

# *Historiography*

in Mass Communication



Volume 2 (2016). Number 3

# *Historiography in Mass Communication*

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## Editorial Purpose

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

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## Essays

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

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

To submit an essay for consideration, email a Word file to the editor at [wmdsloan@bellsouth.net](mailto:wmdsloan@bellsouth.net)

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# *Historiography*

## in Mass Communication

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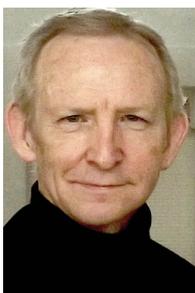
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# Death and Memory

By Wm. David Sloan ©



Sloan

Jim Baughman, a historian of the first rank, died March 26. Coincidentally and unaware of the lung cancer that took his life, I had emailed him just three days earlier. I had asked him if he would do for this journal a Q&A interview about his book *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media*. In 1987 it had won Kappa Tau Alpha's Frank Luther Mott Research Award for the year's best book. When I heard that Jim had died, I was taken

with surprise and sadness.

David Spencer, a former president of the American Journalism Historians Association, had died just a month earlier, and I had a similar feeling. He was not only a good historian but a good friend.

With the deaths of both Jim and David, I think we who knew them sensed immediately that not only had we lost good people but that we also had lost an immeasurable amount of knowledge.

That happens whenever someone dies who has lived a full life. How many of us have told ourselves when parents or grandparents died, "How I wish I had talked to them and recorded the stories they could have told me"? We can never recover memories once they are lost.

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

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If we lose knowledge when someone dies, as we surely do, how much greater the loss is when a historian dies. As with everyone else, when historians are gone we lose the information they had about their personal lives — but with historians we also lose much knowledge that can never be recovered. Every historian accumulates a wealth of information and insight about the past. Even if the historian has published articles and books, there is much that goes unpublished, and it remains only in the historian's mind. We can learn the information the historian has published, but there is a wealth of knowledge and understanding that underlies what appears in publication.

Researchers in other fields, such as, for example, media effects and communication law, also acquire vast amounts of information — but most of it, because it is contemporaneous, still is here for other researchers to examine. The present exists for all.

But the past, because it is the past, can only be recovered by the historian. No one other than historians can, as Trevelyan said, “make alive again for other people some cobwebbed skein of old dead intrigues and breathe breath and character into dead names and stiff portraits.”

It hardly needs mentioning that it is incumbent on us as historians to keep alive as much knowledge as we can of our fellow historians. Obviously, all of us should at least be familiar with their published works. That is easy enough to do. Books and articles are available for us all, and all we have to do is read them. That takes nothing more than self-discipline.

Knowledge about the historians themselves isn't so readily available. Here at *Historiography*, though, one of our goals is to preserve knowledge of historians in our field and protect their memory from vanishing. One way we are trying to do that is with our Q&A's with winners of the Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement that the American Journalism Historians Association gives.

Another is to publish essays about historians. In February we in-

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cluded Debbie van Tuyll's retrospective about Dwight Teeter, who died in 2015. In this issue we are gratified to publish an essay about Jim Baughman. It is written by Prof. Bruce Evensen, who studied history under Jim's tutelage at the University of Wisconsin. For those readers who did not have the good fortune of knowing Jim, we hope the essay will help show why he was one of the outstanding historians in our field.

Along with Prof. Evensen's tribute, we also hope you will find valuable the other articles in this issue. We begin with a thoughtful essay by Erika Pribanic-Smith about the possibilities that "crowdsourcing" offers for getting the public involved in the study of history. For our continuing series of interviews with recipients of the Kobre Award, we have a Q&A with Pat Washburn. Then, to finish the issue, the interviewee for our Q&A with an award-winning book author is Gwyn Mellinger, whose *Chasing Newsroom Diversity: From Jim Crow to Affirmative Action* won Kappa Tau Alpha's Mott award in 2013.

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# Engaging the Public in Media History through Crowdsourcing Projects

By Erika J. Pribanic-Smith ©



Pribanic-Smith

In early March, an article from NiemanLab came up on my Twitter feed about a digital project from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Dubbed a “Citizen History project,” #HistoryUnfolded calls on the public to find newspaper articles about Holocaust-related events in their local libraries and historical societies with the aim of discovering how local newspapers covered these events and how community members reacted to the news.<sup>1</sup> The NiemanLab article reported that citizen historians had found more than 500 articles in just one week of the project; as of April 13, that number had climbed to 858, according to the project website.<sup>2</sup>

This article got me thinking about my dissertation research. Between 2008 and 2010, I sat for countless hours at the microfilm machines at the University of Alabama, scouring what I assume amounted to miles of film holding every newspaper from 1830s South Carolina that the amazing Interlibrary Loan staff could put in my hands. I learned a lot about what thirty-some partisan papers from the most densely populated areas of the state had to say about tariffs, nullifica-

This article got me thinking about my dissertation research. Between 2008 and 2010, I sat for countless hours at the microfilm machines at the University of Alabama, scouring what I assume amounted to miles of film holding every newspaper from 1830s South Carolina that the amazing Interlibrary Loan staff could put in my hands. I learned a lot about what thirty-some partisan papers from the most densely populated areas of the state had to say about tariffs, nullifica-

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## Crowdsourcing Projects

tion, and secession, but I know plenty more newspapers published during that turbulent decade, and I could have gotten many more perspectives if I had the available time and resources to visit all the historical societies and libraries in what had been sparsely-populated farm country. Imagine if I could have had a network of citizen research assistants across the state digging into remote archives for me.

