

Historiography

in Mass Communication



Volume 5 (2019). Number 2

Historiography in Mass Communication

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Essays

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

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

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

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Contents

From the Editor: "Forgeries"	page 1
Debra Reddin van Tuyl, "True Facts: History in a Post-Truth Age"	page 9
Owen V. Johnson, "Discovering Ernie Pyle: It's Not Always Easy"	page 17
Historical Roundtable, "Stories We Tell in Broadcast News"	page 21
Michael Murray, Mary Beadle, Jessica Ghilani, and Reed Smith	
Historian Interview: Ford Risley	page 57
Book Award Interview: Kathy Roberts Forde: <i>Literary Journalism on Trial: Masson v. New Yorker and the First Amendment</i>	page 63

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

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Forgeries

By Wm. David Sloan ©



Sloan

Do we dare say that forged sources and invented records exist? Or that mass communication historians are not always as suspicious of sources as they should be?

Curtis MacDougall in his book *Hoaxes* (1940) and Fred Fedler in *Media Hoaxes* (1989) describe more than 200 falsified newspaper accounts. Any historian familiar with either of those books will recognize that history is filled with instances of fake documents.

Forgeries have continued to show up in more recent years.

In the 1970s Clifford Irving convinced the book publisher McGraw-Hill that the reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes had commissioned him to write an authorized biography. As part of an elaborate and complex deception, he forged three letters he claimed Hughes had written him. On the basis of the letters, McGraw-Hill gave him a \$750,000 advance, Time-Life offered \$250,000 for magazine serial rights to the book, and Dell Publishing offered \$400,000 for paperback rights. Unfortunately for Irving, as soon as Hughes found out about the planned

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book, he went public and exposed the hoax.

In 1983 a similar hoax conned the German magazine *Stern*. Gerd Heidemann, a German journalist, claimed he had obtained copies of the diaries of Adolf Hitler. *Stern* commissioned three handwriting analyses and then paid Heidemann 10 million marks, an amount equal to more than \$12 million today.

As soon as *Stern* announced publication plans for the first installment, though, skeptics pointed out problems. The diaries were written on modern paper, for example, and were full of errors, and the handwriting was a poor imitation of Hitler's. The official German national archives declared that they were "grotesquely superficial fakes."

In 1997 David Selbourne, a British historian, claimed he had gained access to and translated into English a journal by an Italian named Jacob d'Ancona describing his travels in China four years before Marco Polo arrived. Selbourne refused, though, to make the manuscript available for others to examine. He claimed that its owner had allowed Selbourne to see and to publish it only on condition that he not show it to anyone else or to reveal anything about the owner.

As the Associated Press, in a decided understatement, observed, "This raises questions about authenticity."

Little, Brown and Company published the diary in England with the title *The City of Light*; but when it announced plans to publish it in the United States, critics immediately began pointing out problems.

One scholar, in reviewing the book, noted that the name *Baiciu*, which the "diary" used for a famous rebel, was "from an 18th-century misreading of an Arabic manuscript — as good a proof as any that something is badly amiss." Similarly, two authorities on Jewish and Islamic history identified an anachronism in "Jacob's" arrival at a *mellah* in the Persian Gulf, a word describing a ghetto that was not coined until the fifteenth century. They compared such a usage as similar to finding the word "Oldsmobile" in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Another reviewer concluded that “By coincidence, much of what Jacob d’Ancona dislikes in 13th-century China is what David Selbourne dislikes in late-20th century Britain.” She pointed out rhetorical devices that “Jacob” used that closely resembled those of Selbourne.¹

Jump ahead to 2004. Anyone familiar with the “Memogate” episode during that year’s American presidential election knows that dishonest records do exist — and can realize how important it is to assure that documents are genuine.

The episode began when CBS anchor Dan Rather hosted a *60 Minutes Wednesday* segment based on photocopied memos claiming that George W. Bush had performed improperly while serving in the Air National Guard in the 1970s.

Immediately after the program aired, experts questioned the authenticity of the memos. The typography, for example, was different from what typewriters in the 1970s produced. The memos had proportional spacing and modern superscripts. Analysts found a number of other indications — such as wording that the Air National Guard did not employ in official records — that the memos were fake. *60 Minutes* had rushed the program onto the air without adequately checking out the suspicious documents.

CBS initially defended itself and issued a statement standing by the memos’ authenticity. After several days of controversy, though, it began an investigation, which determined that the memos “were likely forgeries after all.”

The consequences were serious. CBS fired the segment’s producer and asked three other employees to resign. Following the election, Rather announced that he planned to retire as anchor of *CBS Evening News*.

If forged documents in print were not enough to scare away historians, the ready availability of sources on the Internet exacerbates the problem. Any historian using the Internet should be alert to errors, fab-

rications, and incompleteness of the text. Such problems are more likely to appear in Internet documents than in paper documents. Printed books, as one example of a paper document, usually have gone through an editing and proofreading process before being published.

Virtually anyone, however, can put a text on the Internet without following rigorous safeguards. Errors can be made in the scanning or keyboarding process required in digitizing a text. Parts of a text may be omitted or altered for any variety of reasons.

Texts may even be fictionalized.

For example, a document called the “Willie Lynch speech of 1712” can be found on hundreds of websites without any indication that it was created in the twentieth century. The speech purports to be the remarks of a slave owner about how to control American slaves. Several groups have found the text on the Internet, apparently accepted it at face value, and used it to support their political agendas — despite the fact that a number of websites have exposed it as a hoax.

To demonstrate the problem of fake sources, consider how one historian, Joe Campbell, has called into question the authenticity of perhaps the most famous anecdote in American journalism history.

In 1896, William Randolph Hearst, the publisher of the *New York Journal*, sent the reporter Richard Harding Davis and Frederic Remington, the famous artist of the American West, to Cuba to spend a month with the rebels fighting against Spain. They arrived in January 1897 but never reached the insurgents’ camps. Remington left for home after about a week.

Legend has it that Remington, seeking to cut short the assignment, cabled Hearst, saying, “Everything is quiet. There will be no war. I wish to return.” Hearst is said to have sent a cable in reply, stating, “Please remain. You furnish the pictures, and I’ll furnish the war.” The original source for the exchange is a book, *On the Great Highway: The Wanderings and Adventures of a Special Correspondent*, written by James Creel-

man and published in 1901. He had worked as a reporter in Cuba during the Spanish-American War.

As Campbell has pointed out, the purported exchange has endured not only as evidence of Hearst's reckless arrogance but of the potentially malign effects of the news media. Many books and articles on media history have quoted it and used it as evidence that Hearst was an irresponsible publisher and that his *Journal* fomented the Spanish-American War of 1898. Determining whether the anecdote is true is therefore of considerable historical significance.

Campbell conducted an extensive investigation of sources and circumstances surrounding the exchange to try to determine its authenticity. In his search, he examined document collections at the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., Ohio State University in Columbus, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, and Columbia University in New York City.

There are several reasons to doubt the purported exchange.

Hearst, Campbell discovered, later denied having sent such a message, and Remington apparently never discussed it. The anecdote's sole original source, Creelman, was in Europe at the time and never explained how he learned about the supposed exchange.

Notably, the contents of the respective messages are incongruous, given events in Cuba in early 1897. Specifically, the passages "there will be no war" and "I'll furnish the war" are at odds with the civil war that then raged on the island. Indeed, the war and its privations were the very reasons Remington and Davis were assigned to Cuba.

Moreover, it is highly unlikely that such an exchange would have cleared Spanish censors. So strict were the censors that American correspondents covering the insurrection in Cuba often had their dispatches taken by ship to Florida and transmitted from there.

Significantly, the correspondence of Richard Harding Davis contains no reference to Remington's wanting to leave Cuba because "there

will be no war.” Instead, Davis’ letters offered other reasons for Remington’s departure, including the artist’s reluctance to travel through Spanish lines to reach the Cuban insurgents. Davis also said in his correspondence that he had asked Remington to leave because the artist’s presence was impeding Davis’ reporting.

As a result of his investigation, Campbell concluded that the exchange between Hearst and Remington almost certainly never happened. He has argued that “because the evidence is so persuasive that the purported exchange did not take place, the anecdote deserves relegation to the closet of historical imprecision — at least until proven otherwise.”²

Campbell’s work reminds us of the efforts that historians should make to determine the accuracy of their sources. The work is demanding, but history deserves it.

In the first essay in this issue of our journal, Prof. Debbie van Tuyl cautions us about the dangers that some popular philosophies and theoretical perspectives pose for the study of history. She reminds us that, in the study of history, facts are important.

We follow her insightful essay with one by Owen Johnson, in which he recounts his efforts to study the writings of Ernie Pyle. Prof. Johnson is retired from the journalism school at Indiana University, where Pyle studied as an undergraduate.

For our Historical Roundtable, Prof. Mike Murray has put together a panel of broadcast historians focusing on teaching. Those looking for interesting and innovative ways to teach subjects in broadcast history will find a variety of ideas in the roundtable.

For our “Historian Interview,” Prof. Ford Risley, an accomplished historian who serves as editor of the journal *American Journalism*, graciously consented to do a Q&A.

Finally, for our book Q&A with the author of an award-winning

Forgeries

book, we have an interview with Prof. Kathy Roberts Forde. Her book *Literary Journalism on Trial: Masson v. New Yorker and the First Amendment* won both the Frank Luther Mott-Kappa Tau Alpha Research Award and the award from the AEJMC History Division for the best book published in 2008.

NOTES

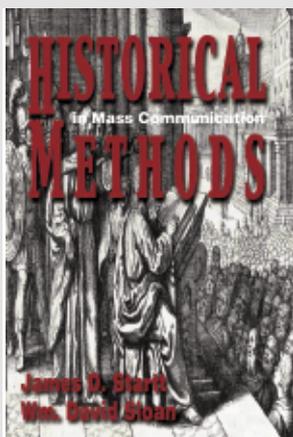
¹ T.H. Barrett, *London Review of Books*, 30 October 1997; Doreen Carvajal, "Marco Polo: Is a Rivalry Just Fiction?" *New York Times*, 9 December 1997; and Roz Kaveny, *New Statesman*, 24 October 1997, p. 45. A convenient summary of the controversy about the authenticity of Selbourne's manuscript may be found at "Jacob of Ancona," Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_of_Ancona. Accessed November 28, 2018.

² For an account of his investigation into the exchange, see W. Joseph Campbell, *Yellow Journalism: Puncturing the Myths, Defining the Legacies* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001).

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

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With its first edition, *Historical Methods in Mass Communication* quickly became the standard manual for research in the field.



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True Facts: History in a Post-Truth Age

By Debra Reddin van Tuyll ©



van Tuyll

Historians face tough times today. In the 1980s and 1990s, scores of scholars were schooled in deconstructionism and postmodernism. These two philosophical approaches to language, truth, and fact were the products of work by European scholars such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, and Jean-François Lyotard, the first to use the term “postmodernism” in an academic work. Postmodernism taught those scholars to be skeptical of anything claiming to be truth, objective reality, even morality. Lyotard and other postmodernists see knowledge as socially conditioned, or socially constructed rather than objectively real.¹ By way of example, for a postmodernist, a red pen is not just a red pen; it is a symbol of dominance when wielded by teacher or professor.

