools. Students in today’s high schools now receive so many A’s that college admissions officers find grade-averages useless in determining prospective students’ performance in their institutions. Many are considering restoring SAT tests as the main admission’s requirement. Meanwhile, a recent *New York Times* article warned that “fragmented attention has reached truly catastrophic proportions. High-school and college teachers overwhelmingly report that students’ capacity for sustained or deep attention has sharply decreased.”<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, grade inflation continues. Recent press reports have been critical of the unbelievable number of “A’s” that Yale students receive. One journalism professor men-

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tioned in an op-ed letter that, of the thirty students in one of his classes, only one “really knew how to use the English Language,” yet they all demanded high grades.<sup>18</sup>

Everyone who has an interest in higher education, as well as in the future of our country, is puzzled by the present disarray on college campuses. Some of the most thoughtful among them have published their responses. In my opinion, columnist David Brooks has written the best of them. He argues that an ideological atmosphere has appeared on college campuses in recent years that “instead of teaching what unites all as human beings” emphasizes “what divides us,” that “human relations are a power struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor,” and that “the goal of rising above bigotry is naïve.” He continues to argue that “students are no longer on campus to learn. They are here to express their certainties and to advance rigid ideological formula.”<sup>19</sup> In brief, according to Brooks’ view, there is a concept active in today’s colleges that regards education as an Us/Them competition. Such a concept is as divisive for colleges as it is unhealthy for students. And it leaves little room for sound history to resonate in students’ minds.

The cause of history at the college level, in my opinion, has sometimes been damaged by the actions of professors themselves. Since the days of the Vietnam War protests, some professors have promoted radical historiography. Such advocacy works against a university’s traditional commitment to objectivity. Under such a circumstance, the study of history, literature, philosophy, and religion become much diminished pursuits. How common this tendency may be cannot be determined beyond confirming that it exists. Another discouraging tendency concerns some professors’ willingness to stop requiring longer written and researched assignments, particularly the traditional term paper. This is a mistake. The nineteenth-century historian Theodor Mom-

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msen explained the error in cancelling these assignments years ago when he wrote: "... Every thinking man ... is a pragmatic historian. There is no other way to understand the events that take place before your eyes. Every businessman who handles a complicated transaction, every lawyer who studies a case, is a searcher for sources and a pragmatic historian."<sup>20</sup> The term paper has long been considered an important stepping-stone for becoming a pragmatic historian, and it should remain so. Finally, there is a tendency, particularly among younger professors, to accept, and at times to promote, what is new or radical, believing it to be progressive. But radicalism, or the advocacy of extreme measures, is not always progress. History reveals too many instances when it is the opposite. In fact, as noted above, it was extreme isms that caused havoc for the study of history.

There appears to be no end to the explanations regarding the current fate of history at the college level. It can be argued that the present disarray of the nation's national politics discourages student interest in history, particularly since American history courses have usually been based on the evolution of the country's political life. The unprecedented politicization of contemporary politics does little to inspire students to pursue history hoping to gain the background needed to enter government work, or some related field. Furthermore, it is difficult to deny the fact that leaders in Washington and at some state capitals seem to have forgotten the old dictum that success in politics depends on the art of compromise. That failure might result in the disarray in current politics lasting into the unpredictable future. In fact, the present politicization of American politics has become so disturbing and widespread that it has influenced many Evangelical Christians in the United States who seem willing to abandon their fidelity to religious principles in favor of gaining social and political power.<sup>21</sup> It is, therefore, hardly a wonder to

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hear people today complain: “Is it worth it?” Why should one study any of the humanities, including history, hoping to acquire the background needed for a career in public service, politics, journalism, or in one of the professions when public life exhibits so much disorder? Also, why should they invest in such a study when it entails the prospect of having long-term loans to pay?

In answering the question posed in this essay, one might prefer one or some combination of the above possibilities. Others might speculate that student demonstrations did not begin with those associated with the Vietnam War, that they long predicted that conflict. The protests, for instance, of the Cold War era, the civil rights movement, and the war never again and pacifist student activities of the 1930s serve as reminders of the longevity of youthful protests in the United States. Most significant of all is the possibility that their roots can be found in the great developments (rationalism, nationalism, industrialism, and individualism) that define the modern age in Western society, along with their unintended social consequences. Perhaps, therefore, the problems that the study of history faces today are bound up in the culture of modernity.

Nevertheless, in my opinion, and given the timeframe of this essay, there is one all-pervasive explanation for the status of historical studies in higher education today — the Us/Them mentality. It is the key to understanding the radical protestors of the American intervention in the Vietnam War and to the generational concept that grew out of it. This particular mind-set reappeared a few years later during the nationally troubled mid 1970s, and it surfaced again in the 1980s as a result of the efforts, especially of small and mid-sized colleges and universities, to recruit and retain students. And, it can be seen as an underlying assumption of the extreme advocacy of social and postmodern history

and of multiculturalism. The US/Them mind-set later became the central dynamic in the Left-Right debate following the end of the Cold War, which remains much alive at present.

As a mental fixation that often accompanies students entering college, an US/Them ideology resists intellectual inquiry and in a like manner damages historical objectivity. It can distort a realistic world view and create a false sense of certainty. And, regarding one's personal conduct, it can encourage rudeness, indiscretion, and even vindictiveness — none of which has a place in public discourse or on a college campus.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Alan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); and quote from Wikipedia review of *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Robert Hughes, *Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 151.

<sup>3</sup> Richard J. Evans, *In Defense of History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 143 and 146.

<sup>4</sup> Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt & Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), 199.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret MacMillan, *Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History* (New York: A Modern Library Chronicles Book, 2009), 116.

<sup>6</sup> Evans, *In Defense of History*, 146.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 82.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 209.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 207. The Holocaust deniers claim that it never happened and insist that it is a hoax promoted by Zionists. Their operations include the Institute for Historical Review, and they publish their findings in *The Journal of Historical Review*. None of the deniers are professional historians, but they would have people believe they are legitimate. Nevertheless, their work, though proven spurious, continues to influence gullible people. *The Economist*, for example, recently reported that 20 percent of American people under thirty believe “the Holocaust a myth.” For the deniers' operations, see Mark T. Gilderhaus, *History and Historians: A Historiographical Introduction* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1996), 90-91. See also, Jennifer Szalai, book review,

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“Rescuing Facts from Cliché” (*New York Times Book Review*, Feb. 11, 2024).

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in George C. Herring, *The American Century & Beyond: U.S. Foreign Relations, 1893-2014* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 513.

<sup>11</sup> Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, 272.

<sup>12</sup> Hughes, *Culture of Complaint*, 84.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, 293. Historians today reject the idea that Greek culture originated in Africa and was carried across the Mediterranean by a series of invasions. They claim that linguistic and archaeological evidence does not sustain that interpretation. Evans, *In Defense of History*, 191;

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, 301.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Margaret MacMillan, *Dangerous Games*, 55-56.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Carol Gelderman, *All the President's Words: The Bully Pulpit and the Creation of the Virtual Presidency* (New York: Walker and Company, 1997), 177. For the spin-masters' duplicity, see, for example, Ben Fritz, Bryan Keefer, and Brendan Nyhan, *All the President's Spin: George W. Bush, The Media, and The Truth* (New York: Touchstone Books, Simon & Schuster, 2004), 147-185; and Howard Kurtz, *Spin Cycle: Inside the Clinton Propaganda Machine* (New York: The Free Press, 1998), 14-33 and 224-242.

<sup>17</sup> Graham Barrett, Allyria Loh, and Peter Schmidt, “Fight the Forum Stealing Our Attention,” *New York Times*, Nov. 22, 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Walter Regan, op. ed., *New York Times*, Dec. 18, 2023.

<sup>19</sup> David Brooks, “Universities are Failing at Inclusion,” *New York Times*, Nov. 17, 2023.

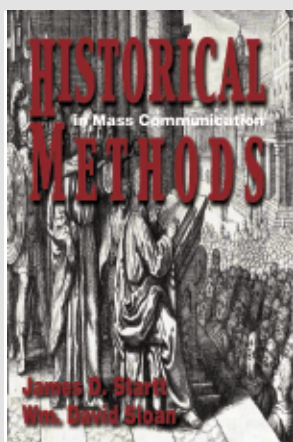
<sup>20</sup> Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, *The Modern Researcher* 5th ed. (Fort Worth, Tex.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1992), VI.

<sup>21</sup> Tim Alberta, *The Kingdom, The Power, and The Glory: American Evangelicals in an Age of Extremism* (New York: Harper Collins, 2023), see any chapter. The subject has also been covered in numerous articles and interviews for the last several years.

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# Gaps in the Record

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**A**t the end of his gospel, the Apostle John writes that “there are many other things that Jesus did, which, if they were written one



Evensen

by one, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written.” In the fifth scene of the first act of *Hamlet*, Shakespeare’s title character observes, “There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.” Our gaps in better understanding journalism’s role in Progressive Era reform bring these observations to mind.

When I published my first academic article thirty-five years ago on the evangelical origins of the *McClure’s* group of muckrakers, I could hardly have dreamt that thirty-five years later I would be returning to journalism’s role in the historiography of Progressive Era reforms. At the time I noted that in the first sixty years of scholarship on journalists and their role in Progressive Era reforms there was “no shortage of opinions on who they were and what they intended.” (“The Evangelical Origins of the Muckrakers,” *American Journalism* 6 [1989]: 6) A list of twenty-one of the more prominent studies portrayed journalists as everything from liberal social reformers to con-

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servative advocates of middle-class values and interests.

In the summer of 1990, historian Harry Stein, writing in *Journalism Quarterly*, helpfully identified criteria common to the best of Progressive Era writing that advocate for reform. He observed that it began with an illustration of a social problem. The inequity is often embedded in a hidden situation the muckraker brings to light. Advocates for reform identify who is responsible for the problem and how it impacts its victims. Writers then link the resolution of the social problem with the creation and maintenance of a more civil society. Stein found this goal — fairness and equity in the nation's public life, particularly among its most vulnerable and at-risk citizens — at the heart of America's progressive agenda in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In 1991, David Sloan provided an analytical framework of the interpretative approaches that historians have used in examining the muckrakers. Chapter 19 in his book *Perspectives in Mass Communication History* develops the arguments of eighteen historians who make up the Progressive School, the Marxist School, the Liberal School, the Neo-Conservative School, the Neo-Progressive School, and the Communications Effects School that have probed the motivations, successes, and inadequacies of muckrakers.

Sloan also includes in his analysis a critical warning by Richard Kielbowitz drawn from his 1982 *Journalism Quarterly* study of journalists as agents of change in turn-of-the-century Minneapolis. Kielbowitz argues that historians run the risk of exaggerating the significance of Progressive Era journalists unless they offer evidence demonstrating the writing itself materially contributed to reform. Sociologist Michael Schudson agrees with Kielbowitz's words of warning. Writing for a roundtable on "Causality in History" in this journal in 2022, Schudson notes, "it is difficult to know when or to what extent the media influ-

ence public opinion, or how or when public opinion influences public policy. I believe that media matter, but I do not think anyone has much of a grasp on how much.” (*Historiography in Mass Communication* 8:3 [2022]: 44)

A more specific criticism on the status of journalism’s role in Progressive Era reform came in 2015, on the forty-fifth anniversary of the reissue of Harold Wilson’s path-breaking study *McClure’s Magazine and the Muckrakers* by Princeton University Press. During our discussion, Wilson indicated his disappointment that there had not been “more historical interest in reform journalism” and in marshalling evidence to demonstrate journalism’s role in agitating for the creation of a more civil society. Wilson saw a wide, unexplored area of inquiry, where scholars might shed further light on “enormous conflicts between capital and labor, blacks and whites, immigrants and natives, and rich and poor, while exploring remedies for these social ills.” Wilson’s work set a standard for future researchers in uncovering how modernizing America awakened readers to their shared sense of communitarian responsibility in making America a fit place for the habitation of a free people.

This strategy to use journalism as a critical instrument in winning reform is apparent in one of the most neglected areas of Progressive Era journalism, and that is its success in promoting movements that empowered women. A long struggle culminating in passage of the 18th and 19th amendments to the U. S. Constitution were twin triumphs of the temperance and suffrage campaigns that have been given insufficient attention by journalism historians of the period. Mass communication researchers have yet to capture the crucial role that journalism played in these movements that marked a revolution in American society. Amending the Constitution enabled the women’s movement to fight for equal standing in court to execute contracts and have the same cus-

tody rights in raising their children as their husbands. It also aimed at ending institutional discrimination that barred women from opportunities in education and employment long enjoyed exclusively by men.

The Library of Congress has posted an online study guide, titled “Prohibition: A Case Study of Progressive Reform,” which observes that temperance “exhibited many of the characteristics of most progressive reforms. It was concerned with the moral fabric of society.” Those concerns extended to raising the legal age of consent, which was seven in some states; challenging child labor and exploitation; ending domestic abuse and providing shelters for its victims; forcing states to criminalize violence against women; winning for women the right to protect their personal property and estates; building public interest in mitigating the effects of poverty; fighting for the eight-hour work day and equal pay for equal work; agitating for free kindergarten and equal access to public education; throwing open institutions of higher learning and professional education; protesting for public parks and water fountains to replace beer gardens; and organizing initiatives in public health, sanitation, safety and nutrition.

So, why has temperance and the range of reforms it piloted received so little attention from journalism historians? Katharine Stanford Davidson completed a literature review in 1926, six years after Prohibition went into effect. Titled, “Results of Prohibition: A Selected Bibliography,” the study, appearing in the *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology*, showed a growing antipathy toward the temperance movement. Only two years later, Herbert Hoover, ran successfully for president by calling Prohibition “a noble experiment.”

By 1933, however, the 21st amendment to the Constitution ended that experiment, New York’s *Daily Mirror* famously reported in big, bold headlines, “Prohibition ends at Last!” Its subhead read: “The Lid

Is Off.” The end of Prohibition also seemed to end historical curiosity about why women organized and marched to campaign for it, and how they used journalism in unique ways to advocate for it. In its online post on the study of Prohibition, the Library of Congress links to an interview conducted by the Federal Writers Project in 1936 as part of the Works Progress Administration. W. W. Dixon’s study of American “Life Histories” took him to Blackstock, South Carolina, where he interviewed Samuel D. Mobley, a 74-year-old retired businessman, who Dixon describes as “a close observer of the panorama of life and a reasoner and philosopher of no mean ability.” Mobley explained that “I have noticed that every attempt to legislate morals into the people has resulted in disaster.” Mobley insisted “religion and morals should be taught and inculcated in the church and home, and self-control and temperance should be read and studied from the Bible rather than the Statutory Code.”

Mobley’s remarks were cryptically endorsed by H. L. Mencken, a journalist and his generation’s most famous wise guy. In his *Chrestomathy*, Mencken’s take is that Prohibition was little more than the triumph of Puritans, who had “the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.” Mencken’s contempt for reformers dies hard. Its sentiment frames Daniel Okrent’s *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition* (2010) and much of the four generations of scholarship that bridges the two writers, down to a *New York Times* book reviewer who finds it unfathomable that Americans should “curtail their precious right to drink.” (May 21, 2010)

My current book project, *Journalism and the Meaning of America*, examines the critical role that journalism has played in encouraging often overlooked reform movements. I was drawn to write a chapter on the origins and strategies of the temperance reform movement because

of personal history and professional interest. I'm the son of an alcoholic, grew up in an alcoholic's home and lived the devastating impact it had on my mother and our family. Many of the readers of this essay will know what I mean, if they've lived in similar circumstances. Yet, systematic studies of what motivated women to act and how they used journalism as a critical instrument in achieving personal and communal empowerment is not well known.