A couple weeks after I learned about #HistoryUnfolded, I visited the Pink Palace Museum of natural and cultural history in Memphis during my spring break. In the exhibit on Historic Black Memphians, a black and white photograph enlarged to take up most of a wall hung next to a small placard that read as follows:

HELP SOLVE THE MYSTERY. We don't know who is in this photo, where it was taken, when, or by whom. It seems to be a meeting of African Americans and white Memphians in a church. If you can identify the church, any of the people, the date, photographer, or the reason for the meeting, please contact the Pink Palace Curator of History.

Ah, I thought. Another job for the citizen historian.

The term for this type of labor distribution is “crowdsourcing.” Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines it as “the practice of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people and especially from the online community.” It’s a concept I teach frequently in my journalism classes, particularly in my Public Affairs Reporting class, in which I emphasize the importance of obtaining diverse perspectives from the various constituencies in the multicultural communities my students cover as beats. As a journalistic concept, crowdsourcing can vary from asking community members to share their own viewpoints and experiences via social media to soliciting public help sifting through documents, as ProPublica has been

doing with its “Free the Files” project on election campaign spending since 2012.<sup>3</sup>

Business blogger Rick Gershman points out that crowdsourcing is an old concept.<sup>4</sup> Since the eighteenth century, challenge prizes have provided monetary incentive for the public to solve problems ranging from how to accurately determine longitude to how to preserve food during long military campaigns. Technological advances simply make crowdsourcing easier by increasing the reach of solicitations and enabling more widespread distribution and contribution of materials.

Numerous archives and libraries have recognized the power of crowdsourcing to aid in the gathering, processing, and analysis of historical facts and documents. The 2012 convention of the American Historical Association featured a session titled “Crowdsourcing History: Collaborative Online Transcription and Archives,” in which nine scholars gave short talks on crowdsourcing projects such as the University of Iowa Libraries farming out the transcription of Civil War diaries and letters so they would be easier to read and search online.<sup>5</sup>

This past March, the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media marked the fifth anniversary of an ongoing project to reconstruct the Papers of the War Department, collecting and transcribing more than 40,000 documents once thought to be irretrievably lost when the War Office burned in 1800. Although the CHNM welcomes any help with the daunting transcription process, it encourages scholars and genealogists to participate as part of their own research efforts and history instructors to assign transcription of materials as a class project.<sup>6</sup> Participants use the center’s *Scripto* tool, which comes with a guide for other historians looking to launch crowdsourced transcription projects.<sup>7</sup> CHNM has additional projects in the works, and its *Scripto* site lists several other institutions that have employed the tool for collaborative manuscript transcription. The Smithsonian also has a Transcription Center website on which it solicits “Digital Volunteers” to

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help make historical documents more accessible.<sup>8</sup>

Transcribing may be the most popular type of historical crowdsourcing, but institutions and individuals have called on the public to assist in other ways as well. Much like the Pink Palace is seeking to solve the mystery of its historical photo, the Library of Congress, British Library, and other archival entities have posted photos in need of identification to the photo sharing site Flickr, resulting in photographic collections that are much more useful to researchers because the contents are better catalogued and more accurately described.<sup>9</sup>

Other projects have dual quests of identifying/describing existing collections and building their collections via public contributions. The Spatial History Project's Crowdsourcing for Humanities Research at Stanford University has conducted multiple crowdsourcing projects. One, "Year of the Bay," asked participants to help generate metadata for archival sources and to submit new materials from organizational, individual, and family archives that would "diversify and enrich our understanding of the San Francisco Bay and different cultural understandings and practices related to the bay."<sup>10</sup> Targeting a more niche audience, the "Living with Railroads" project invites railroad enthusiasts to share their expertise and "help us tease out the long-term influences of railroads throughout the American West."<sup>11</sup>

Stanford scholars are conducting both of these and other projects on a platform called Historypin ([historypin.org](http://historypin.org)), created by a London- and San Francisco-based non-profit group with the goal of creating a shared archive where people can come together to celebrate local, community histories.

Historians at Carleton University in Canada interested in celebrating community history developed their own SMS text and voice message system to collect narratives of local history in Western Quebec on a now-defunct website called HeritageCrowd. They later authored a reflection on their methods and results, in which they offered advice to

others contemplating similar projects. The scholars noted, “Historians who crowdsource the writing of historical narratives may be able to empower members of a given community who may not have the same institutionalized or professional authority conceded to ‘experts’ in the discipline.”<sup>12</sup>

Unearthing diverse perspectives and generating public interest and excitement in conducting historical inquiry are two of the many benefits of crowdsourcing history. Others include increasing the amount of material available for research, making the materials more useful and accessible, and doing so more quickly and inexpensively than ever would be possible without volunteer historians pitching in.

Crowdsourcing has its drawbacks as well. In his study of Flickr crowdsourcing, Evan Fay Earle pointed out that some comments on photos in need of identification are unhelpful, to say the least. Dialogue among contributors allows for inaccuracies and mistakes to be corrected quickly, but due to the nature of the internet, some comments are completely irrelevant and in some cases offensive.<sup>13</sup> Archivist Jan Zastrow includes general quality control and the need to moderate and edit contributors among a list of necessary tasks involved in facilitating crowdsourcing projects, which also includes project planning, digitizing materials, marketing the project, and training staff and volunteers, among other things. Developing or adapting technology to suit the project also may present a hurdle.<sup>14</sup> Zastrow stated, however, that existing social media and tools created for similar projects — such as those already mentioned in this essay — negate that hurdle somewhat, and overall, the pros of crowdsourcing far outweigh the cons.