The dominance of postmodernism and deconstructionism, as well as post-structuralism, has led some scholars, including some in mass communications, to accept the notion that truth cannot be fixed and that facts are actually only an individual’s perception of a phenomenon. Admittedly, America’s current theatre-of-the-absurd political culture,

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combined with Kellyanne Conway's invention of "alternative facts," could lead even the staunchest positivist to question just how real reality is.²

Given the prevailing intellectual climate and that the predominant research methods in mass communication tend toward the social scientific testing of theory, it is not surprising that some historians find themselves drifting toward a more theoretical approach to their work. This tendency is likely amplified by demands from reviewers for statements of theoretical framework and methodology to be addressed prior to publication or presentation.

All of this overlooks the fact that historical research is traditionally atheoretical. In his editor's preface to R. G. Collingwood's 1946 work *The Idea of History*, T. M. Knox maintained that, as of the nineteenth century, historians adopted the positivist epistemology to drive their work. Consequently, the focus is on reason and knowledge. Objective reason and knowledge that is grounded in verifiable facts.³ A historian's verifiable facts are not the same as those of a scientist, Collingwood would argue in the main body of the book. After all, historians typically, though not exclusively, study people who are long dead and events that have long since passed. Consequently, they are reconstructing the past from available evidence, evidence that often is sketchy and incomplete. No, Collingwood argued, history is a particular type of thinking that focuses on what people in the past have done. Its purpose, he argued, is to create human self-knowledge so as to explain human nature.⁴

Take, for example, the nineteenth-century notion of the cult of true womanhood. Women of the nineteenth century were taught their place was within the home, that to be true women, they were to be pious, pure, submissive, and domestic.⁵ Of these four characteristics, piety was considered the most important, as illustrated by the Rev. J. J. Worcester, Jr., at a time when women were agitating for more rights. He reminded his parishioners that "She who seeks to make herself what

God meant her to be has the sure promise of success; she who seeks to make herself something else than God meant her to be is fore-doomed in reaching the goal, and to become dwarfed and deformed in the attempt." Women, the good reverend continued, existed to balance out men; "to supply his defects." Further, he argued that a woman's "sphere" was her home and her "work" was "to inspire, to purify, to elevate, to ameliorate, to comfort, and to adorn."⁶ This idea was prevalent in nineteenth-century America and had a profound influence on how women lived their lives at least up to the Civil War. As Stephanie McCurry explained in her work on gender relations and slavery in low country South Carolina, "Patriarchal prerogatives were deeply embedded in the law of every state in Antebellum America...."⁷

One of the first academic works to examine the notion of the cult of true womanhood described it as a means of holding a woman "hostage in the home." Author Barbara Welter agreed with the Rev. Worcester that piousness was the chief characteristic of a true woman. Religion was a source of strength for women, and it allowed social engagement that did not really remove women from their place inside the household gate — the private sphere. She also enumerated the other characteristics that mark the cult of true womanhood: piety, domesticity, and submissiveness.⁸

In this work, and in others since, Welter explains why women were, as some historians claim, seemingly so invisible in the nineteenth century. Theirs is one interpretation of the nature of women in the nineteenth century. It is one heavily influenced by twentieth-century feminist theory, and it uses that theory to frame an explanation for why people behaved the way they did in an earlier time. Two problems arise, however. First feminist thought as it existed in 1966 did not exist in 1860, hence it may not be an appropriate mechanism for explaining human behavior 100 years earlier. Second, if one delves deeply enough into the history of the time, it seems questionable whether all women of

the period would have bought into the idea of the cult of true womanhood.

For example, a feminist movement was budding by mid-nineteenth century. That movement focused more on suffrage than broad equal rights but certainly represents a step beyond the household gate and into the public sphere, particularly when one considers that the suffragists often worked in tandem with abolitionists to address not one but two social wrongs.⁹ Harriet Beecher Stowe breeched all sorts of social norms when she published *Uncle Tom's Cabin* under her own name, for she definitely stepped outside the household gate and into the public limelight. Her work became the epicenter for the most significant national debate of her lifetime, a debate that women did not shy away from.

The national debates over slavery and suffrage emboldened women who had previously accepted their being hostages at home to speak out publicly. Julia Tyler, wife of the former president John Tyler, denounced Stowe's book in a public letter published first in the *Richmond Enquirer* but picked up by other newspapers. In that letter, she declared that "all the thinking women," whether from the South or the North would denounce the meddling of "a circle of well-placed British ladies" who had been inspired by fictional works to encourage American women to embrace abolitionism. Tyler was annoyed enough by the book to step outside the sphere to which she acknowledged God had assigned women and pen a response to the petition. She wrote, "There are some of the concerns of life in which the conventionalities are properly to be disregarded, and this is one of them."¹⁰

Other women, such as Louisa McCord of South Carolina, a slavery apologist who fell more into the gestalt of true womanhood, wrote widely on the economics and political culture of slavery, but she only stepped partially outside the household gate. She published all she wrote only under her initials, and she wrote only as long as her hus-

band was alive. She, too, took on Stowe's fiction-based indictment of slavery in a formal review in the *Southern Literary Review*. She referred to the book as appealing to "second-rate literary taste(s)." ¹¹

From a "bigger-picture" perspective, Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray examined political involvement by Antebellum women in the North and discovered that their experience in America's political culture was not so different from that of men. Women were heavily involved in writing and thinking about politics, even to the point of informally running campaigns in some instances. One of their examples was Persis Sibley Andrews, wife of Charles Andrews, a Democratic member of the Maine state legislature who depended on Persis to help him win his campaigns and dig him out of political quagmires. He even considered his campaigns for office to be theirs, not just his. In September 1850, when her husband was running for the U.S. House, Persia boldly stated, "I love politics." The Zborays concluded that the women they studied showed "little trace ... of the domesticity, religion, benevolence, or reform that so much dominate accounts of women's history before the Civil War. Rather, these women demonstrate that they could and did speak in a decidedly unalloyed political register." ¹²

In essence, the works cited here present two views of the nature of American women and their involvement or non-involvement in nineteenth-century public life. If history were as scientific a field as some try to make it, it would be possible to formulate a theory, devise an experiment or survey to test that theory so as to achieve findings to support one or the other of these interpretations of the political lives of nineteenth-century women. However, history is not scientific. It is not something that can be studied, with few exceptions, via the scientific method, nor even the theory-grounded social scientific methods used by other types of mass communication researchers. Instead, historical research methodology is much closer to legal methodology. As is true of the law, historical research is grounded in evidence and the interpreta-

tion thereof. To prepare for a case, a lawyer finds all the threads of evidence available, and she uses them to create as complete a picture of what happened as possible — who did what to whom with what effect, in communication parlance. It may be an incomplete picture — eye witnesses are notoriously unreliable; security cameras may not have been working; DNA evidence may be inconclusive. Likewise, the historian tries to reconstruct a situation based on available records. The end product is “an objective, factual historical narrative.”¹³

Who is right about the role of women in the nineteenth century? Welter? The Zborays? Both? Neither? Likely, both have some handle on the truth, but ultimately, the truth of the role of women in the nineteenth century is unknowable. It is something that can be “theorized” about, though not in the way social scientists build theory. Rather, in a historical context, to theorize is to suggest possibilities.

As a research group of computer scientists observed in an article encouraging the use of historical methodology in their field, “Historians are notoriously practical.” They choose their methods based on the questions they are trying to answer. They ground their work in perceivable evidence. The writer continued, “At the core of all historical research is evidence and its careful handling.”¹⁴

This reliance on facts and evidence, as opposed to acceptance of a more relativistic or theory-based methodology, places historians very much outside the norm in a post-truth, post-fact era when the belief in objectivity, reason, and intellectual purity are not just out of vogue but down-right doubted. That does not mean that historians should change their methods, regardless of how many reviewers demand statements of methodology or inquire into what theory is driving the project. It means, just as the aforementioned computer scientists have realized, that historical method, grounded in objective reasoning and analysis of facts, is valuable. It means historians should be in the fray fighting for a place at the mass communication table, for they have something of

equal, if not greater, value to offer both professional and academic communications practitioners: truth, as far as it can be discerned, and facts.

NOTES

¹ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, trans., (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984 [1979]); Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1997).

² Aaron Blake, "Kellyanne Conway says Donald Trump's team has 'alternative facts.' Which pretty much says it all," *Washington Post*, 22 January 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/01/22/kellyanne-conway-says-donald-trumps-team-has-alternate-facts-which-pretty-much-says-it-all/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.051ba4ffd9d1.

³ T. M. Knox, Editor's Preface to R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1946), 1.

⁴ Collingwood, *ibid.*, 5, 7, 9-10.

⁵ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 202; Kathleen L. Endres and Therese L. Lueck, *Women's Periodicals in the United States: Consumer Magazines* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995), p. xii.

⁶ J. H. Worcester, Jr., "Womanhood; Five sermons to young women preached at the Sixth Presbyterian Church, Chicago," (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1885 [?]), 10-11, 16.

⁷ Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 85.

⁸ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18:2 (1966): 151-153.

⁹ Jean Fagan Yellin, *Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Suzanne Marilley, *Women Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism in the United States, 1820 to 1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

¹⁰ "Mrs. Julia G. Tyler to the Dutchess of Sutherland and Others," *New York Times*, February 5, 1853; Robert E. Bonner, *Mastering America: Southern Slaveholders and the Crisis of American Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 194.

¹¹ Louisa S. McCord, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," *Southern Literary Review* (January 1853), 83; Richard C. Lounsbury, ed., *Louisa S. McCord: Selected Writings* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997), 13.

¹² Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, *Voices Without Votes: Women*

and Politics in Antebellum New England (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2010), 13, 98-99, 110.

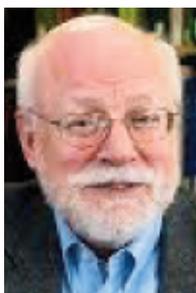
¹³ Elizabeth Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 10.

¹⁴ Jaana Porra, Rudy Hirschheim, and Michael S. Parks, "The Historical Research Method and Information Systems Research," *Journal for the Association of Information Systems* 15:9 (2014): 539.

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

Discovering Ernie Pyle: It's Not Always Easy

By Owen V. Johnson ©



Johnson

In recent years, I have made it my mission to read every column that famed World War II war correspondent ever wrote. That isn't so easy. We'll never know the exact number of his columns, but he probably wrote about 4,000, averaging about 800 words each.

Five volumes of his work were published, four of them focusing on his World War II. Several authors, including myself, have edited collections of his writings.

Much of his work, however, remains unknown to today's audiences.

His most unknown work consists of the aviation columns he wrote for the *Washington Daily News*, 1928-32. During most of that time he wrote six columns a week, 52 weeks a year, meaning he wrote more than a thousand columns. A handful were re-published in the book *On a Wing and a Prayer*. The only way to access all of those columns is to look them up on microfilm copies of the *Daily News*. That's not easy. So far as I know, the only microfilm of the paper is in the Library of Congress. The November-December 1931 reel is missing, apparently hav-

*Owen V. Johnson, an Associate Professor Emeritus at Indiana University, is a leading authority on Ernie Pyle and his journalism. Dr. Johnson is the editor of the book *At Home with Ernie Pyle*, a collection of Pyle's writing about Indiana.*

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ing been loaned to someone and never returned. In addition, he wrote several articles for aviation magazines during those years.