A little known journalist and historian from Rochester, New York, named Samuel Chipman, launched a nine-month, 4,500-mile investigation in 1834 to chronicle the violent impact of alcoholics on their wives and families. Chipman's *Report of an Examination of Poorhouses, Jails and Almshouses in the State of New York* included ninety-six pages of sworn affidavits, obtained from visits to more than 200 jails, asylums and poorhouses in New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Vermont, where he interviewed jailers, justices, sheriffs, superintendents, wardens and county clerks, who attested to the social cost of alcoholism in their communities.

The investigation strengthened Chipman's activism. He became a lecturer in behalf of the temperance movement at a time when women had a limited public role in American life and few legal remedies in protecting themselves and their children from the ravages of alcoholics. Chipman's work anticipates Stein's finding that Progressive Era muck-raking illustrates a social problem by revealing a hidden situation, showing us its victims, identifying who's responsible, and what should be done to create a more civil society.

Chipman found that three-quarters of all poverty cases he encountered were alcohol-related and more than five-sixths of criminal cases. Most of the jails he had visited included husbands who had whipped and violently terrorized their wives in drunken sprees. Nearly all the

alms-houses he investigated were filled with wives and children left broken and destitute at the hands of drunks.

Chipman used riveting case studies along with his data. Memorably, he describes one drunken husband who repeatedly swung an axe at his terrified wife, while she attempted to calm her petrified children, by saying, “Daddy is only playing.” Inebriates sent to poor houses became an epidemic in many communities. One father in Zanesville, Ohio begged pitifully for something to drink, slipped into delirium tremens “and threw himself from a third story window and was killed.” On the bridge In Ogdensburg, New York over the Oswegatchie River, just before it reaches the Saint Lawrence, a once well-respected man now given over to fits of drunken rage plunged his three-year-old through a hole in the ice “and the little creature was instantly swept away.” The other child bolted, screaming, “Father, don’t throw me in! Don’t throw me in!” But the father caught up with the son and before a witness rushed to the scene, horrified, he watched helplessly, as the father “plunged the other in also.” The police reports ends: “The father committed suicide at the State Prison in Auburn.”

Official documents recount how Peter Crine of Minisink, New York In a drunken rage, repeatedly whipped his wife for refusing to take down her frock in the presence of their five children in a one room house. He whipped her on the bed and whipped her on the floor and held her head still so she might better receive the blows. He then reached for a whip better suited for her punishment.

“Oh, Peter,” the children could hear their mother pleading inside the cracks of the whip. “You-can-be-so-cruel.”

According to court testimony, the cracks grew louder as the children watched in silent terror. Their father used seven whips in all “before using them all up” and whipped their mother out of the house. She

slid into a cellar as he sat in a chair and warmed himself by the fire. Newspapers described Ruth Crine as “a pious woman and affectionate mother,” whose 12-year-old daughter Elana told the court, her father kicked her mother “front to back and side to side.” When her mother began to groan, she was “threatened with another horse whipping,” if she didn’t stop. In the gathering darkness, the children could hear their mother crawling along the floor before the sound finally stopped.

Finally, the father ordered the children to pull their mother into bed, where she lay motionless.

“Wait awhile,” Elena later testified he told them. “She may come to.” After some time, Crine lit a candle and brought it to his wife’s face. “I believe your mother’s dying,” he said after a long silence. He ordered Elena “to get the handkerchief and tie up her face.” Elena could hear her mother gasp twice and then she was dead. Crine returned to his chair by the fire.

The children were told to tell neighbors their mother had fallen over a potato hole and into the fire “and burnt herself.” Instead, Elana told authorities what they had witnessed. Peter Crine was hanged in Orange County near the New Jersey state line for murdering his wife.

Alcohol was used as both medicine and stimulant during the fighting of the Civil War and in its aftermath led to “a startling increase in commitments,” according to Frank Sanborn, a charity official filing his report in 1872 with the International Prison Congress. “Thousands of soldiers and sailors, many of them good soldiers” were imprisoned for violent crimes, many stemming from alcohol abuse, Sanborn found. The number of persons committed to state prisons after the war increased by nearly half in Massachusetts and by one third in Pennsylvania compared to pre-war numbers with many states following this pattern.



As corresponding secretary for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union from 1874 through 1879, Frances Willard hoped to educate members on how to win the fight for women's rights in the public square. Her *Hints and Helps in Our Temperance Work*, published in 1875, was aimed at equipping "women whose heart is in the work" but who were unaccustomed to speaking in public. Americans needed to know there were "ten times as many saloons as churches and school-houses" and that "we spend 15 times as much on the bottle as we do on schools." She urged speakers to emphasize the social cost of intoxication. "Half of insanity cases are drunks," they should insist, and "75 percent of murders arose from drunken brawls. Eighty-six percent of criminals are drunks, and ninety-five percent of vicious youths come from homes of drunks."

Willard encouraged workers "to get the statistics for your town" and emphasized "interesting the press in your work. Give your editors facts." This included "editing a column in the local newspaper in the interest of the reform." Women needed to "enlist the press as our most powerful ally." Local chapters of the WCTU needed to have "a pulpit and press secretary to attend to special notice" and "get their plan of work published in as many papers as possible." Every woman needed to know "she can talk temperance to public audiences." When she "speaks of human destiny, the world will listen."

In *Hints and Helps in Woman's Temperance Work*, published in 1876, Willard observed how temperance news was beginning to "permeate public sentiment through the press, in weekly and monthly temperance bulletins, in lectures, conventions, fairs, celebrations, encampments, expositions, petitions, synods and conferences." Her organization was now targeting "teachers associations, medical societies and state and national legislatures to refrain from the use of alcohol, to out-

law liquor traffic, to ban the sale of tobacco to minors and the publication and distribution of pornography, which degrades women.” Willard stipulated “the march of women defenders of the home into public spaces” had “put saloons on the defensive. Now our war cry reaches legislatures in every state and legislators of this nation.”

In a follow-up pamphlet, titled, “How to Write a Newspaper Story,” Willard urged convention workshops “to gather authentic facts, incidents and statistics.” Readers needed to know that “newspaper composition is entirely different” from other forms of writing. “A newspaper story must be told in all its essentials in the first paragraph,” Willard insisted. “This is a concession to the busy public and to a habit of newspaper readers to read only headlines and the opening sentences of one story before going on to the next.” This opening paragraph was “the lead, and it presents all the fundamental facts of the story. Sentences should be short and their meaning clear. Economy of space and time should be your constant endeavor,” she urged workers. “The guiding principles” of those articles should be their “accuracy, clearness, promptness, and courtesy,” sentiments right out of Joseph Pulitzer’s playbook.

Willard wanted temperance workers to remember “this is a busy, reading and thinking nation. We learn about a thousand things solely from ‘what the papers say.’” She thought the women’s movement had been “shorn of more than half its influence” by failing to engage the local and national press. “Let us enter this open door,” she repeatedly argued at WCTU conventions and before women’s groups as her work extended to educators, labor leaders, and sympathetic legislators. “Let us bring the facts of our great cause into contact with the great thinking brain of the reading people.” Willard wanted WCTU’s nationwide chapters to “select one of your best women, who can write rapidly,

clearly and wisely” to take on this critical campaign in influencing America. It meant “placing in leadership earnest, consecrated, kindly, level-headed women who give themselves wholly to this work.” Job one was contacting representatives of the press to better understand their deadlines. “It cannot be emphasized too strongly,” Willard asserted, that Associated Press be made essential partners in publicizing temperance initiatives. Their reports “go out over the wires each day,” Willard noted, “to ten and hundreds of thousands, sometimes to millions.”

In March 1878 Willard was able to practice what she preached. She became editor of the *Chicago Daily Journal*, following the sudden death of her brother, 42-year-old brother Oliver Willard, who had been a problem drinker before and during his stint as publisher of the paper. Assisted by his widow Mary, who became the paper’s business manager, the two women labored together in advocacy journalism, making the *Journal* one of the first examples of a big city daily successfully run by women. Willard’s public agitation for women’s rights led to her election as president of the WCTU in October 1879.

At the Frances Willard House and Museum in Evanston, Illinois, I encountered copies of *The Signal*, a newspaper the two women launched on January 15, 1880, to instigate a public debate over whether women deserved the local option to vote on whether their communities approved liquor licenses. *The Signal* was a three-column, sixteen-page weekly highlighting temperance activities in the West, updating the examples of Chipman and Sanborn in building a case for temperance in the press. On October 21, 1880, it reported, “The saddest feat of intemperance is not the exhibition men make of themselves in saloons and on sidewalks, it is what they do when they get home.”

Vignettes in *The Signal* told simple stories of how alcohol had become central to post-Civil War living and dying. On November 4,

1880, the paper reported a study of a downstate Illinois prison that showed 742 of 865 inmates had committed their crimes under the influence of alcohol. Evidence confirmed a 73-year-old man serving a life sentence for killing his wife was in “a drunken rage” when he killed her. *The Signal* asked if the husband alone was responsible for her death “or the sellers of drink who madden men” so they might realize a small profit. And *The Signal* asked what responsibility communities had in enabling saloons to open.

In three years, *The Signal* became the official newspaper of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union under the new name, *Union Signal*. It rapidly expanded to 1,634,000 copies annually. Its inaugural edition announced, “*The Signal* Corps is an army” that shines a light “on what its enemies are doing,” so that it can lead its friends “into battle.” It would remain “on the alert” until women “secured the ballot on temperance issues” by “plowing up the turf of public opinion until the temperance cause had won.”

In the decade preceding the rise of *McClure’s Magazine* and the early chroniclers of muckraking, Willard created a sophisticated network of internal and external communication channels to build public opinion for temperance and suffrage. She relied on a story-telling pattern aimed at revealing a hidden situation — how homes were being destroyed and women and children brutalized at the hands of alcoholic husbands and the refusal of the wider community to do anything about it. She was a trailblazer not only for women’s rights but muckrakers who would position themselves on the side of the people against the institutional interests of those who threatened them. For Willard this was the liquor interests and the political establishment that supported it and opposed a women’s movement for enfranchisement more than a century after the articulation of inalienable rights in the Declaration of

Independence.

Willard's achievement is quite remarkable — and worthy of investigation by journalism historians — because she is simultaneously organizing and equipping women for rhetorical combat but also molding an electorate to sympathize with and support a truly radical idea — winning for women the right to vote, first on liquor licenses in their community, and then extending the franchise to all issues, since all issues affected women, their children, their homes, and their communities. As she was doing this, Willard's publications also drew women to a new social imperative — their “proper” roles were not confined to the home, but extended to all issues outside it, since everything outside it had created a culture in which many women were unsafe, abused, ignored and preyed upon without legal remedy.

Excellent work by Jane L. McKeever in *The Library Quarterly* in October 1985 summarizes the progress Willard made in establishing the Woman's Temperance Publishing Association — which began in 1880 as a two-person operation in the corner of a Y. M. C. A. building in downtown Chicago and grew within a decade — to become a one-hundred-person operation, producing 125 million pages annually. Local distributors were encouraged to buy in bulk. Fifty newspapers could be had for a single dollar. At the time of Willard's death in 1898, the publishing house was annually printing 150 million pages, two-thirds of it on temperance and the rest job printing. Its mail order operation of 35,000 items in 1886 exceeded 70,000 items by 1892.

An examination of collections held at the Willard Home and Archives opens our understanding of the role of publishing in women's work on temperance and reform through access to the ballot. Businesses run by women that advertised in WCTU publications produced posters, pictures and pins, banners, badges and bookmarks, as well as sta-

tionery, ribbons, engravings and even sets of encyclopedias for a discounted rate of \$32.50 per set. WCTU's publishing house also got into the subscription book business, when local unions selected 400 publishing representatives who made twenty percent commissions on copies sold. Forty-nine departments kept the books coming with a superintendent at the head of each of four divisions — educational, evangelistic, health and prevention, social and legal.

A department of organization within the WCTU oversaw publishing, and Willard oversaw it. She filled the nation's Sunday schools with literature to train women missionaries to work with children and to reach the forgotten — the railroad workers, soldiers, sailors, miners and lumbermen, the paupers and the prisoners and the reformatories and homes that cared for women brutalized by inebriates. The literature campaign launched the white cross movement targeting young men on ways to respect women and avoid their violation. It grew to include retrieving women and girls from sex slavery and advocating for legislation punishing men for violence against women.

Willard also built external relations with the public press designed to win women a fair hearing in the nation's press. Willard visited twenty-three states during 1880 — her first full year in office — and every section of every state and many territories during the first three years of her presidency. Willard hired staff to make sure that newspaper editors were notified in advance of her speaking engagements, and she consented to interviews and advances on her speeches to get the word out. Her visits and remarks had the dual effect of speaking to the sympathetic as well as organizing new chapters for the work of the WCTU.

On the night of May 14, 1885, in Auburn, New York, Willard made her one thousandth speech in American communities of ten thousand, an itinerary that included many towns with populations of

five thousand or less. Her presentations made good copy and often received front page attention. The interested and just plain curious came to get in on the spectacle of an articulate woman with a national following making a case for women's rights.

In speech after speech, Willard's template remained the same — she stalked the hidden situation of violence within the home. She identified who was responsible — liquor interests and a political establishment that supported it. She identified the victims — husbands, wives, children, and the greater society burdened by the cost of broken homes, crime and indigence left in the wake of the violent drunk. She places a wider responsibility in the failure of society to act in behalf of women and children at risk. And Willard portrays a more civil society when half of its members were finally freed to participate through the ballot box on issues that materially affected their lives and the lives of those they loved.

Newspaper accounts in the *San Jose Mercury* and *San Jose Morning Times* in April 1883 describe this pattern. Willard told her gatherings that women didn't need to be drunks to suffer at the hands of drunks. "We are being educated by our sorrows and our losses," she said. "There are fathers, husbands and brothers falling everywhere." Alcohol made many men "cruel to what they love best." When women won the vote, "they'd vote for the safety and happiness of their homes. In America there are many protections, but few defenses for the home. We come to plead for those who can't plead for themselves. We have come to protect the homes of those who pray and sob and struggle."

In recent years, scholars have been increasingly drawn to Willard's use of rhetorical warfare in making a case for temperance, suffrage, and women's political empowerment. The best of this work includes Carolyn De Swarte Gifford's *Writing Out My Heart: Selections from the*

*Journal of Frances E. Willard, 1855-1896* (1995), Carol Mattingly's "Woman-Tempered Rhetoric: Public Presentation and the WCTU" in *Rhetoric Review* (1995), Erin M. Masson, "The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1874-1898: Combating Domestic Violence," *William & Mary Journal of Women & the Law* (1997), Amy R. Slagell's "The Rhetorical Structure of Frances E. Willard's Campaign for Woman's Suffrage, 1876-1896" in *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* (2001), Patricia Bizzell, "Frances Willard, Phoebe Palmer and the Ethos of the Methodist Female Preacher," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* (2006), Lisa Zimmerelli, "*The Stereoscopic View of Truth: The Feminist Theological Rhetoric of Frances Willard's Woman in the Pulpit*," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* (2012), and Christopher H. Evans, *Do Everything: The Biography of Frances Willard* (2022), particularly his seventh chapter on "Home Protection," pages 95-107 and his ninth chapter, titled "Agitate, Educate, Organize," on pages 123-137.

Willard's strategy of public persuasion can be seen by a careful reading of Willard's writings to WCTU subordinates and workers in the women's movement. By 1884, the WCTU had grown to 10,000 local unions, the largest women's organization ever assembled. That year Willard wrote *Hints and Helps in Woman's Temperance Work* noting that a decade of agitation for the vote made the women's movement good copy. Of the nation's 54,000 newspapers, Willard told WCTU workers across the country, 8,000 now regularly published temperance news. Local unions were directed to develop "a weekly temperance column in the local papers," creating common cause with "a public ready to aid them." She insisted the temperance message be circulated "in factories and business establishments through the press, pulpit and by personal invitation." Its message should be: "Everybody is welcome" to join the cause. Public education should teach young women "to require



a nobler habit of life from men to offset the temptations of the saloon and the grimy grog-shop.” Boys should have their own trained spokesmen. “Editor conventions” should be staged across the country, “enlisting bright, enterprising young men” to join the cause.

