Historiography

in Mass Communication

Volume 11 (2025). Number 3

Historiography in Mass Communication

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

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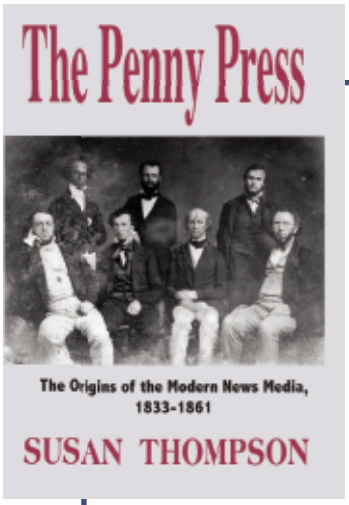

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Scholars have lauded this book as the best ever written focusing on the cheap press before the Civil War.

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

The Only Way To Save History

By Wm. David Sloan ©

Sloan

For several years, the director of our doctoral program at the University of Alabama specialized in the study of pornography. He had the Germanic sense of mechanical order. He never unbuttoned the coat on his gray suit, and he might never have watched anything even slightly suggestive had it not been his research focus. He thought history was useless.

Our students could choose from a number of specializations. But what do you think many of them elected to study during those years? History? No, pornography.

Even though the students found pornography more appealing than history, they offer a good lesson for historians. It is this: Students tend to gravitate toward their teachers' research interests. Especially important are the teachers they meet the first semester.

History in the JMC curriculum has been drying up for several decades, suffering a laborious death. It has resisted resuscitation efforts over the entire teaching career of you, the present generation of historians.

The American Journalism Historians Association and the AEJMC

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

History Division have been trying for years to increase the importance of history in the curriculum. In fact, though, sometimes we've not even figured out *why* students aren't interested in history.

Here's a simple explanation: Students tend to be interested in the same subjects that interest their professors. And, believe it or not, even at the doctoral level many entering students haven't decided what research areas interest them. So they're ripe to be manipulated, and a lot of professors are more than willing to manipulate them.

Innocent, students will tend to accept whatever instructors tell them they should emphasize. If in their first semester they take courses in social science methods, in which their instructors emphasize the importance and pre-eminence of social science theory, by the end of that semester most students will have decided they need to specialize in — what else? — social science theory and methodology.

This situation leads to the conclusion that the most effective way to promote the study of history is by historians teaching the introductory methodology course. In fact, I will be so bold as to say that the *only* way history will come to be recognized as important is if historians start teaching introductory methods courses. I will never suggest that historians (or any other professors) manipulate students, but they should introduce them to the wide range of methods that the mass communication field employs. Who are the professors best prepared to do that?

Consider what is happening now. Professors who specialize in social and behavioral science have taken on for many years the responsibility of teaching the core courses in theory and methodology. Most teach the standard methods of content analysis, experiment, and survey, and their courses are filled with explanations of statistics, measurement, sampling, and hypothesis testing — the same as the courses those professors took as graduate students. They have a limited awareness of

other methods. They're provincial. Few really understand methodologies such as those used in law and history. They didn't study them in graduate school because their professors didn't teach them or consider them important. Now, professors themselves, they don't teach them because they don't consider them important.

And should we be surprised at what students conclude: that the legitimate methods for important research are those of S&BS and that history is meaningless in addressing the significant issues in communication?

No wonder most doctoral graduates are uninterested in history. And once they become professors, why should anyone expect that they will tell their own students that history is important? So we'll have the same continuing cycle as far into the future as we can see, a cycle that begins with professors who teach methodology.

Now, imagine a different situation.

What if professors teaching the general methodology course included not only S&BS methods but also historical and other methods that are widely used in the study of communication?

Students would recognize that many subject areas and methods — not S&BS alone — are valid, and more students would choose history as their specialization.

But who are the professors who will teach the variety of methods that the field of mass communication uses?

Don't assume they're S&BS professors. Historians have been using systematic methodology for generations, and yet S&BS professors are, for the most part, unaware of it. If they had any interest in teaching historical methods, they would be doing it by now.

When you think about it, many of the professors now teaching the general methods course really are among the least prepared to teach it.

They've invested so much of their education in S&BS that those are the only areas they know. They don't have the background or training to teach other methods.

Who are really the best equipped to teach methods?

They are for the most part professors who specialize in such areas as history and law. Most JMC historians took required methods courses in graduate programs that focused on S&BS. At the University of Texas, for example, I had to take four such courses. That is not unusual in graduate programs. Then most students who became historians learned at least one other methodology — history — and perhaps several. Thus, historians know a wider range of methods than do most professors who now teach methods.

