

Historiography

in Mass Communication



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Historiography in Mass Communication

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Can We Save History from Hospice?

By Wm. David Sloan ©



Sloan

Does anyone doubt that history in the JMC curriculum needs life support?

The patient's condition is so dire that, if something isn't done soon, history could expire at all but a few schools.

If you think that diagnosis is exaggerated, consider some of the preliminary results coming in from a national survey being conducted by the American Journalism Historians Association.

- An undergraduate history course is offered in only about two-thirds of the nation's JMC programs.
- At the majority of those programs that have a history course, it is taught only once a year or less frequently.
- At fewer than 5% of the programs is a history course required.
- At the graduate level the situation is even worse. Even among those schools that offer an undergraduate history course, fewer than half offer a graduate course, and hardly any grad program requires a history course.
- Asked to rank the importance that programs place on six subjects (such as professional skills, knowledge of communication law, and so

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forth), “knowledge of communication history” ranks either fifth or sixth at nearly every school.

“At my school,” commented a respondent to the AJHA survey, “there is an elective history course, but it has not been offered since 2002. I include history in my Intro to Mass Comm course and my Media Law and Ethics course. At a recent faculty meeting, a colleague criticized me for including ‘too much history’ in the intro course.”

“Thank you for doing this survey,” commented another respondent. “But don’t bet the farm on [my school re-introducing history to the curriculum]. The campus has a real budget crunch, and the dean told a colleague who was retiring that he was unlikely to be replaced. ‘You’re a visionary,’ he said. ‘The campus needs more practical courses.’”

The decline of history has been going on for years and years. We might even say decades and decades.

Kitty Endres, the most recent winner of the AJHA’s Kobre Award for lifetime achievement, observed in an interview we published in January of this year, “This is a difficult time in higher education. In my institution [the University of Akron], we’re facing cutbacks. Every college, every department, every area is competing for enrollment and limited resources. The sexy new areas, like social media, gain enrollment and get new faculty. Lots of students, and even some faculty and administrators, ask if journalism history has any relevance today.”

David Abrahamson, another Kobre winner, now retired from Northwestern University, made a similar observation. “I hate to say this,” he lamented, “but I often suspect that we may be on the verge of a genuinely *ahistorical* period. One doesn’t need to be dystopian to see evidence of this all around us. We seem to be in an era where the journalism academy — or at least its administrators — are hopelessly enamored with technology and suspicious of any subject not directly related to our students’ vocational success.”

Can We Save History from Hospice?

Pat Washburn, the 2008 Kobre winner, now retired from Ohio University, warned in our interview with him: “Whereas a history 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.... There must be a continual effort by all historians, and by the AJHA, to fight against the tendency of mass communication departments to downplay journalism history in undergraduate curriculums.”

Here at *Historiography* one of our ongoing concerns has been about the role of history in the JMC curriculum. In each of our interviews with Kobre winners, we’ve posed the question “What do you think we in JMC history need to be doing to improve the status of JMC history?”

The answers the Kobre winners have given are worth pondering. All of them have been concerned with the decline in the importance that JMC programs accord to history — but each of them believes that we can do things to revive history. Here are some of their answers.

David Copeland (2010 Kobre winner), Elon University:

“The value of media history as a required part of the curriculum has been under attack for many years, and the course has been a victim in more cases than we’d like to acknowledge.... We need to remind our colleagues of a couple of important points that have been said by many in multiple ways. One is what Brink and Kelley said in 1963, ‘Studying a subject without an appreciation of its antecedents is like seeing a picture in two dimensions — there is no depth. The study of history gives us this depth as well as an understanding of why things are as they are.’ Another is what Maureen Dowd of the *New York Times* said to a group of our students at Elon over breakfast, ‘The best reporters at the *New York Times* are those who are steeped in history and literature.’”

Maurine Beasley (1996 Kobre winner), University of Maryland:

“We need to make sure our units continue to teach history by insisting that it is relevant. Perhaps we will have to alter our approach

to focus more on the history of technology since we are teaching more and more hands-on courses preparing students for a technologically driven work force. Also, we need to think in terms of broadening our history courses to reach all university students — not just journalism or mass communication students.”

Hazel Dicken-Garcia (2006 Kobre winner), University of Minnesota:

“Poor understanding by faculty ... within programs impedes curriculum improvement, which requires colleagues’ support. More interaction with colleagues across the hall or on the next floor could help. Brief, occasional chats about projects underway is a good start, and journalism and mass communication historians can initiate those.”

Mike Sweeney (2015 Kobre winner), Ohio University:

“We need to find ways to excite students.... History too often is taught by people who view it as a chore instead of a calling. We need to find ways to tie issues and personalities of the past to ongoing questions. Nellie Bly, William Randolph Hearst, Byron Price — these are people everyone should know about. And the fundamental shifts in human understanding brought about by new media today have antecedents in the Gutenberg press, the telegraph, the radio, and so on.”

I’ll close these remarks with some I made in my own Kobre interview in April of last year:

“The answer to this question is easy. *First*, historians must be very good at what they do. They need to be rigorous in their research so that their fellow professors will have no reason to criticize their methods. Historical research, when done properly, is much more demanding than most theoretical, quantitative work is. JMC historians should perform at such a level that their quantitative colleagues would be embarrassed to criticize.

“*Second*, historians should be PR professionals. Anytime they or their students have any achievement — such as presenting a research

paper at a conference — they should publicize it among their colleagues. That will increase both the awareness of and the respect for the work that the historians are doing.

“*Third*, historians should teach the general methods courses in graduate programs. I wrote about this idea in an earlier issue of *Historiography* (“The Only Way To Make History Important,” Vol. 2 [2016]:2). So I won’t repeat the details. Here’s the gist of the reasoning: Students tend to be interested in the same subjects that interest their professors. In their first semester of graduate school, students tend to accept whatever their instructors tell them they should be emphasizing. If in their first semester they take courses in social science methodology, in which their instructors emphasize the importance and pre-eminence of social science theory and methodology, by the end of that semester most students will have decided that they need to specialize in — what else? — social science theory and methodology. So the most effective way to promote the study of history is by historians teaching introductory methodology courses, where they could let the students know that history is just as legitimate a research area as social and behavioral science.

“*Fourth*, the AJHA should institute a program that its Task Force on History in the Curriculum recommended years ago. The Task Force proposed a system that would give the AJHA’s ‘stamp of approval’ to those schools that meet its criteria. The system provided a way to encourage schools to improve their offerings in history. Operating such a system, though, requires work, and it’s not always easy to find professors who are willing to work.”

I’m pleased to report that, since I did my interview, the AJHA has begun work on the Task Force’s proposed system of evaluating schools’ offerings in history.

Even though it is time to summon the doctor, JMC history doesn’t have to be sent to hospice. It can be revived. *Leonard Teel*, the 2014

Kobre winner, was very successful at his school not only in maintaining history but raising its status.

“At Georgia State University,” he explained, “I found that a professor’s insistence could secure curriculum changes to favor journalism history, and I managed to get the History of News Media course moved to the 4000/6000 level and made it one of the required Critical Thinking and Writing (CTW) courses.”

A handful of professors at other schools have had similar success. And what they have achieved proves one thing: History can be an important part of the JMC curriculum, but it will be important only if professors — that means you — work hard at it.

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Some Thoughts on Defining and Gleaning a Historiography of Transnational Journalism

By Debra van Tuyll ©



van Tuyll

Writing an engaging piece about the historiography of transnational journalism history is a bit daunting. Transnational journalism history is a new enough approach that very little about it is systematic, and not much has been written about it or through a particular lens. It has no well-defined epistemology and very little in the way of methodology. Further, no actual well-developed theoretical approach, such as those David Sloan identified in his seminal work *Perspectives on Mass Communication History*, exists either.¹ Even those who labor in this particular historical field do not know exactly what, and sometimes even how, they are planting. One of the biggest topics of conversation at last year's transnational journalism history conference (only the second one yet) was the need for definitions, theoretical direction, and methods.

What scholars do know is that looking at journalism as a transnational phenomenon means considering the profession as a thing in and of itself and not solely as the product of a particular place or culture. These scholars would never argue that journalism is not a national phe-

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nomenon, only that some aspects of it, perhaps even many, can be examined in a broader context than the nation state. My own studies of Confederate journalism have been grounded in the notion that the press of a slave state will function differently from that of a free-labor state, and that domestic wars influence the structure and function of the press. By the same token, Dutch journalism, Chinese journalism, Brazilian journalism, Malaysian journalism, and American journalism will most definitely have nationally bounded distinctions — regulation and its effect on practice being one of the most obvious. They will have commonalities as well — printing technology, for example, or the fact that the press is, and always has been, regulated by governments, even in a country like America where constitutional protections are extended to a grand total of one profession: journalism.