The Lilly Library at Indiana University has columns on aviation that Scripps-Howard distributed to some of its member newspapers, 1930-32.

After a stint as managing editor of the *Daily News*, 1932-35, he returned to writing columns, 1935-45, first about his travels across the United States, including travel to Canada, Mexico, Central America and South America, then to reporting about America's war experience. Most of the war reporting came from late 1942 until his death in April 1945, but also including travel in Great Britain from late 1940 to spring 1941. About twenty of his columns were published posthumously in 1965. They were written during his stint in the Pacific in 1945. Scripps-Howard chose not to publish them then because it decided that chronologically it would have been confusing to readers who would have wondered how Pyle's columns could keep appearing weeks after his death.

There is no definitive source for Pyle's columns. Scripps-Howard distributed copies of his columns first to its member newspapers, and then during World War II to other subscribing newspapers. Distribution first was by mail, but then increasingly, especially during the war, electronically. The Lilly Library has most of those original Scripps-Howard distributions.

It can be confusing, however. For example, in 1943 Scripps-Howard distributed a series of columns about Pyle's R&R trip to central Africa, after it sent columns in which he described the Allied victory over the Axis powers, even though Pyle's R&R trip preceded the Allied victory.

Subscribing newspapers were not required to print all of Pyle's columns. During the war years, some of them were marked for publication on a certain date, but papers were not required to adhere to those dates. In my own work, I have chosen to use dates of distribution that appear on the material distributed by Scripps-Howard.

Discovering Ernie Pyle: It's Not Always Easy

Many of the columns can be found in the Google News Archive, as published by the *St. Petersburg Times* (the forerunner of today's *Tampa Bay Times*) and the *Pittsburgh Press*, but many issues are missing from their collections. Many can also be found on the subscription based newspapers.com. Paige Cavanaugh, Pyle's bosom buddy going back to their student days together at Indiana University, faithfully kept scrap-books of Pyle's columns as published in the *Washington Daily News*.

More confusing is trying to reconcile the different versions of each column. Each newspaper subjected (through copy editors — which newspapers once had) its own style rules and space limitations to Pyle's columns. My former colleague Mike Conway once shared with me an excerpt of an interview he did with Walter Cronkite, in which Cronkite says that in his newspaper days he edited Pyle's columns. Many newspapers did not permit vulgarities, such as Pyle's occasional use of words like "damn" (he used it surprisingly often for a journalist of his time). That meant that they even "cleaned up" Pyle's famous Captain Waskow column, which included "God damn it to hell anyway."

Columns would be cut because of space limitations, or they were not printed at all.

Even what Scripps-Howard distributed did not necessarily reflect Pyle's original work. What he submitted was edited by Scripps-Howard staffers, most notably by Lee Miller, like Pyle a native Hoosier (not to be confused by the photographer of the same name). Some people have suggested that Miller turned Pyle from a good writer into a great one. In the two decades, I've engaged in research I have been given copies of two columns that apparently are Pyle's original submissions. That's too few to evaluate the editing of his work.

The several books of Pyle's collected work leave out some of his work because they don't reflect the narrative of the book. For instance, during the end of Pyle's stay in England in 1941, he wrote two columns about Edward R. Murrow. They didn't fit into the narrative of "Ernie

Pyle in England,” so they were never reprinted. The two were, as my father would have put it, “acquaintances.” They shared common backgrounds. Both came from backgrounds of poverty, for instance, both took a gap year after high school, both arrived on their university campuses as hicks from the sticks, and both wound up as big men on campus. Murrow, however, preferred in his professional career to mix with the *hoi polloi* while Pyle, at least in the story told by Scripps-Howard, preferred the company of the ordinary G.I.’s.

For seven years I taught a course at Indiana University on Ernie Pyle. It included a 10-day trip to London, Normandy and Paris. One year, my younger daughter created a “Flat Ernie” to accompany us. He regularly appeared in photos taken on the trip. The original Ernie Pyle was anything but one-dimensional. He sought to show life, both in peacetime and in war, as multi-dimensional. Thoughtful readers, both then and now, will realize this. They should not be misled by the apparent simplicity of Pyle’s writing style.

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

Historical Roundtable: 'Stories We Tell' in Broadcast News

By Michael Murray, Mary Beadle,
Jessica Ghilani, and Reed Smith ©



Murray

The study and teaching of the history of broadcast news is a relatively recent enterprise — particularly with respect to the attention given to television news — which often parallels the lives of the academics who study and teach the subject. As a result, some of the research focused on broadcast news has been based upon the observations of individuals and events observed firsthand on occasion by those doing the reporting and the research.

This close proximity to history has offered unique opportunities to stimulate interest, offer additional clarity or alternatively debunk some of the historic narratives from the field, including the many “moments” one might most readily recall with genuine concerns about authenticity and accuracy. The members of this panel of four media historians have experiences totaling well over a century in the field and offer considerable perspective on the stories they regularly report to their students and their colleagues.

Q: *What are some of the important stories you regularly tell in class when covering the history of broadcast news?*

Murray: Recognizing that the history of broadcast news is a sub-set of the history of broadcasting, a lot of the early and most significant his-

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torical stories in this broader and more recent range of media activity revolve around the lives of broadcast inventors and the network founders. Don Godfrey has written about some of these innovators and

Mary Beadle is a Professor and former chair of the Department of Communication at John Carroll University, where she also is the former dean of the Graduate School. She has served as chair of the History Division of the Broadcast Education Association on two different occasions. An international scholar, she has held appointments and/or lectured in South America, Hungary, Russia, Vietnam, Belgium, Italy, Argentina, Lithuania, Ireland, and Paraguay. Her book *Indelible Images* documents the work of women pioneers in broadcast news. She completed her Ph.D. at Kent State University.



Beadle

Jessica Ghilani is an Associate Professor of Communication at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, where she teaches digital media studies, U.S. culture, and advertising history. She completed her Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh and held a pre-doctoral research appointment as a fellow with the Smithsonian Institution in the National Museum of American History. More recently, she received an National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant. Her book *Selling Soldiering: Advertising for U.S. Army Volunteers since 1914* will be published in 2019 by the University of Iowa Press.



Ghilani

Michael Murray is University of Missouri Distinguished Professor Emeritus on the UM-St. Louis campus. He founded academic programs in mass media at Virginia Tech, the University of Louisville, and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, where he served as founding director of the Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Missouri. A founding member of the American Journalism Historians Association, he is the recipient of its highest honor, the Kobre Award for lifetime achievement. His book *The Political Performers* received a Goldsmith Research Award from the Kennedy School at Harvard.



Smith

Reed Smith is a Professor of Communication Arts at Georgia Southern University. He has published numerous articles, two books, and a Catherine Covert Award-winning monograph about various broadcast and journalism history topics. Before entering academe, he worked in both commercial and public radio. He completed over two decades as Multimedia Communication Coordinator at GSU, has served as a member of the Board of Directors of the AJHA, and is the book review editor for *American Journalism: A Journal of Media History*. He is also the author of the recent book *Cecil Brown: The Murrow Boy Who Became Broadcasting's Crusader for Truth*.

inventors, for example, and there are a number of good books available about these characters — almost entirely white males. There are some support documents available online and also a few excellent broadcast documentaries available including Ken Burns' *Empire of the Air* and some other films about specific programs or key performers such as Orson Welles and his *War of the Worlds*. Those can stimulate class discussions about early radio. And within the broad mix, some people from an even larger domain of again, again mostly radio, start to emerge as important early managers in terms of the development of broadcast news, in particular.

From CBS, company founder, William S. Paley and his key researcher and ace lieutenant, Dr. Frank Stanton, come to mind. But most of us are aware that interest in CBS as just one source of information about the field is overdone. Since I once worked for that company in a minor capacity at one point and wrote a dissertation and book about CBS News documentaries, most of the stories I tend to relay to students in media history classes are reviewed with them as a means of illustrating some important points about broadcast news development, including the methods of invention and established norms, as well as the controversies, policies and procedures emerging in that environment. In my case, those topics usually revolve around the key people in the field, their decision-making processes and the most important broadcasts with which they are associated. I also talk more generally about the team they developed and the way they worked together. Given this background with opportunities to screen some of the key broadcasts and talk about their impact, the approach provides a plus in terms of offering insight and also a bit of a psychic boost because I am (and always have been) obviously very enthusiastic about the subject matter. This means students have to be cautious about conclusions they might draw from what I am offering, not the least of which are the CBS programs still widely available for review.

Beadle: I talk about the history of broadcast news in the Introduction to Mass Media which presents a broad overview of all media. This course is required for Communication majors and I focus on how broadcast news developed. Since this generation of students gets most of their news from Twitter, I try to give them a deeper perspective on how news has been presented in a broadcast form, not a social media form. I often will play the Hindenburg disaster as an example of live broadcasting. I also use Murrow and his broadcasts from London to show how live broadcast were international. I tell stories of “The Golden Age” of TV news. The stories here tend to focus on President Kennedy. This includes the Kennedy-Nixon debates, Kennedy’s address to the nation about the missiles in Cuba, Kennedy at a press conference, the four days of coverage of the Kennedy assassination, and Oswald’s murder. These are all events the students have heard about but don’t really understand how important TV coverage was to the American public. All these events can be found on YouTube and I have shown many in class. After watching these clips, discussions tend to focus on the differences between social media news and historic television news coverage including 9/11 and more in-depth storytelling based on what can be verified.

Smith: For me, it is also important to begin broadcast news history by talking about the 1930s’ Press-Radio War. It is crucial to discuss that conflict — in which the wire services initially refused to provide news to radio stations — because it is emblematic of recurring challenges that have occurred in media history in which a new technology has threatened the livelihood of an existing news medium. We are currently experiencing the latest of those challenges as Internet news threatens the future of newspapers and traditional broadcast news delivery. It is important to understand how journalism history has continually repeated itself in this regard and how the legacy media have sought to

survive by adapting to a changing technological environment. In addition, it is important to grasp why broadcast news has never been as “free” as U.S. print news. My recent biography of Cecil Brown — and other broadcast history texts — have documented how difficult it has been historically for broadcast news to achieve an equal footing with its print counterparts due to the conflicted environment in which it operates. That is, having to adhere to the FCC’s vision for public service while broadcast ownership concurrently required the news entertain and boost audience ratings.

Ghilani: My approach to the history and historiography of news is an audience-centered one that examines the roles media have in shaping culture and informing public opinion. The stories and examples I bring into the classroom skew in that direction and I bring elements of media history into every course I teach, whether it is the explicit theme or something that can serve to illustrate a concept or theory. For example, in speech communication courses, we talk about the power of media to cultivate the public as “audience” using the example of the ubiquitous coverage of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. iconic “I Have a Dream” speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963. Broadcast television and radio networks covered the march extensively and carried the famous speech live. It was the lead story on ABC, CBS, and NBC’s prime time news shows. And it represents a significant moment in news history where ideas about racial equality were relayed to the public directly from leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, rather than narrated about, at a distance via white journalists. I discuss the statistics on public approval and how public memory of this famous speech and the march where it occurred functions with revisionism to make it seem as though most people were supportive of the messages about civil rights when that was not the case.