Although I’ve not yet attempted a crowdsourcing project myself, I can envision the application of what other scholars and institutions have done to media history research. Those who have paid for transcription services in the past may find free labor among a public eager to assist. Taking a cue from the Holocaust Museum, we might find citi-

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zens willing to dig into local archives and libraries to locate obscure sources on our behalf. Furthermore, Nicholas Hirshon demonstrated in a recent issue of the American Journalism Historians Association's *Intelligencer* that social media can enable us to discover sources and perspectives not available in institutional holdings, including individuals' memories and artifacts hiding in basements and attics.<sup>15</sup> Finally, if we're stumped on an historical mystery, it couldn't hurt to reach out to the public and see what they know that we do not.

Crowdsourcing projects could be a way to engage our students as well. We could identify relevant projects among those that already exist at the Smithsonian, Center for History and New Media, Stanford Spatial History Project, Library of Congress, and other institutions and craft assignments that require students to contribute. Though more labor intensive, we also could have our classes create crowdsourcing projects themselves. Using a tool such as Historypin, students could connect with their communities and research media history topics related to the areas surrounding their universities. Such a project could spark an interest in history among our students as well as local citizens while offering a resource that would be useful to the community far beyond the end of the semester.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Shan Wang, "A Museum Crowdsources How American Newspapers Covered or Didn't Cover the Holocaust," NiemanLab, March 1, 2016, <http://www.niemanlab.org/2016/03/a-museum-crowdsources-how-american-newspapers-covered-or-didnt-cover-the-holocaust/> (accessed April 13, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> See <https://newspapers.ushmm.org/>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://projects.propublica.org/free-the-files/>

<sup>4</sup> Rick Gershman, "Crowdsourcing: An Old Idea Amplified by Modern Technology," March 9, 2016, <http://www.onespace.com/blog/2016/03/crowdsourcing-old-idea-amplified-by-technology/> (accessed April 13, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> "Session of the Week: Crowdsourcing History," *AHA Today*, November 30, 2011, <http://blog.historians.org/2011/11/session-of-the-week-crowdsourcing-history/>

(accessed April 13, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> See <http://wardepartmentpapers.org/transcribe.php>

<sup>7</sup> See <http://scripto.org/documentation/>

<sup>8</sup> See <https://transcription.si.edu/>

<sup>9</sup> Evan Fay Earle, "Crowdsourcing Metadata for Library and Museum Collections Using a Taxonomy of Flickr User Behavior" (Master's Thesis, Cornell University, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> See <https://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/project.php?id=1081>

<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.historypin.org/project/42-railroads/>

<sup>12</sup> Shawn Graham, Guy Massie, and Nadine Feuerherm, "The HeritageCrowd Project: A Case Study in Crowdsourcing Public History," in eds. Kristen Nawrotzki and Jack Dougherty, *Writing History in the Digital Age* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/dh/12230987.0001.001/1:9/—writing-history-in-the-digital-age?g=dculture;rgn=div1;view=fulltext;xc=1#9.3> (accessed April 13, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Earle, "Crowdsourcing Metadata," 14.

<sup>14</sup> Jan Zastrow, "Crowdsourcing Cultural Heritage: 'Citizen Archivists' for the Future," *Computers in Libraries* 34, 8 (October 2014), <http://www.infotoday.com/cilmag/oct14/Zastrow—Crowdsourcing-Cultural-Heritage.shtml> (accessed April 13, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> Nicholas Hirshon, "Social Media Offer Research Help for Recent History," *Intelligencer* 32, 1 (Winter 2015): 18, at <https://ajha.wildapricot.org/Intelligencer> (accessed April 13, 2016).

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# James L. Baughman, 1952-2016

By Bruce J. Evensen ©



Evensen



Baughman

Saturday, March 26, 2016, was James Baughman Day in Madison, Wisconsin. It was also the day he died.

Mayor Paul Soglin heralded the occasion as a celebration “of the love and intellectual passion Jim has inspired in his current and former students, and for his contributions to scholarship, history, journalism and education.”

Jim grew up in Warren, Ohio, the historic capital of the Western Reserve, and became a lifelong fan of the underperforming Cleveland Indians. He named his cat “Andre Thornton” to honor an old Indian, who was past his prime. He acknowledged in *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media* (1987) that absent Andre’s frequent interruptions the author “would have corrected every error and annoying or dissatisfying argument in the book.”

Jim received his undergraduate degree in history from Harvard in

*Bruce Evensen, director of the journalism program at DePaul University, in April received the University of Wisconsin’s Harold L. Nelson Award for outstanding contributions to mass communication research. He is the author of When Dempsey Fought Tunney: Heroes, Hokum, and Storytelling in the Jazz Age and of a number of other works about media history.*

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1974 and a doctorate in history from Columbia University in 1981, studying under Bancroft Prize winner William Leuchtenburg. He was twenty-seven in 1979 when he joined the faculty in the University of Wisconsin-Madison's School of Journalism and Communication, maintaining a joint appointment with its Department of History. In 1981 he became an assistant professor at Wisconsin, earning tenure in 1985, the year the University of Tennessee Press published *Television's Guardians: the FCC and the Politics of Programming, 1958-1967*, a reworking of his dissertation that examined the failure of government regulators "who sought something more from the nation's most popular cultural institution." The public never rallied to the self-appointed champions of the public interest, "leaving commercial broadcasters largely free to pursue their own ends." (xvi) Jim's detective work involved taped interviews with former Federal Communications Commission Chairman Newton Minow, FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson, CBS president Frank Stanton, CBS television president Frank Shakespeare, CBS News president Fred Friendly, and many others intimately involved in the struggle over better television. The materials are on deposit in the Columbia University Oral History Collection. It is what made Jim's findings, one reviewer wrote, "an invaluable guide to the literature" on early broadcasting.<sup>1</sup> Jim's insistence on original sources was a lesson learned by each of his doctoral students.