However, 21st century scholars have taken a keen interest in transnational journalism, and something of a historiography of transnational journalism history might be gleaned from a growing body of literature. At the very least, such a historiography might be useful in pointing historians in fruitful directions as they look back at journalism history through a new lens.

Before delving into those trends, and for the sake of full disclosure, I should state that I do have a particular interest in promoting this approach. I, along with Mark O'Brien, a journalism lecturer at Dublin City University, are the organizers of the annual conference on transnational journalism history. We began plotting this conference after we met at Cardiff University's Future of Journalism conference in 2009 or so. We were both intrigued by the differences we observed in how Europeans and Americans understand journalism, the origins of journalistic practice, and the commonalities and differences in practice and regulation. Mark introduced me to John Horgan at that conference, the ombudsman for the Irish national Press Council. As a naïve American, I was aware of the ombudsman concept and that some American newspapers

had them. I knew at one point back in the 1980s, America had even had a press council of its own, though it functioned as a self-policing agency that had no real power to discipline journalists. But I had never even thought about a national press system existing in which an ombudsman had real power to discipline and to affect press practice. As I gathered other little tidbits of press practices from Romania or Wales or France, it became abundantly clear to me that my European colleagues did, in fact, think about the profession at least somewhat differently than I had been trained to do through my time as a professional and my graduate work. They asked similar questions, but answered them with a slightly different “spin.” This difference became clear in an encounter I had with one of the attendees. Catching my American accent as we shared tea and a Welsh raisin cake, this English journalism professor exclaimed, “You’re American. You’re the ones who invented journalism.” My rather shocked response was, “We did? When?” Mark and I decided that we had stumbled upon a phenomenon that warranted a bit of scholarly attention.

Our conversations took on new urgency a few years later when I was checking a study abroad group into a B&B in Bath, England. The proprietress looked at me appraisingly after I introduced myself. “You’re American,” she said almost accusingly. “Yes,” I replied. She narrowed her eyes and declared, “You’re the ones with the wonky ideas about free speech.” Her comment was so out of context, I couldn’t think what to say. I think I eventually mumbled something about how, yes, the First Amendment did make America a bit different.

Ever since the Cardiff conference, Mark and I had been meeting for coffee whenever I visited Dublin, and the following summer when I relayed my experience in Bath, our thinking started to move from the amorphous to the solid. Our conversation turned to the need for a conference that would put Europeans and Americans in the same room and stimulate what we hoped would be a fruitful conversation. Initially, we

planned to host two conferences: one in America and one in Ireland. Interest has been sufficiently great that we will be holding our third conference in June 2018 in Montreal at Concordia University, and we have plans for a fourth gathering in 2019 at the University of Groningen, which brings me to the starting point of the historiography of transnational journalism history. We have managed to attract global attention for the conference; this year, we will have attendees from each continent, with the exception of Antarctica.

In our early conversations, Mark and I did not know what to call the phenomenon we instinctively knew was worthy of further study, but while we were having coffee in Dublin, far across the North Sea in the Netherlands, Marcel J. Broersma at the University of Groningen was already laboring in the field of transnational journalism history. The “eureka” moment came when I stumbled across Broersma’s 2011 article that offered a structure — and a name — for what Mark and I had been thinking about so long. As far as I can determine, this is the first piece of academic writing to ever address what Broersma termed “transnational journalism history.”

In this article, Broersma offered a succinct definition of transnational journalism history. It is, according to the title of his piece, an approach that balances global journalistic universals with national peculiarities.² It is a journalism suited to a “transnational world ... that is not held together by relations between nation-states but by the global stock market, borderless information technology, transnational conglomerates, including the media industries, as well as by various cultural practices and flows....”³ Broersma’s introduction encapsulated exactly what Mark and I had been exploring in our conversations: journalism history had been bounded by national borders probably at least since the 19th century, and while globalization had pushed “the contemporary fields of journalism and journalism studies” toward research that was more comparative and transnational, “journalism history seems to have

lacked a trigger of this kind.” He continued, “As no pan-European public sphere has emerged and the media continue to operate primarily at the national level, journalism history continues to study journalism as a resultant and producer of national culture.”⁴ That statement opened an additional line of inquiry that Mark and I, in our focus on media systems, had overlooked: the role of the media in the creation of the public sphere and the influence of globalization on that public sphere. As others have argued, the media is one of the most important elements in the globalization of the public sphere because of its power to shape how audiences understand their world.⁵

Others were writing about transnational journalism at the time, though not in a historical context. Their work, however, helps to define the contours that transnational journalism history might take. Kevin Grieves, now of Wentworth University, previously of Ohio University, was among the first to produce a book-length study of, to use his title, *Journalism Across Boundaries*. In *Journalism Across Boundaries*, Grieves examined the role of journalism culture in making meaning and the creating of identity (i.e., does one think of oneself as European, as German, as a bit of both, or, perhaps, as a Berliner). Grieves also cast transnational journalism as a bridge builder — a social structure that can be used to span cultural differences and play a role in arriving at a common understanding instead of conflict. Not that this would necessarily be an easy task to accomplish; others, in fact, have argued that media are more likely to reinforce national identity while repressing transnational identity.⁶ Grieves backed away a bit from the bridge-building argument when he later pointed out that permeable transnational political borders require negotiation about what constitutes newsworthiness, appropriate sources, professional practices, and regulation. Grieves actually sees the conflict between national and transnational identity as not necessarily a bad thing. Globalization only goes so far in overcoming regional and cultural journalistic (and identity) distinc-

tions, and that is as it should be, Grievies says. Losing all vestiges of “distinctive features of different journalisms — shaped by national cultures and systems” is neither desirable nor realistic.⁷

Grievies also provided a working definition of transnational journalism in his book. He distinguished between international journalism and transnational journalism this way: international journalism is “reported by foreign correspondents from the other side of national borders.” When a foreign correspondent covers news from a bureau in another country, the stories he sends to his employers are considered “foreign,” for the journalist in question frames his story in terms of “the outlook and interests of the home country.” In other words, the country from which the correspondent is reporting is considered “other.” Social identity theory, formulated by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s and 1980s, would postulate that in such a situation, readers would have an in-group bias against “foreign” news and a more favorable response to domestic stories.⁸

Transnational journalism, Grievies argues, “treats more than one nation as the home audience.” In other words, transnational journalism focuses on similarities by dealing with commonalities rather than differences. This does not mean that national journalistic characteristics disappear all together with transnational journalism, only that its focus is on the “multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of nation-states.”⁹ Ultimately, as Broersma argued in his 2011 article, national-level journalism deals with specifics of how journalism is done in a particular country. Transnational journalism deals with universals of the field — shared values, practices, routines, and perhaps even personnel.

Transnational journalism seems to be a by-product of integration and globalization. Perhaps the best example is contemporary Europe where 28 countries have agreed to integrate currency and commerce while keeping national borders in place. One of the ideal outcomes of

this integration would be the creation of a European public sphere, but that, according to Grieves, would require the creation of European journalism that employs “the available transnational communication channels.” That ideal has not yet been realized fully — either by European media or by European citizens.

That is not to say, however, that transnational journalism does not exist nor that it has a history. To some degree, journalism has always had transnational components. Technologies, characteristics of those drawn into the field, transfer of practices, and, to some extent, professionalization of the field can all be examined from a transnational perspective. The best example of a journalistic technology becoming a transnational phenomenon is Gutenberg’s development of movable type. He devised his new printing method in Germany, and it spread across a globe. While nation states did not yet exist, the printing press nevertheless revolutionized communication, particularly political and religious communication, between leaders and publics. Certain aspects of the Internet, such as social media apps — and some would argue the Internet itself — have had similar impacts on contemporary society.

On a smaller scale, journalists and printers have been vagabonds from the beginning of the field. As these individual practitioners have moved from place to place, they have taken those professional values and practices they have found valuable with them and thus spread them across the globe. Stephen D. Reese addressed this topic in a 2001 article in *Journalism Studies*.

Reese noted in his article that the reason for studying journalists themselves is to discover what personal characteristics influence their work. In the article, he proposed a “hierarchy of influences” to look at the “broader social structural context of press practice.”¹⁰ These broader social contexts include journalistic routines, practices, and values.