That means that the professor in your school best qualified to teach the methods course probably is *you*!

The reason historians tend not to teach methods courses isn't because they're unfamiliar with the wide range of methods — but because they're drawn more toward the humanities. Thus, most don't have much interest in teaching the methods of the "sciences."

It's just the same for S&BS professors. Most don't have an interest in anything other than S&BS methods — and so they don't teach any methods other than those of S&BS.

If I were still teaching, I would immediately volunteer to teach the methods course. It would be easy. I dare say, even fun. Here's the system I would use:

For each method, I would invite another professor who specializes in it to lecture to the class. That would make the professors realize that I appreciate them. They would be flattered, which would help them to appreciate my own research.

As for myself, the class would be rewarding. Not only would I

develop a closer relationship with other professors, but I would get to know nearly every student in the graduate program. If you like students, that would be compensation enough.

But if a professor teaches only S&BS methods, the losers turn out to be the students, who are left with the impression that only social and behavioral sciences are legitimate. And ultimately the entire field of communication study, restricted to a narrow range of interests, loses.

So, if you want history to become more important, you must decide how important it is to you. If it is important, then decide to do one thing: Start teaching general methods courses. It's the only way.

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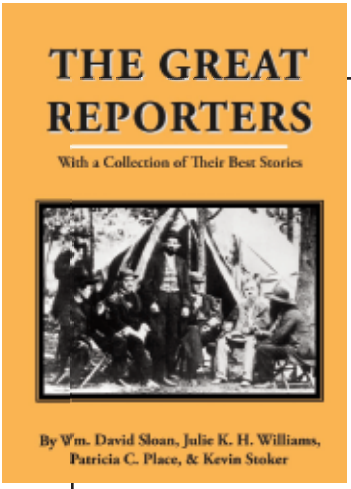

THE GREAT REPORTERS

Of the thousands of reporters who have paraded through American journalism, those included in this book wrote in such a way that set them apart from the rest. Although all of the stories were written more than three-quarters of a century ago, even today they still maintain their ability to transport the reader to the exact time and place the news events occurred.

This anthology contains biographies of the following 18 outstanding newspaper reporters, along with a collection of their best and most dramatic news stories.

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DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS
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Discovering Gaps in Researching Propaganda-Press Histories

By Elisabeth Fondren ©

Fondren

Political propaganda, much like journalism, is tied to national cultures and creates tailored messages for specific audiences. And yet global influences are everywhere; often visible and known, other times presumed. Throughout the ages, international propaganda and journalism have infused and contested with each other, across cultures, languages, borders, systems of government, and knotted into entanglements that intellectual and cultural historians try to understand — and untie.

As pioneering press historian Eugenia M. Palmegiano suggested more than two decades ago, analyzing how propaganda, the press, and news coverage overlapped or expanded in opposition to each other, can lead to a broader understanding of international media histories that are "multidimensional" and produce new "sophisticated webs" that span

Elisabeth Fondren is an associate professor of journalism and political communication at St. John's University in New York. Her research explores the history of international journalism, government propaganda, military and media relations, and freedom of speech during wartime. She received her Ph.D. in Media & Public Affairs from Louisiana State University. She serves on the AJHA Board of Directors.

 An earlier version of this essay was published as "The Global Panoply of Propaganda-Press Cultures: Expanding International Journalism History," *American Journalism* 40:3 (2023): 357-368.

across disciplines.[1] She proposed to focus on the *temporal, spatial,* and *thematic* dimensions and invited her peers to add to that list. In 1999, Palmegiano, who served as American Journalism Historians Association president at the time, looked at the new millennium ahead and argued, correctly, that media history is a cornerstone of intellectual history, or "the record of what people thought about the monumental or the mundane and how they determined which was which."[2] Around the same time, media historian Mitchell Stephens charged to internationalize journalism history, since journalists routinely crossed borders (ideological and physical) and historians should follow suit.[3] Scholars have heeded that call, arguing national centric methodological approaches are inadequate to investigate complex modern- and historical issues.[4] The emergence of the transnational journalism history paradigm, particularly in the last decade, has added an important lens through which we can analyze complex sources and build interpretive frameworks.[5]

Mainstreaming Transnational and Global Approaches

For the next decade, in order to mainstream transnational or global approaches in journalism history, scholars should continue to unearth original and cross-country perspectives about the multidirectional flows of information; the varied agents of news or propaganda; their ideas, ideologies, and identities related to their lived experiences.[6] In the sections below I use anecdotes from my own research on twentieth century media, war, democracy, and press cultures. I explore past interactions between journalists-propagandists; how propagandists steal — often quietly — new ideas from their enemies; official censorship and impediments on free press; journalistic exchanges as soft power; and how marginalized reporters circumvented official views to access news.