Willard urged workers to prioritize placing stories in the Associated Press to receive national syndication. She thought it “a sin that the public is satiated with murders and other horrors in the daily press” and seemed unaware that the social cost of alcohol was greater than “the cost of all our schools of all grades.” Editors needed to know that three-quarters of the violent crime in the country stemmed from the abuse of alcohol and nine in ten youth crimes. She cited a strong correlation between drug abuse, indigence, and insanity and posed a deadly picture of “100,000 of our fellow citizens annually reeled out into eternity through the awful doorway of a drunkard’s death.”

By the opening of Chicago’s World’s Fair in 1893, Willard was America’s most famous woman. A painting, titled “Women and Their Political Peers,” was unveiled at the Woman’s Building at the fair, seen by many of the fair’s 27 million visitors. The exposition’s white marble city gave a glimpse of America’s future, but the painting showed a different America. Willard, representing the American woman, surrounded by four other faces — a Native American, a convict, a mentally challenged man and a man who appeared to be insane — who were all denied the vote.

Although she wouldn’t live to see it, in 1905 Willard became the first woman honored with a statue in a chamber of the United States Capitol. Eighteen years before, Willard had presented to Congress a petition, signed by 200,000 women, demanding the vote. A year later, she had testified before a Senate committee, considering extending voting rights. In 1917, Montana’s Jeannette Rankin stood before Willard’s

statue as the first woman ever elected to the U. S. Congress. On April 6, 1917, Rankin voted against American entrance into the Great War. She later observed, “I felt the first time the first woman had a chance to say no to war, she should say it.” In 1985, a statue of Rankin would be erected in the same hall as Willard.

By 1920, America’s two great experiments — in temperance and woman’s suffrage — began. In that year, 26 million women were eligible to vote and nearly half of them did in our only presidential election in which two newspaper editors — Warren Harding and James Cox — were the major party nominees. “Women and Weather Make Fair Election,” the Memphis *News Scimitar* of November 2<sup>nd</sup> told its readers in a celebratory mood.

Future journalism historians studying American reform movements — and particularly the role of women in them — would be well served investigating how the temperance and suffrage campaigns used journalism and the power of publicity, forever empowering women and changing America when they did.

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# Getting Students to Love Writing, 2.0

By Julie Hedgepeth Williams ©

**I**n the previous issue of this journal, I wrote my take on “How Do We Get Students To, Well, LOVE Writing Papers?”



Williams

Unexpectedly I had a sweet confirmation of one student’s love of writing media history papers. I should explain that my media history students are actually University Core Seminar students, which I translate off-handedly to outsiders as what used to be called eons ago “Freshman English.” Actually, in Samford University’s design of its core curriculum, it’s actually better described as a required core class on communications, both written and oral. I assign my freshmen to do research in historical media of a given era, and then they write about that in four “Quick Papers,” which they write about in four “Quick Papers” and, by the end of the semester, two longer “Big Papers.” After each paper, they speak about what they found. I have my students down in the university archives reading not only the university’s collection of old media, but also my own, which I bring in each week. They pick up stories ranging from quirky to world-changing, from completely bizarre to pertaining to their major. Their papers always teach me things I never knew, and their speeches collectively paint a wide-ranging picture of any given era for their class. What a

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blast!

My students are eligible to go to the American Journalism Historians Association's Southeast Symposium after they get out of my class. At our annual symposium in Panama City Beach, Florida, they present their papers in front of a wider audience of students (and faculty) from the Southeast. I could speak for miles of paragraphs on the benefits of this inexpensive and delightful symposium, but I'll manage to bite my tongue about that for now.



Ella Townsend  
at the AJHA  
Southeast  
Symposium

I took six of my freshman students this year, graduates of the class, to Panama City Beach for the symposium in February. They included a psychology major, a business management major, a voice major, an architecture major, an English major and a dual English/political science major. As you can see, not a one was a journalism major or a history major, but they all had written fascinating papers on some aspect of media history and had a ball presenting their work.

A couple of days later, I found a stitchery (in the photograph on page 49) gently placed in the ever-present pink plastic envelope on my office door, along with a thank you note. It was from Ella Townsend, the architecture student mentioned above. She said she had created this beautiful gift for me in commemoration of our class.

It showed, Ella explained, the nine eras of the press that I had lectured about in class. I was amazed, as some of these eras have no writing exercise associated with them; I merely ask the students to do “intelligent listening” to learn what went on in history and in the press during those eras we won't be writing about. I must admit that some do very little listening when they figure out there won't be an assignment asso-



ciated with that lecture, but Ella obviously listened.

As Ella explained, the tiny embroidered pictures on the stitchery, which overall is only about 3 inches in diameter, were, top row from left: A tea bag, representing the Colonial/Revolutionary Press era (think the Boston Tea party); a party hat in today's political party colors, representing the Party Press era (yes, I wear a birthday party hat to class that day!); and a penny for the Penny Press era. The second row from left shows a cannon for the Civil War Press; a color illustration from the Illustrated Press (I think of this as a *Godey's* piece, as we made much of *Godey's* hand-tinted illustrations); and a cactus to indicate the Frontier Press. The last row from left includes The Yellow Kid from the Yellow Press; followed by a rake representing Muckraking; and finally a heart in one of Samford University's school colors, as we leap to the 1970s to study Samford's famous (to the administration, infamous) and nationally lauded underground newspaper of that era.

I was touched by Ella's work. Not only had she loved the class, as she said in her note, but she had shown how much of an impression it had made by stitching this wonderful instant heirloom.

With Ella's permission, I sent this in to David Sloan, the editor of *Historiography in Mass Communication*, as a follow-up to my earlier essay. Yes, students CAN learn to love writing — and truly, the class found a permanent home in Ella's memory... and in her needlework. She's an architecture major; so I can't imagine that I'll ever have her in

## Williams

class again (alas, as she was a great student) — that's the sad fate of a core course teacher. But she loved the old newspapers and now adds that angle on history to her informational pantry as she moves forward.

I love this thoughtful and creative evidence that, yes, students from various realms can love to write papers in media history.

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# Historian Interview

Robert Miraldi ©

**R**obert Miraldi is an award-winning author and reporter. His free speech column – winner of numerous awards — is syndicated in the USA



Miraldi

Today Network from Vermont to Florida. Dr. Miraldi is author of three books and editor of three others. His biography *The Pen Is Mightier: The Muckraking Life of Charles Edward Russell* won the Mott Award as the best book in journalism/mass communication in 2003. His biography *Seymour Hersh: Scoop Artist* won the Sperber Award as the best journalism biography in the United States in 2019. Miraldi was a Fulbright Scholar in the Netherlands in 1992 and was named an outstanding journalism educator by the Poynter Institute.

He received his Ph.D. from New York University. He is a professor emeritus at the State University of New York at New Paltz.

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

**Miraldi:** I was born on Staten Island when it was dotted with open spaces, ball fields and even farms. It was more like Iowa than New York City. My father sold real estate and insurance, although he spent much of his time coaching and presiding over the baseball leagues my older brother and I participated in. Baseball and the Protestant church in which we were active dominated our early lives. My mother was Norwegian-French but was the best Italian cook; relatives flocked to our

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house for her Sunday dinners.

I was educated in NYC public schools, a good student, engaged in many extracurricular activities. Social studies/history and English were my favorite subjects in elementary school. In high school I loved learning Spanish. High school was an exciting time for me. It signaled the start of my professional life, oddly, but also allowed me to begin trying to save the world, an ideal that later spilled over into my journalism and my scholarship. Baseball was my obsession, along with politics. My high school yearbook noted my two ambitions: to play third base for the NY Yankees and to be New York's U.S. Senator. I settled for less, however. But I was an all-star shortstop and had two tryouts for professional teams.

In my senior year I was elected class president and ran on a platform vowing to bring football back to the school, where it had not been played in nearly four decades. We raised \$17,000 and the school had a football team the next year. The *NY Times* did a story about our success, noting, Miraldi "is a politician who lived up to a campaign promise." That still gets a laugh among my friends.

But the biggest personal event for me related to journalism. My local daily newspaper, the *Staten Island Advance*, part of the Newhouse chain, started a Sunday newspaper. For two editions on Saturdays they needed copy boys (I don't recall any copygirls, although they did have numerous women reporters). I became a copyboy, working 12 hours every Saturday beginning in my sophomore year. I learned how to monitor the AP and UPI news wires and how to fill glue pots for cut and paste. Little by little I was able to do short rewrites. By my junior year I was writing feature stories, and even editing copy in an emergency. Printers ink began to fill my blood, although my journalism career almost ended before it began.



In 1969 former President Eisenhower was near death at his Pennsylvania home. One Saturday the newsroom was told that if Ike died at any time during the day, we would go to press within one hour. No other editions would be published. The newsroom was on edge. In the “wire room” I read an AP bulletin in mid-afternoon saying the former President died quietly at home. I ran into the newsroom, jumped on a desk and announced his death. Mayhem ensued. When I returned to read the story again, I realized it was his advance obituary — for when he died. I snuck back in the newsroom and fessed up: he is not dead! Never mind. The publisher wanted to fire me. But my editor backed me up, said I had promise — and I went on to a decade as an award-winning reporter and then four decades teaching journalism.

By the way, there were plusses and minuses to starting my journalism career early. The plus was learning how a newsroom and the world of news work. The minus was that I learned to be a facile writer but in the clipped fashion of a telegraphic journalism dispatch. My teachers often said they liked my writing but felt like they were reading *Time* magazine!

For two years I went to Wagner College on Staten Island, a small Lutheran liberal arts school overlooking New York Harbor. I worked 20 hours a week as a sports reporter; my studies often took a backseat. In 1970 I transferred to the State University of New York at Oneonta, studying political science, intent on law school. I ran out of money at the end of undergraduate study and returned full-time to the newsroom, working one year as a general assignment reporter. In 1974 I earned a master’s degree in journalism from Boston University. Since I had already been a reporter, the university waived classes in journalism practice. I was left to read, read, read — about journalism history, literature and law. It was heaven.

I returned once again to the newsroom on Staten Island, ready to save the world. It was the era of Woodward and Bernstein, after all. And I was able to make significant changes — helping improve and close down a notorious state institution for the disabled; convincing the NY Parks Department to create the largest urban park in America on Staten Island; and improving conditions in boarding houses where the mentally ill were being warehoused. Reporting was exciting — and productive.

In 1975 I became an adjunct at Wagner College, teaching introductory journalism. I did this for five years while working fulltime as a reporter. I loved the classroom and tried to do in class what I tried to do with my stories — entertain and inform. Feeling the restraints of journalism, I returned to NYU in 1980 to complete a Ph.D. in American Studies with a focus on Media Studies. From 1980-82 I taught at St. John's University. In 1982 I went to SUNY New Paltz to teach journalism.

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

**Miraldi:** I often say that I am a journalist who happens to have a Ph.D. As I have already said, I worked as a journalist from 16 to 28 years old. I ended my career as an investigative reporter, which piqued my interest in “muckraking journalism,” the early form of investigative journalism that dominated the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I was ready to switch gears. While working on a story at the end of my journalism career, a source asked me, “What is your little muckraking mind up to?” Scholarship was beckoning.

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

**Miraldi:** I've taught journalism at Wagner College, St. John's University, University of Wisconsin Madison and the State University of New York. I helped create the journalism program at New Paltz, the first in New York's public university system, and taught many classes while there for 35 years. I taught introductory and advanced journalism, public affairs reporting, investigative reporting and copyediting and layout. I also taught Press History and Mass Media Law. My goal was to teach students how to be journalists, but also help them understand why journalism was important in a democracy. The study of journalism history brings us face to face with many of the paramount issues that persist in journalism today.

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

**Miraldi:** Social studies was always my favorite topic back to the seventh grade. I was obsessed with the map of America, and how the country grew and what issues and battles we faced as industrialism dawned. So it was natural for me to lean into journalism history as my interest in the media grew. My work as an investigative reporter inclined me to look at the “muckraking” journalists — the first investigative reporters who created this brand of journalism. They were heroic and led interesting lives. My Ph.D. thesis at NYU was about the journalism of David Graham Phillips who wrote 17 best-selling novels but was equally famous as a muckraker. His 1906 magazine attack on the U.S. Senate led President Roosevelt to coin the term “muckrakers.” I looked carefully at his journalism and this focused my research, frankly, for the next 35 years on what historian Louis Filler called these “Crusaders for

American Liberalism.” Muckraking and the American Progressive Movement became my passion.

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

**Miraldi:** I have always been an optimist. My journalistic experiences told me that we can make important changes in society. I learned this from my journalism. So, it made sense for me to look to the aspects of journalism history that spoke to this optimism. Filler’s book influenced me greatly — a look at journalists who allied with progressive causes to bring about, for better or worse, significant enlargement of our central government. Progressivism and Socialism, what Charles Edward Russell called the Cooperative Commonwealth, were major political focal points for me. Consequently, the journalistic movement that helped spur these political episodes became the focus of my research. Two mentors at NYU guided my work: Paul Baker, a biographer, and Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Irwin Unger.

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

**Miraldi:** My first book in 1991 tried to reconcile two competing ideals of journalism: Hence, the title: *Muckraking and Objectivity: Journalism’s Colliding Traditions*. When I subsequently dug into the life of muckraker Russell, I again had to reconcile the fact that he was a famous and prolific investigative reporter at the same time as he was running for political office as a Socialist. Russell straddled Progressivism and exposé, always trying to use his journalism to improve society. And he accom-

plished much, including exposing the largest slum landlord in New York City, Trinity Church.

When I later explored the journalism of Seymour Hersh, who many considered to be America's greatest contemporary investigative reporter, I again was assaying his constantly pushing the boundaries of journalism. He used the rules of objectivity to bring about changes and challenge governmental power. And he was constantly attacked for violating journalism's unwritten rules of objectivity. The dilemma of activism as a challenge to journalism's norms has formed my work and inquiry.

***Historiography:*** Summarize for us the body of work that you have done related to history.

**Miraldi:** I have written three books and edited three others. In addition, I have written two articles for *Journalism Quarterly*, two essays for *Journalism Monographs* and an article for *American Journalism*. My first scholarship was on David Graham Philips, typical of what emerges from a Ph.D. dissertation. I wish in retrospect I had broadened my work but the publications I did led the reader into an important world of journalism, from elegant writing of the 1880s to both activist and “yellow journalism” of the 1890s and then into the muckraking era of the early 20th century. My first book was a collection of essays and case studies contrasting two eras of journalism. But that book was a warmup for the two biographies I then wrote. I viewed Russell as the greatest of the muckrakers, with a turbulent and prolific life of journalism. When you dig in to a life, you never know if you'll like the subject. For me it was a bonus that Russell was passionate, compassionate, pure of heart, in short, a good man. I turned next to a contemporary figure, Seymour Hersh, who I had been observing since he exposed the My Lai massacre

in Vietnam in 1968. Hersh was a legend, and I chronicled his massive output of journalism from My Lai to prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib in 2004. Hersh was an elusive subject and we danced around on interviews and email for many years. But in my view what made both these biographies work was the primary source material I had to work with. Russell had 26 books, hundreds of magazine articles and personal journals. Hersh also had many books and articles in the *NY Times* and *New Yorker*, but his early years were open to look at because, by chance, just when I was beginning research the AP had collated all of his early articles. It was a treasure trove; I read them all. Good writing always helps a book but great material is most important.