Because my research focuses on the history of advertising in the

United States, many of my media history courses and units put advertising into context, as both an industry and a medium for strategic, persuasive communication. Advertising aims to reflect and construct culture, therefore some of the most effective and iconic advertisements are those that have incorporated elements of the zeitgeist. Advertising campaigns have become news and been deemed newsworthy on numerous occasions. Political ads in particular garner a lot of attention in news media. In courses that focus on advertising history, I talk about media coverage of political advertisements. For example, I discuss infamous attack ads like the 1964 Daisy advertisement from the Lyndon B. Johnson presidential campaign and the 1988 Willie Horton advertisement from the George H. W. Bush campaign. Both examples represent moments when ads became national news. I also talk about attempts on behalf of marketing and advertising to foster “newsworthiness” and generate buzz. For example, I tell them about the “Torches of Freedom,” which was a suffragette-inspired public relations campaign crafted by Edward Bernays to encourage women to smoke and to remove the social stigma against them doing so. I introduce them to the concept of *Yellow Journalism* as a precursor to what they understand today to be “clickbait.”

Q: Which individuals appear at the center of stories you might tell about major successes — and news work?

Murray: Starting out — at least in my case — the individuals I always target for attention would include some of the foundational leaders of the field at CBS News: Edward R. Murrow, of course, his producer and professional partner, Fred W. Friendly, his writer, Ed Bliss, and some of the so-called “Murrow Boys” (and as we know now, a few Murrow “girls”) — people he first recruited to CBS Radio. It’s been argued by some scholars that Murrow actually became prominent, at least initial-

ly, in part, because many of those folks he hired and carefully mentored — especially those with whom he worked in London, became very successful and benefited directly as a by-product of having worked with Ed. As we know from the broadcast literature, many of those close contacts also later became authors and even journalism professors. It has been pointed-out on many occasions that this was one of the major elements of why Murrow and his team are still well-remembered. I understand the criticism in terms of attention and bias they showed. I accept it and try to get students to understand that this was one aspect at work in the way stories of news development were told by some early insiders — at least until relatively recently when some broadcast scholars we know, namely Mike Conway and Tom Mascaro, have offered better insights into the early years of broadcast news. So the story has, to some extent, changed.

As a researcher in the field, there are also stories you might tend to hear more than once when you are investigating an important subject, including some information you elect not to repeat because it doesn't really relate to the areas you are researching, or the points you are trying to address. For many years while I was researching and writing about the broadcasts of Alistair Cooke over the BBC World Service, network insiders would go out of their way to tell me what a difficult and demanding person Alistair could be. His producers, both here in the U.S. and also in the U.K., would comment about those qualities without prompting from me, I guess because that was not at all the popular image Alistair projected worldwide. He was known to be a perfectionist but his listeners had no way of knowing that because he wrote very succinctly, just as he spoke. He was always very generous to me so I could never see the point of dwelling on those points. Although I would frequently reference correspondence I had with him and share some of those letters with my students. I would also mention some talks I had with other major figures about Alistair's influence worldwide — includ-

ing a conversation I once had with Margaret Thatcher. She told me that she was a very dedicated listener of *Letter from America*. It's highly unlikely that I would drop that name in a class today. Students would not be impressed and most would not know her. And for a number of reasons, Alistair's work has not had the "staying power" in our collective memory as Edward R. Murrow or even Fred Friendly.

Beadle: Murrow and his coverage of World War II is always part of the historical perspective of broadcast news. However, I usually start with newsreels and how important they were before TV so the public could see important events. Students seem to appreciate this since their world is so visual. There are many sites on line that I use to show them what a newsreel was and how important they were especially during WWII. I often compare WWII newsreel coverage to Vietnam war coverage on the nightly news. Today, drone strikes can be seen on the internet and social media. This leads to many discussions about the changes in visual coverage and the impact pictures have on understanding a story. Another area I discuss is Murrow and his documentary work. I often show a clip of *Harvest of Shame*. Many of our students are very involved in social justice issues and travel to Florida over spring break to volunteer with the migrant farm workers. It is important for them to understand that early news coverage was bringing these issues to the public's attention. Of course, part of this story is the ending of documentaries on CBS and major news networks. This is relevant because many students today are very interested in documentaries and they watch them on YouTube and Netflix. They have a very different idea of documentary form (short, very personal and often not news, but celebrity oriented). It is important that they are exposed to important documentaries and formats of the past. The discussion includes the economic aspects of documentary and news divisions.

Smith: In the early days of broadcast news, there was no primer on how to do it properly. Its practitioners created the strategies for how best to present news on the radio largely by trial and error, and under corporate or government restraint. I try to point out that before Ed Murrow, H.V. Kaltenborn was the news icon of CBS. As the medium's most respected early commentator (1930s), Kaltenborn launched the golden age of radio commentary, which lasted into the early 1950s. He and Murrow after him, along with the other members of the World War II CBS team, were idealists. They believed radio news — with its ability to not only report the sound of news on-location and to utilize the human voice as a motivating force — could help solve mankind's issues. Flash forward to the 1960s, which were momentous years in the development of broadcast news. Coverage of the Kennedy Assassination and its aftermath demonstrated the power of visual news coverage, reportage from Vietnam (including Morley Safer's Cam Ne revelation), and shocking scenes of civil rights' demonstrations helped change America's view of war, society and reportage of news itself forever. That decade culminated with *60 Minutes* proving that investigative reporting could be both commercially and journalistically successful. Then, in 1980, the visionary Ted Turner, launched CNN, and despite naysayers predicting its failure, took broadcast news delivery to an entirely new level of prominence.

Ghilani: In studying the history of news and mass communication, I focus on cultural impact and audience reception so my list of individual figures is fairly short. Some names that come up beyond broadcast news are Ida B. Wells, Doyle Dan Bernbach, Edward Bernays, and in the more modern era: Edward R. Murrow or even Katie Couric. But they are most often names emerging in passing or in relation to story coverage, rather than a key emphasis or focus.

Due to increased public scrutiny on the news media and notions

about real versus “fake” news, I talk about the War of the Worlds radio program. We examine the scale and scope of print news coverage about the broadcast, afterwards. I focus on the notion of newsworthiness and how perceptions can be influential. The War of the Worlds is a useful story because of the way many newspapers exaggerated the impact of the broadcast because radio was considered to be a threat to print news dominance. We also talk about the introduction of radio as a dramatic and pivotal technological intervention into the domestic space.

Q: *What sources have you used to acquire information and, when necessary, verify the details of stories you tell?*

Murray: I have always recommend parts of the many biographies written about the life and times of Edward R. Murrow, as well as Fred Friendly’s books including especially *Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control* and Ralph Engelman’s excellent book about Fred and his foresight, titled *Friendlyvision*. I also review some information from Ed Bliss’ *Now the News* as a means of relaying information and to gain student interest and knowledge about some fairly controversial and impactful programs including those about Senator Joseph McCarthy and also *Harvest of Shame*. I try to cover many sides of the controversies concerning those particular programs and the academic literature also containing works about those programs. I’ve also used some of the published interviews I conducted and published about those over the years. They include interviews with Fred Friendly, again Murrow’s (and later Walter Cronkite’s) writer, Ed Bliss, who also edited the Murrow’s collected broadcasts, *In Search of Light*, and some other network leaders, including both Cronkite and Dan Rather. Like many academics starting-out with what I believed to be a fairly interesting dissertation topic, I used some of those sources from preliminary research assignments I gave myself to discuss the media influence of Senator Joseph

McCarthy and McCarthyism. Most of those sources became staffers at *60 Minutes* and they include especially Don Hewitt, Joe Wershba, Palmer Williams, Gene DePoris, and a few others, who were willing to talk about it. Surprisingly, one of the most prominent U.S. Senators, Stuart Symington, who served as a Democratic member of the McCarthy Committee, refused to talk to me about Senator McCarthy and his methods — or what Symington termed “that sorry period.” Some of my colleagues speculated that he was just embarrassed from having been associated with that McCarthy-led committee. But he did help me out with some things later-on, which I really appreciated.

Beadle: That’s a good overview of important sources. A few more specific references might include: *The Origins of TV News* by Mike Conway which gives an in-depth look at the beginnings of nightly news; *A Reporter’s Life* by Walter Cronkite which offers a personal view of the important news events of the twentieth century; *Reporting Live* by Lesley Stahl covering former President Nixon and Watergate; and another book, *That’s the Way It Is: The History of Television News in America* by Charles Ponce DeLeon. For a behind the scenes look at Watergate, Katherine Graham’s *Personal History* is also a very good, if very long, read.

Smith: The sources that influenced me most early in my academic career were Eric Barnouw’s three-volume *History of Broadcasting in the United States*, and Alexander Kendrick’s *Prime Time: The Life of Edward R. Murrow*. In recent years, Edward Bliss’ *Now the News*, Mitchell Charnley’s *News by Radio*, Cecil Brown’s *Suez to Singapore* and Irving Fang’s *Those Radio Commentators* are books that have broadened my appreciation for the depth and breadth of broadcast news history. The primary sources that I have utilized in recent years, and which I heartily recommend, exist in the Mass Communications History Collections at the

Wisconsin State Historical Library in Madison, at the Mass Media and Culture Archives at the University of Maryland in College Park, at the Vanderbilt Network News Archive in Nashville and at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

Ghilani: For contemporary data, reports, and coverage of the industry and how everyday people use and access news, I rely heavily on reputable institutions that focus on journalism and public engagement with media like the Pew Research Center, The Poynter Institute, the Columbia Journalism Review, ProPublica, and the Center for Innovation and Sustainability in Local Media from the University of North Carolina's School of Media and Journalism. For sources on the longer-term impact of mass media in US culture, I turn to cultural historians like Roland Marchand, Lizabeth Cohen, T.J. Jackson Lears, Stuart Ewen, and Charles McGovern. All look at history, mass media, and US culture.

Q: In the course of preparation and verification of material you shared, have you ever discovered any special errors and / or important omissions?

Beadle: The omissions that I find most prevalent are the lack of women in the early history of news. Because I work in an academic unit named after an alumna who became a broadcast icon at NBC News and the host of *Meet the Press*, the Tim Russert Department, I always include information I have researched on Martha Rountree, the creative person behind the initial development of *Meet the Press*. I wrote a short piece on Martha Rountree for *Notable American Women* Susan Ware (Ed.) in 2004. I was able to interview her sister and her daughter who provided material and insight into her creativity. Another area of omission is the contributions of local women. The book Mike and I edited, *Indelible Images*, provides some examples. And there are two local women that I

discuss in class who were pioneers in photojournalism and in television news. So I always include a brief look at photojournalism. This is important today because multi-media and so-called “backpack” journalists are asked to do it all today, including photography. A prominent photographic leader, Margaret Bourke-White, began in Cleveland and was a pioneer in the use of the visual medium to tell a story. So you might want to consider *Margaret Bourke-White: A Biography* by Vicki Goldberg. There was also documentary produced by the local public television that includes an interview with her brother and gives great information about her beginnings, starting out in Cleveland. Another local pioneer was Dorothy Fuldheim. She was the first woman to anchor a local newscast (1947). Her biography, *The First Lady of Television News* by Patricia More, provides insight into her early work. I was also lucky enough to interview her and my university houses the Northeast Ohio Broadcast Archives with many clips of her reporting.