As I suggest here, looking beyond national frames, including diverse voices, and comparing news cultures, will add important dimensions to existing propaganda-press histories, which are all too often centered around elite journalists and powerful institutions. This extended global perspective is valuable, especially since propaganda paired with modern media technology seems to be ever-expanding. And while one-sided messages and tactics may be "easier to detect" in the online infosphere, they are often "more difficult to combat."[7] Historical propaganda-press perspectives also elucidate governments' ongoing struggle to balance citizens' right to know with political and military propagandists' goals to maintain secrecy and restrict transparency, which limits criticism and public debate.[8] Put differently, how state propagandists, foreign correspondents, publicists, and audiences have sourced, created, spread, and countered information during past crises or wars reveals much about the universal nature of mass information and manipulation. It also demonstrates the role of an informed press and a skeptical public, which propagandists — whether they are sitting at a desk flexing pencils, broadcasting "news," or programming social media algorithms — fear most.

Psychology and New Media Needed to Influence Modern Publics

Almost one hundred years ago, American political scientist Harold Lasswell published the first systematic study of messages, channels, methods, and goals of propaganda in World War I (1914 to 1918). Government propaganda — conceptualized as both the provision and suppression of information — as Lasswell showed, became entrenched in the process of communication as states adopted new media techniques in the battle to win the "war of ideas on ideas."[9] This widely hor-

izontal analysis of state propaganda was expanded during and after World War II, as chief US propagandists disclosed their tactics, personnel, and approaches of using information to bring down Adolf Hitler's so-called Third Reich, and lower morale among Wehrmacht soldiers and the German home front. "The distinctly new feature of modern war propaganda is its extension to noncombatants," wrote Daniel Lerner, chief editor of the Psychological Warfare Division, SHAEF (1944-1945). In his 1949 account of US information warfare against Nazi Germany, Lerner added, "Propaganda at home to bolster up the martial spirit, or at least the will to resistance, among the millions of workers and farmers, men and women and children is a phenomenon unknown to earlier centuries of modern history."[10] Propaganda scholars have come to rely on these earlier accounts, and later added to Lasswell and Lerner's models, especially in the second half of the century as the Cold War, US-Soviet tensions, and international crises like the wars in Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq dominated the discourse around mass persuasion at home and abroad.[11] Discussions around information transparency and citizens' right to know, moreover, became part of the US public's growing expectation for an independent press.[12]

Discovering Gaps in Propaganda-Press Historiography

Scholars of propaganda-press relations quickly find that even though this territory has been well covered, there are cracks in that historiography.[13] Some of those gaps are methodological, some conceptual, and the largest are the people that are missing from those histories: minority voices, women, religious and other ethnic groups, counterpropagandists, peace journalists, and other publicists promoting education or reconciliation via mass media. As mentioned earlier, the transnational

journalism history paradigm helps scholars backtrack the lived experiences, standpoints, and perspectives of people who worked in or reported on global wars.[14] While several histories about information flow exist, biographical studies, especially of women journalists during propaganda wars are still rare.[15] In addition, histories of how freelance or working-class journalists evaded foreign propaganda and censorship, circumvented restrictions and news control, and, through their published work informed international wartime public opinion, would be significant to our understanding and expand the notion of "who" is a journalist.

Incorporating global perspectives in present and future press-propaganda scholarship, furthermore, also matches a renewed interest in studying the *space* and *place* dimensions of journalism and news cultures.[16] Journalism and propaganda expert Michael S. Sweeney, for instance, explored Imperial German, French, and US propaganda national cultures in relation to time, space, and ideas. All of these dimensions, as Sweeney argued in 2021, are, in one way or another, linked to propagandists' ultimate aim: reaching audiences, sharing information, influencing thoughts, and using media as a tool to communicate political power and goals.[17]

Journalists, as Stefan Berger in his recent book about history and identity points out, are both subject and object in the process of writing history.[18] In studying the interactions of minority reporters with censors and state propagandists in World War I, for instance, I found that these reporters subverted official rules and through their unique standpoints and transnational reporting activities (including photography of war-and home fronts) contributed to audiences' knowledge about the war.[19] In working to unearth diverse stories, characters, and perspectives, journalism scholars should continue writing histories of historical-

ly uncelebrated reporters: multiracial minorities, freelancers, working-class, non-elite, and women correspondents who had interactions with government propagandists and military censors.