At the most basic level, journalistic routines are at least remotely similar across the globe — someone acquires information from some

source and publishes it for audiences to consume. Basic journalistic routines could likely be studied from the transnational perspective because they are similar. Technology transfer would fall under this category. It is a well-known fact that the Chinese invented printing and that Gutenberg's innovations allowed for printing to develop as an industry that could make information available to a broad audience. The spread of Gutenberg's invention to other western countries is well documented, but the same is not so true of the next major innovation in type-setting, the linotype. The linotype was developed by the Ottmar Mergenthaler company in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1886.¹¹ Historians of printing technology have written extensively about how the linotype sped up the news by spitting out whole lines of type instead of requiring typographers to set type one letter at a time (upside down and backwards, even!). But very little is known about how the linotype innovation spread across the globe. But spread it did. At least one machine made its way to Greece and is now housed in the country's Museum of Typography in Crete.¹² And, according to a 1920s trade publication, Mergenthaler even managed to create a Chinese font for the linotype consisting of only 35 characters, helping, the article claimed, the Chinese to standardize their language.¹³ Yet, in its story celebrating the 100th anniversary of the linotype, *The Atlantic* only discussed the machine's history and contributions to American journalism and printing.¹⁴ The global diffusion of the linotype would be a challenging, yet fascinating, transnational study of the influence of technology on language usage as well as on other journalistic routines.

Finding universals in journalistic practices and values is more difficult, given that these so often are the product of national values and contexts. In a study of an editorial partnership between a U.S. and a French online news site, Angèle Christin found little in the way of a seamless transnational circulation of editorial content. As she pointed out, America and France have two very different types of media sys-

tems, and both are extremely nationalistic in outlook.¹⁵ Still, as Broersma demonstrated in his article, the history of a national press can sometimes be used to “demonstrate transnational universals.”¹⁶ In a historiographical essay on Dutch journalism, Broersma identified three distinct stages of history studies. First came press history, or the study of “the institutional history of the press.” Next, scholars matured to journalism history, which focused on how news was produced and the professionalization of journalism in the Netherlands. Finally, scholars were toiling in the field of the history of journalism, which extends to “content, form, and style of news coverage.” Broersma argued that this progression is likely not exclusive to Dutch journalism history but might, at least in its broad contours, represent the development of European journalism in general.¹⁷

To some degree, Broersma was describing what Startt and Sloan refer to as the Developmental approach, which views the history of journalism as “the continuing evolution of journalistic practices and standards.”¹⁸ Broersma even says essentially that in the article’s abstract. He wrote, “This narrative is a story of continuous progress in which the development of journalism is interpreted as a long road from a partisan press to press freedom, including the establishment of an autonomous profession independent of political and economic powers that obeys more or less the objectivity regime and the practices and formal conventions resulting from it.”¹⁹

Broersma, did, however, redeem himself (recall I’m speaking as an American schooled to consider the Developmental approach to be outdated) later in his article when he delved more deeply into the historical development of Dutch journalism history scholarship and found that in the early 21st century, Dutch scholars turned to the more sociological approach advocated by James Carey in his major work *Communication as Culture*.²⁰

It is this more sociological approach to journalism history that may

allow the “transnational grand narrative of journalism” to become an important development in scholarly approaches to studying journalism history. Such a narrative allows journalism to be viewed more broadly than just as “a one-dimensional activity, a watchdog, a trustee of the public, which is there to serve one important function, i.e., a democratic one.”²¹

It may be too soon to write an actual historiography of transnational journalism because it is such a new field. Still, it is possible to surmise what that historiography might eventually look like. Even those who argue that journalism is not a global field agree that there are commonalities that span the practice of journalism in most places. Christin, for example, sees the definition of journalism as having been standardized across the globe and conforming to the U.S. model of objectivity. She also sees the production journalism as deeply transnational. Production extends at least to technologies used in the creation of the actual physical or electronic media product and to the movement of news personnel across the globe. Further, because of the common understanding of what journalism is, journalists in most parts of the world use very similar writing forms and definitions of what constitutes news, though definitions of news are prone to national adaptations.²²

Broersma suggests seven commonalities that might provide a basis for historical studies of transnational journalism, and thus become the building blocks of a historiography of the field. Those seven focus primarily on news routines and conventions. They include media organizations and networks; transnational public spheres; transnational radio and television audiences; communications technologies; transfer of norms and values; news forms; and news flows.²³

There are some other aspects of journalism that might lend themselves to examination through a transnational lens. The relationship between language and thought and its influence on the effects of news, for example, is ripe for study, though studies in this realm would likely

require the assistance of scholars from anthropology, psychology, and linguistics. Language and thought are inseparable, though, and no number of EU regulations can make a person living in Germany interact with news media exactly the same way as a person living in Dublin. Another topic would be the history of transnational journalism itself. When and where did transnational journalism become a thing in and of itself (as opposed to international journalism)? There has to have been a spark. Perhaps it was the formation of the EU, but I suspect it was much earlier.

The theoretical nature of contemporary studies of transnational journalism is another area that may provide for fascinating historiographical studies in the future. Scholars have analyzed transnational journalism with theories ranging from field theory²⁴ to critical theory²⁵ to gatekeeping theory²⁶ to framing theory.²⁷

As the editors of the German journal *Medien & Zeit* pointed out in their issue devoted to transnational journalism, media have transcending national and cultural borders for a long time. Scholars are beginning to think about that transcendence. They are moving to global levels of analysis that go beyond thinking about international journalism and its emphasis on the “other” to thinking about how stories connect audiences despite borders. This is a new way of thinking that could serve journalism historians well. Media have always transcended borders. Three-quarters of the space in the first issue of America’s first newspaper to survive more than one issue, the *Boston News-Letter*, was given to news from the British Isles. America, it seems, could be covered in a single column of the two-page issue. News from abroad was what would sell the newspaper.²⁸

While transnational journalism is portrayed as a newish phenomenon by the more social scientific mass communications researchers, it is likely much older. This new way of thinking about journalism opens a door for thinking about journalism history, particularly for those who

are interested in examining the history of international news; the immigrant press; the flow of journalistic technologies, values, and practices.

NOTES

¹ Wm. David Sloan, *Perspectives on Mass Communication History* (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1991). For a convenient summary of the schools, see James D. Startt and Wm. David Sloan, *Historical Methods in Mass Communication*, rev. ed. (Northport, Ala.: Vision Press, 2003), 21-46.

² Marcel J. Broersma, "Transnational Journalism History: Balancing Global Universals and National Peculiarities," *Medien & Zeit*, 25:4 (2010), 10.

³ Peter Berglez and Ulrika Olausson, "Intentional and Unintentional Transnationalism: Two Political Identities Repressed by National Identity in the News Media," *National Identities* 13:1 (March 2011), 35; J. K. Chalaby, "From Internationalization to Transnationalization," *Global Media and Communication* 1:1 (2005), 28-33.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Berglez and Olausson, "Intentional and Unintentional Transnationalism," 36.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Kevin Grieves, *Journalism Across Boundaries: The Promises and Challenges of Transnational and Transborder Journalism* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2012).

⁸ J. C. Turner and K. J. Reynolds, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in W. G. Austin and S. Worchel, *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Monterey: Brooks/Cole, 1979), 33-47; J. C. Turner and K. J. Reynolds, "The Story of Social Identity," in T. Postmes and N. Branscombe, eds., *Rediscovering Social Identity: Core Sources* (Psychology Press, 2010).

⁹ Grieves, *Journalism Across Boundaries*, xx.

¹⁰ Stephen D. Reese, "Understanding the Global Journalist: A Hierarchy of Influences," *Journalism Studies*, 2:2 (2001), 173-174.

¹¹ Steve Cole, "Linotype Invented and Built in Baltimore," American Printing History Association website (<https://printinghistory.org/linotype-baltimore/>. Accessed March 20, 2018).

¹² Comment from Elia Koumi of the Greece Museum of Typography, American Printing History Association website (<https://printinghistory.org/linotype-baltimore/>. Accessed March 20, 2018).

¹³ "Unusual Exhibit of Linotype Company," *The Fourth Estate*, April 30, 1921, 14A.

¹⁴ John Hendel, "Celebrating Linotype, 125 Years Since Its Debut," *The Atlantic*, May 20, 2011 (<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2011/05/celebrating-linotype-125-years-since-its-debut/238968/>. Accessed

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¹⁵ Angèle Christin, "Is Journalism a Transnational Field: Asymmetrical Relations and Symbolic Domination in Online News," *Sociological Review* 64: Supplement 2 (2016), 212-234.