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

**Miraldi:** Both of my major biographies were challenging — and exhausting. Both received attention and awards. But I do wish Charles Edward Russell was more recognized. Lincoln Steffens called him “the most wounded of the muckraking tribe.” He felt the pain of terrible turn-of-the-century conditions more than others. His life is a model of persistence. He knew that progress is slow and that each generation has to push society forward to make improvements.

***Historiography:*** *Given your career-long interest in muckraking journalism and investigative reporting, if you would start a new project now, what would it be?*

**Miraldi:** The book that has not been written is on the second great wave of investigative reporting that took place beginning in the early 1960s

up and through Watergate in 1974. It coincides with chaos in the streets and tremendous growth in the regulatory state. An incredible amount of quality work is just waiting to be discovered. It is a big and important book.

***Historiography:** We realize that it is difficult to judge one's own work but if you had to summarize your most important contributions to the field of journalism/mass communication history, what would they be?*

**Miraldi:** I do believe that my biographies of Hersh and Russell will be considered definitive looks at the career and lives of two legendary and important figures in journalism history. They both show what one persistent journalist can accomplish, despite pushback from establishment power. Their accomplishments should inspire us. And they typify the eras of great social unrest in which they worked.

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

**Miraldi:** I would start earlier on journalism history research. There are so many books I would still like to write. So much territory uncovered. I hate generalizations about journalism when the researchers have not really read the primary source material. Charles Edward Russell was city editor for Joseph Pulitzer. I read almost three years of city-side news in Pulitzer's *World*. What a view of New York and of journalism, both good and bad. I read a year of Phillips' editorials for Pulitzer and it revealed lucid and careful opinion writing. There is so much out there to uncover.

***Historiography:** Tell us about your “philosophy of history” or what you think are the most important principles for studying history.*

**Miraldi:** I am often guilty of being present-minded. I see history and I spin to the present. This is both a sin of research and a value. For example, I recently did an essay on the emerging AI phenomenon of deep-fake pornography. And I could not help but frame it in terms of how we have long chased technology’s drawbacks and figured out ways to control abuses of the press and media. My philosophy is that history is interesting — which is why I can get lost in historical archives and old newspapers — but that it also guides us.

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

**Miraldi:** I don’t feel able to make such an assessment on such a broad field. But I believe we have good journals. I wish we had a more unified vision and purpose.

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

**Miraldi:** I have had a pet peeve for many years. For three decades I taught a class called “Press in America.” It was a broad introduction to the role, function and history of the American press, although the definition of press varied. In my mind it was a primer on how the press has both shaped and responded to American history. It also framed how the press is such a vital force in a democratic society and why we worry



## Historian Interview

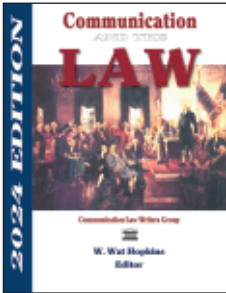
when it is threatened or does not perform up to what the Framers had in mind. It was my belief the class needed to be taught across the curriculum of my university — and all universities. The press/media are vital to our world, more so now than ever. How can someone go through college without exploring its function and history? Media history should be required in liberal arts education.

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

**Miraldi:** When my children were growing up, I had trouble getting them to watch black and white movies, some of the classics, of course. I worry now that the fast pace of the Internet and social media will make it increasingly difficult to get students to relate to a telegram, typewriter or tabloid era, even though there are great similarities. One other silly worry: Internet content disappears daily. How will we capture the past?

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# Book Award Interview

E. James West ©

James West won the American Journalism Historians Association award in 2023 for the best book of the year for *A House for the Struggle: The Black Press and the Built Environment in Chicago*. He is a lecturer in

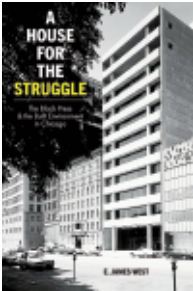


West

Interdisciplinary Societies and Cultures at University College London and co-director of the Black Press Research Collective at Johns Hopkins University.

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

**West:** My book is a building history of the Black Press in Chicago. It provides a new history of the city's Black press by exploring the relationship of its Black newspapers and magazines to the built environment from the late nineteenth century into the 1970s.



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

**West:** My doctoral work and first two books focused in large part on Johnson Publishing Company, perhaps the most influential Black publishing enterprise in American history, which was based in Chicago. I became fascinated by the company's Michigan Avenue headquarters, which had been constructed during the early 1970s, and the ways that

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the company utilized its building to project editorial ideas and narratives about its own history and continuing significance. This was the starting point for my interest in the broader relationships between print, place, and race in Chicago.

**Historiography:** *What was the state of the historical literature about the topic at the time you began work on your book?*

**West:** Some scholars have dabbled in analysis of the Black press' spatial politics — for example, Eric Gardner's discussion of the *Christian Recorder's* offices in *Black Print Unbound* — but it hasn't really been a central focus. In this regard, I see my book as helping to connect two strands of scholarship that have significantly developed over the past few decades. First, research into media and place — a good example of this and an influential text for my work is Aurora Wallace's *Media Capital*, which explores architecture and communications in New York City. Second, scholarship on Black history in Chicago — Davarian Baldwin's *Chicago's New Negroes* is perhaps the most influential work in this area to have been published over the past few decades, although there has also been wonderful scholarship from Ian Rocksborough-Smith, Simon Balto, Betsy Schlabach, Robert Weems, Jason Chambers, and others. I should also flag that there has been some excellent recent work on race and architecture by scholars such as Adrienne Brown and Charles Davis, although this wasn't as directly relevant for my project as my discussion of race and the architectural form is somewhat limited. With some notable exceptions — for example the *Chicago Bee* building or the Johnson Publishing headquarters at 820 South Michigan Avenue — most of the buildings I discuss aren't really that architecturally interesting. So, I was more concerned with how they were used, the role they

## Book Award Interview

placed within the community, their symbolic and practical function, etc.

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

**West:** There was a lot of returning to archives I had already worked in, but with a new set of eyes, rereading material through the lens of a new project. I probably visited about two-dozen archives across the US, although the majority were in Chicago. Collections at Chicago Public Library and Chicago History Museum were particularly important. Papers of former editors or contributors to Chicago's Black newspapers and magazines helped to deepen (and in some instances, complicate) my close reading of individual publications. I also leaned on oral history collections such as The History Makers, which I've always found really useful for the kind of cultural histories I try to write. In terms of time, I'd actually written a chapter about the Johnson Publishing building during my doctoral work, although this didn't make it into the final thesis. So, I've been thinking about the project since at least 2013. I was fortunate to receive an early career fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust and a Fulbright scholarship, which provided me with the space to research and write for a few years, and I'd pretty much finished the majority of the book by 2020.

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

**West:** My work on this project unfolded against the backdrop of

Johnson Publishing's bankruptcy and the fire-sale of many assets, archival and otherwise. The company's enormous photography collection is currently being catalogued by the Smithsonian and Getty, and although I was able to check a few things, it would have been wonderful to delve into these collections properly. It's an extraordinary collection and it will revolutionize our understanding of twentieth century Black culture when it becomes fully available to researchers and the public — I'd encourage people to read more about the archiving project, which is in the very capable hands of Steven Booth:

<https://www.getty.edu/news/johnson-publishing-company-archive-getty-smithsonian-digitization-project/>

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

**West:** The most important thing for me, which I've already mentioned above, was the necessity of re-reading archival materials that I was already very familiar with. Returning to familiar sources with new questions and points of reference was very generative and allowed me to consider the history of Chicago's Black press — a history I was already very familiar with — in a completely different way.

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

**West:** Probably the biggest challenge was trying to familiarize myself spatially with Chicago, a city that I've visited plenty of times for research but have not lived in for an extended period of time. Given the importance of space and location to the project, I wanted to be as famil-

iar with Chicago's historical (and contemporary) geography as possible. This meant lots of structured walking routes and note-taking when I was in Chicago, and lots of Google Maps when I wasn't! Being able to root myself in the city — to actually understand the physical distances between sites, how big buildings were, etc. — was challenging but ultimately enormously beneficial for making connections between different publications and locations.

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

**West:** Well, the first thing I'd say is that neutrality doesn't exist for historians or anyone else, and that my book was shaped (in ways good and bad) by my own experience and identity. I'm a white British scholar working on African-American history; so I'm writing about a community that I'm not part of, and one that I have the potential of doing significant harm to through its representation (or misrepresentation) in my work. So reflecting critically on how I'm conducting research, how I'm interpreting the materials I'm working with, is really important — who am I writing for? Whom does it benefit? How can it be interactive and collaborative, not extractive?

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

**West:** It highlights the literal and figurative role of Chicago's Black press and its buildings in shaping the real and imagined geography of Chicago's "Black Metropolis." It provides a new lens for thinking about the history and legacy of the Black Press, and the connections between

race, place and media politics — in and beyond Chicago.

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

**West:** One of the *Chicago Defender's* offices was originally a synagogue, and the ways that the newspaper retrofitted the building for its new purpose was really interesting. Plenty of the original features, such as Hebrew inscriptions, remained after the renovation — an interesting quirk, and a reminder of the interconnected history of Jewish and Black life on Chicago's South Side.

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

**West:** Write! If you want to write a book, you need to write it — you need to sit down and crank out words, many of which will be bad, over a long period of time. And then you have to go back and make them less bad. I'm a big believer that ten thousand words of bad is better than no thousand words of nothing. Write, write and write some more, and at some point, it will start to make sense.

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# The Media and the Personification of Society

By Julie Hedgepeth Williams ©

NOTE: This is the ninth article in our series “How Media History Matters,” dealing with the significance that the mass media have had in American history.



Williams

We think the series will appeal especially to historians who believe historical claims need evidence to support them. It's easy, someone has said, to suggest explanations if one doesn't have to worry about facts.

It will become clear as we publish more essays that many ways exist to justify JMC's historical importance. One monolithic explanation won't work. Julie Williams' essay focuses on the media's role in helping members of a society to understand themselves and to help them determine the nature of their society — and to create a single community from many people.

**L**ong before the first camera was invented; centuries before every ordinary guy with a Kodak or a Brownie could shoot snapshots around town; back when only a few, select people had their portraits painted in oils or tempera, an amazing innovation helped capture the likeness of Americans.

It began in September of 1690. Benjamin Harris pulled the first copies of *Publick Occurrences, both Forreign and Domestick* off the press

*Julie Williams is the author of a number of books, including The Significance of the Printed Word in Early America. She is a former president of the American Journalism Historians Association and a recipient of its Kobre Award for lifetime achievement.*

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and distributed them to a bunch of curious Boston readers. *Publick Occurrences*, America's first newspaper, lasted only one issue, but it signalled the birth of American periodicals.<sup>1</sup> The media that followed *Publick Occurrences* grew more and more stable and lasting. With regular publication, the media were able to do something that had once been difficult or even impossible: they gave ordinary people an ongoing snapshot of community and world life, personality portraits, advice, morals, triumphs abroad, tragedies at home, wars and rumors of wars, and more.

With the advent of its first newspapers, young America had a weekly image of itself and the world. That snapshot of society was painted in words and splashed across a paper canvas, so that it might also be described by the literary term "personification." In literature, abstract ideas are given personality via personification. In life, the abstract concept of community is given personality via the media. Just as personification in novels uses words to make ideas or activities seem human, the media likewise use words to give human faces and names to the ideas and activities of the community. The mass media's personification of society paints a colorful portrait of the community.

In order to create that true personification, or portrait, early American newspapers could not limit their outlook too narrowly. Society, after all, was made up of thousands of people from hundreds of places, who were involved in a whole range of enterprises. To represent the community fully, newspapers had to cover just about any news from just about anyone. As a result, the common public itself became the subject matter of newspapers' word-portrait, right alongside kings and governors and czars and princes. Early newspapers carefully attempted to personify the whole of society, not just a select few or a chosen elite. The result was a fairly thorough picture of life from an array of angles.

## The Media and the Personification of Society

That full personification of society in the form of the printed colonial newspaper was as revolutionary as the printing press itself had been. While the printing press had brought Bibles, books, and broadsides to the public at large, the newspaper brought the public itself to the public.

It was a momentous change in the purpose and practice of the printing press. In capturing society's face and personality for everyone to see, the earliest American newspapers offered a common textbook to a diverse group of readers who were learning about themselves. By seeing themselves individually and collectively in print, Americans came to understand each other better and to have an idea where they were headed as a community. Or, they formed opinions about where the community ought to be headed, and they gave each other ideas about how it ought to be steered differently for its own good.

In the centuries that followed, the newspaper struggled with its own definition of itself. It was at times the booster of particular political parties and later the bitter adversary of politicians; sometimes the praise-singing advocate of the new frontier and later the objective clinician with no desire to advocate; for awhile the poetic tale-teller in literary form and later the "McPaper" dispenser of information snacks to readers in a hurry. Through all its confusion over its purpose and form, however, the newspaper basically retained its original charm. It continued to personify the community at large. It continued to capture society's portrait for readers to admire or despise and praise or protest as they saw fit. Other forms of media that followed the newspaper, such as radio and television and today's online media, also developed that portrait-painting function, molding and sculpting it to fit their own styles and capabilities.

As the personification of society, the media reflected many sides of

society's lavish personality, covering such diverse topics as commerce, crime, and politics, the latest ballgame scores, the latest obituaries, the latest court trials, and who got married last week. The media gave faces and names to the great triumphs, such as a moonwalk or the winning of a war, as well as the small ones, such as the birth of a child or a high school football team's championship. Likewise, the media gave names and faces to tragedies of great magnitude, such as assassinations and plane crashes, as well as individual tragedies, such as a traffic accident or an arrest for petty shoplifting.

The news media embodied the community's collective personality. The media gave each reader an idea of what his neighbors were up to or not up to. Sometimes those neighbors were across town; sometimes, they were half a world away. And without the mass media to give them a sense of what the guy next door and the guy around the world were doing, people would have had fewer points of contact, less cohesiveness, less understanding of the common ground and differences between each other.

That common ground and those differences were communicated by many institutions, from the churches to the schools to the city council. The media certainly did not corner the market on community self-knowledge. But the media attempted more regularly than any other source to show common characteristics as well as differences between people by simply telling readers what went on each day or each week. Thus, while readers probably never fully understood each other, they had a basic sense of community, whether that community was a small town or the world as a whole. Media reflected, perpetuated, and helped cement the basic concept that each person knew what his neighbors knew.

Why was it so important to know what each other knew? After all,

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even after each day's news was published, no reader ever knew *entirely* what his fellow citizens knew. For all their daily or weekly portraiture, the American media left out literally millions of pieces of information that never found their way onto newsprint or into broadcast. The news-portrait was not very wide-ranging, either; people in one city likely did not read the everyday events printed in another city. No matter how detailed the press' story of mankind, a large chunk of mankind never appeared in the portrait or did not have access to the whole picture.

In spite of all their limitations, the media's swashbuckling attempt to give communities, states, regions, and even the whole nation a picture of themselves helped keep the individuals within those communities, states, regions, and even the whole nation from each going his own way.

Older civilizations — Europe, the Middle East, the Orient — thrust cohesion on their people through kings, dictators, closed societies, and state religions. America shunned all of those and insisted on developing a democratically based government and a tolerance for varying peoples and religions. What, then, would provide Americans with a sense of oneness, of community, of bringing together those individuals to make a nation?