Propaganda-Press Panoply in Modern Conflicts and Crises

Do we really need more nuanced histories of propaganda and journalism? Simply put, the answer is: yes. The proliferation of government propaganda and states' efforts to shape global public opinion and news have defined the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries.[20] Journalism, as Giovanna Dell'Orto writes, remains an important source of information about "different political systems internationally."[21] Most recently, misinformation about COVID-19 and anti-democratic propaganda campaigns have refueled anxieties surrounding the pervasive powers of mass persuasion.[22] The Chinese Communist Party, as a 2022 Brookings Institution report points out, increasingly utilizes search engines to spread propaganda and government news to global audiences.[23] Now, as in the early twentieth century, journalists and educators continue to ask: What are democratic tools to counter new forms of propaganda?[24] Can disinformation and messages that are deceptive, blatantly one-sided, or over-sell an unrealistic point of view be considered political communication?[25] What is the logic of depropagandization through education?[26] How can citizens learn to detect and ultimately reject wrong information? What would peer-to-peer counterpropaganda look like, and could it work?[27]

Propaganda and censorship, taking various shapes in both democratic and authoritarian states, have become fixed elements in today's media environment. In Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, we see how armies and civilians use modern technology but also many of the

age-old propaganda techniques like pamphlets or extreme censorship. Within a few days of the start of the invasion in February 2022, the Russian government banned all journalists from calling the conflict a war or an invasion.[28] The Kremlin threatened foreign journalist and revoked visas. We have also seen the proliferation of visual propaganda, memes, and infographics about the war, especially on picture-heavy social media sites like Instagram or TikTok in an approach that echoes the wide-ranging poster campaigns of World War II, or the aerial pamphlets of the Korean war. No matter where they are located, global audiences watch on their phones or computer screens how journalists, freelancers, and citizen reporters act as watchdogs in hard-to-comprehend battles, and observers explain to their audiences how information travels, and how they sourced their news.

Developing and Expanding Propaganda Proficiency

Another look back also shows us that propaganda-press cultures never developed in echo-chambers. "The work of journalism," French sociologist Gabriel Tarde wrote in 1893, "has been to nationalize more and more, and even to internationalize, the public mind."[29] The experiences of the Great War, as mentioned above, put the critical study of political propaganda on the map.[30] All belligerent governments realized that propaganda proficiency was critical to selling their causes and stirring up support for the war. Most governments, with varying degrees of success, also relied on journalists and publicity experts to do their bidding.[31] The American propaganda arm, the Committee on Public Information (CPI), influenced domestic and foreign readers and viewers.[32] In the Great War and in every other major conflict after that, propagandists, relying heavily on elites — including editors, publicists, and

reporters — moreover, often used the tactic of suggestion in trying to mobilize public opinions and attitudes.[33] Propaganda messages, defined by Lasswell in 1927 as the "control of opinion by significant symbols ... stories, rumors, reports, pictures, and other forms of social communication," are always products of their environment, informed by cultural, social, and political conditions and outlooks.[34] The records in surviving archives, for instance, millions of leaflets, newspapers, and colored posters, have become part and parcel of how military and media historians have studied propaganda, ideologies, iconographic images, and culture-specific voice and tone.[35] In the Pacific Theater, before the US invaded Okinawa, Japan in July 1945, bombers dropped about six million aerial leaflets.[36] Media historians, as indicated earlier, have long agreed that "Journalism is also the product of a particular culture, in that it reflects the views and values of the individuals who create it."[37] And the American Society of News Editors' 1923 principles — the first ethics canon of its kind — argued that journalism is different from sensationalistic propaganda by "its processes (to inform and scrutinize) and its purpose (to hold power accountable)."[38] Lastly, the short-lived history of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA) shows that there was a concerted attempt to build, popularize, and share public expertise against rising misinformation and international and home-bred fascism from 1937-1942.[39]

After the end of World War II, the US government weaved transnational propaganda into its foreign policy goals, and propaganda became part of reciprocal exchanges, reaching and influencing international public opinion.[40] During that time, Western information networks expanded as "soft power" policy into third world countries and, in the case of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, broadcast propaganda messages of "freedom" to Eastern European audiences behind the Iron