Jim's advisee Carolyn Bronstein remembers how he was "electrified" by her discovery of a manuscript collection that focused on how feminists organized in the 1980s to combat pornography. The area was well outside Jim's area of personal study, but he knew an important research topic when he saw one. Bronstein wavered on the project because of its controversy, but "Baughman remained firm," she recalls, and gave her the encouragement and confidence to go where the evidence led. Bronstein won the AEJMC's Nafziger White Dissertation Award in 2002 for the project. It later became an award-winning book.

My doctoral work at Wisconsin began with Jim's History of Journalism seminar. Traces of his reading list, including colonial studies by Wisconsin's own David Paul Nord and Thomas Leonard, examination of the constitutional crisis by Leonard Levy and Wisconsin graduate Jeff Smith, and readings in the early Republican press by Bernard Bailyn and John Stevens, could be seen for many years in Journalism and the American Experience, a course I first taught at DePaul University in the fall of 1988. The same could be said for readings on the penny press by Michael Schudson and Dan Schiller, Louis Starr's work on the Civil War Press, and Harry Stein's summary on the Progressive period.

One day, Jim rummaged around his Vilas Hall office and gave me a faded copy of Walter Lippmann's essay "Two Revolutions in the American Press," first published in the *Yale Review* in March 1931. It was my introduction to critiques on Jazz Age journalism. Jim liked Richard Steele's work on self-censorship by the press in reporting "the good war," Michael Sherer's study of agenda setting and the Vietnam War, and the analysis of Gladys and Kurt Lang on Watergate. He also introduced a generation of students to the work of Michigan scholar Susan Douglas on early radio, William Stott's approach on documentary expression and Thirties America, Raymond Williams and his important work on the cultural power of radio, and Erik Barnouw's examination of the early evolution of American television.

Students unnecessarily confident in their own writing were in for a rude awakening in Jim's classes. I hadn't gotten beyond the first paragraph of my first paper in his History of Journalism seminar on Harold Wilson's classic study, *McClure's Magazine and the Muckrakers*, when Jim found one adjective ("whole") and one verb ("posit") he didn't like. His delight was not only in ideas but the economy of words needed to express them. It must have worked, because the re-worked study became my first conference paper, given at a Midwest Regional Conference of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of

Illinois in April 1987. Two years later, a more muscular version of that paper, titled “The Evangelical Origins of the Muckrakers,” was published in *American Journalism*. That was my first academic publication. Many of Jim’s graduate students could say the same thing, that they got their start in scholarly publishing through his classes.

My stumbling start in a search for a full-time job teaching journalism history led me to an East Coast school, where I’d made the short list but didn’t get the job offer. Sensing my disappointment, the search chair said soothingly, “Those guys in Madison” — she meant Jim Baughman and Steve Vaughn, my dissertation adviser — “those guys in Madison really supported your case.” It was the consolation every doctoral student needs to know — that he or she is not alone in the daunting transition into the academy. The student is supported by key faculty who take a deep interest in the student’s success. Baughman and Vaughn were unsurpassed in such support.

The two helped point me to scholars starting to make their mark in journalism history. It led to my first attendance at a meeting of the American Journalism Historians Association in Atlanta in October 1989. I was on a bus headed to Jimmy Carter’s Presidential Library. The venerable Edwin Emery, author of the textbook *The Press and America: An Interpretative History of the Mass Media*, was on that bus. He was always interested in the expanding tent of journalism historians. I mentioned I had just completed my doctoral work at Madison and Jim had served on my committee.

“Excellent young scholar,” Emery said, nodding his head approvingly. He’d been very impressed with Jim’s *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media* that Twayne Publishers had brought out in 1987. The book had won Kappa Tau Alpha’s Frank Luther Mott Research Award for the year’s best book. It challenged the general assumption that Luce had wielded great influence on American and international politics. His real importance was the impact he had on Amer-

ica's media. Baughman, Emery observed, is "a big part of our future."

That following year, Jim became full professor at Wisconsin, and two years later Johns Hopkins University Press brought out the first edition of *The Republic of Mass Culture: Journalism, Filmmaking, and Broadcasting in America since 1941*. In it, Jim analyzes the business models of radio, television, film, print, and broadcast journalism, and how each was adapted to defeat competitors across the 20th century, leading to television's triumph in the Sixties and afterwards. The book's three editions were widely adopted in mass communication history classes and served as an opportunity for Jim to involve his growing list of graduate students in the projects. The noted historian Stanley Kutler, who founded *Reviews in American History*, praised the work of Jim and his collaborators not only for enriching our understanding of the historic development of broadcast media, but also for how the study traces media influence over "other segments of American life, including our politics, economy, culture, and values."<sup>2</sup>

In 2003, two years after Johns Hopkins brought out Jim's revised and expanded account of Luce's impact on the modern news media, Jim accepted the job of chairman of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Wisconsin. I asked him why. He well understood that the administrative role would slow the completion of his manuscript that examined the rise of early television. He simply answered, "It's my turn." Faced with budget cuts in the program and across the university, Jim remained upbeat. The school's faculty and staff, he insisted, would remain committed to their students. "They are," he observed, "constant reminders of why most of us became educators."<sup>3</sup>