At least in part, Americans adopted a cohesive identity from one another by watching each other in the media. By allowing Americans a frequent chance to look at themselves and study themselves, the media gave Americans a sense of what they could learn from each other. The media were, in their own way, one of the ties that helped bind their readership and audience together. By personifying society, the media gave readers a chance to see themselves at their best and at their worst and thereby to come to some grasp of how to capitalize on the best and improve on the worst. While Americans did, indeed, come from diverse

backgrounds and lived widely varying lifestyles, they let the media be their eyes-in-common to help form some sense of community.

That sense of community-building, of creating a single society from many peoples, was quite evident in 1732 when Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Whitmarsh pooled their resources to send Whitmarsh to the boom town of Charlestown, South-Carolina,\* to start a newspaper.<sup>2</sup> *The South-Carolina Gazette* was to be the colony's first permanent newspaper, printing under various names and editors until the early 1800s.<sup>3</sup>

### THE GAZETTE OF COLONIAL SOUTH CAROLINA

In 1732, Charlestown had been settled long enough for one generation to have been born, grown up, and died. Open to all Protestants, the city and indeed the entire colony had a reputation as a place that was free from religious overtones such as were found in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. In fact, many settlers from the pious new territory of Georgia had lately been returning to South-Carolina, for Georgia restrictively denied them the use of alcohol and slaves.<sup>4</sup>

The city of Charlestown boasted between 500 and 600 houses, although these were poorly constructed.<sup>5</sup> The houses reflected the raw, pioneer quality of the inhabitants, who suffered from coarse manners, a lack of clergy, and few schools. Colonial leaders in Charlestown begged the Church of England to send missionaries to civilize the place. While manners were rough, the government itself was even worse. Between 1727 and 1731, the branches of the local legislature fought bitterly over bills of credit. Rancor ran so high that no legislative acts were passed at

\* NOTE: This essay makes use of colonial spellings of *South-Carolina*, *Charlestown*, and *Cherracquees* for *South Carolina*, *Charleston*, and *Cherokees*.

all in those years.<sup>6</sup>

But things were starting to look up in 1732. As Whitmarsh established his newspaper, the colony was on an economic upswing; Britain was funding a defense buildup in Charlestown, and Parliament had recently allowed a bounty on hemp. The crown itself had forgiven arrears of quit-rents, so the colonists did not have to pay them; also, restraints on the colony's rice crop had been partially lifted.<sup>7</sup>

From the very start, Whitmarsh wanted to continue boosting the colony in its rise toward civilization. He had in mind that his *Gazette's* purpose was to help the immediate community of Charlestown and the broader community of South-Carolina. In his first issue, he wrote to his readers:

It being fully expected, that what is thus offered to the Publick, should be written, with a view at least, in their Service; it may not be improper, in this *prefatory Paper*, to let the *Reader* know, that something to that End will be attempted...<sup>8</sup>

Just as important, the new *Gazette* was not to be a one-man show. Whitmarsh did not expect to dispense his own wisdom to a wisdomless audience. Instead, he attempted a fuller personification of society; he asked readers to be correspondents, to send in items on any topic that would be of interest and value to their neighbors. He suggested that the readers might, for example, offer ideas on ways to help “the *Trade of this Colony*, which, perhaps not without Reason, may be apprehended to be in Danger of declining, unless some new Methods are considered of, and put in practice....”<sup>9</sup>

On trade or any subject, Whitmarsh urged, the readers' words should be “to the Good of the Province in general,” as well as pleasing

to the king. Accordingly, Whitmarsh warned his correspondents to

carefully avoid giving Offence, either publick, or private; and particularly, that they forbear all Controversies, both in Church and State; for since the principal Thing in View, by publishing these Papers, is the general Service of the People residing in this Province, let us not (however incapable we may prove of accomplishing our Purpose) at once defeat it....<sup>10</sup>

Thus, Whitmarsh launched his paper with a plan to help the colony, not to question church and state or to stir up trouble. His intent was plainly to get his readers talking with each other. He was directly aiming to help the people of Charlestown and South-Carolina paint their own portrait of themselves. And he wanted a full portrait. He wanted as many people as were willing to add their colors to the picture. He wanted his *Gazette* to reflect as much of South-Carolina's personality as it could.

### *Seeking Reader Unity*

As Whitmarsh saw it, the more his paper captured the various facets of society, the more unified South-Carolina would become. Naturally enough, Charlestownians still considered England or France or other distant places as home.<sup>11</sup> Whitmarsh hoped they could overcome that sense of being strangers in a far-off land, and he expected his *Gazette* to play a part. He commented that “as our Number is small, our Unity ought therefore, to be the greatest, as well for the Advancement of our own Interests” as for the honor of the king.<sup>12</sup> Whitmarsh was definitely hoping that a wide-ranging story of society would spark a sense in his



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readers that they were united as a community.

As if to emphasize the fact that he wanted all Charlestownians to consider themselves a party to that community portrait in his paper, Whitmarsh published a verse pointing out that he had no particular prejudice against any segment of his readership:

I'm not High Church, nor Low Church, nor Tory, nor Whig,  
No flaming young Coxcomb, nor formal old Prig,  
Not eternally talking, nor silently quaint,  
No profligate Sinner, nor pragmatICAL Saint.

.....  
To amend — not Reproach — is the bent of my Mind,  
A Reproof is half lost, when ill Nature is join'd.  
Where Merit appears, tho' in Rags, I respect it,  
And plead Virtue's Cause, sho'd the whole World reject it.<sup>13</sup>

Whitmarsh's plea for correspondence worked. South-Carolinians jumped at the chance to communicate to their fellow colonists. With no means of instant communication over distance, with other settlements weeks away by horseback or sailing ship, and with even nearby neighbors miles distant, the people of South-Carolina seemed to be starved to talk to one another. Whitmarsh's newspaper did not go wanting for news from the public. A wide range of readers with a wide range of ideas and interests began taking part in the writing of the *Gazette*. With such a colorful and varied authorship, the paper quickly did what Whitmarsh had hoped it would do: it became a personification of society.

Right away, for example, an expert on agriculture wrote in. Whitmarsh dubbed him "Agricola," following the *Gazette's* rule not to iden-

tify correspondents by name.<sup>14</sup> Agricola said he had seen the announcement requesting help from the readership. He wrote about how to grow hemp, thinking South-Carolinians might find it practical. Among other things, Agricola informed Charlestownians that hemp was useful in the making of gunpowder and in curing lust. Plus it was a good medicine for jaundice, burns, and even deafness. “The Powder, or Flower, mix’d with any ordinary Liquor, is said to turn those who drink thereof stupid,” Agricola explained. “*But these are not to be used, but with Caution and Judgment.*” Agricola was obviously eager to help his neighbors. “And whatever else occurs to me in this Way, that may possibly be of Service, I shall, with Pleasure, communicate in this Manner,” Agricola vowed.<sup>15</sup>

Farming was certainly a vital part of South-Carolina society and thus an appropriate element in the *Gazette’s* personification of the province. But there were other important facets of life, and other readers were bound to include them in the community self-portrait, too. Therefore, a sixteen-year-old lass, under the alias “Martia,” also published a letter in the *Gazette*. Martia gave her brother and her beau (and men in general) a lecture on their poor choice of company, their behavior, and their all-too-rough conversation. “Reputation should be by all desirable, but with them, ’tis the very corner Stone of their Building,” she admonished.<sup>16</sup>

The correspondents were not the only part of Whitmarsh’s multi-colored, multi-dimensional portrait of Charlestown. He also ran ads on such things as strayed horses and books for sale. He published straight news, too:

On Tuesday last, about 1 or 2 o’Clock in the Morning, a Fire broke out in the back Shop of Mr. Van Velsen’s which was burn’t

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down, but by timely Assistance did no further Damage.

On Wednesday last, a Person who was employ'd in the Fishery off this Bar, was suddenly seiz'd with a Fit of an Apoplexy, while he had the Net in his Hand, ready to cast it into the Water, of which he Instantly died.<sup>17</sup>

The personification of society was not complete, of course, without news of the people in power. Therefore, the *Gazette* reported that a midwife had set out for Parma to assist the queen in childbirth. Her Majesty, Whitmarsh told his readers, would complete her pregnancy in five days.<sup>18</sup>

### *The Talk of the Town*

As Whitmarsh had anticipated, his *Gazette* quickly became a focal point for talk and debate in town as readers began to see each other's ideas and knowledge in print. For example, Martia's forward letter caused a stir throughout the community. "Rattle" replied with a letter to Martia's Papa. "I perceive, by the Close of her Epistle, that the poor Girl has a huge Month's mind to a Husband," he pointed out. Correspondents called "Anonymous" and "Juba" answered Martia, too, but Whitmarsh made the mistake of showing their letters to Martia for proper rebuttal. Martia, complaining that she had been misinterpreted, burned Juba's and Anonymous' letters.<sup>19</sup>

The *Gazette* even sparked discussion of itself. One man thought the *Gazette* was a pretty witless venture. He did not hesitate to say so:

Surely this Scribbler [Whitmarsh] must be some very idle Fellow.  
— One, doubtless, that has nothing else to do. — I'll warrant you,

he's drove plaguy hard for a Dinner, yet sure, he can't expect to earn many, by so stupid a Project.<sup>20</sup>

Whitmarsh was peeved. He told his readers that his detractor was none too upstanding and spent most of his time gambling.<sup>21</sup>

Meantime, "Publicola," concerned that the fledgling *Gazette* would put itself out of business with such ugliness from Whitmarsh, issued a warning as "a great Friend, and Well-wisher to your *Undertaking*." He warned Whitmarsh that the paper had set up rules against giving offence, and yet Whitmarsh had accused his own accuser of being a gambler. "You'll pardon this Freedom, and be assured, it comes from one, no otherwise concern'd in any part of the Dispute, than as being anxious for the Good of the Publick," Publicola wrote. Whitmarsh was repentant. He promised to avoid those kinds of disputes in the future.<sup>22</sup>

That exchange brought a reply from an inveterate gambler named "Whisk." He wrote to Whitmarsh with a plea that the newspaper's hardness of heart about gambling might get him turned out of his club, and he wished some assurance in print that he was not the subject of Whitmarsh's earlier accusation. Whitmarsh had a good sense of humor about it. Addressing the gentlemen of Whisk's club, Whitmarsh said wryly, "I give 'em Leave to admit [Whisk] twice or thrice a Week, provided they send him Home in good Time. For 'tis well-known, by his Good-will, he'd ne'er budge 'till Day-break."<sup>23</sup>

While the *Gazette* generated some debate about its own existence, it more commonly provoked debate about various issues. For example, a correspondent named "Z.X.," who had browsed a copy of the *Gazette* earlier, was compelled to question the very nature of British law. "The *Tenderness* of the *Merchant's Character*, hinted at, in one of your Papers, has led me into some Thoughts on that detestable Vice, *Slander*, or

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*Defamation*,” Z.X. wrote. The writer called for stricter control of such hateful crimes by strengthening British law, which he saw as mighty lax:

It is, no doubt, a peculiar Happiness to be but born, and live a Subject, to the *British Constitution*; yet, with the greatest Deference to the superior Wisdom of *Those* who are the *Supporters* of it, I sometimes can't help thinking, that the *Punishment*, appointed for Slander, Calumny and Defamation, are scarce adequate to their *Guilt*.

Can the *Price* of my *Reputation* be exactly settled by twelve Men impanel'd on a Jury? Can they (tho' of the strictest Probity) be competent Judges of the *Damages* I may obtain, by the loss of so *invaluable* a *Treasure*, as my *good Name*?<sup>24</sup>

Outcries by South-Carolinians such as Z.X. showed that the fledgling *South-Carolina Gazette* had quickly become an influence in community thought. In a matter of weeks, it had garnered supporters and detractors and debaters and advice-givers. Whitmarsh had intended to seek unity, and to a degree he was succeeding — he already had the public observing each other, chiding each other, boosting each other, and helping each other via the pages of his two-month-old newspaper.

### ***For the Good of Society***

As the newspaper established itself, Whitmarsh stuck firmly to his original intent to print his *Gazette* for the overall good of society. He did not want to limit the portrait of society too strictly so that it was not in the general public interest and thus not a true personification of Charlestown. Therefore, he told writer “Mercator” he could not print his let-

ter, because Mercator was so smitten of “Celia” that he did not make a whole lot of sense for the average reader. Likewise, “Adidimus” had sent in what “we can’t possibly comprehend” and might even be a joke, and it “mayn’t be worth while to puzzle our Readers about it.”<sup>25</sup> Whitmarsh’s focus was definitely on the public as a whole, not on private interests.

The *Gazette*’s readers took to heart the idea that their newspaper was to be a help or of interest to their fellow colonists. A number wrote moral lessons for publication. Even though many writers sought to give advice, each letter was as individual as its writer. Subject matter varied widely. The advice took on hues of humor or was weighty with sadness. Sometimes it was solemnly religious; sometimes it was just an observation. By having so many voices in his press, Whitmarsh began to succeed in printing a full personification of society.

One correspondent who offered advice was “Honestus,” who was horrified by the news report of the suicide of Fanny Braddock. Miss Braddock had inherited £6,000 from General Braddock. But alas, she had fallen into that same ugly habit as Whisk; she was a gambler. She had “lately met with some unlucky Chances, that both deprived her of her *Fortune* and *Reason*, and occasioned the unhappy Dilemma, above-mentioned,” the *Gazette* explained in a news account. Honestus hoped the ladies of Charlestown would learn something from Fanny’s misfortune. He urged ladies not to fall into the trap of gaming. Instead, he advised, ladies should seek a “*discreet* and *virtuous Friend*.” By talking to their friends, ladies could unload their minds and soothe their passions, filling “most of the vacant Hours of Life.” Most calamities like Miss Fanny’s, he told the *Gazette*’s readers, were produced by idleness.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, “Lucretia” offered a poetic rewrite based on the book of Proverbs in the Bible. She sent in a version of Proverbs 7, “being the

## The Media and the Personification of Society

Description of a HARLOT.” She warned young men:

Stubborn and loud she is; she hates her Home,  
Varying her Place and Form, she loves to roam;  
Now she’s within, now in the Streets doth stray,  
Now at each Corner stands, and waits her Prey.<sup>27</sup>

As Honestus had done the week before in his sermon to women on the ill nature of idleness, Lucretia assured readers that she did not have anyone particular in mind in offering her advice.<sup>28</sup> Both, however, thought the community in general could benefit from their wise observations.

The *Gazette*’s purpose to help the community’s moral sense took a new turn around Easter time. Whitmarsh knew some of his readers had been none too faithful as churchgoers. He hoped that “this Paper might fall under the Perusal of some, who might not otherwise have given themselves the Trouble of receiving these Truths in a more proper Place.” He printed an account of the nature of the sufferings of Christ. It should, he said, help Christians

who, thro’ the Unhappiness of a bad Education, or the prevailing Temptations of Sin, have been engaged in a vicious Course, before their Conversion to the Life of Holiness; by which they first began to be reconciled to God, and to be entitled to the Benefits of the *Sufferings of Christ*.<sup>29</sup>

Whitmarsh expected his article to help the heathen who had made the grave mistake of missing church. The article likely was even more meaningful to the far-flung, rural folk who had no chance to get to

church. While not aiming to take the place of church, the *Gazette* did help outline moral and religious ideas, a vital part of society's personality.