Curtain.[41] Between 1961 and 1970 Soviet and US editors engaged in transnational exchange trips to improve access to news and advance information flows between both nations.[42] Cold War historian Dina Fainberg has used the prism of transnationalism to investigate foreign news coverage, government-led disinformation campaigns, competing notions of Soviet and US *truth* and *trust*, and journalists caught in the crossfire between rivaling ideologies.[43] Researchers scrutinizing the "mediated culture of fear" during the so-called "Global War On Terror" in the early 2000s, have studied the models of peace journalists, showing how reporters may engage in propaganda wars and work to reframe zero-sum storylines of conflicts.[44]

Suggestions for Future Research and Methodologies

A look forward, then, could build on those earlier histories and use a global lens to further disentangle the record of propaganda and journalism as part of broader intellectual and cultural histories. To do that, we need to embrace wider, cross-national and often comparative perspectives that include multi-language primary sources. Specifically, I would extend this argument by examining how different societies have wrestled with the rise and fall of propaganda, one-sided, deceptive, or false information, and the role of public opinion and a free press from World War I up to now. How do these questions relate to current debates on propaganda anxieties, restrictions on press freedom, and censorship online? Building on ongoing work to internationalize the field of journalism history, future scholarship could analyze the multidirectional flows of global information; how journalists work as propagandists, willingly and unwillingly; how reporters expose lies, half-truths, or circumvent censorship; how communities engage in counterpropaganda via the

press; and the role of visual media narratives.

Drawing on archival sources and previously unexamined primary sources such as digitized newspapers, magazines, digitized propaganda materials in local, regional, and international archives, scholars could add to the current historiography by focusing on: 1) Discussions and meta journalistic discourses around how audiences learn about news in closed societies, and how transnational flows of information work during wartime; 2) How journalists expose, analyze, and explain states' propaganda institutions and messages; 3) How and under which conditions journalists work as propagandists in authoritarian and democratic societies; 4) How journalists have exposed censorship practices during war, circumvent it, or produced counterpropaganda; and 5) Focus on marginalized voices, ethnic/racial minorities, women, freelance, parachute journalists entangled with propaganda. The methodological approaches could be comparative research; transnational coverage of particular news stories; transfer of ideas, norms, practices across regions and cultures; transnational eyewitnessing and further theorizing the propaganda-press relationship.

More than two decades after journalism historians proposed an international and intellectual turn in how to study the cultural histories of journalism and mass communication, much has been achieved.[45] Exploring the global dimensions of press-propaganda activities during wars and democratic crises could add a more close-up view of that knotty record.

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NOTES

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[16] Heidi JS Tworek, *News from Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2019); also see Nikki Usher, "Putting "Place" in the Center of Journalism Research: A Way Forward to Understand Challenges to Trust and Knowledge in News," *Journalism & Communication Monographs* 21:2 (2019): 84-146.

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Historian Interview

By Gwyneth Mellinger ©

Mellinger

Gwyneth Mellinger is a Ruth D. Bridgeforth Professor of Telecommunications at James Madison University. Her book *Chasing Newsroom Diversity: From Jim Crow to Affirmative Action* (2013, University of Illinois Press) won the Frank Luther Mott Kappa Tau Alpha Book Award, and her book *Racializing Objectivity: How the White Southern Press Used Journalism Standards to Defend Jim Crow* (2024, University of Massachusetts Press) won both the American Journalism History Association Book Award and the AEJMC James Tankard Book Award and was a co-winner of the AEJMC History Division Book Award. She received her Ph.D. in American Studies at the University of Kansas.

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

Mellinger: I grew up in Kansas and developed an early interest in civil rights history because of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, activism by students at my high school, and reading about both history and current events. I then spent five years in California getting a B.A. from Mills College, a women's liberal arts college. There I was intro-

duced to critical approaches to literature, history, and political and cultural analysis. I returned to Kansas to work for newspapers and got an M.A. in English from Emporia State University, an M.S. in journalism from the University of Kansas, and a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Kansas. I began teaching full time in 1997.

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

Mellinger: My first reporting job was at the *Emporia Gazette*, which was still owned by the White family. I then worked for the *Topeka Capital-Journal* and the *Lawrence Journal-World*. During those years I was in and out of graduate school. I was introduced to teaching as a graduate assistant and adjunct instructor, including night classes at the Kansas State Penitentiary. I completed my doctorate while working full time. My only adult jobs have been in newsrooms and classrooms.