*Same Time, Same Station: Creating American Television, 1948-1961* did make its debut in 2007. The meticulously researched book reveals a mature scholar at the height of his insight and powers. Jim's interest is examining the ideas that informed and the practices that shaped early television. He positions these tendencies as a tension between guard-

ians who hoped the medium could help create a nation of cultural consumers versus the standardization of business practices and formats that discouraged risk-taking and experimentation. Risk-taking wound up losing. “Commercial television gradually stopped caring,” Jim writes. “Cultural choice narrowed to largely whatever (morally mainstream) productions appeared likely to reach the largest number of viewers.” (xiii) The commercial networks were largely scrubbed of public service programming by the Sixties, while they expanded their nightly news blocks. The evening news lent prestige to the product. Sports, sex and violence were aimed at attracting audiences, shattering the shared hopes of NBC executive Sylvester Weaver and those who had long labored “so that the television audience would be different.” (308) Daniel Horowitz found in Harvard’s *Business History Review* that Jim’s “major achievement” had produced “the most thorough, well-researched, and broad-ranging history of television we have to date.”<sup>4</sup> Nord, now professor emeritus at Indiana University, concluded that “no one has done the history of American television better than Jim Baughman.”

Jim proudly presided over the 100th anniversary of Wisconsin’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication in 2005. The school had an honored history. It was founded through the pioneering work of Willard Grosvenor Bleyer, who became in 1913 the first president of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism and, seven years later, was named honorary president of the journalistic fraternity Sigma Delta Chi. In 1921 he became president of the Association of American Schools and Departments of Journalism. His 1932 book, *Newspaper Writing and Editing*, published by Houghton Mifflin, was an early standard on journalistic professionalism. Wisconsin’s Harold “Bud” Nelson’s spirited scholarship in the Sixties traced *Freedom of the Press from Hamilton to the Warren Court*,<sup>5</sup> followed by his popular textbook with Dwight Teeter, *Law of Mass Communications: Freedom and Control of Print and Broadcast Media*.<sup>6</sup> It went through nearly annual updates.

When Nelson died in 1996, Nord wrote how Nelson had inspired his students to probe how people lived in the past as a way to see how we might live in the present. Jim gave his students the same instruction.

Matt Blessing, state archivist and director of the archives division of the Wisconsin Historical Society, remembered Jim as a strong advocate of the archive. His support for the archive included his work in getting Foote, Cone & Belding, founded as Lord & Thomas in 1873, to donate its company archives to the historical society. The archival holdings facilitated Jim's determination to push his graduate students into researching primary materials. The society's Mass Communications History Collection has been a gold mine for mass communication historians and includes materials from Warner Brothers, the National Broadcasting Company, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, National Educational Television, and personal papers from Chet Huntley, David Brinkley, Howard K. Smith, H. V. Kaltenborn, Charles Collingwood, Joseph Harsch, Bruce Barton, and a wide range of individuals who worked in journalism and the media.

Jim completed his second term as chairman of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication in 2009, and three years later he was named Fetzer-Basom Professor of Journalism to strengthen the program's ties to alumni and the community. He chaired the university's advisory board on the History of Print and Digital Culture, co-editing in 2015 *Protest on the Page: Essays on Print and the Culture of Dissent*, a book published by the University of Wisconsin Press. He was working on his eagerly awaited book on the history of journalism and presidential politics in the age of television when he died from lung cancer.

Katy Culver studied under Jim and returned to Wisconsin as assistant professor to help him in the roll out of the Center for Journalism Ethics, aimed at equipping graduates entering a rapidly changing profession. She told *The Daily Cardinal* that Jim "had a style where he always demanded excellence of you, but he always made that excellence

seem attainable.” His last lecture for each class gave students “the sense that you were going out in the world and to do good things. He always inspired you.” His commitment to the public good is what made Jim “so irreplaceable.” His colleague Professor Sharon Dunwoody agreed, telling the *Wisconsin State Journal* that Jim’s “absence will leave a hole in the fabric of academic life at this university.” Vaughn observed that, in his 35 years at the university, he had never known anyone who better combined the ideals of research, teaching, and service than Jim did.

Jim very much admired G. K. Chesterton, British intellectual and Christian apologist. He often tagged his correspondence with Chesterton’s admonition in “Ethics of Elfland,” the fourth chapter in his volume *Orthodoxy* (1908), that tradition is “the democracy of the dead” because it “refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about.” Now, former students and colleagues of Jim Baughman who happen to be walking about must move past our grief to guide another generation of scholars to careers of usefulness and excellence in journalism and mass communication history.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Politics* 47, November 1986, p. 1079.

<sup>2</sup> *The Republic of Mass Culture*, 3rd edition, 2006, p. x.

<sup>3</sup> *The Wisconsin Journalist* 2, Fall 2003, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Business History Review* 81, Winter 2007, p. 815.

<sup>5</sup> *Freedom of the Press from Hamilton to the Warren Court* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967).

<sup>6</sup> *Law of Mass Communications* (Mineola, N.Y.: Foundation Press, 1973).

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## Kobre Award Interview: Patrick Washburn



Washburn

Patrick S. Washburn received the Kobre Award for lifetime achievement from the American Journalism Historians Association in 2008. He taught journalism at Ohio University from 1984 until he retired in 2012, leading the graduate program for more than thirteen years. He is the author of three books, two of which were on the history of black newspapers, with *The African American Newspaper: Voice of Freedom*, winning the AEJMC's first annual Tankard Award in 2007 for the best book published by an AEJMC

member in the previous year. He also has written two monographs, one of which was with another Kobre recipient, Mike Sweeney, and he has been a historical consultant for two PBS documentaries on the history of the black press. From 2001 to 2012 he was editor of *Journalism History*.