Perhaps such moral lessons were gravely needed, for as the newspaper reported, moral lapses were severely punished in the community. For instance, Joseph Summers, a local resident, was indicted for being an accessory after the fact to a burglary and robbery committed by Peter French. French had been condemned to death for the act. As readers of the *Gazette* found out, Summers was not going to get off any more lightly than his accomplice had. "Yesterday morning," Whitmarsh reported solemnly, "in Council, the Dead Warrant was signed, for the Execution of *Joseph Summers*, on Thursday next."<sup>30</sup>

Robbery appeared to be a recurrent problem in town. The *Gazette* sounded warnings such as this:

One Day last Week, Mr. *Charles Jones* pursuing a Runaway Negro, who had robb'd him, and coming up with the Negro, he resisted and fought him, and he struck the Lock of his Musket into the Negro's Scull and kill'd him. He went and told a Justice what he had done who ordered him to cut his Head off, fix it on a Pole, and set it up in a Cross Road, which was done accordingly near *Ashley Ferry*.<sup>31</sup>

Piracy was a problem off the coast, too; some Spanish and French fell upon both the *Alice* and the *Elizabeth* and made off with "Money, Sails, Rum, Sugar and dry Goods to a considerable Value, and having stripp'd the Capt., Mate and the Men of all their Clothes and Bedding, were civil as to give them Leave to proceed...."<sup>32</sup>

And of course, related to all the theft and burglary in the area were



the ever-lurking “Indians,” who were difficult because they wanted to beg from the South-Carolina settlers. They were scary, and the governor gave in to them. One day the Cherracquee Indians unexpectedly showed up in Charlestown to pay their respects to the governor. “[H]is Excellency perceived, that their Business was to Beg,” Whitmarsh reported. But the Cherracquees persisted in claiming that all they wanted was a boat to go harvest conch shells from the coast. The governor gave them some ammunition and some paint at public expense, but the Cherracquees insisted they only wanted conch shells. “His Excellency pleased them so far, as to order ’em a Canoe and Hands to go with them for this Purpose, and when they had got the Shells, they went home well satisfied,” Whitmarsh reported.<sup>33</sup>

Such hard news perhaps sparked Charlestown’s thinkers to explore ways of improving the community. An anonymous reader, for example, had an idea how sinful behavior such as burglary, theft, and beggary could be cured. He wrote to Whitmarsh:

[G]ive me Leave to use this one Argument more, from Authority of *Solomon*, which is, That *Learning* is the surest Way to *Riches* and *Honour*, Two Allurements, that generally prove of Force enough to sway our Dispositions.<sup>34</sup>

The writer believed a good educational system would be of benefit to South-Carolina. “Without Compliment to the *Youth* of *Carolina*, It may with Justice be observ’d, that their Capacities are no less susceptible of Learning than those of any other Country...,” he wrote. The earlier children began schooling, he added, “the more easily will they be led to a happy Disposition towards the End proposed.” He exhorted South-Carolinians to admire a neighboring province that had sent one

of its well-educated “Sons to transact her Affairs at one of the politest Courts in *Europe*.” The writer urged South-Carolinians especially to emphasize literature education for their children.<sup>35</sup>

### *Entertaining the Town*

Other readers did not take life so seriously, and they, along with Whitmarsh, saw the newspaper as a vital tool in entertaining the community.<sup>36</sup> Entertainment, after all, was another facet of Charlestown’s personality, worthy of inclusion in the newspaper’s portrait of the city. In reply to the article on education, for example, Whitmarsh got a letter from a humorist named Ralpho Cobble. “WITHOUT farther Preface we shall give our Readers the following Epistle, literally as we lately received it ...,” Whitmarsh wrote.<sup>37</sup>

“*To the Authr Gazitt*,” Cobble teased. “Sr. what do you tell us of yr Larnin & exampels of our Naboring colonees pish don’t yo no that Strangors were alwase perferd here....” He added that “sure some of us was as capuble of doing Bisniss as Those I have been perferred without havin more Larnin.” Cobble included a poem:

LEARNING that Cobweb of the Brain,  
Profane, erroneous, and vain,  
A Trade of Knowledge, as replete  
As others are with Fraud and Cheat.<sup>38</sup>

While Cobble gave the readers of the *Gazette* a good laugh and a bit of entertainment, the *Gazette* could shift gears quickly and take the lead in educating the community on very serious matters. “We have heard, that the *spreading* of the *Small-Pox* in *Wilitown*, thro’ so many

## The Media and the Personification of Society

families in so short time, was chiefly occasion'd, by the Ignorance of that *Distemper*," Whitmarsh wrote. He did not want the same thing to happen in Charlestown; so he consulted the proper authorities and explained what they had suggested people should do when certain symptoms struck:

As to the *regular Small-pox*, ... little else needs to be done, than to keep the Patient *full* with a plentiful Quantity of such liquids as shall keep up the Spirits of the *Patient*, yet not too much excite the Fever. Such as *Water*, *Gruel with a little Wine in it*, *small White Wine Whey*, or the like, in order to throw out the *Distemper*...<sup>39</sup>

The *Gazette's* advice apparently had a good effect. The hapless Wilitown had had an epidemic, and rumors were flying that the same thing was happening in Charlestown. Word had it that smallpox had been in Charlestown for six weeks and had affected twenty families. After investigating the matter, Whitmarsh could assure his readers that the Charlestown rumors were patently untrue. "[W]e think it necessary to acquaint the Publick that upon the strictist Enquiry that can be made," he reported, "it is not found that any one Person in *Charlestown*, besides Mr. *Haynes*, who has first taken it, has got it."<sup>40</sup> The epidemic never struck in Charlestown. Whitmarsh was later able to report that Haynes "is in a fair Way of Doing well; and we do not hear of one Person more, that is infected with that *Distemper*, in or near this Town."<sup>41</sup>

A wide range of other topics found their way into the *Gazette*, too. One correspondent published an account of how to make chamois, and another article described the growing of silkworms. A local immigrant wrote of her disappointment with Charlestown, and she offered her

suggestions for improvement. A woman sent in a riddle for the readers to solve.<sup>42</sup> The *Gazette* never wavered in its effort to offer the broad outlook it had promised. Over and over again it printed articles on just about any subject from people of all walks of life.

People were eager to see their work in the *Gazette*, too. When Whitmarsh refused to print pieces that were too personal, Charlestownians, now used to the idea of a newspaper, protested by passing items from hand to hand until Whitmarsh was forced to print them.

And of course, in painting the full picture of Charlestown life, the newspaper covered extraordinary happenings as well. It informed people about curiosities, such as the meteor that flew through Charlestown one dark Sunday night,<sup>43</sup> and gala celebrations, such as the hoopla in honor of the queen's birthday.<sup>44</sup>

Although that sort of news was important, Whitmarsh admitted he was disappointed when a sudden influx of news from Europe threatened to take over the newspaper's pages in one issue nearly half a year after he founded the *Gazette*. Despite the long list of news items, he refused to limit the issue to just foreign reports. "But, that our Readers may not be quite without some sort of Amusement, besides that of News meerly, we shall spare room for the following Lines, sent us by a Correspondent ... on Love and Marriage ...," Whitmarsh said. Of course, the lines included "some agreeable Hints on the same Subject." The poet sang:

Say, mighty Love, and teach my Song,  
To whom the sweetest Joys Belong  
And who the Happy Pairs  
Whose yielding Hearts, and joining Hands,  
Find Blessings twisted with their Bands,

To soften all their Cares.

.....  
Two kindest Souls alone must meet;  
'Tis *Friendship* makes the Bondage sweet,  
And seed'st their mutual Loves:  
Bright *Venus* on her rolling Throne  
Is drawn by gentlest Birds alone,  
And *Cupids* yoke the Doves.<sup>45</sup>

With that said, Whitmarsh returned to news from Constantinople.<sup>46</sup>

The publication of the poem on love and marriage illustrated Whitmarsh's firm concept of what his *Gazette* was all about. The newspaper's purpose was not *just* to report news of the kings of Europe. Rather, Whitmarsh wished to entertain, to inform, to set people to thinking about the myriad other things that made up the world, including love and marriage.

Furthermore, Whitmarsh was willing and able to let the readers of Charlestown add their own, individual colors to the portrait he was painting of life in general. For instance, in introducing the poem on love and marriage, he said that his correspondent "F.C." was likely to be violently upset that his vehement piece was bumped in favor of other news, but Whitmarsh promised to run F.C.'s work soon. Likewise, he apologized to other correspondents for holding off their contributions in favor of the hard news from Europe. However, as Whitmarsh had said, there was no need to deprive readers of their amusement and advice. Thus, he gave them the poem as the week's major front-page story.<sup>47</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Whitmarsh clearly wanted to reflect the South-Carolina community at large. He applauded the public's participation. He counted foreign news as secondary to things that were closer to most readers, things such as love and marriage and amusement and advice. He included the deeper news, to be sure, but that was just one small part of the personification of Charlestown society.

Whitmarsh was attempting to paint a vivid, broad-ranging portrait of society. He succeeded in doing so and in involving the public in the painting of that picture. He used material from both men and women, from both young and old, from both wise and foolish, from both poet and essayist. His news covered the European world and beyond, but it also included items of local interest in Charlestown and South-Carolina. Certainly not every South-Carolinian was mentioned in the *Gazette*, and certainly not everyone in the province took the newspaper or read it. But Whitmarsh definitely wanted to include as much of the colony as he could in his personification of society. He wanted to cover as broad a range of topics as possible to help South-Carolina.

Thomas Whitmarsh, then, in establishing South-Carolina's first permanent newspaper, was attempting to offer readers a look at themselves. He wanted to give a hint of society's full character and possibilities in his *South-Carolina Gazette*. His mirror on society did not just reflect. It asked readers to be active in contributing their own advice and opinions, which the newspaper in turn offered to others in the community.

In modern times, Americans have become jaded by the ever-present media. They are born into a media-saturated world and live with more media than they can handle all their lives. But in the early days of

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America, electronic media were nothing but an undreamed dream, and newspapers were something of a curiosity. The people of South-Carolina were not drenched in media. Their reaction to the establishment of the first permanent newspaper in the area showed something about the significance of the media. To those media-starved people, the newspaper was a way to meet each other, to share ideas, to examine what was good and what was bad about each other, and to learn from those good and bad elements.

The *South-Carolina Gazette* of 1732 was a community effort and a community accomplishment. As was apparent from their response to the newspaper, the people of South-Carolina were thrilled to see themselves and their ideas in their newspaper.

The readers of the 1732 *South-Carolina Gazette* showed, then, the significant part the newspaper played in building a community. The paper made a gallant effort to personify society by inviting society to be the subject matter as well as the readers of the newspaper. Such a multi-faceted outlook produced a multi-faceted paper that covered a wide range of topics from all areas, from humor to kings. That wide-ranging look at everyday life entertained people, guided them, sparked their debates, and helped them build their own lives.

Whitmarsh's *Gazette* was an early illustration of newspapers' powerful ability to personify society. A newspaper could show a broad field of ideas and issues and incidents, from the trivial to the earth-shattering. It could explain those ideas and issues in a variety of voices, from a spectrum of perspectives.

Ultimately, then, the community both looked into itself and out from itself via its newspaper. By seeing itself from hundreds of viewpoints and as hundreds of different personalities, the community came to recognize and understand its own nature.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Scholars now generally describe *Publick Occurrences* as America's first newspaper. For an account of the one-day life of the newspaper, see Sidney Kobre, *The Development of the Colonial Newspaper* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Colonial Press, 1944), 1. Kobre also provided a facsimile copy of the paper on page iv.

<sup>2</sup> Articles of Agreement between Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Whitmarsh, 13 September 1731, quoted in ed. Leonard W. Labaree, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 28 vols. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1959), 1: 205-08.

<sup>3</sup> Louis Timothée signed a contract with Benjamin Franklin in 1733 after Whitmarsh's death, promising to take over the Whitmarsh press. Timothée, who anglicized his name to Lewis Timothy, revived the *Gazette*. He died in 1738 and left his press to be run by his wife, Elizabeth, and then for many decades by his son, Peter. Peter's wife, Ann, had to revive the *Gazette* after her husband's death, and she left the paper to her son, Benjamin Franklin Timothy. He published it under various names until 1802. See Hennig Cohen, *The South Carolina Gazette, 1732-1775* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1953), 247-48.

<sup>4</sup> David Ramsay, a prominent eighteenth-century resident of South Carolina, offered a useful timeline of settlement and governmental happenings in his book, *The History of South-Carolina, from its first Settlement in 1670, to the Year 1808*, 2 vols. (Charleston: David Longworth, 1809), 1: 2, 2n, 10-11.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 106.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 6 and 165.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 105.

<sup>8</sup> *South-Carolina Gazette* (Charlestown), 8 January 1732.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> The *Gazette*, for instance, offered British news as a separate thing from foreign news. Obviously, people did not think of Britain as a foreign country; it was home. Many considered the colonies as an outpost of home, not a separate address from home. See, for example, the *Gazette* of 15 January 1732.

<sup>12</sup> *Gazette*, 8 January 1732.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 January 1732.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 January 1732.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* Elizabeth Christine Cook contended in *Literary Influences in Colonial Newspapers, 1704-1750* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912) that Whitmarsh and Franklin essentially fooled Charlestownians into believing that the public was writing



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the news in the *Gazette*. Cook said on p. 231, for instance, that “[i]t is probable that Whitmarsh [*sic*] himself, or some member of his staff, wrote the letter...signed Martia. We can hardly suppose that any Charleston writer would have responded in a manner so like Franklin’s....” She went on to give evidence that much of the wisdom in the *Gazette* was reprinted from another publication of the era, the *Spectator*. See pp. 232-37. Although Whitmarsh may, indeed, have had a few essays ready to run early on, he clearly had live correspondents sending in their contributions as well. For example, he frequently ran messages to correspondents, telling them he had gotten their letters and promising he would print them eventually. He felt compelled to apologize to some for delaying their entries, and he told others he would not run their offerings for various reasons. See the *Gazettes* of 22 and 29 January, 12 and 19 February, 4 and 25 March, and 27 May 1732, for such messages from Whitmarsh. The messages ran along the lines of the 4 March piece, which read: “Happening within these two Days, to have the ill Luck to Fall in Company with a Person, that, by several Expressions in his Conversation, we were too plainly convinced, is the same, against whom *Mr. Prattle’s* Letter is levell’d, we must beg pardon for not inserting it.... And we do assure our Correspondent, it is no less a Concern to us, than (possibly) it may be to him, that must forbear giving it a Place in our Paper.” Such an apology seems unlikely to be fake. Plus, since Franklin never mentioned, either in his papers or his autobiography, that he and/or Whitmarsh had pulled a big hoax on the public, it seems even more likely that indeed Whitmarsh’s messages to correspondents were genuine and not part of an elaborate scheme. Also, when the *Gazette’s* writers, be they Whitmarsh or someone else, offered items clipped from other sources, they often made no secret of it. See, for instance, the *Gazettes* of 29 January, 5 February, and 25 March 1732. Thus, Cook’s revelation that the *Gazette* was running articles from the *Spectator* was not entirely startling. The readers of the *Gazette* were well aware that some of their news was being clipped. Finally, even if Cook’s analysis were correct, it is obvious that Whitmarsh felt it was critical to make it *look* like his articles came from people all over South-Carolina. No matter whether Cook was right or wrong, Whitmarsh obviously saw the necessity of giving his readers a full picture from a wide range of viewpoints, supporting this essay’s contention that Whitmarsh wished to personify society in all its facets. Since Cook’s point cannot be proven and seems erroneous, this essay will treat the letters from the public as if they were genuine.

<sup>17</sup> *South-Carolina Gazette*, 15 January 1732.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 January 1732. It was not unheard of for printers to show items about certain people to those very people for their response. For instance, a later *Gazette* editor, Peter Timothy, showed a friend a couple of contributions for an appropriate reply. See the *Gazette* of 3 October 1761.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 January 1732.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

## Williams

- 22 Ibid., 29 January 1732.
- 23 Ibid., 12 February 1732.
- 24 Ibid., 26 February 1732.
- 25 Ibid., 12 February 1732.
- 26 Ibid., 5 February 1732.
- 27 Ibid., 12 February 1732.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid., 8 April 1732.
- 30 Ibid., 25 March 1732.
- 31 Ibid., 29 January 1732.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ibid., 1 April 1732.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid., 27 May 1732.
- 37 Ibid., 22 April 1732.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid., 18 March 1732.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Ibid., 25 March 1732.
- 42 Ibid., 19 February 1732; 5 February 1732; 1 April 1732; 22 January 1732.
- 43 Ibid., 5 February 1732.
- 44 Ibid., 4 March 1732.
- 45 Ibid., 27 May 1732. The English hymnist Isaac Watts had written the poem, titled “Few Happy Marriages,” in 1701.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Ibid.