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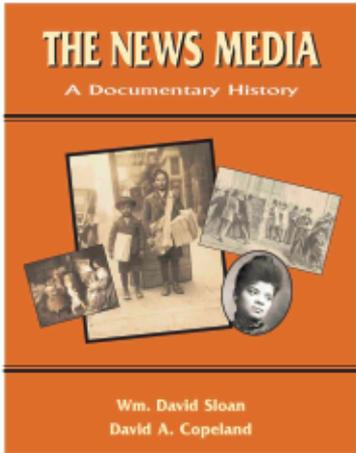
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Historical Roundtable:

Historian: The Most Fun Job at a University

By Michael Sweeney, Maurine Beasley, Nicholas “Nick” Hirshon, Patricia G. “Pat” McNeely, and Candi Carter Olson



Sweeney

When charged by David Sloan to conduct a roundtable discussion but left free to pick a topic, I did not hesitate. Those who know me — the conference auctioneer, the wisecracker, the would-be raconteur at the bar — will not be surprised by my choice: Having fun.

As teachers of historiography, we sometimes produce lists of why we should write and read history, and why our students should too. I won't go into them here, as you know them already and several have been discussed in these online pages. One particular item typically gets left off the list: We do history because it excites our little gray cells, it electrifies our emotions, and it beats the tar out of doing advanced statistical tests with little Greek letters. In short, being a historian is fun.

I've invited four friends to address this topic. I chose them because I have seen them in action, giving papers at conferences and writing with the enthusiasm of novelists. I find them kindred spirits.

Our panelists are Maurine Beasley, professor emerita, University of Maryland; Nicholas “Nick” Hirshon, assistant professor, William Paterson University; Patricia G. “Pat” McNeely, professor emerita, University of South

Michael Sweeney, a journalism professor at Ohio University, has written a number of books and is a recognized expert on the history of the press and war. He is a recipient of the American Journalism Historians Association's Kobre Award for lifetime achievement.

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Sweeney, Beasley, Hirshon, McNeely, and Olson



Carolina; and Candi Carter Olson, assistant professor, Utah State University.

— Michael S. Sweeney, Ohio University

Sweeney: What do you find about historiography that is, well, fun?

Beasley



Hirshon: Historiography is an adventure, a detective solving a mystery. I love documenting and preserving forgotten media history, and as a former reporter, I have a lot of fun turning over every possible stone through every method available — microfilm, archives, oral history interviews, ephemera I buy online — in order to tell a story that others have overlooked. It's neat to think that my work may be the only reason why a significant historical figure or event comes to public attention. I'm not doing some study that would have inevitably been done anyway or has been done over and over again, like the umpteenth biography of, say, George Washington or Abraham Lincoln. I am doing something unique that only I might have thought to do. And I really enjoy the process, too. I might stumble on a historical fact that I find interesting, start asking questions, and then I'm hooked. Once I'm interested in the topic, I work relentlessly to find the answers. Unlike other aspects of academic writing, which don't always appeal to the mainstream, historiography interests lots of "regular" people. I'll tell a friend what I'm working on — a friend who hasn't spent a day in grad school — and they'll be legitimately interested and ask to read my work and then we'll start a conversation and I've got them hooked, too. So not only do I enjoy the process,

Hirshon



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McNeely



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Olson

but I also like that my writing, the result of a lot of hard work, will actually be read and appreciated.

Olson: Like Nick, I love uncovering mysteries. I have a bit of an addiction to mystery novels, and hunting through archives is the equivalent of a real-life mystery novel without being able to guess the ending, most of the time.

I also love uncovering unheard stories, particularly those of women. So much of our history is dominated by white, male voices. Historiographies allow me to uncover the voices of people who haven't been heard in mainstream histories. I hear a lot of, "we've already had one article on this woman. Why do we need another one?" To that I answer, "Why do we need yet another biography of Winston Churchill?" People have so many different facets to their lives that multiple people need to be working through multiple archives and sources of information to make history fuller for everyone. Once history has that fullness, then it will be open to everyone and show the complexities of human relations and our societal successes and failures. We as a society did not move forward with just one group of people. We progressed with multiple groups producing change, sometimes together and sometimes in opposition to one another.

When I'm hunting down sources for oral history interviews, I often have women tell me, "Oh, but I'm not interesting. I don't have much to say." However, they always end up telling me eye-opening histories about everything from the assassination of JFK and who got the story first — the AP or UPI (turns out it was UPI) — to the ways that self-publishing has been particularly empowering for women over the last twenty years.

I particularly love women's press clubs and newswomen's history because the women I research were incredibly sassy, hard-working, and indomitable spirits. They would take the streetcars home at 2 a.m. in the 1920s because they had a story to cover and that was the only way to get home. They would be hired to cover women's food and fashion, and they'd write stories on birth control and sex during times when those subjects

were taboo. They would be told that women couldn't write, so they would make friends with the publishers' wives, train them to write, and then send the wives out into the world to make money as writers. I spend a lot of time laughing and falling in love with dead people when I'm hunting through archives.

McNeely: Nothing is more fun than hitting that “eureka” moment of historiography when you discover an unexplored angle for an historical mystery, event, or person that is suddenly yours to research and write. I only had time to write two books while I was teaching, but now that I've retired, the joy of discovering tantalizing and undeveloped topics has been translated into six books that I've written since 2014.

I was a newspaper reporter and editor for fifteen years before joining the journalism faculty at the University of South Carolina, so I've been using my investigative reporting skills in my history research and writing. I call this combination “investigative history.”

The books that I'm writing aren't exactly on the *New York Times* Best Seller List, but they're doing quite well for local books, and I'm constantly on the move making PowerPoint presentations and doing book signings for libraries, museums, book clubs, genealogy chapters, historic societies, conventions, and other civic and community organizations. I also teach classes for senior groups who love history and — best of all — buy my books.

That has created a “domino effect” on my research and writing where one discovery leads to another. I've written a lot about the Civil War, and after I make a presentation, four or five people usually come forward to talk about their family histories and legends. Some bring copies of letters and diaries that their ancestors wrote, or swords that were saved from the Civil War. I've met dozens of descendants of historic figures, including generals and politicians who played leading roles in South Carolina during the Civil War, and from time to time, I think about trying to organize a reunion

of all those descendants.

Once someone gave me a plastic grocery bag that I later found contained an original linen-backed 1865 war map. Another time, someone came in with a big envelope full of Confederate money wanting to know if it was worth anything. Others have invited me to their homes to see artifacts and documents, many of which should be in archives and museums. One woman showed me a table in her front yard that is one of the granite capitals that was shot or fell off a column at our Statehouse during the burning of Columbia in the Civil War.

Another time, I found a family with original letters, documents and a book signed by General William T. Sherman that they have hidden away for more than 150 years. There was enough to write a book called, *Eye-witnesses to General Sherman's Campaign in the Civil War*.

Right now, I'm waiting to hear from a woman who has documents that may help solve the argument that has raged for years between North and South Carolina about where Andrew Jackson was born. Jackson wrote four different times, including in his will, that he was born on a plantation belonging to his aunt and uncle in South Carolina, but North Carolina points to the fact that the Jackson farm was located in North Carolina. After I made a presentation on my latest book, *Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun and the Petticoat Affair*, a woman said that she and Jackson were related through an ancestor who had been the midwife when Jackson was born in South Carolina. With rising hope, I asked if she had any letters or documents. When she said she did, I had that great "rush" you get when you think you have found a significant piece of an historic puzzle. Doesn't that pique your interest too?

Beasley: Some people may think historical research means sitting in a stuffy archives pouring over microfilm. In my experience it's far more daunting and comical if not occasionally scary. Well do I remember running down a dark street in a strange town at 3 a.m. in pursuit of Eleanor

Roosevelt's press conference material on one occasion and spending a nail-biting night in what I am sure is a haunted mansion in New York City on another.

And then there were all those times I dressed up in a fox fur piece like Eleanor wore to set the stage for research presentations about her and found the audience laughing — not at what I intended to be scintillating and witty remarks — but at my vain attempts to catch the fur piece as it kept sliding off my shoulders. One other incident: I took an undergraduate student to a journalism history conference where he gave an excellent paper he had written for my history class at the University of Maryland. I presented my own paper after him. When I congratulated him on his presentation, he said, “Thanks — and oh, you were good, too — a lot better than you are in class!”

Sweeney: To what extent does such positive energy help you choose projects and move them forward?