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

**Washburn:** I was born in Temple, Texas, and in what would become typical of my childhood, my parents moved to Houston six months later. Because my father was a traveling paint salesman, who was frequently transferred to another city or took a job with another company, I grew up in Texas, Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma, never attending the same school for more than two years until I was in high school in Tulsa. A constant was my mother's belief in the importance of reading books. So I grew up devouring history, both fiction and non-fiction.

I entered Baylor University as a radio-TV major and then switched and got a journalism degree when I realized I was never going to suc-

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ceed as an announcer because my voice was too high pitched. I also earned a master's in journalism and a Ph.D. in mass communications from Indiana University. After both my undergraduate and master's degrees, I thought I would never take any more courses. But I returned after eight years for a master's because my job was eliminated, and I decided to get a doctorate after working six-and-a-half more years because I was tired of Gannett.

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

**Washburn:** I was a newspaper sportswriter for four years in Big Spring, Texas, Charlottesville, Virginia, and Atlanta, and then I spent four years in the college sports information field at Harvard University and the University of Louisville. After getting a master's, I became a suburban reporter, a science writer, a columnist, and an entertainment guide editor for Gannett's afternoon newspaper in Rochester, New York, for six-and-a-half years.

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

**Washburn:** I taught three courses every year: the graduate historical research class, the beginning news reporting class, and an honors tutorial on journalism history. I also taught the undergraduate journalism history class in the last half of my career, and, at various times, I taught editing and ethics.

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

**Washburn:** I grew up voraciously reading history and was a history

minor as an undergraduate at Baylor. But I never thought about doing historical research until I entered Indiana's doctoral program in 1979, and doing a dissertation that was historical in nature was the only type of research that appealed to me. Furthermore, because I was used to reading history that was written as a narrative, I wanted to be a story teller and had no interest in quantitative research. Because I was weak in math, I took a required statistics course in my first semester; if I was going to flunk out, I might as well do it early. When I survived that course, I knew I was going to graduate.

In five years at Indiana, I continually prepared to be a narrative historian, doing a number of historical research papers. The most notable was on the black *Pittsburgh Courier's* Double V campaign in 1942 (victory over totalitarian forces overseas and victory over the same types of forces in this country, particularly in the South). It won the student paper competition in AEJMC's history division in 1981 and was published in *American Journalism* in 1986. I also took a number of courses in the history department, including two on how to do historical research and how to write history (both resulted in refereed conference papers and journal articles); I read books by noted narrative historians, such as two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Barbara Tuchman; and I did a narrative historical dissertation. Finally, I attended every history session at three consecutive AEJMC meetings, reading all of the papers and listening to the discussants. That taught me how to recognize and avoid the major errors made in historical research.

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

**Washburn:** A huge influence was my dissertation advisor, Dave Nord. When I selected him, a number of the Indiana doctoral students were surprised because he had a reputation for being hard; but I did not care

because I wanted the best person possible, and Dave, even though it was early in his academic career, already was a standout historian. I will never forget our first meeting about my dissertation topic. He agreed to chair it but said, “When we have a meeting, don’t expect to sit there and have me tell you everything to do. Either come in prepared and ready to discuss things or don’t show up.” I was taken back, but it was good advice and I definitely followed it. He made me strive for excellence, and my dissertation was better because of him.

Other major influences were three experienced mass communication historians, Maurine Beasley of Maryland, Peggy Blanchard of North Carolina, and Barbara Cloud of Nevada-Las Vegas. Early in my career, each one took the time to offer me sound advice about my research and was very encouraging. Also influential were three books: *Historians’ Fallacies* by David Hackett Fischer, *The Historian as Detective* by Robin Winks, and *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian* by Wallace Stegner. The latter, which is about John Wesley Powell’s two trips down the Grand Canyon after the Civil War and then his government career in Washington, is a stunning piece of historical writing because it has the feeling and flow and excitement of fiction but is, in fact, hard core history. I recommend it for all historians who want to be story tellers. The final influence came from working on newspapers. At every paper where I worked, I heard the same six words, “Keep the reader turning the page.” That made me a better writer because I concentrated on not boring readers, which is essential if you are going to be a good historian.

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

**Washburn:** I have done a lot of research on the history of the black press, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century. Tied in with that is the interaction between the government and the press in World

War II. Constitutional liberties clearly shrink during wartime, and I am fascinated with what happens to the First Amendment. How much does the government try to curtail the press' rights, supposedly because it is necessary in order to win, and how much is the press willing to give up to help win the war and not jeopardize military campaigns?

In addition, I am writing a book on the history of American sports journalism in which I am examining such things as emerging media technologies, religion, culture, the rise of immigrants and changes in urban environments, media evolution, the increasing presence of women reporters in the last 100 years, and sports reporters who did not merely excel at what they did but actually changed the landscape.

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

**Washburn:** I have written extensively about the history of the black press, particularly in the period from 1910 to 1950, when it was at the height of its influence and was the most powerful element seeking equality for blacks. In doing so, I detailed for the first time the clash between the government and the press in World War II and the part that Attorney General Francis Biddle played in keeping the government from indicting the black press under the Espionage Act. Besides that, I have had two notable monographs. One was about the Office of Censorship's struggle during World War II to keep the press from writing about the atomic bomb. The other, which was done with Sweeney, solved a seventy-year-old cold case about a story by a *Chicago Tribune* reporter in June 1942 on the Battle of Midway, which resulted in the government unsuccessfully seeking an Espionage Act indictment. A number of historians had been stumped by the case, but using the FOI Act, interviews, and archival material, we revealed how the reporter got his facts for the story and how close the *Tribune* came to being

indicted.