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

Mellinger: I taught journalism courses for 16 years at Baker University, a liberal arts college in northeast Kansas. My teaching portfolio included reporting and copy-editing, as well as media law and media ethics. From 2013 to 2016, I taught at Xavier University in Cincinnati, where I continued to develop my media ethics course and added the media-and-society survey. In my later years at Baker and at Xavier, I was a department chair. For the past nine years I have been at James Madison University, where I was hired as director of the School of Media Arts & Design. I stepped down from administration in 2022 to focus on research and writing, and to finish my recent book. At JMU I have taught the media-and-society overview, copy editing, and media ethics. I also

have recently prepped a class on research and critical thinking that is required of all our majors. For many years I had course releases for administrative work, so being back in the classroom as a full-time faculty member has been refreshing. I will retire from JMU at the end of the 2025-2026 academic year.

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

Mellinger: As a journalist, I was always interested in using interviews and documents to tell stories, and I also had deep curiosity about the past and its implications for the present and future. I am not surprised my academic calling is grounded in history. The thesis for my master's in journalism was my first attempt at primary-source historical research. The subject was newspaper editorial coverage of the 1958 Kansas gubernatorial election; the Republican nominee was a Kansas newspaper editor who was still living in the 1980s and available to provide oral history. The premise of the historical analysis was straightforward (how did newspaper editors treat one of their own who was running for office?) but the research required many trips to the historical society in Topeka where newspapers from around the state were available in bound volumes that were stored floor to ceiling. At that point few, if any, of those newspapers had been microfilmed, but I preferred reading the newspapers in their original format anyway. It was that hands-on research and the process of analyzing primary sources for a historical narrative that laid the foundation for future scholarship. Being in the archive seemed logical and natural.

In my interdisciplinary doctoral program in American Studies at

Kansas University, readings tended to be a mix of history and critical theory. I saw many examples of scholarship grounded in history that used theory to explain cultural, political, and social phenomena. My deepest scholarly curiosities focused on identity in America, particularly race and the democratic paradox. In that program, I wrote seminar papers that used the American Society of Newspaper Editors' diversity initiative as a site for analysis. I had worked in predominantly white newsrooms in the 1980s and 1990s, and observed attempts to implement Goal 2000, as the ASNE project was called. Those seminar papers evolved into a dissertation and eventually my first book, *Chasing Newsroom Diversity: From Jim Crow to Affirmative Action*.

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

Mellinger: My dissertation chair was Sherrie Tucker, a music historian whose books are *Dance Floor Democracy: The Social Geography of Memory at the Hollywood Canteen* (Duke, 2014) and *Swing Shift: "All-Girl" Bands of the 1940s* (Duke, 2000). She expanded my understanding of texts and social location as well as ways to "read" race and gender in cultural practice.

I also was strongly influenced by two Kansas University historians who were affiliated with American Studies, David Katzman and Bill Tuttle, both of whom had published books about race from primary-source research. Additionally, I read extensively in whiteness studies and consumed work by such scholars as Ruth Frankenberg and David Roediger. Their research helped me grapple with the question of how the democratic paradox of racial disparity could persist and become structured into institutions like journalism.

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

Mellinger: Given my interest in the democratic paradox in American society, that institutional racism persists despite well-intentioned and passionate efforts to eliminate it, my scholarship gravitated to the white response to the twentieth-century Black freedom struggle. I have been fascinated by the persistence of a segregated press and the unwillingness of many white journalists to recognize its toxic impact for democracy. As such, I have been most directly concerned with the role of white editors and journalists, who typically defend their own constitutional rights, in perpetuating racial inequity when they had a clear choice to acknowledge and remedy a situation that was patently undemocratic. Usually, the defense of racial privilege in journalism has been surreptitious and cloaked in diversionary tactics and obfuscation. This was the case in the American Society of Newspaper Editors diversity initiative, which met resistance in daily newspaper newsrooms and is analyzed in *Chasing Newsroom Diversity: From Jim Crow to Affirmative Action*. It also is the foundational argument for *Racializing Objectivity: How the White Southern Press Used Journalism Standards to Defend Jim Crow*.

Moreover, my concern with media ethics requires me to frame the segregated press as an ethical failing of journalism. A few years ago I began researching ethics and diversity and did some focused historical work on the conflict of interest, a concept that really did not enter journalistic consciousness until the 1960s. From that scholarship I was able to theorize a racial conflict of interest for white editors who were gradualists and white supremacists during the freedom struggle. That argument is central to *Racializing Objectivity*.

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

Mellinger: I was fortunate to pursue tenure and promotion at institutions smaller than R-1. This meant that I did not have to churn out articles quickly, before I had fleshed out ideas. I also could putter in archives, taking my time to reflect on what I found there, then carefully analyze and triangulate sources. While I have presented more than thirty papers at conferences and symposia, where I received eleven top-paper awards, I have published just seven articles in peer-reviewed journals. Two of them were honored with top-article awards. In addition to the two solo-authored books, I co-edited with John Ferre' a volume on media ethics, *Journalism's Ethical Progression: A Twentieth-Century Journey*.