Smith: Many broadcast news historians convey the impression that the CBS team was the first and only news organization to report the early days of World War II from Europe. In reality, both NBC and Mutual were reporting from Europe prior to CBS. However, neither possessed the foresight nor corporate support to put together a news organization that rivaled the team that Ed Murrow coordinated. That is why CBS receives most of the accolades for its war coverage. In addition, few historians acknowledge that Ed Klauber — whom network chief William Paley had hired away from the *New York Times* — was the man who possessed the vision for what CBS News would become. Murrow later cited him as developing the strategies that made CBS News synonymous with the term “journalistic integrity.” However, pointing up how Paley valued style over substance, he fired Klauber, and over the next decade or so most of the members of the esteemed Murrow team relocated to other networks or left broadcasting altogether because their

passion for high-quality journalism put them at odds with Paley's dedication to profits and political expediency.

Murray: Besides oral history interviews, I tried to take the time to correspond with some of the network leaders when I first started doing research for a few book projects and had good experiences with those, overall. In the age before e-mail and I-phones, some important people would take the time to respond to questions if they thought you were serious. And I found that sharing some of that information with students was a great strategy to stimulate their interest in a subject. As I indicated earlier, many of the news leaders at CBS and *60 Minutes* for example, had worked at the company for some time were sometimes willing to share information and material. And yes, a number of the many stories I heard and then later shared with students turned-out to have been in error or at least I later discovered to have been embellished somewhat, to say the least. Using popular sources to share information is always full of potential pitfalls including those from broadcast interviews and program sources. That would include those from news and public affairs series — from both commercial and public broadcast sources. You can't always know what is valid or what's unique from the perspective of one participant or observer or what might have been considered good PR for them or their company.

Ghilani: I have not but I have had the chance to dispel prevailing myths about certain stories. For example, most students have heard of the *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast and believed that it was renowned because it caused widespread panic. The response to the broadcast was far less pervasive than what most media outlets reported. This was due to the perceived threat of radio to print journalism. Print journalists framed the story in a way that made print seem more reliable, trustworthy, and accurate than radio.

Although many of my courses incorporate the history of media and mass communication in the United States, I have only begun to develop dedicated units that focus on the history of news. At this particular cultural moment, it is necessary especially to talk about how the massive structural changes in journalism combine with the impact of social media to create a climate in which clickbait and fake news can circulate and influence, eroding public opinion about even the most reputable and trustworthy of media institutions

Q: *When omissions or errors occurred, did you still include the background on any erroneous information you discovered as a means of reinforcing the difficult questions of historiography when reviewing material in class?*

Murray: Yes, I think some of the stories can be helpful as long as proper perspective and clarification is always provided. Walter Cronkite told me some stories I often repeat and a few of those also appear as part of the *Cronkite Remembers* video series. One involves his pre-interviews with candidates Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy just prior to the *Great Debates*. In one instance, Walter talked about using a sports analogy and the issue of good sportsmanship and fairness to get JFK to relent on pressure he and his campaign team were providing to try to get CBS to edit a response he gave that was not very well delivered. The candidate relented when it was pointed-out that his opponent had agreed to "no edit" format. There are also some funny stories related to other big interviews Walter conducted, one of which appeared in documentary format concerning Frank Sinatra. It's telling to see how balanced the approach was and one biographer discussed the abject fear Sinatra was experiencing in post-production, after Walter got through grilling him about his life and career. Funny stuff.

In other instances, *60 Minutes* founder Don Hewitt used to tell sto-

ries, some of which were later questioned by those involved in the events. Most of them were also of a humorous nature and designed to poke fun at his extreme behavior and occasional odd methods while working on a big story or a major edit, on deadline. One of the funniest had to do with him claiming to have told Dan Rather to physically attack someone — “to hit him in the mouth” — in order to get some major historical material for the *CBS Evening News*, namely Abraham Zapruder’s 8 mm film of the Kennedy Assassination. Hewitt also repeated that story as part of a profile for the *American Masters* series. He added as part of the story that he quickly called Dan Rather back on the phone after he initially said it to him — to indicate that he had changed his mind: “Dan, don’t do that. That’s the stupidest thing I ever said.”

Dan Rather indicated to me that he had no recollection whatsoever of that particular phone interaction and actually doubted that it ever happened. But I believe that by including that story as part of the PBS series (and in my class notes), the point was driven home and emphasized as an illustration of Don’s intensity and dedication, and also as a symptom of what he thought it took to be successful in the field. It’s telling that the sequence in which that story was told was followed in that PBS program by Walter Cronkite seen reinforcing Don’s enthusiasm to get to the news at almost any cost, with Walter’s added occasional concern that Don may have, on occasion, gone too far. Don Hewitt also liked to repeat another story about his post-presidential interactions with Richard Nixon. It concerned his service as director of the first of the so-called historic “Great Debates” against John F. Kennedy. In discussing that broadcast, Hewitt always emphasized, as some other sources have done as well, how much better Kennedy appeared on television versus Nixon, who appeared to be sick and pale. He had refused the chance to have some make-up applied to improve his appearance. And Hewitt claimed that many years later, he asked Nixon off-camera if he had ever regretted not letting the make-up person try to improve his

appearance in an effort to bolster prospects to become the nation’s leader. Asked if he thought that by merely adding some make-up he might have been elected U.S. President? Nixon reportedly, at least in Don Hewitt’s account, told him: “Yeah, and I’d probably be dead now, too.”

That was another one of Hewitt’s often repeated stories, and in this case, one he told again on the Bob Costas’ *Later* program on NBC, without having another source or means to validate it, or alternative way of knowing whether that conversation had actually happened, or at least in terms of how colorfully and often it was told. But that story — and the re-telling of it, does reinforce for students how competitive national politics can be during an American Presidential election. Dan Rather told me another story about coverage years later when viewers seemed to hold a grudge about the way their community had been falsely portrayed.

Beadle: As we discussed earlier, rather than focus on questionable or erroneous information, I always try to center attention on incomplete information, especially with respect to the subject of women in broadcast news. In all my classes I include information on the importance of women in broadcast journalism and the important role they played in the development of the field. And I always try to connect history with a local person or event. And whenever possible, I also try to connect the past with the present. These connections and occasional revisions of information make history more relevant to the students.

Smith: I agree — absolutely. It is important for students to understand that history is continually undergoing revision as new sources are discovered, some of which shed new light on topics about which we previously thought we knew the whole truth. Particularly in the area of broadcast news historiography, it can be challenging to secure artifacts

to paint a full picture of events and personalities. This is because most of the analog recordings from previous decades have either disintegrated or been discarded. Nevertheless, if one is willing to do the legwork, quality examples from yesteryear can be accessed. It is important to understand that history is never complete, that there are always new insights that can be derived from previously under-utilized or undiscovered sources. For example, while Murrow deserves the accolades he received broadcast news did not develop solely at CBS. Historians who make that assumption — based on what some previous historians have written — fail to deliver the whole story — the full truth.

Ghilani: Whenever possible, I try to include as much as I can about the impact of myths and misinformation to evidence some of the complicated and nuanced aspects of the dissemination of content in both distant and digital eras. “Watershed coverage” examples that I raise include moments when journalists and even advertisements became the subject of the news: the Sinking of the Lusitania and how media coverage helped foster public approval of the United States’ entrance into WWI; then later, again in terms of military coverage when Mike Wallace conducted interviews regarding the circumstances of the My Lai massacre from the Vietnam era; and the attacks on September 11th, 2001; and the way that social media and crowdsourcing shaped the coverage of the Boston Marathon Bombing, particularly during the police pursuit of the culprits. We know now that stories like these represent moments around which publics are cultivated and assembled through media coverage. Due to technological shifts in mass communication, not all of these moments involve people crowding around a literal television, but they entail it in a figurative way.

Q: *Are any of your stories based on personal experience — beyond “War Stories” that might not fit into a broader historical context?*

Murray: When you consider personal experiences extending back almost a good half century now, in my case, you can imagine that it might invite some personal second-guessing, including occasions when I was participating in some ancient event, usually as a reporter. The first time I covered Richard Nixon I was still an undergraduate student. My friends and students have heard some of these stories ad nauseam. Briefly, I felt an understanding “right out of the gate” that the approaches used by Nixon’s media advance teams were very sophisticated for their time, and also very effective — especially in terms of setting-up mass meetings with targeted people in the audience, including some providing pre-screened questions. These methods were later copied by many candidates using TV. That way, candidates could consider them as a means of insuring some thoughtful responses and avoiding confusion or unwanted controversy. So yes, if you have those kinds of experiences early in a career — at least in my case, you do have a tendency to think about them and share them if appropriate, as time goes by. In terms of this example, the technology and the blanket cable coverage have changed things so much that if you heard the same or similar questions coming from adults — or teenagers — in different cities today, you would pick-up on the strategies being used and be able to dissect how they were employed pretty fast.

In terms of reviewing them years later, I did have some opportunities from my own very early “minor league” coverage, and also with the benefit of feedback from some “major leaguers” I got to know or work with. On one occasion I can remember asking Walter Cronkite if he felt comfortable with the efforts CBS News was using to cover attempts by the national political parties and their candidates to control coverage in conjunction with strategies later outlined in Joe McGinnis’ book, *The Selling of the President*. That popular book closely chronicled some efforts to try to micro-manage press coverage by carefully orchestrating and controlling events and by limiting media access to Richard Nixon.

Walter just said, “Well of course we do. If we know about them, we try to report on them.”

Beadle: I was privileged to have interviewed three local women whose stories I use in my all classes: Dorothy Fuldheim, Alice Weston and Doris O’Donnell (a local newspaper reporter). The story I tell for each woman is that of a groundbreaker. Because the media job market is challenging for young graduates, I use these stories as a way to encourage people to follow their dream. It was difficult for all these women to succeed, but they persisted and opened doors for all of us who followed and helped contribute to news coverage that today is more balanced.

Smith: My oral history interviews with Cecil Brown’s 100-year old wife and his nephew provided nuances regarding his personality and those of relations with his colleagues and superiors (including Murrow and Paley) that had previously not found their way into print. Although they all could not be verified with other sources — and therefore could not be used — they were important in adding understanding to how and why historic figures, who have been either lionized or villainized, were real people who possessed fallible personalities and acted in the way they did because of varied and often complex motives. While I have not interviewed the notable individuals that Michael has, I have had interesting experiences in conducting research.