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

**Washburn:** My most satisfaction has come from my first book and a monograph.

The book came from my dissertation, which was about the federal government's investigation of the black press in World War II. Since I was going to the Roosevelt archive in Hyde Park, New York, I met in the fall of 1982 with a history professor at Indiana, who had used that archive a lot. I wanted to know what advice that he could give me. When I told him my dissertation subject, he said, "If I was you, I'd look for another topic. People were interested in blacks through the 1960s, but that has changed now. Find something that people will be interested in today." I was astounded because I had a topic that had never been researched, and I felt it was important. Four years later, I thought back to what he had said when I got a full-page review in the *New York Times* as well as a review in the *New Yorker*. I wondered whether he saw the reviews, but I never asked. Nevertheless, I smugly got a lot of satisfaction from that. Then I got more satisfaction when the book resulted in me being an invited speaker twice at the Smithsonian and once at the National D-Day Museum, being invited to speak at universities across the country on the black press, and being invited to be an historical advisor, and appearing in, two award-winning PBS TV documentaries on the black press.

My other satisfaction came from the monograph about the *Chicago Tribune*. It is the only time as a historian that I went about solving a cold case, and it took thirty years to do it. Making the monograph memorable, too, was having Sweeney as a co-author. It was only the second time in my career that I had a co-author, and each of us brought differ-

ent areas of expertise about World War II to the project. We agreed this resulted in the monograph being better than if either of us had written it alone.

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

**Washburn:** Both of my important contributions are related to the black press.

From 1910 to 1950, the black press reached the height of its power and influence, but then it began declining rapidly and civil rights leaders became the new leaders in the push for more black equality. However, as my research has shown, if the black press had not accomplished what it did in those forty years, the civil rights movement would have started at a much lower level and probably would not have been as successful as it was. No one talked about this when I began my research, but now it is a generally accepted fact by historians.

My other contribution is that my 1984 dissertation, which became a book two years later, encouraged others to do research on the black press because they realized how little was known about it. When I wrote my dissertation, I did not see the impact that it would have, but in the past thirty years, research on the black press has blossomed enormously as journalism historians have been filling in numerous gaps in what we know about it.

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

**Washburn:** When I was head of Ohio's graduate journalism program

from 1987 to 2000, I spent so much time with it that I almost stopped doing research. Therefore, in 2000, when I was no longer an administrator, I had to jumpstart my research career again. If I had continued doing research all along, I would have accomplished more as an historian.

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

**Washburn:** I’ll briefly mention a few. You must put yourself back into the time period that you are studying, and look at it as people at the time saw things, instead of looking at history through today’s rose-colored glasses; study history in the order that things happened because only then will you understand why things occurred; and work hard to avoid bias. Finally, you must tell not only *what* happened but *why* things occurred because asking why will take you to new areas of understanding in history that you would never get to otherwise.

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

**Washburn:** The quality of work by journalism historians is continually improving as more and more areas are being examined. The biggest weakness, however, continues to be an understanding of significance. When I was at Indiana, I took a course on historiography in the history department, and I never forgot what the professor said on the first day, “There are a lot of things in history that have never been studied, but who cares? Study something people care about.” In other words, ask yourself if something is worth studying. Whenever I start a project, I always ask myself that question, and unless I can say definitely yes, I look for something else to study. Since there is only a finite time to do

research, why spend time on something that is not worth examining? I understand the publish or perish atmosphere in universities, but that does not excuse insignificant historical research.

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

**Washburn:** There must be a continual effort by all historians, and by AJHA, to fight against the tendency of mass communication departments to downplay journalism history in undergraduate curriculums. Where this type of course typically used to be required of journalism majors, it is now mostly an elective or is coupled with ethics, and many students never understand the necessity of knowing any history. As for the wider field of history, more journalism historians should be giving papers at historical conferences and writing articles for historical journals outside the mass communication field. If that is done, JMC historians will gradually get more respect and notice.

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

**Washburn:** Besides justifying the presence of JMC history in undergraduate curriculums, another major challenge is not letting social scientists tell historians how to do research and write articles and books. The research method used should be the one that is best for what is being examined, and the same applies to how it is written. In terms of what I do, there unquestionably is validity in narrative historical studies with no theory just as there is validity in theory-driven studies. And one research method is not better than another. Instead, the only question that should be asked is if the method used is the most appropriate one to examine a certain historical topic.

# Book Award Interview: Gwyneth Mellinger



Mellinger

Gwyn Mellinger won the 2013 Frank Luther Mott-Kappa Tau Alpha Research Award for the year's outstanding book for her *Chasing Newsroom Diversity: From Jim Crow to Affirmative Action*. Dr. Mellinger is chair of the Communications Department at Xavier University.

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

**Mellinger:** The book examines, from a historical perspective, the American Society of Newspaper Editors' role in both constructing the daily newspaper industry as a virtually segregated institution and, beginning in the 1970s, in attempting to bring what we now call diversity into newsrooms. Although the ASNE's timeline clearly parallels American society's broader struggle with the question of racial equality, there are moments at which this organization of newsroom leaders made collective choices that exempted the ASNE and its members' newsrooms from civil rights reforms that applied to other professions. Moreover, once ASNE leaders embraced the need for non-white hiring in the 1970s and 1980s, the organization repeatedly undermined its own efforts to diversify newsrooms.

At the heart of the project is scrutiny of Goal 2000, the ASNE's initiative undertaken in 1978 to bring non-white employment into parity with the national demographic by the end of the century, and to track progress through an annual census. Although many ASNE members were sincerely interested in righting a wrong, the organization unwittingly obstructed its own efforts along the way. The book traces, over

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more than sixty years, how racism and other identity-based differences became institutionalized within a profession, one that relied upon constitutional guarantees at the same time it denied them to others. Ultimately, the book demonstrates that good intention, including a sizeable commitment of resources, was insufficient in combating the stereotypes that slowed the acceptance of non-whites, women, and non-heterosexual journalists in daily newspaper newsrooms.