Olson: At the moment, my historiographies are focused on women's press clubs and the newswomen associated with them. So I choose projects based on the clubs that seem like the natural next step. I'm always excited to start digging on a new club because I know that I'm going to uncover something that club itself probably hasn't heard about. It's also important to me to be doing oral histories as quickly as possible because many of my sources are reaching an age where they either will not be able to remember their pasts or they are not going to be there any longer to tell the tales.

When I was getting close to the end of my dissertation, I took sections of my work around to the women I'd interviewed and had them review the pages I'd written with their words. One of my women had tripped while walking her dog about a year beforehand. She sustained a massive brain injury and was still in recovery. She read through the quotes with tears in her eyes and said, in brief, “You captured my memories before I forgot

them.” That statement is always in the back of my head as I’m working.

Our history is fragile and ephemeral. We have to capture memories, dig up that crumbling letter, and read the molding diaries, newspapers, or newsletters before they’re gone.

McNeely: Years ago, I stumbled and fell across the gravestone of an English printer and American patriot in an obscure cemetery in upcountry South Carolina. Wondering why he was buried there, I followed that trail for a paper that I wrote on the founder of the nation’s third daily newspaper, and I’ve been stumbling over tantalizing topics ever since. I’ve found that the key to keeping the positive energy bubbling is identifying an interesting topic, preferably with good and personal local angles, although local for me means my entire state.

Hirshon: I love how historiography allows us to explore pretty much whatever topic we find interesting, as long as we can make an argument for its significance to mass media history. I grew up in Queens, a blue-collar borough of New York City that is often lost in the shadow of more glamorous Manhattan. And I grew up as a fan of two underdog sports teams, Major League Baseball’s New York Mets, always second fiddle to the New York Yankees, and the National Hockey League’s New York Islanders, an afterthought to the big-city New York Rangers of Madison Square Garden. In other words, I’m used to people dismissing a lot of the topics that I find interesting: the history of Queens and the Mets and the Islanders. So it’s fun to use the research tools that I learned about in my doctoral program to explore the media angles of topics that people tend not to pay attention to. It’s proving the naysayers wrong.

Sweeney: How can we, as historians, communicate this enjoyment to our students?

McNeely: If students can be guided toward topics that are relevant to them while simultaneously understanding that they are private detectives solving history's mysteries, they'll get excited.

To keep that excitement going, students need to understand how to mine the vast resources available in local libraries and how to tap the expertise of librarians. The range of resources, rare books, and early newspapers available online has greatly expanded, and today's students who live on the internet have access to resources that once took weeks of squinting at microfilm and two or three weeks waiting for articles to be copied.

With vast resources available at the flick of a wrist, students need to be guided to trusted sources and taught how to recognize "fake history." And now that iPhones have cut notetaking to minutes instead of hours, it's more important than ever for students to have a clear understanding of plagiarism and the importance of accurate citations.

Armed with an interesting topic and a clear understanding that they are detectives solving mysteries and writing stories, how can they help but enjoy historiography?

Olson: I talk about my research in class, and I work with undergraduates as research assistants to try to communicate the excitement of historiography to a new batch of potential archive diggers. Beyond that, though, I'm doing an experiment with my large-lecture media literacy students this term to try to get them to incorporate some history into class discussions. I'm doing an in-class assignment asking them to identify a stereotype, write a history of the stereotype, identify three media texts that use the stereotype, and write how the stereotype is used in those media texts. I ask them to write it in an undergraduate-level imitation of the caricature definitions on the Ferris State University Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. This term, however, I've spoken with the archivist in our library, and I'm going to have students head down to the archives and see

if they can find an archival example of their stereotype to add into the project. I'm interested to see how many students embrace this challenge and how many will hate it.

Hirshon: If you're genuinely enthusiastic about historiography, or anything else, your students will see it. I try to tell my graduate students about my work in an accessible way, and I emphasize how they don't have to research some long-distant piece of media history that has no connection to their lives. That's how a lot of them view media history: something from very, very long ago, like the development of the telephone. But historiography can be much more recent and relevant to their lives than that. As I do, they can research almost any part of media history that interests them — the history of the cartoon show they loved to watch growing up, or the songs of their childhood, or movies, or books. I think that's a key advantage that we have over other fields. It's more difficult, sometimes, to see how non-historiographical research could possibly be a labor of love, a passion project. Historiography just seems to go hand in hand with a researcher's enthusiasm.

Sweeney: And now, a final word from a masterful teller of fun stories.

Beasley: About that 3 a.m. experience. It happened because I stupidly missed a plane connection in Denver to Laramie, Wyoming, where the University of Wyoming has a valuable collection of papers of Washington journalists, one of whom covered Eleanor's press conferences. I was so busy grading papers I had brought with me that I didn't hear the announcement my plane was leaving (such was my life as an assistant professor who finally had gotten a little research grant to go to Wyoming). The plane departed at 8 p.m. and I had arrangements made to be taken from my motel to the university archives in Laramie at 7 a.m. the next morning. I was determined to keep that appointment. So I managed to get from the

airport to the Greyhound Station in Denver and board a late-night bus for Wyoming. I was the only passenger who got off at Laramie at 3 a.m. in front of a closed bus station.

The driver, after expressing some concern for my well-being, pointed me in the direction of my motel. I set out to walk there, considerably hastened by the fact that a saloon, the only place with lights on, suddenly closed and an inebriated patron appeared to be chasing me. I dashed into the motel lobby where I woke up a sleepy clerk who wanted to know where I had come from. “Why, Bethesda, Maryland,” I gasped to his evident astonishment. But I kept that 7 a.m. appointment.

About that haunted mansion in Manhattan: I ended up with a sleepless night there as a result of trying to find a cheap place to stay in NYC, where I was looking at an archives housed in a private club that once had been the magnificent residence of a leading political figure. The head of the archives said occasionally researchers were allowed to stay there, and the price — \$40 for the night — certainly appealed. Well, I was there in August; my narrow room had no air-conditioning and little paint on the walls. I found the bathroom, which had been intended for servants in the 1890s and not updated since, at the end of a dismal hallway. These drawbacks, however, paled in comparison to the sounds I heard all night long — groans, sighs, and strange noises. To top it all off, the archives wasn’t in very good shape either, but then journalism historians have to be a resilient lot.

To this day when I meet academics who heard me talk about Eleanor Roosevelt, they never mention what I said, but they ask if I still have my fox fur, which incidentally was a present from friends in AJHA who found it at a garage sale, I think. It has provided a lot of laughs for people in our field, especially me, and I thank those who gave it to me.

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Historian Interview: William “Bill” Huntzicker ©



Huntzicker

Bill Huntzicker is a leading historian of the American pioneer press. His book *The Popular Press, 1833-1865*, which included an account of the frontier press along with American newspapers in general, is recognized as one of the authoritative histories of the journalism of the period. It received a Choice Award in 1999 as one of the year's outstanding scholarly books. Before retiring in 2017, he had taught journalism at Bemidji State University, St. Cloud State University, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

He received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota.

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

Huntzicker: In introductions to students, I called myself a “cowboy dropout,” who, despite having grown up on eastern Montana ranches, didn’t think I could make it in that culture. I was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, where my mother’s father was a physician whose family lived upstairs from his practice. When I was about a year old, my parents moved me to southeastern Montana, where we lived in a very small town called Ismay and ranched on a place that included the land on which my father’s family homesteaded in 1908. Over the years, we lived on several farms and ranches around Miles City, where my mother

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re-started her career as a social worker. Once we moved to Miles, where I started the fourth grade, Mom worked at the courthouse in town and Dad owned and/or leased different ranches. I felt I had the best of both worlds: country life in summer and weekends and life in the big city (town of 10,000) on weekdays during the school year.

Beginning in high school, I wrote as a stringer for the daily *Miles City Star* and worked there as a reporter and editor for two summers while in college. Small town dailies are the best places to start; the daily deadlines give you the experience but they're small enough to allow you to generalize. On some days, I had pages that were all mine: the story, photos, captions, layout and headlines.

My mother had instilled a desire to attend the University of Minnesota, her alma mater, but we couldn't afford the out-of-state tuition. So I attended Montana State University in Bozeman, to study math but switched to history because my real desire — journalism — wasn't offered as a major there. Colleagues at the *Star* were such good teachers that I put their training to use when I was editor of the student weekly newspaper. I used to joke that I was the only person I knew who took his on-the-job training to college instead of the other way around. But I discovered that I loved teaching reporting and writing to individuals and small groups when we trained our own staff.