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## News & Notes

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

### **American Journalism Historians Association 2024 Call for Papers, Panels, and Research in Progress**

The American Journalism Historians Association invites paper entries, panel proposals, and abstracts of research in progress on any facet of media history for its 43rd annual convention to be held in Oct. 3-5, 2024, in Pittsburgh, Pa.

**The deadline for submissions is June 1, 2024, 11:59 p.m. EST.**

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

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

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

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

### **RESEARCH PAPERS**

Research entries must be no longer than 25 pages of text, double-

## News & Notes

spaced, in 12-point type, not including notes or figures. Please use end-notes and place figures at the end of the document. The *Chicago Manual of Style* is recommended but not required.

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

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

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

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

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

David Sloan Award for outstanding faculty research paper

Robert Lance Award for outstanding student research paper

Jean Palmegiano Award for outstanding international/transnational journalism history research paper

J. William Snorgrass Award for outstanding minority journalism research paper

Maurine Beasley Award for outstanding women's history research paper

Wally Eberhard Award for outstanding research in media and war

Questions about paper submissions can be directed to AJHA Research Chair Jennifer Moore of The University of Minnesota Duluth ([mooreje@d.umn.edu](mailto:mooreje@d.umn.edu)). Authors will be notified no later than Monday, July 17, 2024, whether their papers have been accepted or not. If you

have not heard by that date, please contact Jennifer Moore.

## **PANELS**

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

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

A title and brief description of the topic.

The moderator and participants' information (name, institutional affiliation, student or faculty status).

A brief summary of each participant's presentation.

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

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

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

## **RESEARCH IN PROGRESS**

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

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For research in progress submissions, send a blind abstract of your study. The abstract should include a title, a clear purpose statement, and a brief description of your primary sources. Abstracts must be no longer than two pages of text, double-spaced, in 12-point type, with 1-inch margins, excluding notes. Primary sources should be described in detail on a separate double-spaced page. The AJHA Research in Progress competition is administered electronically.

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

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

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

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

### **The 32nd Annual Symposium on the 19th Century Press, the Civil War, and Free Expression: Panel and Paper Submissions**

Augusta University, Augusta, Georgia

November 7-9, 2024

The Society of Nineteenth Century Historians, in partnership with the Pamplin College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at Augusta University, presents the 32nd Annual Symposium on the 19th Century Press, the Civil War, and Free Expression.

The Society invites panel and paper submissions dealing with media, broadly defined in the nineteenth century. Recent topics have included the Civil War of fiction and history, slavery and abolition, coverage of presidents and legislatures, the minority and foreign language press, the illustrated press, sensationalism, reporting on the arts, and spiritualism and the supernatural.

**SUBMISSION:** Please send — no later than August 26, 2024 — your paper or a panel proposal as a Word attachment (including a 200–300-word abstract) to [19thcenturyhistorians@gmail.com](mailto:19thcenturyhistorians@gmail.com).

- Selected papers and panels must be presented during the conference Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, November 7-9, 2024.
- Presentations should range between 15 and 20 minutes with papers of at least 10 pages.
- If submitting a pre-formed panel, please include a panel abstract and the names, contact information, and presentation title for each presenter.
- A Zoom option is available upon request.
- It is not necessary to be a member of the Society to submit a paper or panel for consideration.
- Outstanding submissions will be honored with special recognition. The authors of accepted student papers are eligible to receive financial assistance to help defray the cost of travel expenses. The inaugural Sachsman Family Award for outstanding student research and the Schmitt Family Fund in support of undergraduate and graduate scholarship are each dedicated to encouraging in-person presentation. Attendance in Augusta offers a wonderful opportunity to join the Symposium's community of scholars, gain valuable input and feedback, and explore opportunities to network during a memorable conference experience.

Since 2000, the Symposium has produced nine books covering a broad range of subjects. These include: *The Civil War and the Press* (2000); *Memory and Myth: The Civil War in Fiction and Film from Uncle Tom's Cabin to Cold Mountain* (2007); *Words at War: The Civil War and American Journalism* (2008); *Seeking a Voice: Images of Race and Gender in the 19th Century Press* (2009); *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th-Century Reporting* (2013); *A Press Divided: Newspaper Coverage of the Civil War* (2014); *After the War: The Press in a Changing America, 1865–1900* (2017); *The Antebellum Press: Setting the Stage for Civil War* (2019), and *The Civil War Soldier and the Press* (2023). Panel presentations from the 2020 and 2023 Symposiums were recorded and aired on C-SPAN and C-SPAN 2.

Also, a unique opportunity is available to participate in an exciting Call for Conference Papers/Book Chapters project, *Unexplained! Negotiating the Supernatural in the 19th Century Press*.

Details are available at [19thcenturyhistorians.org](https://19thcenturyhistorians.org). For more information, please contact [19thcenturyhistorians@gmail.com](mailto:19thcenturyhistorians@gmail.com)

### **Sidney Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism History Nominations**

The American Journalism Historians Association seeks nominations for the Sidney Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism History. The deadline for nominations is May 15, 2024.

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

The Kobre Award recognizes individuals with an exemplary record of sustained achievement in journalism history through teaching, research, professional activities, or other contributions to the field of jour-



nalism history. Award winners need not be members of the AJHA.

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

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

Send nominations no later than May 15, 2024.

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

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

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

### **National Award for Excellence in Teaching**

**Deadline for nominations: June 1, 2024**

The annual AJHA Award for Excellence in Teaching honors a college or university teacher who excels at teaching in the areas of journalism and mass communication history, makes a positive impact on student learning, and offers an outstanding example for other educators.

An honorarium of \$500 accompanies the prize.

**Eligibility:**

A nominee may be tenured or untenured, and should hold either a full- or part-time appointment with a minimum of three years teaching experience at a college or university that confers an associate, baccalaureate or higher degree in journalism, mass communication, communication studies, or history as of the submission due date.

All nominees must have responsibility for teaching the history of journalism and mass communication either as a stand-alone course or as part of a broader course.

**Nomination packets must include:**

Letter of nomination from the candidate that includes the following:

- a. A summary of his/her teaching philosophy and how he/she designs courses or assignments to actualize that philosophy,
- b. An example of how experience has improved his or her teaching over time,
- c. and a discussion of how the impact of his or her teaching has become evident.

Curriculum vitae

A syllabus from a mass communication history course or a course that incorporates mass communication history.

Three items that demonstrate teaching effectiveness. These may include assignment sheets, lesson plan or detailed lecture notes, PowerPoint presentation for a lecture, examples of student work along with the assignment sheet from which the work was created (anonymize the work if possible and obtain permission to submit from the student where copyright may be an issue).

One letter of support from a colleague (peer or senior) or academic administrator.

Nominations should be sent to Education Chair Kaylene Armstrong ([kdarmstrong@nwsu.edu](mailto:kdarmstrong@nwsu.edu)) electronically as a PDF (one file).

Previous Recipients:

2023	Erin Coyle, Temple
2022	Dianne Bragg, Alabama
2021	Ira Chinoy, Maryland
2020	Michael Fuhlhage, Wayne State
2019	David Vergobbi, Utah
2018	Mike Sweeney, Ohio
2017	Amber Roessner, Tennessee
2016	Wayne Dawkins, Hampton
2015	Tracy Lucht, Iowa State
2014	Bernell Tripp, Florida
2013	Earnest Perry, Missouri
2012	Janice Hume, Georgia
2011	Leonard Teel, Georgia State
2010	David Sloan, Alabama
2008	Betty Winfield, Missouri

### **Award Call: Jinx C. Broussard Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Media History**

This award is presented to the winners of the AEJMC History Division's teaching competition. Members may submit an innovative teaching technique to the contest, which is judged by a committee each spring.

Teaching ideas should be original, tested, and creative techniques

used by the author in teaching media history and could be used by other instructors or institutions. The competition welcomes a variety of teaching ideas, including those taught across a quarter/semester or taught as a module within an individual course. Of particular interest are teaching ideas that help instructors address one or more of these pedagogies: diversity, collaboration, community, or justice. The 2024 deadline for submissions is May 8.

The applications should be submitted as one document saved in a PDF format to [aejmchistory@gmail.com](mailto:aejmchistory@gmail.com) using the subject line “Jinx C. Broussard Award” and should include:

Required: a three-page CV

Required: a single-spaced, two-page discussion of the teaching idea that includes a 250-word overview followed by discussions of these seven criteria used for judging.

Optional: a set of supplementary teaching materials relevant to the teaching idea, such as syllabus, assignment, handouts, links, or slide, saved as PDF and no more than five pages

### **Criteria for judging:**

*Originality* (makes clear how the work has not been published or presented at a conference or an online forum previously; is not in any other 2024 AEJMC competition; and does not represent another person’s teaching without acknowledgment of that work and discussion of significant modification by the author)

*Tested* (describes how employed previously in the author’s classroom)

*Transferability* (makes a case for how other schools/classes/programs could use)

*Degree of transformative nature* (speaks to evidence of how the

teaching leads to a marked change on the part of students, such as via assessment or student feedback)

*Degree of focus on diversity, collaboration, community, and/or justice* (addresses one or more of these pedagogies, as defined by the author)

*Degree of clarity* (presented clearly, completely, and concisely)

*Willingness to present* (expresses willingness to present at the 2024 AEJMC conference)

Please send any questions about the 2024 competition to the division's Teaching Chair Bailey Dick at [bdick@bgsu.edu](mailto:bdick@bgsu.edu).

## **Applications for Hazel Dicken-Garcia Research Grant**

The American Journalism Historians Association seeks applications for the Hazel Dicken-Garcia Research Grant. The deadline for applications was extended to June 1, 2024.

Established in 2023, the grant provides financial assistance to graduate students and junior faculty whose work embodies the scholarly interests of Dicken-Garcia, who mentored numerous M.A. and Ph.D. students during her 30-year career in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota.

Applicants must be graduate students or pre-tenure faculty and be current AJHA members upon submission of an application, and awardees must continue their membership throughout the grant period. Their research must be related to mass media history. Preference will be given to scholars researching in the following areas: 19th- and 20th-century journalism standards; equity issues and the media; gender, identity, and the media; media and journalism ethics; international communication; Civil War journalism; and free expression/First Amendment. A grant award may be up to \$1,000.

Complete details about the grant program and submission requirements are available at <https://ajha.wildapricot.org/DickenGarcia/>.

For questions regarding the grant, contact Kaylene Armstrong of the AJHA Education Committee at [kaylenearmstrong@gmail.com](mailto:kaylenearmstrong@gmail.com).

## **2024 BEA Lifetime Achievement in Scholarship to Michael D. Murray**

Heather Birks

Michael D. “Mike” Murray, University of Missouri Board of Curators’ Distinguished Professor Emeritus on the UM-St. Louis campus has been awarded the 2024 Broadcast Education Association (BEA) Lifetime Achievement in Scholarship Award.

For over a half-century Murray has been a leader in program development and the initiation of new academic degrees in appointments he has held at: Virginia Tech (1974-76); University of Louisville (1976-82); University of Missouri-St. Louis (1982-2017) and as Founding Director of the Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas (2005-2006)

Murray received undergraduate and graduate degrees in Communication at St. Louis University. As a graduate teaching assistant, he was news director of the campus radio station while working part-time for CBS News. Upon completion of his master’s degree, he received a commission as a U.S. Army Reserve Officer from the Gateway Battalion at Washington University in St. Louis, MO. He completed his military service as a Captain in the U.S. Army Signal Corps at Fort Knox, KY.

He wrote his doctoral dissertation at the University of Missouri-Columbia, fifty years ago – in 1974 about Edward R. Murrow’s CBS “See It Now” television series. He also published an interview with for-

mer CBS News President Fred W. Friendly in the inaugural issue of “Journalism History” and delivered his first research paper at the annual meeting of the BEA in Las Vegas. That paper focused on Alistair Cooke’s documentary series, “America.” An abbreviated version of that paper, entitled “AMERICA: Cooke’s Tour,” published in “Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly.”

Dr. Murray joined Virginia Tech’s faculty in 1974. At that time, media-related courses were located in a Department of Performing Arts and Communication. Under Murray’s leadership, a separate Department of Communication with a major media component was formed, a bachelor’s degree was approved and faculty were recruited. In 1976, Murray joined the University of Louisville faculty where he founded another academic unit and authored a new bachelor’s degree. He also oversaw production of a public affairs program for WAVE-TV (NBC) and became the first person tenured in Communication at U of L (1980). He returned to the Missouri University system in 1982 as a tenured professor and advisor to the Chancellor overseeing a 100,000-watt NPR radio station, KWMU. Five years later, on the fortieth anniversary of Missouri’s first TV station in 1987, KSD-TV (NBC) now KSDK, he wrote a station history which was excerpted in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Dr. Murray’s eight books include: *The Political Performers; Television in America* with Donald G. Godfrey; *Indelible Images: Women of Local Television* with Mary Beadle; the *Encyclopedia of Television News* containing 300 entries authored by over 100 contributing scholars; and a college text, *Media Law and Ethics* with Roy Moore. Murray also co-edited two books to improve teaching in the field: *Mass Communication Education*, also with Moore, and *Teaching Mass Communication* with Anthony Ferri. Another college text, *Prime Time Pioneers*, was issued by

Mizzou Publishing with all royalties going to student scholarships.

He served as Review and Criticism Editor for BEA's *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, including recruitment of contributing authors for the research tributes in Volume 50 (March 2006) on the occasion of the publication's fiftieth anniversary. He also served on the advisory board for what is now the *Gateway Journalism Review*, and corresponding editor for *Journalism History*. He authored the introductory chapter "Research Strategies" in the *Guide to Sources in American Journalism History* by Lucy Caswell and a chapter on handling "Oral History Records" for the graduate level textbook by Don Godfrey, *Methods of Historical Analysis in Electronic Media*.

Dr. Murray is a founding member and former president of the American Journalism Historians Association and recipient of that organization's Sidney Kobre Distinguished Service Award. He also functions as a long-time member of the Board of Governors of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS) for Mid America, serving as a frequent Committee Chair, Program Planner and EMMY Awards Judge. He was elected as the first Governor Emeritus of that organization (2018) and has also held post-doctoral fellowships at University of California-San Diego (NEH); Stanford University (American Press Institute); University of London (Institute of U.S. Studies); Columbia University (The Freedom Forum); and Dr. Frank Stanton Fellow, (IRTS). He was honored with a Goldsmith Research Award from the John F. Kennedy School at Harvard University and Ed Bliss Award from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Over the years, he has published interviews with many of America's TV news leaders focusing on historic broadcasts, including Walter Cronkite, David Brinkley, Tom Brokaw and Dan Rather. As president



of the American Journalism Historians Association, he joined the effort to have the memory of Edward R. Murrow honored with a U.S. Postage Stamp and hosted a “first day of issue” ceremony along with the U.S. Postal Service on his campus on the occasion, January 27, 1994. He is currently working on behalf of NATAS and other organizations to have the contributions of Walter Cronkite, a native of St. Joseph, Mo., also honored with a U.S. Postage Stamp.