I have found archivists to be some of the most helpful individuals I have encountered anywhere. Most of them have sincerely cared about helping me conduct research, and they typically have taken a personal interest in the project on which I was working. In the summer of 2014, when I traveled to the Wisconsin Historical Society to do research on Brown’s papers, upon arriving I was shocked to learn that my laptop had quit working, jeopardizing the entire week of research that lay ahead. Thankfully, a graduate student employed at the archives

checked out a laptop from the University of Wisconsin in his name, so that I could use it for the week, and refused any remuneration. On the same project, I interviewed widowed Brown's wife — who lived in Los Angeles — multiple times over the course of two years. Although a centenarian, she was a delight, willing to share personal stories and possessing an amazingly accurate memory for events that had occurred seventy years before. She took me into her confidence, and we formed a personal relationship. Upon completion of the book, she sent me the ring her deceased husband had tenaciously clung to in the South China Sea in 1941 after surviving the sinking of the British warship *The Repulse*. Those are experiences that make primary source research gratifying.

Ghilani: I use oral history and guest speakers to help add texture and experiential understanding to my classes. I bring in archival materials to help enrich the learning space and encourage students to engage with rare documents. Guest speakers will often include "War Stories" about what happens in the field. My personal experience in journalism has been primarily via digital media. I have discussed my digital media experience from over 10 years in blogging and in creating content for *CBS.com's* Pittsburgh affiliate. But there are not many War Stories to speak of from that experience because this has been something I do on the side when I have time to spare, which is a lot less often than it used to be.

Q: What stories do you think are most important for students interested in understanding the history of television in terms of news reporting?

Murray: In our current era, it seems like political reporting has kind of taken-over the public consciousness at least in terms of adult viewers and overall public interest in news, by comparison to other important

areas. The cable companies are now driven by political reporting and primarily on political conflict. But that might just reflect some ongoing biases and the increased level of competition, plus the very large number of new players we see in the field today. Newspaper reporters and columnists have become prominent as “talking heads” on cable, and this passes for some people as news as opposed to commentary. Again, since this is being driven by cable news and also a.m. radio with very special interest in the current political administration there is a new and ever-evolving “cast of characters” even from outside of Washington, D.C., and some of them are obviously still learning “on the job.” This makes them especially ripe for scrutiny and criticism even if there are fewer formal critics available to comment on their work as opposed to comparison to the old days of newspaper dominance in which every major newspaper had at least one “so-called” media critic or TV critic who had worked in the field. As far as television history is concerned, we know now that research on the medium’s formative years concentrated primarily on the homogenizing effect of network television. Don Godfrey and I tried to address this tendency in the book, *Television in America*, and Mary Beadle and I also followed with a book about women in television titled *Indelible Images*.

Beadle: The most important stories for me are how TV brought the news into the homes of the American public. It was immediate and visual unlike newsreels, photojournalism and radio. Historical examples always provoke discussion about changes in news coverage today. Social media bring the stories immediately to individuals, not to the home. Broadcast news created a common culture, but social media has created individual experiences that may or may not be shared. I often use the coverage of war to demonstrate this difference. YouTube has many clips to choose. These include: Newsreels from WWII or Korea, Vietnam, Iraq war (the first one) with CNN coverage live, Second Iraq War after 9/11,

drone coverage and the use of embedded reporters.

Smith: Stories related to the current presidency need to be put in context of stories that related to previous presidencies. Outside of the occasional NPR or PBS story and some online sites, broadcast news has typically done a poor job of reporting on its own performance. In their weekly *Newshour* segment, I recently heard analysts Mark Shields and David Brooks compare the legal investigations of the current presidency to those that occurred during Richard Nixon’s Administration. I cite them because they provided both a unique and insightful historical perspective. In a similar vein, it is important to understand the differences of war coverage dating from World War II until today. U.S. government and military censorship — or lack thereof — has varied across the span of seventy-five years. Students need to appreciate what the American public hears or does not hear about U.S. military activities, and how what they hear impacts public opinion and the military’s activities abroad. It also is important not to overlook local or non-Great Man broadcast history. Several of my projects have dealt with previously overlooked individuals who played important roles in helping their communities understand how local issues fit into the nation’s larger situation; or individuals, such as Brown (a forgotten Murrow Boy), who helped Americans overcome their 1940s’ isolationism. Such case studies can help scholars understand, for example, the differences in the way nations view journalists’ right to report, or how employee relations can call into questions a journalist’s First Amendment rights.

Ghilani: I think it is important for young students who may be less familiar or even unfamiliar with television news to understand how it continues to dominate as the primary venue for news information, across age groupings. Even as digital sources rise in influence and print declines, the Pew Research Center’s studies of how people in the US get

their news continue to demonstrate that television is at the top.

Since most of them identify social media as their primary source for news information, we talk about medium theory and the problems of filter bubbles, algorithmic feeds, and what happens when people receive all of their news information via private companies that have a dominant objective to generate advertising revenue, rather than function to circulate reliable journalism.

We talk about the relentless pace of news now versus the pace that journalists work with in other media as well as other eras. We talk about what that pace means for verifying information and putting together careful stories. We also talk about what it means for publics to have to wait for information and how that changes the relationship between audiences and media.

Q: Do any of the stories you relay to students regularly, address some key challenges in terms of the study of the history of broadcast news?

Murray: Yes, providing a balance of information can be an important challenge. The general public is especially sensitive to the perception of liberal bias right now and students are also well-aware of these concerns. Some events and the participants in them have tended to create interesting stories but they are often a lot more nuanced by comparison to the stark way they are presented. If you go back to basics and review, for example, the Murrow and McCarthy programs, you can see how both liberals and conservatives picking-out instances in which things appear to be lacking balance. Believe it or not, I once had a conversation with William F. Buckley and he highlighted for me one of the broadcasts from the *See It Now* series which portrayed a certain individual as having been a victim of McCarthyism, when the unvarnished truth, at least according to Bill Buckley, was quite the opposite of that. Talking about an individual — the subject of a televised hearing which *See it Now* cov-

ered — Buckley insisted of a witness: “Well, she WAS guilty, you know.” Of course, he was well-known as an ardent supporter of McCarthy and co-authored a book about his detractors, but students could benefit from getting information beyond what sometimes appears to be “set in stone,” in this instance, a complaint that the *See It Now* team was not providing an accurate picture, although they repeatedly claimed to have done so.

Beadle: The biggest challenge is providing students a historical context to understand the importance of events in broadcast journalism. For example, the era of McCarthyism needs to be clearly explained for them to understand the importance of *See It Now* and the risk that CBS took in airing a challenge to McCarthy. The other challenge is the influence of advertising on the content of documentary programs aired on networks.

Smith: The lack of access to audio and video recordings from previous eras can make broadcast news history particularly challenging, but not impossible. Most of the archives I mentioned have digitized historic recordings. So they are available for listening or viewing, and in a few instances, personal correspondence and news scripts have been preserved as well. While many of the high-profile broadcasters have written books about their experiences, others did not compile documents related to their work. On the other hand, if you can track them down, some of the individuals involved in broadcast news history, former colleagues, or members of their audiences, remain alive for oral history interviews. The great thing about broadcast news is that it is a relatively young enterprise, which makes oral history a legitimate research tool for revelatory sources.

Ghilani: Yes, I talk about how — when you study something that relates

so much to understanding audiences and cultural history — it is difficult to determine what things were “really like” and how collective memory can be especially flawed.

Q: Do any stories you tell relate as well to other courses — in other areas — such as media law, broadcast writing and reporting, or other media-related courses you might teach regularly?

Murray: Before I became so darn “distinguished” and “emeritus” — and still taught a full load of courses — some of the major legal cases we would regularly review in the Media Law classes and also from case studies in the *Media Law and Ethics* textbook (co-authored with Roy Moore, Mike Farrell and Kyu Youm) would revolve around stories of major cases and the characters driving attention to certain kinds of narratives with respect to Libel or some other area of interest. Many of our colleagues in Mass Communication and Journalism have written a lot about the important Civil Liberties and Civil Rights cases and there are definitely some important Libel cases carrying especially important messages for students with an ambition to work in the field. In terms of the other research I’ve used in class, I have also had additional conversations with individuals who were very proud of their special coverage. Those would include most famously: John Siegenthaler, but also Tom Brokaw and Dan Rather, for example, who reported from the field in the South on the Civil Rights story and then discussed first-hand experiences describing the brutality, chicanery and blatant stupidity involved in opposing progress or keeping people from the right to vote.

Beadle: I include information about news in Introduction to Mass Media, Communication Ethics, Documentary, and Diversity and Media. I have already discussed content for Introduction and Documentary. In Communication Ethics, I use the story of Stephen Glass, a reporter for

The New Republic who made up stories published by the magazine. I use the film, *Shattered Glass*, to look at questions of responsibility and loyalty in the coverage of news events. Watching this film and the subsequent class discussion provides a context for looking at "fake news" and the importance of verification of facts. It is important for students to understand this is not a new phenomenon. Other historical issues I often include are the NBC Dateline scandal of rigging GM pickup trucks to blow up, Brian Williams' lies regarding his coverage of the Iraq war and the Dan Rather controversy about forged documents regarding President Bush's Vietnam Era service. In the areas related to Diversity and Media, I use many of the Pew studies and the RTDNA reports that look at diversity in the newsrooms. The focus in both these classes is to analyze stories based on the concept of framing. The RTDNA Women and Minorities reports also includes historical data from 1990 about salaries and employment in radio and television.

Smith: Utilization of news scripts and recordings to analyze how the respected practitioners of broadcast news produced stories offer excellent models for students to understand how sound, video and writing work together to bring a story alive for the audience. The craft of creating excellent broadcast news never goes out of style. I have a bias toward radio news and how to write word pictures in the style that the Murrow Boys did, and which NPR continues to do today. I typically share these examples with students when I teach courses such as Audio for Journalists and Sports Broadcasting. It also is important to share stories about the courage of journalists in getting stories, so that students understand that broadcast news is not a profession for the weak of heart. They need to hear about the Murrow Boys going on bombing missions over Europe, Fred Friendly resigning at CBS because he believed the public must see congressional hearings about prosecution of the Vietnam War, and Iraqi troops imprisoning Bob Simon during the

Gulf War. In addition, examples of ethical — or unethical — behavior of broadcast journalists are important for students to understand in the Media Ethics' course. Students see too many examples these days of broadcast journalists violating the standards that their predecessors believed were sacrosanct. In all my courses, I make the point that, contrary to their view that broadcast news is primarily show business, there have been high-principled “giants” in the field before them, and students need to see the profession as a public service “calling,” not just a high-profile, paying job.

Ghilani: Definitely. My courses focusing on speech communication, advertising, and film as well as cultural studies, gender studies, and digital media all include examinations of the history of mass communication and the influence of media on everyday life. I find it to be a subject that is interdisciplinary to a large degree.

Q: Regarding coverage of major events emerging from the history of American broadcast news, what sources would you recommend for verifying information or getting some added in-depth coverage on key issues related to the field?

Murray: Some of the best sources sometimes reside outside of our field. They were created and covered by people involved in the development of the story; acknowledging some of the key characters who took a serious risk in the telling of them. When I was putting together a small book for classroom use about local reporting methods and Civil Rights in Missouri, I reverted back to some primary source documents to examine hiring patterns. I discovered that one of our long-term U.S. Representatives, who was previously a St. Louis Alderman, had conducted and then published a report about hiring practices that focused directly on the local press itself. It uncovered some very unpleasant

truths about the number and the nature of positions held by minorities which obviously had an impact on story selection and the way stories from that era were being reported. Within the context of a “Broadcast Writing and Reporting” class, the re-telling and study of those kinds of stories can offer some additional insights into what was uncovered more recently and what is still happening today.