MSU's history department was inspirational, and an adviser to our student paper, Hari N. Dam, himself an outstanding journalism teacher in the English department, encouraged me to go to graduate school in American studies at the University of Minnesota. He thought correctly that interdisciplinary study would suit me; I probably didn't even know what the word meant back then. American studies introduced me to journalism and media history and theory as well as the main American studies disciplines of history and literature.

The themes of American cultural and intellectual history lend themselves to journalism and media history.

Historian Interview

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

Huntzicker: Upon college graduation, my freelance work for the Associated Press paid off with a job at the AP in Minneapolis, where I wanted to attend graduate school. Because it was an election year in 1968, I used my press credentials on my time off to see as much as I could about the political process. The political reporters weren't celebrities in those days, and several of them welcomed me to tag along when they came to town with the candidates they were following. While in graduate school, I worked in public relations, mostly writing news, for the University of Minnesota. When I completed the doctorate, I took a teaching position with a severe pay cut from public relations.

I've also worked in public relations for non-profits between teaching positions.

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

Huntzicker: *University of Wisconsin-River Falls:* news writing, reporting, public affairs reporting, technical writing, photography, photography II, photojournalism (all in pre-digital film and darkroom era), principles of advertising, public relations

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities: reporting, interpretive reporting (now called in-depth reporting), publications editing, journalism history, case studies in media history and law studies (1833-1865), and a similar case study course on the era of Reconstruction and the Gilded Age

Bemidji State University (Minnesota): reporting, media writing (including Web pages), mass media history, introduction to radio writing and production (team taught), introduction to television writing and production (team taught), persuasion, media ethics, advertising copywriting, news editing, and mass communication theory, research and

thesis (a two-semester sequence for seniors). I created an entirely online course in which students had to research and interview online and post their stories when done.

St. Cloud State University (Minnesota): mass media history, reporting, media writing, introduction to multimedia journalism, American Television and Cultural Diversity (in which students analyzed a television series for ethnic, racial, gender and other identity issues), Critical Analysis of the Media, and graduate seminars in ethics, mass communication theory, and diversity issues in the mass media

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?

Huntzicker: I grew up with history all around me. Our cattle grazed on land that once had homesteads on every 160 acres. The places were named for the original homesteaders. For example, our ranch house was the Julius Zabel place. His brother, Henry Zabel, homesteaded a few miles down the road. Henry Zabel's daughter married Kenton Stickney, whose family homesteaded a few miles away. It was hard to imagine a house on every 160 acres on land that became large pastures. When my father and his two sisters were young, they could stand on the roof of their house and holler at the Zabels and Stickneys when the wind was right. None of those houses, yards or corrals remain. The land has also changed. The Homestead Act required the land to be farmed; but after the grasshoppers and the dust bowl ended much of the dry-land farming there, much of the land became pasture again.

The town, Ismay, had a bar, two churches, two grain elevators, and a Post Office when I was in high school. One of my first political activities was to testify in Ismay to the state's public transportation commission against allowing the railroad to remove the depot agent in Ismay.

Historian Interview

We argued that he helped facilitate the fighting of prairie fires, which were still started by trains moving through the dry prairie. At one time, the town shipped many cattle out on the Milwaukee Railway, saw passengers come and go on the trains, operated three gas stations (one of which was owned by my dad for a while), a bank, two general stores, and a newspaper. Many of the town's buildings fell in on themselves during my lifetime. When U.S. Highway 12 was constructed long before I was born, it missed the town by six miles — it's the nearest paved road today.

People around me practiced nostalgia like a religion, remembering the heyday of the town and some of its people. Not all memories were pleasant. My grandfather invented a device to catch grasshoppers to feed to chickens. Grasshoppers were so hungry that they would gnaw on a pitchfork handle, leaving it too rough to use with bare hands. During the Depression, I was told, cattle prices were so low that the railroad demanded payment for shipping in advance because the cattle may not sell for enough to pay for the transportation.

A major industry of my larger hometown, Miles City, was the sale of its history for tourism. Gen. Nelson A. Miles, for whom the town was named, was the general commanding Fort Keogh when it was established after Custer's defeat at the Little Big Horn in 1876. The magnificent row of officers' houses deteriorated along with other original buildings as an agricultural experiment station was established in its place. One of President Trump's first actions to thank the community for its support was to eliminate the Fort Keogh livestock experiment station. Both Miles City and Ismay are in Custer County, named of course for the martyred and careless cavalry leader. Most towns had a rodeo in those days; Miles City had two a year.

A local photographer created a business of restoring and selling photographs made by the original post photographers, including beautiful images of Native Americans and native wildlife, as settlers took

over the area. In my opinion, L.A. Huffman has a series of photos on the decimation of the bison and the breaking of a horse that are as significant as photo essays as anything *Life* magazine published.

The point is not to relate my region's history — I've already said more than I actually know about it — but to relate that I saw and appreciated history and wanted to understand it, even though I left Montana.

In graduate school at the University of Minnesota, Professor Edwin Emery required our seminar to research the news coverage of an historical event. So I chose the Battle of the Little Bighorn (Big Horn when I grew up in Montana; recently officially made Bighorn by the National Park Service). This activity began my interest in news coverage of the war for the Northern Plains, a topic that I continue to study.

Emery's seminar taught me that research into media history allows ready access to accessible sources — published material — and can be developed into interesting and publishable research. At the same time, I was getting rich lessons in intellectual and cultural history from historian David W. Noble and political theorist Mulford Q. Sibley. Minnesota's American studies program was known for its broad look at American history's main ideas, from a "city on a hill" to discussions of the "American character." A dynamic dissertation and book that grew out of that program was John William Ward's *Andrew Jackson, Symbol for an Age*.

The study of American culture helped me understand how people who grew up in a tough rural existence could perceive themselves as cowboys. As a child, I used to imagine being in a movie while I was riding the ranch on my Shetland pony. My pony, Sugar, was more like a pet than Roy Rogers's Trigger. When Dad got a palomino mare, though, she became my favorite horse and I rode her all I could.

Throughout my life, I saw the landscape change over time and learned how tenuous our relationship is with both nature and the marketplace. Homesteads were imposed on prairie that couldn't sustain

them, and many were converted back to pasture now administered by the federal government and leased to local ranchers.

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

Huntzicker: When I was an undergraduate at Montana State, Pierce Mullen assigned Thomas S. Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* for a senior-level history of science course. Then at Minnesota, David W. Noble assigned the same book for a course on American Intellectual History. Most of the evidence we gather supports the ruling myths we live by. This myth-and-symbol school of American studies — for which Minnesota was notable — was falling from grace in favor of more social science and quantifiable research — at about the same time as Ronald Reagan became president by exploiting the national myths and symbols.

“Down with the king; long live the king,” Noble used to say to indicate that Americans perceived themselves as antiestablishment even as they were building a new establishment. Failure to acknowledge that one cannot escape one's roots was a major failing of American culture, fostering the myth that a rugged individualist working alone could succeed as a cowboy or an industrialist. Noble waged war on the idea of American exceptionalism — our forebears actually imported European culture with them, despite our national inferiority complex that spawned extreme individualism and nationalism. Professors Noble and Sibley gave me the intellectual tools to look critically at our large cultural myths. Noble taught that there were no virgin births — except maybe that one time — and that we need to understand our own heritage and biases and work to overcome them. At the same time, he appreciated the diversity and complexity of American life, rather than looking for the simplest explanations.

My journalistic experience taught me to question both the routine and outlandish claims of political leaders.

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

Huntzicker: As a student of history, I've tried to integrate some history into every course I teach. When I taught photography, I discovered the illustrated press, most notably *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper's Weekly*. I spent years collecting images of Native Americans and the cultural conflict in the West. Today my students can find all of those stories and images with a 20-minute search of HarpWeek. It's so unfair!! Anyway, I presented many academic papers on 35mm slides of 19th century images exploring cultural assumptions and westward expansion.

From this study, I grew to appreciate the power of images to create, reinforce and challenge our political and cultural assumptions. I hope to continue to research images from the earliest pictorial publications through television. I believe the memes on Facebook used to manipulate the 2016 election have power, like television commercials since the 1950s, that we have only begun to understand.

I continue to be interested in the development of the West and the media's role in it as well as the power of images.

Because of my interest in the West, David Sloan and Jim Startt invited me to write the chapter on the frontier press for their text, *The Media in America: A History*. Of course, I'm proud of my chapter surviving through ten editions of this book now with Sloan. They later invited me to write *The Popular Press, 1833-1865* for their series of books on the history of American newspapers. Coincidentally Professor Hazel Dicken-Garcia had invited me to teach a course focusing on this same period for the University of Minnesota. Sloan, Startt and Dicken-Garcia drew me

into the study of newspapers and journalism during the antebellum and Civil War era — a period that saw the creation of professionalism in journalism and the values we cherish today.