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

Mellinger: As a first-time author teaching at a small college, I had concerns that *Chasing Newsroom Diversity* could be published. After several desk rejections from other publishers, the University of Illinois Press requested a full manuscript before a contract decision. The project enraged a blind reviewer who seethed — I am not exaggerating — that the only purpose of such a book would be to destroy the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the profession of journalism. Fortunately, the editors at Illinois understood the project and found another blind reviewer to evaluate the manuscript. The venom in that initial peer-review was disconcerting, particularly since the scholar was probably a former white journalist who objected to my concern for institutional racism in

newsrooms and we may well have attended the same conferences. When *Chasing Newsroom Diversity* was published, it was a first book, certainly, but it also was a first book that almost wasn't.

Historiography: *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 (journalism/mass communication) history, what would they be?*

Mellinger: My scholarship presents counternarratives to open new lines of historical inquiry. I ask readers to revisit their assumptions and consider different interpretations of received knowledge. My scholarship is concerned not just about inclusion and exclusion in newsrooms and news coverage, but also with how the profession came to be racially segregated and why it was so difficult for white journalists to consider change. Given journalism's role in the process of representation, in affixing identities to individuals and segments of society, this has implications for democracy.

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

Mellinger: My years doing administrative service were financially beneficial, but they came at the expense of teaching and research. When I returned to the faculty in 2022, I had a clear goal of publishing *Racializing Objectivity*; I had finished the research in 2016. At the end of my career, it would have bothered me greatly to have left that project unfinished, but I could not think of a single administrative task of comparable urgency or importance. In retrospect, I wish I had not felt com-

pelled to do the administrative work.

Historiography: *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.*

Mellinger: History functions at three levels. First, there is the lived experience of individuals and communities within a culture; second, this is documented in various ways for our study and analysis; and, third, the process of "doing history," itself an activity within culture, creates its own artifacts and begs for critique. If we are ethical historians, we will never neglect the third aspect, which asks us to reflect on both our own process of discovery and the construction of the archive. Questions of inclusion and exclusion will always arise from the process of sifting through sources. History is never finished; it can be and should be revisited and reconsidered. This is not a case for presentism or relativism, merely an acknowledgment that history is an intellectual process and is not constrained by absolutes. Just as we might refine our ethical values, our understanding of history can also evolve. Some approaches and focuses that would have been logical in the past understandably seem less natural over time.

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

Mellinger: I do a fair amount of peer review for journals and conferences. I see some very strong work, but the de-emphasis on history by some graduate programs has shrunk the pool of publishable scholarship. The restrictions on access to primary sources, which were problematic

during and after the pandemic, are no longer a factor. It appears the number of research-based books, which dropped a few years ago, may have rebounded.

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

Mellinger: I recognize that travel budgets and research support have been reduced, which creates obstacles for scholars who require primary-source materials. I worry about the number of scholars who default to digital archives, which tend to be curated and are not reliably complete. I have worked in an archive (the Associated Press) where a commercial enterprise (Gale) had gone through and cherrypicked documents to aggregate a database product to sell to libraries. In some of the boxes I found documents here and there in plastic sleeves, which meant they had been designated for scanning. But the vast majority of the archive, the material I used in my scholarship, was not part of the database. Anyone relying on the AP database in a university library would not have the same research experience that I had in the archive in New York.

I also am concerned about scholars who use AI tools to sort and analyze the information they have gathered. I can think of no project of mine that AI would have benefitted because I always seek to do more than document a chronology. Critical thinking is beyond the "ken" of AI. Because of concerns about intellectual property and the accuracy of AI-generated information, I would decline to evaluate a manuscript whose research was assisted by AI.

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

field of history in general?

Mellinger: This question is particularly salient because of recent attacks on museums and the historical record, which seek editing and erasure of marginalized history. We have been reminded this year that the gains of the freedom struggle and other movements for civil rights were always tentative, that social justice was not universally embraced, and the paradigm shifts we mistook for new norms would be renegotiated by a powerful, self-interested backlash. The stands taken by the American Historical Association, American Association of Colleges & Universities, and so many specialized organizations, including those focused on JMC education and history, are essential for preserving intellectual honesty at this moment. We cannot shrink from this debate, precisely because principles of historical authenticity and intellectual freedom are at stake.