Beadle: Archival footage is often helpful. I am fortunate that I have access to an archive located on campus. I have used clips of the urban riots in the 1960s to discuss the Kerner Commission report. In the Diversity and Media class, we discuss how news covers minority groups. The students review the main findings of the Kerner Commission about the lack of reporting about the situation in the inner cities. This leads to discussion about the coverage of stories today and how stories are framed. Based on the Kerner Commission, we discuss changes in reporting and the importance of social media and the internet for minority groups to have a voice.

Smith: A number of scholars in other academic areas have completed projects that — while not relating directly to broadcast news — provide insights for topics in broadcast news. Consulting such sources can help build context for studies. As a reviewer of prospective journal articles in broadcast news, I sometimes find authors framing the story as if it occurred in a vacuum. This is never the case, and if the context is not included, the study is incomplete. For example, while researching news commentary that went against the popular historical narrative during World War II that Americans wholeheartedly supported the war effort, I found that this was not necessarily the case. Articles in the *Journal of American History* provided the context in which anti-war commentary played a role. In addition to consulting appropriate issues of major U.S. newspapers for criticism and analysis of radio and television news

(*New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*), researchers should not overlook smaller-circulation newspaper archives, such as *Newspapers.com*, in which they will find articles related to broadcast news. A researcher should also be aware that the entire number of the trade magazine, *Broadcasting*, dating to its beginning in 1931, can be accessed free online. Speaking of online, there is a plethora of broadcast history sources online, too many to mention here, but a good starting point is with the Museum of Broadcasting and American Radio History sites.

Ghilani: One of the documentaries I most enjoy screening with students — one that does an effective job to overview significant changes in political and presidential news conventions comes from Bill Moyers, called *Illusions of News*. It was part of a series titled *The Public Mind*, examining media influence in culture. *Illusions of News* in particular focuses on broadcast television news and the evolution of political, presidential news beats and conventions. Moyers relays the ways in which the Reagan administration was pivotal in reforming the style of presidential news coverage on television. Michael Deaver is one of the people interviewed by Moyers and he talks about the significance of visual imagery toward strategic persuasion and framing stories. Deaver was instrumental in shaping presidential news coverage by staging various photo opportunities and distributing video footage that was attractive and favorable enough to offset narrations comprised of critical coverage. Deaver thought that as long as there were attractive images providing the visuals, any kind of coverage would result in favorable public opinions about President Reagan. Journalist, Leslie Stahl is also interviewed and talks about how she initially did not realize that this was a tactic specifically designed to distract from what she would say.

I prefer using these kinds of examples because they allow students to engage with political news without fearing social repercussions or

drawing political lines in the classroom. The privilege of historical distance allows them to speak openly about their views without revealing partisan allegiances.

***Q:** What would you consider to be most valuable in terms of comparing how issues in broadcast news you cover in class developed in terms of offering a progression of events on that topic with comparisons to how they currently function?*

Murray: Taking a topical approach is probably the most effective strategy to get at some deeply rooted facts in a story. This requires some content expertise and that recognition also helps to best understand why a particular story or kind of story has not been reported-on effectively; or perhaps why you would consider it to have been under-reported, under-covered. If you consider technical, medical or scientific stories, you can see the complexity with the reporting, especially within the context of broadcast news. So, mass communication historiography literature has developed in some instances around some widely misunderstood or misinterpreted events that have a basis in science or technology. They require a great deal of expertise and a special, long-term commitment to a story.

Beadle: Unfortunately, the coverage of war is an interesting story to look at across time. From newsreels of WWII and the Korean War, to Vietnam, to both Iraq wars, to the use of drone coverage, technology has changed the coverage of war. It is important to look at how these technologies have changed the story of war and the reaction of the audience.

Smith: I like to tell students the content of broadcast news is not broadcast news. The electronic media present a powerful platform on which

stories about culture, medicine, politics, sports and many more topics have been and are presented. Therefore, broadcast news research needs to become immersed in the topic with which the researcher is dealing in a study. This requires a great deal of reading and perhaps consulting with experts in the related field beyond chronicling the event(s) under analysis. (This can present an opportunity for the researcher to move outside his own academic “silo” and become acquainted with a colleague(s) in other disciplines.) Of course, you cannot expect to become as knowledgeable as that colleague, but you need to gain an informed, working knowledge of the discipline, so that you can properly frame broadcasters’ reportage of it. Over the years, my various projects have broadened and deepened my familiarity with specialty areas with which I previously was only knowledgeable in a cursory manner.

Ghilani: In general I think it is necessary to put contemporary moments into context with history. I try to resist the kinds of historical methods that become stories of great individuals. I think incorporating history is something that enriches every kind of class environment.

Q: Are there any works you use with revealing insights about historic coverage on special issues by broadcast news?

Smith: In the realm of radio, I have students listen to classic broadcasts such as Murrow’s *This is London* reports, FDR’s “Fireside Chats,” and even a narrator’s reading of Ernie Pyle’s “The Death of Captain Was-kow.” Of course, the latter was not originally a broadcast story, but it is a splendid example of a journalist’s use of words to paint a scene that communicates pathos and greater meaning than the event itself. Students today — who have grown up in a completely visual media world — have zero understanding of the power of the Theater of the

Mind concept with radio audiences. I typically link such recordings with recent NPR stories, which link the strategy of using sound to help the audience become a part of the story. (Ironically, the CBS team was prohibited from recording sound, but that did not stop them from reporting from locations where the sound of news was overheard in the background). Most certainly the films *Good Night and Good Luck* and *The Insider* are important to screen. Both are docudramas (not entirely factual), and students sometimes consider them ponderous viewing, but the films reveal the process and challenges broadcasters have faced with the reporting of controversial issues and the push-back from network executives who feared the ramifications of airing them. I also utilize a wonderful PBS documentary, narrated by Jane Pauley and produced more than a decade ago, that focuses on how the media covered President Kennedy's Assassination. The value of the documentary is that it identifies the role television played in covering the tragedy and the funeral in the days afterward. But, even more importantly for journalism scholars, it marks the coverage as the end of the heyday of newspaper coverage of breaking news and the realization that television would replace newspapers as the medium that Americans paid the most attention to for breaking news. Of course, the networks expanded their evening newscasts from 15-minutes to one-half hour shortly thereafter.

Murray: With regard to important stories and sharing with students, in my own case, I try to remind myself periodically that since they didn't "live it," they are, of course, less likely to be aware of the significance — or the fact that they might have even seen it — but still have forgotten. I always like to pick an era and present various approaches to a subject like reporting crime and punishment. I will review some of the major crime stories from the broadcast literature, for example, beginning with the CBS Radio broadcast, *Who Killed Michael Farmer* — another

Murrow classic. When I was in graduate school my senior professor, Joe Wolfe, made the case that one documentary in particular was a model in terms of being well structured and very well-sourced, including many participants: gang members, witnesses, social workers, parents and the judge in this case. More recent examples would likely include those from the era of “New Journalism” of the nineteen sixties including background information from many print stories which form the basis for broadcast coverage. I talk about major works like *In Cold Blood* starting as a highly regarded book and a topic revisited for broadcast. The work of individual reporters also comes to mind on that “beat” such as Edna Buchanan reporting on crime from Miami. I use her book, *The Corpse Had a Familiar Face*, to reinforce the importance of good storytelling. Major local political stories can also be very important beyond *The Pentagon Papers*, *The Selling of the Pentagon*, the Watergate story and Woodward and Bernstein.

We have an advantage now because documents in a lot of cases are now available on-line and the coverage of some areas which used to be considered “taboo” is now widely accepted. AMC recently ran a six-part “made for cable” series about *The Clinton Affair* containing quite a lot on press coverage on the plight of Monica Lewinsky in the wake of press scrutiny in the era of the “Me too” movement. On this topic, there are also a lot of cases from the field of broadcast news involving Roger Ailes and the leadership at FOX-TV and bad actors at the other major networks; namely Les Moonves, Charlie Rose and Matt Lauer. I suspect their tawdry tales will eventually also show-up in the form of documentaries and even feature films. I used to use a series of C-SPAN tapes I received through support from Purdue University on the entire Gary Hart “Monkey Business” episode. It consisted of three tapes and a discussion on media ethics. There is currently a popular film about the subject. But I found the actual “real-life” press coverage shared with students a lot more frightening — and sick — than anything a movie could possibly

portray on that topic. It could have just as easily been titled “The Hunt” and /or “The Hunted.” But some of our colleagues have also put together some revealing books about stories from relatively recent media history including comparisons from other examples from journalism history. A couple of them come to mind including Brooke Kroeger’s *Undercover Reporting: The Truth about Deception* and also Chad Raphael’s *Investigated Reporting*. Our colleague, Joe Campbell, has also published a number of works focusing on established media myths, mistakes and misinterpretations about key events and eras from the study of journalism history. Those are important and interesting to point out within the context of reviewing that material with students.

Ghilani: I think the *War of the Worlds* broadcast — the reaction to it as well as coverage of it by the media of that broadcast day — functions as a very useful example for historiography. It evidences a moment in which the press shaped and also reframed an event in the wake of influence to foster a more favorable position for the field.

Beadle: PBS’ *The American Experience*, *Breaking News of the 1930s* is helpful in exploring what we mean by “breaking news.” In 2007, the coverage of the Virginia Tech shootings demonstrated for the first time that social media led media sources for breaking news. The impact of that event and the reporting of rumors or unverified fact by major news sources has changed the way media report the news. *The Transformation of Network News* (Nieman Reports, 1999) discusses the relationship between the business of broadcasting and what news is covered. This leads to discussions about news coverage today related to “clicks vs. content.” In general, it is important for students to actually see TV news because generally speaking, they don’t watch TV as much as they use social media or streaming sources. They may play an embedded video but often not the full clip. News is a different experience

for the students today. So, I try to connect historical information with today's media. Since most of the students I teach are Communication majors, and not journalism students, I approach the history of broadcast journalism as something they need to know to understand the information they are receiving and why being a smart user of news is important to be an effective, well-informed citizen.

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

Historian Interview:

Ford Risley ©



Risley

Ford Risley, the editor of the history journal *American Journalism*, is a professor at Pennsylvania State University, where he serves as associate dean of the Bellisario College of Communications. He is the author or editor of four books, including *Abolition and the Press: The Moral Struggle Against Slavery*, for which he won the American Journalism Historians Association's Book of the Year Award in 2009. His most recent book is *Dear Courier: The Civil War Correspondence of Editor Melvin Dwinell* (2018). He is a former president of the AJHA. He received his Ph.D. in mass communication from the University of Florida.

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

Risley: I was born in North Carolina, but grew up in Jacksonville, Florida. My mother was a school librarian, and reading was a big thing in our family. I spent many hours in the little Willowbranch Library in Jacksonville. I became interested in journalism during my first year at Auburn University, and I began working for our weekly student newspaper, which was a great experience. After working as a reporter for nine years, I earned my master's degree at the University of Georgia. I then got my Ph.D. at the University of Florida.