From these interests, I became involved in the annual Symposium on the 19th Century Press, the Civil War and Free Expression at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. My papers have been published as chapters in six of the books Professor David B. Sachsman has edited from this conference that he has organized for more than 25 years.

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

Huntzicker: My greatest achievement cannot be listed in a bibliography. I'm most proud of students who have learned enough about reporting, writing and critical thinking that they are successfully practicing in the field. Although few of my students are historians, I hope I stimulated an interest in history among many of them.

As a journalist, I enjoyed covering academic subjects, often in law or history, for a popular audience. I also loved to write against popular stereotypes, trying to increase sensitivity to overlooked people, ideas and issues. By following the work of faculty, I was often able to write about such research and publications for the University News Service.

Starting out in academia, I continued to analyze stereotypes, taking my slides on the images of Native Americans, Chinese Americans and the development of the West to academic and popular history groups. Given the teaching loads with which I started, I'm proud of this part of my work. To some extent, I influenced a small audience, mostly through AJHA, that, in turn, reached larger audiences. I'm particularly proud that faculty, like John Coward, David Mindich, David Sloan, David Sachsman, and David Noble and others, have mentioned me in their acknowl-

edgements and/or footnotes.

I have published a number of book chapters and papers on American Indians and Chinese Americans in the 19th century press in, among other places, *Journalism History*, *South Dakota History*, *Minnesota's Heritage No. 7* and the books edited by David B. Sachsman from University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

As a volunteer reporter for neighborhood publications, I covered the conflicts over historic preservation. Observing this work, a representative of the History Press invited me to write a history of Dinkytown, a four-block business district adjacent to the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

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

Huntzicker: My most substantive work is *The Popular Press, 1833-1863*, published in 1999 with the sustained encouragement of David Sloan and Jim Startt. Without their patience and persistence, I might still be working on it. I owe them more than I can say.

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?

Huntzicker: I hope I have made a contribution to the community of media historians. We have been fortunate to work in some organizations, like American Journalism Historians Association and the Symposium at Chattanooga, in which we can get acquainted as we share our ideas and research. In the process, I have refereed innumerable papers for these conferences and those of the larger AEJMC and other publica-

Historian Interview

tions. With my adjunct and temporary academic appointments, I have not committed to long-term involvement, like serving on boards. But I did a three-year term on the AJHA board and even longer on the Chattanooga Symposium's steering committee.

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

Huntzicker: The most difficult things to teach — listening skills, critical thinking, and a sense of curiosity — are the three most important tools a student needs in life and on the job as a journalist or historian. I would try to work out more assignments and activities that emphasize these tools. These three attributes seem more easily developed in history than journalism.

From a career perspective, I would have tried to understand the market to the extent possible. I was a white male applying during the height of the affirmative action period, and forecasts of a tight job market proved accurate in the 1980s.

I would also try for a tenure-track position in a larger campus where tenure may be more promising than at a small campus unlikely to tenure an entire department. Although I went into a tight economic job market, I did it in a large metropolitan area where I wanted to remain and where I could find many places to work. I have taught on seven campuses. Working as an adjunct on temporary appointments is stressful, but I have been fortunate to work with some great people.

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

Huntzicker: Like my graduate school mentors, I appreciate the diver-

sity and complexity of American life and would like to help other people do the same. Some of the persistent themes from the 19th century — especially nativism, racism, stereotyping, scapegoating, and xenophobia — persist today. Students and others can understand their own world view better once they study the evolution of them and see their roots in the past.

Each new mass medium — beginning with the penny press and telegraph — was heralded as a tool to facilitate community and peace. Yet we get extreme sectionalism and Civil War within a few years. More recently, radio and television don't seem to have brought the global village Marshall McLuhan forecast. Instead, we have bunkers built around Facebook “friends” and other internet interest groups and communication in 144 characters (or whatever the tweet character limit is now).

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

Huntzicker: Our greatest strength is the number of former and current professional journalists involved. The result is that we get papers, conferences and journals with solid research and accessible writing. Refereeing papers can even be fun, and the conferences are far from stuffy. I can remember some papers that I said I wished were even longer.

Many JMC programs still have a chasm between faculty and courses in skills, on the one side, and theory, ethics and history on the other. The greatest thrill of teaching in this field is the ability to work both sides of the fence. The writing skills are important no matter what career one chooses. A good teacher should emphasize the practical skills while encouraging critical theories and questions.

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?

Huntzicker: I think solid research will improve our standing in mainstream history. I've seen my book cited in a number of general history books in the time period, and other books in our series edited by Sloan and Startt are cited as well. Others, like David Mindich and Joe Campbell, have been capturing popular audiences with reviews in major publications and interviews in the media.

I appreciate seeing an increasing number of widely cited colleagues, including Dicken-Garcia, Coward, Mindich, Maurine Beasley, David Copeland, Carol Sue Humphrey, Patrick Washburn, Patricia Doolley, David Domke, Michael Sweeney, Mark Neuzil, David Perlmutter, Giovanna Dell'Orto, and the late Barbara Cloud and the late Dwight Teeter — to name a few.

With solid research, imaginative theories and accessible writing, leaders in our field will continue to be more relevant as media issues continue to receive more attention.

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

Huntzicker: As more politicians and policy makers challenge the First Amendment, we must derive ways to affirm the importance of free expression and, in journalism, fact-based reporting. In this deeply partisan era, this challenge to our values must be met with meaningful discussion. For my part, I hope to explore some of the values that have come to the fore in the past few years; some have been continuing themes throughout our history.

In a society that has seldom valued history and the liberal arts in general, survival of the history courses in our majors is the biggest challenge.

The general political and social partisanship sometimes infects the academic community, raising basic issues about free expression, diversity and the mission of education to both challenge and reinforce traditions. The pessimist in me worries about an impending confrontation between advocates of free expression and armed defenders of the Second Amendment. If that happens, no one will have a safe space on or off campus. The optimist on my other shoulder says the growth of satire and its popularity among socially responsible millennials speaks well for a future in which people can courageously speak truth to power. Both the optimist and pessimist see the power of social media increasing. We who study media, history and free expression should be at the heart of these discussions.

We need to foster meaningful discussion and debate with a realistic historical perspective. Those of us who study free expression should be at the heart of this discussion.

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Book Award Interview: Chad Raphael ©



Raphael

Chad Raphael won both the Frank Luther Mott-Kappa Tau Alpha Research Award and the Best Journalism and Mass Communication History Book Award, given by the History Division of the AEJMC, for the year's outstanding book for his 2005 history, *Investigated Reporting: Muckrakers, Regulators, and the Struggle over Television Documentary*. He teaches communication at Santa Clara University.

Q: Give us a brief summary of your book.

Raphael: The book examines the spread of investigative reporting in American television documentaries from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s and the hostile responses this provoked in government. As documentarians developed the contours of watchdog reporting on television, Congress, the Federal Communications Commission, and the courts in turn investigated the fairness and accuracy of broadcast news more extensively than at any other time in television's history. These were political struggles over framing some of the most contentious issues of the era: poverty and welfare, the Cold War and the War in Vietnam, and business and consumerism. But they were also conflicts

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over how the relatively new and powerful medium of television ought to represent reality, including whether and how broadcast journalists should practice objectivity or muckraking, use hidden cameras, and edit interviews fairly. And these were also regulatory battles over whether television journalists deserved the same First Amendment rights as print reporters, the proper role of government oversight, and media accountability for staging, distorting, or biasing the news. The book concludes by considering the legacy of these controversies for the political, representational, and regulatory conditions of watchdog reporting.

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

Raphael: From Michael Curtin's *Redeeming the Wasteland: Television Documentary and Cold War Politics*, I learned that all of the networks created prime-time documentary series in the early 1960s. Curtin showed that the networks invested in documentaries to please regulators and elected officials who resented what FCC chairman Newton Minow called the "vast wasteland" of escapist entertainment on the tube, epitomized in the quiz show scandals, but also to serve network news executives' and journalists' interests in building their influence and prestige in American journalism. Political and broadcast leaders agreed that prime-time documentaries could provide public service programming that would benefit citizens, the broadcast industry, and the government.

But I also knew that within a few short years, Congress and the FCC were routinely hauling in journalists to defend their work during numerous investigations of documentary news practices and many of the Nixon administration's allegations of media bias focused on documentaries. So I wanted to know why this broad consensus for television documentary dissolved and why it became the most controversial of

broadcast news genres.