BEA’s Lifetime Achievement in Scholarship recognizes significant contributions to research and scholarship involving broadcast and electronic media. Recipients are evidenced by related extensive publication in books and leading journals, for at least twenty years. The LAS was awarded to Dr. Murray at BEA’s annual convention at the Las Vegas Convention Center during a ceremony and reception on the evening of Saturday, April 13.

### **AEJMC History Division Announces Dr. Linda Lumsden as Winner of 2024 Donald L. Shaw Senior Scholar Award**

The History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication will honor Dr. Linda Lumsden as the Donald L. Shaw Senior Scholar during the Division’s Awards Gala. The longtime journalist, editor, public scholar, and author of five books, including *Social Justice Journalism: Social Movement Media from Abolition to #womensmarch*, retired in 2021 after teaching for more than two decades at the Western Kentucky School of Journalism & Broadcasting and University of Arizona School of Journalism.

Established in 2020, the award honors a scholar who has a record of excellence in media history that has spanned a minimum of 15 years, including division membership. It is named in honor of the pioneering journalism theoretician, distinguished journalism historian and former

head of the History Division, who taught for almost half of a century at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Hussman School of Journalism and Media.

“We were gratified by the quality of the nominees for this prestigious award, which is now in its fifth year,” one judge said. “Linda Lumsden is an incredibly accomplished scholar and richly deserving of this award. She has produced outstanding work in multiple areas of journalism history — the radical press, women’s-rights journalism, and social-justice journalism — and in doing so has shown the interconnectedness of these important areas. Her years of service to the profession and mentorship of junior colleagues have contributed greatly to the continuing robustness of the History Division.”

Over the course of her 12-year journalistic career, Dr. Lumsden served as a reporter and editor on newspapers in New York and Connecticut.

Dr. Lumsden, who received her Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1995, is the author of five books and countless journal articles. During her illustrious career, Dr. Lumsden served as the J. William Fulbright Core Scholar at National University of Malaysia in 2012- 2013 and was honored with numerous awards, including AEJMC’s 2017 Best Faculty Paper and a three-time winner of the American Journalism Historian Association’s Maurine Beasley Award for Outstanding Paper in Women’s History in 2005, 2006, 2007, respectively, and was a runner-up in 2008.

“So much of what we know about the radical press and the suffrage press we owe to Linda Lumsden,” another judge added. “Her seminal work in both areas is cited and taught widely. She continues to blaze new paths with her more recent work on social justice journalism. What’s more, she has been a high-impact member of AEJMC and its

History Division since the 1990s, sharing her expertise and big heart through mentoring junior scholars and robust service to our associational life. I'm thrilled that this year's winner of the Shaw Award is Linda Lumsden."

Added Professor Carol B. Schwalbe, the Director of the University of Arizona's School of Journalism, who nominated Lumsden for the prestigious award: "The thread through Linda's scholarship has been an exploration of how disempowered groups find voice through journalism in their struggles for social justice. Her work has significantly contributed to the history of social justice journalism, the radical press, the black press, the suffrage press, and women reporters since she first won top AEJMC paper prizes as a part-time, nondegree-seeking graduate student in 1991 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill."

Despite her record of tremendous accomplishments and honors, Dr. Lumsden noted that news of the award was "a true gift to learn from out of the blue that my work meant something, and that I contributed in some small way to journalism history."

"I am surprised and thrilled to have my name associated with these heroes of journalism history," Dr. Lumsden noted. "Don Shaw taught me historical research methods at UNC-Chapel Hill back in 1991, and I have revered the inspirational Maurine Beasley, the first recipient of this award, as the founding mother of women's journalism history since my graduate school days.

It is also rewarding for me to see the tremendous growth in recent years in research on the alternative press and social justice journalism, as reflected in History Division papers, journal articles and awards. No one could ask for a finer end to their career than this recognition that I have played a small role in that progress."

Along the way, Dr. Lumsden mentored countless undergraduate

and graduate students and peer scholars, who have gone on to illustrious careers of their own, and they regularly cite the influence of her contributions on their lives.

“Linda’s work has affected both my scholarship and my teaching. At an AJHA convention in Birmingham, Alabama, she gave a presentation on political cartoons in radical periodicals. Her analysis was brilliant and I was enthralled,” University of Louisville Professor John P. Ferré recalled. “In fact, I began to connect the dots between her research on visual rhetoric in the radical press and my study of religious media. That inspiration led to a chapter I published a few years later: ‘Evangelical Television Criticism through a Half Century of Christianity Today Cartoons.’ Fast forward to 2020. I was searching for reading material for my 500-level communication ethics course that would satisfy my students’ growing interest in issues of social justice, which burgeoned after Louisville police shot and killed Breonna Taylor just seven miles from campus, as well as my desire for media analysis that takes history seriously to compensate for the fact that our majors and graduate students have no required media history course. Linda’s latest book, *Social Justice Journalism: Social Movement Media from Abolition to #womensmarch*, fit the bill perfectly.”

Dr. Lumsden will receive a plaque and monetary award during the division’s Awards Gala in conjunction with the AEJMC annual meeting.

### **AJHA 2024 Southeast Symposium**

Natalie Bonner, Alex Boothe, and Caleb Aguayo

Students from universities in the Southeastern U.S. presented their research at the American Journalism Historians Association’s 2024

Southeast Symposium on Feb. 3.

The Symposium aims to foster a welcoming environment for undergraduate and graduate students to present their research and to promote scholarly conversation among the students and their peers.

This year's research topics ranged from comic book history to the media coverage of historic events, including World Wars I and II, the 1903 Iroquois Theatre fire and Native American newspaper opposition to Alaskan fish canneries.

Makenzi Azeman, an undergraduate student from the University of Florida who researched the comparisons between Nazi propaganda and Israel-Palestine focused political cartoons, said she enjoyed the wide range of topics presented.

"It was very enlightening to hear about so many different great topics," Azeman said. "I'm really glad I came because I'm a big fan of history and it was all really interesting to learn about."

Faculty from the participating institutions recommended the students to present their research, and they then reviewed the students' research to select the most comprehensive undergraduate and graduate papers for awards.

Tressie Nuñez, a psychology major from Samford University, focused on the changing images of Batman's archnemesis, the Joker, in the history of DC comic books. While unrelated to her major, she said she enjoyed researching a topic that was of personal interest to her.

"I just thought it was really cool to talk about it and that people were receptive and actually enjoyed it," Nuñez said. "I really enjoyed the conference, and hearing that everyone else's topics and ideas were broader than I had even thought about was really awesome."

Justin Gray, an undergraduate student from Augusta University, worked alongside his professor, David Bulla, on a paper that examined

the *The National* and its failed business model as a daily sports paper.

“It was a great experience. I liked the location and getting away for a few days.” Gray said. “I enjoyed everyone’s presentation and being able to present my work.”

More information about AJHA and its Southeast Symposium can be found [here](#).

### **Garza Wins *Journalism History’s* Annual Essay Contest**

Dr. Melita Garza of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, won the 2024 essay contest sponsored by *Journalism History*.

Originally the brainchild of Dr. Erika Pribanic-Smith (University of Texas at Arlington), the competition first began in 2018 and has featured essays around specific themes. This year’s competition focused on civil rights with the impetus being the 60th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A panel of judges assessed the submitted essay proposals, and selected Dr. Garza’s as the best. She will receive a \$100 prize and have her essay published in the journal.

Dr. Garza is an associate professor and the Tom and June Netzel Sleeman Scholar in Business Journalism at the University of Illinois. Her essay, which is not yet titled, will focus on Ruben Salazar’s work at the *Los Angeles Times* and at Spanish-language station KMEX regarding the Mexican-American freedom struggle. Her entry says that she plans to place his work within a broader civil rights context.

“I am grateful that *Journalism History* chose to commemorate this milestone legislation, whose spirit, more than a half century after its passage, is still hauntingly unfulfilled,” Dr. Garza said. “Moreover, I’m thrilled to bring greater recognition to pathbreaking journalist, Ruben Salazar, who lost his life in 1970 while covering one of the nation’s largest Mexican American civil rights marches.”

Three other scholars tied for second place, and their essays will also be published in the journal, according to *Journalism History* editor Pam Parry (Southeast Missouri State University). The judges deemed these excellent essays as worthy of publication in *Journalism History*, she added.

The second-place winners are Dr. Pete Smith (Mississippi State University), and Dr. Nathaniel Frederick II (Winthrop University) and Dr. William Schulte (Winthrop). Dr. Smith's essay is titled, "Let the Chips Fall Where They May," and will discuss press framing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act in four Mississippi newspapers. Drs. Frederick and Schulte co-authored a piece that will focus on the media establishment and the Black arts movement.

In addition, six other essays were selected to be published on the *Journalism History* website. Essay coordinator Willie R. Tubbs will edit and submit those essays for posting throughout the year.

"Our judges had quite the challenge on their hands this year," Tubbs said. "All of our submissions, even those that were not ultimately chosen, were strong. But among that strong field, three stood out for their quality. I think our readers will be impressed with the unique, powerful approaches the authors take in attacking this important subject."

### **New Resources from *Journalism History* and the AEJMC History Division**

By Elliot King

*Journalism History* and the History Division of the AEJMC have resources for both research and teaching — an updated *Journalism History* literature review list and an updated journalism history podcast

episode guide.

For research, most studies require historical context. *Journalism History* is filled with important context, perfect for a literature review section. The literature review list provides a quick overview of articles written on various topics. The journal is also a great publication to submit your research to if your study focuses on an area of mass communication history.

The *Journalism History* [podcast](#) guide is a resource too. I use the “why does journalism history matter?” episode as a starting point in both my journalism history course and my media literacy course. In addition, I have a podcast assignment where students pick a podcast to listen to (or read the transcript) and write about.

For a copy of the guides, contact Elliot King at [eking@loyola.edu](mailto:eking@loyola.edu).

### **Mislán Named *Journalism History* Associate Editor**

The History Division has announced that Dr. Cristina Mislán will become the associate editor for its journal, *Journalism History*. She will join incoming editor Perry Parks and officially start her duties in August. Mislán is an associate professor in the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri.

### **Andersen Tuttle Named *Intelligencer* Editor**

The American Journalism Historian Association announced Karlin Andersen Tuttle as the incoming editor of the *Intelligencer*, the organization’s electronic newsletter. Andersen Tuttle, an AJHA member since 2019, recently earned a dual-title Ph.D. in mass communications and women’s, gender, and sexuality studies from Penn State.

“I am excited to take on editing The Intelligencer and continue its work highlighting members’ achievements, research, and pedagogy,”



Andersen Tuttle said. “The annual AJHA convention created such a supportive space for me as a graduate student to present my research and learn more about the field. I plan to use my position to continue to grow that community and encourage future scholars.”

Before pursuing a Ph.D., Andersen Tuttle wrote for a daily newspaper in Washington state, *The Spokesman-Review*, and worked in marketing for a regional library system. After moving to Pennsylvania, she worked in public relations and marketing at Penn State where she wrote and edited a twenty-eight page quarterly magazine covering faculty and graduate student research. She currently serves as the editorial liaison for the journal *Mass Communication & Society*.

Her dissertation, “Your Trusted Friend: Untold Histories of Five Christian Women’s Magazines, 1974-2023,” included reviewing over 600 magazine issues, archival material, and oral history interviews with the magazines’ editors and staff members.

She also holds an M.A. from Penn State in Media Studies and a B.A. in English with minors in journalism and editing, publishing, and design from Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington.

### **2025-26 Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program Competition Open**

Julia Lieber

Fulbright Program,

Contact: [scholars@iie.org](mailto:scholars@iie.org)

The application process is open for Fulbright U.S. Scholar awards for the 2025-26 academic year.

The [Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program](#) offers over 400 unique awards for U.S. citizens to teach, research, and conduct professional projects in more than 130 countries, including projects in the areas of history of

journalism and mass communication. [Explore awards available in the 2025-26 competition.](#)

We encourage you to visit our website for application resources:

- [Getting Started](#)

- [Application Guidance](#)

- [Open Awards in the 2025-26 Competition](#), searchable by discipline, country/region, etc.

- [Webinar Schedule and Archive](#)

[Register for webinar presentations](#) throughout the year, sharing opportunities for specific regions, countries, and disciplines.

The deadline for applications is September 16, 2024. To receive program updates and application resources, [connect with Fulbright](#).

### **Call for Papers – Sessions on the History of Stereoscopic Photography V – the National Stereoscopic Association’s 50th Annual 3D-Con**

Melody Davis

The National Stereoscopic Association is pleased to announce its fifth annual “Sessions on the History of Stereoscopic Photography” at the 50th annual 3D-Con held at the Drury Plaza Broadview Hotel, Wichita, Kansas, on July 26, 2024. Presentations are welcome on any aspect of stereo-media from the inception of stereoscopic photography to immersive stereo media. We project stereoscopically on the 3D-Con’s big screen, and our growing community of international scholars represent diverse research from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. All stereoscopic photography subjects from the historical to the contemporary are invited.

Please fill out the contact information form on the web page below.

Then upload on a separate file your abstract of 600 words maximum, followed by a biography of no more than 300 words, and five images (optional).

Deadline: **May 14, 2024**

<https://3d-con.com/history.php>

Notification of acceptance by May 24, 2024. Digital images will be expected by June 25, 2024.

Contact Information

Melody Davis, Ph.D., Prof. of Art History

Russell Sage College, Albany and Troy, NY

Contact Email: [davism6@sage.edu](mailto:davism6@sage.edu)

URL: <https://3d-con.com/history.php>

### **Caitlin Cieslik-Miskimen Selected New Editor/Moderator of Jhistory**

David Mindich

Caitlin Cieslik-Miskimen has been selected as a new editor/moderator of JHistory.

She joins me, Elliot King, and Gerry Lanosga as moderators. Christopher Shoop-Worrall is stepping down after years of excellent service.

Cieslik-Miskimen teaches at the University of Idaho and is a member of both JHistory and the JHistory First Friday Salon.

### **Oral Histories of Monroe Price, Klaus Krippendorff, and Charlie Wright Released**

The University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication Library Archives (ASCLA) has released three multi-session oral history interviews, with Charlie Wright, Klaus Krippendorff, and Monroe Price:

## News & Notes

The interviews include transcripts synced to audio (Wright) and video (Krippendorff and Price):

Charles W. Wright (1927–2017) (3 sessions)

Klaus Krippendorff (1932–2022) (5 sessions)

Monroe E. Price (1938–) (5 sessions)

The interviews are part of the [Communication Scholars Oral History Project](#), an initiative of the [Annenberg School for Communication Library Archives](#) (ASCLA). The Oral History Project was launched in 2016 to record the life and intellectual histories of senior Annenberg School scholars; interviews with Oscar Gandy and Larry Gross are currently in processing.

We are thrilled to announce that the scope of the project has now widened to the international field, with the aim to document the histories of a diverse range of senior communication and media scholars from around the globe.

The Communication Scholars Oral History Project is among the growing collection of materials hosted by ASCLA on the [history of the field](#). Among the collections:

George Gerbner Papers (1951 – 2006)

Elihu Katz Papers (1948 – 2014)

International Communication Organization (ICA) Records  
*Studies in Visual Communication*

Among the collections in processing:

Herbert I. Schiller Papers (1919 – 2000)

Kurt Lang (1924 –2019) and Gladys Engel Lang (1919 –2016)  
Papers

The records of the Union for Democratic Communication (UDC) have also been added to ASCLA's holdings.

ASCLA also maintains collections on [journalism](#) and [media](#). Please

## News & Notes

contact lead archivist Samantha Dodd (for general ASCLA queries) at [samantha.dodd@asc.upenn.edu](mailto:samantha.dodd@asc.upenn.edu) and/or subject consultant Jeff Pooley (for oral history-specific queries) at [jeff.pooley@asc.upenn.edu](mailto:jeff.pooley@asc.upenn.edu) with any questions.

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