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

**Mellinger:** I had worked in daily newspaper newsrooms during the 1980s and 1990s, when the ASNE's Goal 2000 was encouraging non-white hiring. I had seen editors attempt to bring non-white journalists into newsrooms and had observed my non-white coworkers' anxiety about being accepted. In retrospect, I realize that I did not understand what they were going through, but I had some awareness that their experience was far different than mine, that they believed their qualifications and work were scrutinized in ways that mine were not.

When I began working on a doctorate in the American Studies program at the University of Kansas in 1999, the ASNE had declared Goal 2000 unattainable and a period of questioning about what had gone wrong and how to move forward had begun. In a seminar on Philosophies of American Studies, in which we read widely in democratic and social construction theory, I wrote a short paper applying some of these concepts to the ASNE case study. It clicked. In other seminars and in my independent and directed reading, I immersed myself in whiteness theory, which gave me insight into how white-skin privilege and other democratic inequities construct and maintain social, economic, and political difference.

During this period I was deeply influenced by Nancy Fraser, David Roediger, Ruth Frankenburg, and others. Although the theory un-

dergirding the book is largely embedded, allowing the history to speak for itself and make the argument, the book is informed by and in conversation with a good many scholars who were active in the late twentieth century and who still shape our understanding of the social construction of difference and the institutionalization of inequity.

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

**Mellinger:** The first three chapters of the book, taking us from the 1950s through the 1980s, had their start in my dissertation, but I resumed research after the dissertation was completed, adding additional chapters and bringing the timeline into the twenty-first century, revising the earlier chapters to enhance the narrative quality of the history, and incorporating insights from the broader research. The book, including work on the dissertation, was a decade-long project.

The primary source material for the project began with the ASNE institutional archive, which included transcriptions of the proceedings at the annual conventions, minutes of the board of directors, and the organization's monthly publication, initially called the *ASNE Bulletin* and later renamed *American Editor*. Although my focus was on the years when race and gender were concerns, generally the 1950s forward, I studied the entire institutional archive, going back to the ASNE's founding in 1922, in order to develop a sense of the evolution of thinking about the profession and its social responsibility obligation.

The ASNE was a decentralized organization that did not assemble a comprehensive archive through the years. Committee chairs and officers turned over every year or two, and there was never a sustained effort to gather their materials in a central location. This meant that surviving correspondence among ASNE officers, directors, committee

chairs, and members was scattered throughout the archives of former members who happened to have donated their correspondence to a research library. I gathered material in the personal papers of more than a dozen ASNE members.

Finally, when the focus shifted to the 1980s forward, the traditional correspondence archive vanished. Many of the editors who led the diversity initiative in its second and third decades had not archived correspondence. More of their conversations had been conducted by telephone; and, by the time the focus was on the 1990s, many of their exchanges had occurred through email that had not been preserved. To compensate, I identified a number of informants and conducted nearly two dozen telephone interviews, which I recorded and transcribed.

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

**Mellinger:** It is important to have a broad archive to cover gaps in the record and to avoid taking information from just one source. The ASNE institutional record gave me a chronology of events and issues, as well as the names of editors who had been active in the organization and played a role in the diversity initiative. This was very helpful in directing me to the archived correspondence of deceased ASNE members and toward living informants I might interview.

Although the Internet gives us the sense that we have a larger quantity of information at our fingertips, the physical archive is in peril. I do not have a sense that email was widely archived during the first two decades of its use, and I worry that scholars will be hindered in conducting historical research that focuses on the later decades of the twentieth century and beyond.

*Q: What advice would you give to people in our field who are considering*

*doing a book in JMC history?*

**Mellinger:** First, take stock of available archives and ensure that there is a credible, multidimensional record with which to work. Second, develop a plan for the archival work that includes sources of funding. Few scholars are able to do this kind of scholarly labor without at some point paying expenses out of pocket. Third, assume that meticulous work in multiple archives and institutional records will take longer, maybe even much longer, than you imagine at the outset.

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

**Mellinger:** The book focuses on the newspaper profession as an organizational process, and it does offer a critique of the ASNE's participation in and contribution to inequity. Some historians are uncomfortable with archival scholarship that argues a point, but I'm not — probably owing to my labor in an American Studies program. Grounding a broader argument in historical research gives any scholarship heft and added credibility.

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

**Mellinger:** When I began the project and began identifying individuals who had been active in the ASNE's diversity project, I immediately became aware that time was of the essence. Some editors who were active in the 1960s through 1990s had died, some were in poor health, and a few died shortly after I had interviewed them. It is impolite to speak of others' mortality, but for scholars of recent history it is a practical consideration. I will not name names, but there were indeed sources that I would have approached for interviews if I had started the project just

two years earlier.

*Q: What finding most surprised you?*

**Mellinger:** As a scholar examining the ASNE's institutional record from a historical perspective, I was struck that ASNE leaders and diversity advocates did not know or understand the organization's past. ASNE leaders and committee chairs turned over regularly, impeding the accumulation of institutional memory. As I had discovered, a single, comprehensive archive was unavailable. So ASNE members who rotated into the diversity initiative had no understanding of what had been tried before and to what effect. This meant that the organization often introduced "new" initiatives that drew on old ideas and repeated mistakes. As a result, the ASNE's diversity effort offers a case study on the value of understanding one's past and the hazards of functioning in a historical vacuum.

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