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

Risley: I was a reporter at newspapers in Florida and Georgia. I also worked as a freelance writer while I was in graduate school to help pay the bills.

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

Risley: I've been lucky to spend my entire teaching career at Penn State. I teach our undergraduate media history course regularly and our graduate media history seminar when we offer it. I also teach mass media law from time to time. I used to teach journalism skills classes, but I haven't done that since I took over administrative duties.

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?

Risley: I got interested in historical research while taking a graduate seminar with Wally Eberhard at Georgia. He encouraged us to do an original research project and I was quickly hooked. At the time, we were living in Marietta, Georgia, not far from Kennesaw Mountain, which was one of the major battles during the Atlanta campaign of the Civil War. My wife and I spent a lot of time hiking in the area, and I started thinking about what it was like to report the Civil War. At Florida, I was fortunate to take several terrific seminars with faculty like Les Smith. I also owe a great debt to John Inscoe and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, who were on the history faculty at Georgia and Florida, respectively. They welcomed me into their seminars just like I was a graduate student in the history department.

Historian Interview

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

Risley: Since I work in the Antebellum and Civil War eras, my big influences have been historians working in this period such as James McPherson, C. Vann Woodward, James Stewart, Merton Dillon, and Russell Nye. Of course, I also owe a great debt to many journalism historians, particularly Hazel Dicken-Garcia, Gerald Baldasty, Jeff Smith, Debbie van Tuyl, David Bulla and, of course, Cutler Andrews.

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

Risley: My research has focused on Antebellum and Civil War-era journalism. I'm interested in the role of the press in reporting and editorializing on this pivotal period. I'm also interested in how the press developed during this time.

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

Risley: I've published articles in *American Journalism* and *Journalism History*. I think it's important for media historians to publish in mainstream history journals. So I've also published articles in *Civil War History* and *Georgia Historical Quarterly*. My books include *Abolition and the Press: The Moral Struggle Against Slavery* (Northwestern University Press) and *Civil War Journalism* (Praeger). I recently published an edited collection, *Dear Courier: The Civil War Correspondence of Editor Melvin Dwinell* (University of Tennessee Press).

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

Risley: I enjoyed writing *Abolition and the Press* because I had never tackled the subject of antislavery newspapers and their role in the debate about ending slavery. It's a complicated subject with a lot of players. So putting the story together in a way the readers could understand was a challenge that I think I managed. In *Civil War Journalism* I had a tall order in telling the story of the journalism of both the North and South during the war. There was a great deal of material to cover, but I like the way it turned out. *Dear Courier* was a labor of love because editing a collection of 200 letters is tiresome work. However, I was glad to give the editor of a small town newspaper the attention he deserved.

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?

Risley: I would like to think that I'm one of the historians who have helped us to have a far better understanding of Civil War-era journalism. This was not an area that was studied much three decades ago, but fortunately it is now. *Civil War Journalism* synthesized a lot of that research, not only my own, of course, but also that of many other people doing outstanding research.

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

Risley: I wish that I didn't have to rush through my Ph.D. program. My wife and I had started a family and we couldn't afford for me to spend

Historian Interview

more than three years as a student. I left Florida “ABD” and madly finished my dissertation during my first year at Penn State. That was hard, of course, but it also meant that I didn’t get to read as many standard works as I would have liked. I spent several years catching up on the reading I would probably have been able to do if I could have spent another year in the Ph.D. program.

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.

Risley: I don’t know that I have a philosophy of history. I think history should have a strong narrative thread. We should never forget the root word of history is “story.” When it comes to media history, I think context is critical. Without that we don’t get a complete picture.

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

Risley: I think the quality of historical work is better than it’s ever been. As editor of *American Journalism*, I see a lot of good research on interesting and important subjects. Most folks doing media history research today have received excellent training and they put it to use in tackling subjects. Personally, I would like to see more works of media history looking at big subjects. We need authors who want to tackle broad questions that will be of interest to more people. The “Visions of the American Press” book series that David Abrahamson spearheads has been a great step toward doing that. We need more works like the kind published in the series.

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?

Risley: We need to continue fighting for the essential role of history in the curriculum. We also need to take every opportunity to include historical perspectives in other classes we teach. We need more media historians publishing in mainstream historical journals. Media historians also need to write commentary that provides historical perspective on current events.

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

Risley: History has always faced the challenge of being relevant. That's certainly the case in our field where we are so concerned about what's going on now. We need to constantly remind our colleagues that history informs our understanding of the present and can be a guide to what will happen in the future.

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

Book Award Interview: Kathy Roberts Forde ©



Forde

Kathy Roberts Forde received the Frank Luther Mott-Kappa Tau Alpha Research Award and the AEJMC History Division book award for her 2008 book *Literary Journalism on Trial: Masson v. New Yorker and the First Amendment*. She is past chair of the AEJMC History Division and past associate editor of the journal *American Journalism*. She was the founding director of the Media & Civil Rights History Symposium at the University of South Carolina, a biennial scholarly gathering. She received her Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina.

Q: Give us a brief summary of your book.

Forde: *Literary Journalism on Trial* tells the story of a significant First Amendment libel case that involved two competing conceptions of what makes a truthful report. This case allowed me to tell the story of the emergence and development of two forms of reporting in American journalism — the traditional and the literary — and chart their points of contact and divergence. And it allowed me to explore the range of debates and ideas about the role of the press, democracy, and the First Amendment in U.S. public life in the twentieth century.

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

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Forde: I credit my classmate at UNC, Glenn Scott, for the initial idea that grew into my dissertation and then book. I was in my first semester of the doctoral program, and I was looking for a research paper topic for Dr. Ruth Walden's Media Law course. I was eating lunch with classmates in the grad student lounge, knocking around ideas for our law papers. I wanted to find a topic that would align with my interest in literary journalism, and Glenn mentioned this U.S. Supreme Court libel case involving misquotation and the *New Yorker* magazine. I wrote my law paper on that case and its progeny — and the case raised so many fascinating historical and legal questions, it eventually led to a much bigger project.

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?*

Forde: I used *Masson v. New Yorker* as a way to explore the history of two traditions of U.S. journalism in the twentieth century: traditional objective journalism and literary journalism. These two traditions developed some differing journalistic techniques, standards, and norms — and these collided in the 1980s in this libel case that further interpreted the actual malice standard of *New York Times v. Sullivan*. So my research involved analyzing the many actions, opinions, and related documents in the twelve-year trip of *Masson v. New Yorker* through the federal court, as well as the line of U.S. Supreme Court libel cases stretching from *New York Times* to *Masson*. I examined print news coverage of the case and its trials in major U.S. newspapers and newsmagazines, as well as trade publication coverage. I spent a great deal of time working in the vast *New Yorker* magazine archive at the New York Public Library, paying particular attention to the magazine's handling of libel cases across many decades. I conducted oral histories with Jeffrey

Book Award Interview

Masson, who brought the suit, and multiple lawyers who litigated the case across the years. And I analyzed important works of public intellectuals, like John Dewey and Walter Lippmann, and journalism association documents that charted the development of a philosophy of journalism across the twentieth century. I read most of Janet Malcolm's published work and some of Jeffrey Masson's to look for their ideas about narrative, reporting, writing, objective knowledge, and more. The research itself stretched across several years and was an iterative process of primary and secondary source work.

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

Forde: Yes, I very much wanted to take the oral histories of Janet Malcolm, the *New Yorker* author Masson accused of libel, and her primary attorney, who also defended the *New Yorker* magazine. But Malcolm wasn't willing to talk with me, and her attorney was obliged to follow suit.

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

Forde: I think of myself as an archival historian. The kinds of historical questions that interest me require moving well beyond news content. Of course, I examine news content for all of my projects, but that's never sufficient. I'm interested in the historical actors and institutions of journalism and their role in significant historical events, issues, and transformations in the broader landscape of politics, society, and culture. I want to understand the role of journalism in public affairs — and to investigate that role, I often need to consult the personal papers of historical actors like publishers, editors, journalists, politicians, and

public figures; institutional records of particular news organizations or publishing houses; a vast array of government records; and other kinds of special collections. To find relevant archives, I suggest reading relevant secondary literature not only in journalism history but also in relevant historical subfields for the project — and mining that literature for useful primary sources, including archival collections. I suggest triangulating sources to verify facts and test historical interpretations. I suggest reading widely in the social sciences, too, so you're familiar with social science theories and knowledge that can help historians make sense of the past.

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

Forde: Tracing the movement of ideas about journalism's standards, norms, and reportorial and narrative techniques through time — with attention to continuity and change — is a challenge. It's the work of intellectual history, and it requires attention to discourses in a broad range of sources, like trade publications, news sources, memoirs, institutional histories, legal cases, and more. It was also challenging — and at times nerve-wracking — to research and write about living people. Both Masson and Malcolm were high-profile figures, both of whom had been involved in a very contentious defamation case involving misquotation. You can bet I was exceedingly careful with all my quotations! I also had a very hard time getting permission from Conde Nast, the parent company of the *New Yorker*, to use the material from the *New Yorker* records at the New York Public Library.

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?

Forde: I think historians should get as close as possible to their research subjects; we need granular knowledge. I don't think the problem is getting too close to a research subject; the problem is not changing our lens. We must be able to move from the close-up view to the far-away view of our subject; from the empathetic to the neutral and disinterested; from the subjective to the objective. We should always be questioning and testing our interpretations, looking for countervailing evidence as we work with our sources. We should, of course, avoid applying present-day values and conditions to the past.

Q: What new insights does your book provide?

Forde: It charts the professional and disciplinary divide between what I called "traditional" journalism and literary journalism across the twentieth century — and the related, often contentious debate about the promises and limitations of journalistic and narrative norms, standards, and techniques in representing reality. It demonstrates how the *Masson* case involved deep concerns in the professions of journalism and law about the postmodern critique of objectivity that gained increasing traction from the 1960s forward. And finally, it argues that the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the *Masson* case represented a retrenchment on the press protective doctrine of *New York Times v. Sullivan*.

Q: What findings most surprised you?

Forde: I was surprised to find that few journalism historians had engaged with the postmodernist critique of objective knowledge, considering that the professions of both journalism and history embrace a fundamental commitment to objectivity. Yet the critique of objective knowledge had roiled the profession of history (consider Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream*). So I was happy to be able to demonstrate how jour-

nalism had indeed grappled with this critique in a very public way — and in the federal courts, even the U.S. Supreme Court.

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

Forde: If you're writing a history-based dissertation, write it in book form. There is no need for a literature review chapter. Your footnotes constitute the literature review. If you are writing as a faculty member, you have to protect your research and writing time, which is easier said than done. Find mentors in our field who have published books you admire and ask them for advice as you navigate the research, writing, and publication challenges and choices. Improve your thinking and writing by reading widely in history and related fields and noting how other books are structured. Balance narrative with analysis. Always look for ways to deepen your analysis; the stronger the analysis, the more significant your work will be. Ask colleagues and friends to read work-in-progress, and do the same for them. Be open to criticism and feedback — and invite it before a press sends your manuscript out for peer review.

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