The short answer I found in the existing literature was that network documentarians began practicing investigative reporting, taking a more adversarial stance toward government, which sparked a government backlash. But I suspected the answer was more complicated. *The Journalism of Outrage*, by David Protess and his colleagues at Northwestern, had shown that many investigative reports are products of collaborations between reporters and government sources, who provide story ideas and information in order to influence policy through the news. Dan Hallin's *The 'Uncensored' War: The Media and Vietnam* and Lance Bennett's theory of indexing suggested that the range of policy views represented in mainstream news coverage usually mimics the scope of debate in official policy circles, ignoring or marginalizing other views as illegitimate or unrealistic. This led me to examine whether the rise of controversial documentaries and government investigations of them might express growing disagreement *among* political and journalistic elites, and not just *between* them, over increasingly divisive issues.

So my main questions emerged from comparing what I'd learned about the media history of the 1960s with what I was learning from social scientific studies of investigative reporting and media-state relations conducted years later.

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

Raphael: One lesson is that when the news media face a sustained crisis of public legitimacy, we should look beyond simple explanations about rising media adversarialism toward government. Instead, there are likely to be three dimensions to the crisis: a polarized political climate, a struggle over journalistic practices for representing reality (often sparked by the rise of a new medium), and an unsettled regulatory regime (again, often because a new medium demands new rules of the

road). Similarly, I see political, representational, and regulatory dimensions to today's debates over news on social media.

I also tried to leave readers with a model not only of how watchdog reporting is produced through collaboration among journalists, government sources, and interest groups, but also how reports are attacked and delegitimized. Officials and corporate targets of these reports played an important role in dampening the influence of investigative reports on public opinion and policy, but this also depended on whether reporters' own bosses, interest groups, and the other news organizations attacked or defended the report. Some executives decided that it was more cost-effective or politically expedient to disown their reporters' methods and findings, journalists at other news organizations saw these controversies as an opportunity to hurt a competitor, and some interest groups decided not to champion the reports as a way to advance their policy proposals.

I close by arguing that investigative reporting's mission to serve the public interest was better served by the regulatory regime of the 1960s than it was afterward. The FCC may have repealed the Fairness Doctrine and ignored its own rules against news distortion, but these were largely symbolic regulations that had little effect on investigative news. Deregulation did not set watchdog reporters free but increased the role of the judiciary in overseeing news through tort suits, and left news more vulnerable to market pressures, and therefore underfunded.

Q: What findings most surprised you?

Raphael: I was most surprised by how divided the news media were over these controversies. Local stations resented network journalists as arrogant outsiders who generated bad publicity about local areas on the national stage. Print journalists looked down their noses at their

television counterparts, seeing them as show business types who oversimplified stories to grab ratings. Some network reporters and executives faulted watchdogs for not practicing objectivity.

I was also surprised by how many government actors turned out to be investigative reporters' best friends. The FCC consistently protected muckrakers by refusing to enforce its Fairness Doctrine or news distortion rules against reports, sometimes by ignoring facts and using tortuous logic. Some Congressional leaders also helped stave off stricter regulation of television news. And the courts recognized television news reporters' First Amendment rights.

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?

Raphael: I began by reading secondary source accounts by historians of journalism, politics, and regulation. Next, I turned to the biographies of the broadcast journalists, executives, and officials involved.

Then I turned to primary source materials. At that time, the documentaries could only be found in a handful of library archives and broadcasting museums strewn around the country, from UCLA to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin to the Museum of Television and Radio in New York. I found testimony and original documents reprinted in the *Congressional Record*, proceedings of the FCC, and court cases. For additional primary documents, I spent several weeks at the National Archives and Records Administration and the Library of Congress, as well as scouring a number of broadcast archives, and the personal papers of the participants. I conducted a content analysis of media coverage of the controversies.

I also conducted face-to-face interviews with journalists and media executives, from former CBS President Frank Stanton to executive pro-

ducers and directors, even the film editor on a documentary that was accused of selective editing.

It took me around two years to conduct the research, which I did for my dissertation while teaching part-time, and around a year to write the dissertation. After putting it aside to work on other things, I returned to it with fresh eyes and wrote the concluding chapter, which gave me time to gain a larger perspective on what the book meant for contemporary debates over media-state theory, journalistic freedom, and regulation.

The best day of my research came at the National Archives, a day on which a new batch of Nixon administration papers was released to the public. I found some new memos by Nixon aide Charles Colson about the administration's strategy for countering the CBS documentary *The Selling of the Pentagon*. As I left the archives, I saw Nixon advisor John Ehrlichman and a couple of his associates huddled in the lobby. I imagine that they had come to see what was in the newly-released documents as well. That assured me that the history I was studying still mattered.

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

Raphael: The Library of Congress had not yet released some of the internal records of the House Commerce Committee, which led several investigations of documentaries. I would have liked to know more about the committee's internal thinking and communications, especially why the chair, the dogged Rep. Harley Staggers, decided to quit investigating the networks.

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

Raphael: Compare accounts from multiple sources. For example, the internal conflict within news organizations over these reports really came out through interviewing executives, the director, and the film editor of *The Selling of the Pentagon*, who were united in resisting political pressure to turn over out-takes from the film to Congress, but had very different views about whether the film was edited ethically.

Consider bringing your archival research to interviews to stimulate people's memories. Unlike some television news interviews, mine were not aimed at ambushing sources and catching them in a lie. But giving an interviewee a document or a picture can help jog their memory or provoke a revealing response. For example, I gave a CBS executive producer a copy of the news reporting standards and practices manual that the network redrafted and released during one controversy as evidence of its ethical practices. He took one look at the hefty document, rolled his eyes, and told me that he never consulted it. That reaction told me something invaluable about the status of the document, and about the tension between the network's executives and news producers.

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

Raphael: Given limited funds and time, I couldn't get to every archive or interview every participant who might've told me something important, so prioritizing my search and knowing when to stop were difficult, but necessary.

Some important participants had died without leaving their papers to an archive. I would've loved to have interviewed CBS producer Jay McMullen, who was responsible for *Biography of a Bookie Joint*, which was investigated for suggesting that Massachusetts lawmakers were protecting illicit gambling houses, and *Project Nassau*, an aborted report on a planned invasion of Haiti and Cuba by U.S.-based exiles, which

indirectly helped fund the ill-fated coups.

Some interviewees who had faced investigation had solidified a story in their heads for the authorities and the press, so it was hard to get them to reexamine it, even years later.

I grappled with whether to make and print my own still photos from the documentaries in the book, given concerns about copyright infringement, and ended up deciding that I was willing to risk a lawsuit to assert my right to fair use for scholarly purposes. Thankfully, I haven't heard from any lawyers.

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

Raphael: I was fortunate in that I wasn't beholden to anyone for giving me extraordinary or exclusive access to information. And I didn't feel an overwhelming affinity for one side of these controversies. Most of the people I researched weren't wearing white hats or black hats, but grey ones. Some of the journalists had indeed engaged in questionable ethical practices, such as invading the privacy of innocent and powerless people, or reordering questions and answers during the editing process to make interviewees look worse. Some of the government critics had legitimate concerns about how to hold investigative reporters accountable for staging news, even if many of their cures would have been worse than the disease. The only morally uncomplicated actors were in the Nixon administration and they were maleficent, attacking some of the documentaries as part of their larger campaign to control news coverage and punish journalistic criticism.

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

Raphael: It's seductive to begin by discovering a topic of personal interest, or one that hasn't been addressed much in our field, and devote yourself to researching it. But I'd encourage colleagues to begin by asking "what does society most need to know about media history now?" We write about the past, but we write for people living with its consequences, and we should take seriously their need for accurate, insightful, and multi-perspectival accounts of how we got here. Of course, this doesn't mean falling into the trap of present-mindedness by depicting media history exclusively through our contemporary beliefs and values, especially to justify or celebrate them. People also need to be estranged from how we create, use, and regulate media today, so that we can see our own peculiarities and question them.

What aspects of media history might help us to address the problems of misinformation and disinformation, hate speech, and privacy invasion in today's news environment? What do we need to know about the past to understand and counter the political polarization that contemporary media can sometimes promote, in which some of us live not just in our own filter bubbles but in separate fact bubbles? What can we learn from the history of public and nonprofit media in the U.S. and elsewhere that could help us envision an economic model for public service journalism that is insulated from government and market pressures? We can't provide neat historical recipes for resolving these enduring problems, but we can help people understand important causes and neglected dimensions of these challenges, and perhaps help to evaluate our options.

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