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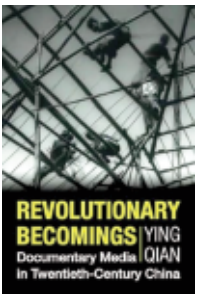
Book Award Interview

By Ying Qian ©

Qian



Ying Qian received the 2024 AEJMC History Division's Best Journalism and Mass Communication History Book Award for *Revolutionary Becomings: Documentary Media in Twentieth-Century China*. (It was a co-winner with Gwyneth Mellinger's *Racializing Objectivity*.) Dr. Qian is an associate professor in the Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures at Columbia University. Her research interests include transnational media histories and Chinese-language cinema and media. She received her MPhil from the University of Cambridge and Ph.D. from Harvard University. *Revolutionary Becomings* is her first book. Along with the AEJMC award it also won the Lionel Trilling Book Award from Columbia College.

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

Qian: *Revolutionary Becomings* is a history of documentary cinema in China's twentieth century, covering a period from cinema's earliest years in 1895, to the television documentaries of the 1980s. From Sun Yat-Sen's revolution in 1911 to the Shanghai workers' uprising in 1925,

my research demonstrates documentary had been part of transnational radical organizing and financing all along, attracting a considerable number of political and social activists into filmmaking and exhibition. Documentary was previously considered absent from Shanghai's left-wing film movement of the 1930s and the hard (Marxist) versus soft (non-Marxist) cinema debate. By excavating Shanghai filmmakers' docu-fiction practices during the Japanese air-raids of 1932, and amateur home movies in Shanghai's diasporic communities, I show that these documentary practices not only propelled this period's growing media reflexivity and experimentation with film form, but also alert us to the highly unequal access experienced by filmmakers differently positioned along a spectrum of colonial privilege in the semi-colonial city, thereby provincializing the Griersonian assumption of unhindered location shooting. In the Maoist period, I investigate documentary's participation in a variety of (re)productive arenas beyond the movie theater, from the Great Leap Forward production campaign, to Cold War diplomacy, and to Cultural Revolution purges and mass struggle sessions, bringing attention to the important roles played by "useful films" — industrial and educational documentaries — in the production of state socialism. The book's last chapter examines documentary's participation in transitional justice and historiographical reorientation in the post-Mao decade, and the epilogue discusses how this book's findings inform our understanding of contemporary independent documentary and its political strivings.

This book performs substantial film historical and archival work, attending to transnational linkages throughout the book, and engaging with film and media scholarship on early cinema, useful cinema, solidarity films, and propaganda. It approaches documentary as a prism to examine the mutual constitution of media and revolution: how revolu-

tionary movements gave rise to specific media practices, and how these media practices in turn delimitated the epistemological, political, and aesthetic possibilities that shaped the specific paths of revolution's actualization.

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

Qian: I became interested in documentary film in the early 2000s, when the availability of new digital technologies brought forth a vibrant independent film culture in China. I was an active participant in the indie film community where people from all walks of life regularly gathered to make, watch, and discuss films. Conversations after screenings would start with the films but quickly expand to free discussions on all kinds of questions — political, social, historical, and personal. It was in this community that I began to make films and curate film programs. My earliest academic writings were also on contemporary indie documentary film.

This book, however, was on a longer documentary tradition in China, from cinema's earliest years, to the end of the 1980s, just before the emergence of indie filmmaking. This was a documentary tradition that had been disavowed by the indie film community. As I wrote in the book's epilogue, indie filmmaking in China came into being as filmmakers consciously severed their ties with state studios in the wake of state suppressions of the 1989 Tian'anmen protests. So indie filmmakers were eager to seek their inspiration elsewhere, and not from an earlier documentary tradition that had been so closely connected to partisan politics and state sponsorship.

I came into contact with documentary footage from this longer period when interning for the filmmaker Carma Hinton at the Long

Bow Group. At that time, Carma, and her fellow filmmakers Richard Gordon and Geremie Barmé, were finalizing their award-winning documentary *Morning Sun* (2004), on the culture of China's Cultural Revolution. *Morning Sun* used a large amount of footage from both documentaries and fiction films made in China between 1949 and 1976. I was astounded by the variety and sheer volume of these films, and as I researched into these films, I became intrigued by the polarized memories these films elicited from viewers. Those old enough to experience the Maoist period were divided: some insisted the movies were faithful portrayals of their youthful years; others called them shameless lies. It seemed to me that we — especially younger viewers who didn't have direct experience of the Maoist period — needed methods to read and evaluate these films and understand what kinds of archival materials they are.

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

Qian: Research literature on China's documentary history has been scarce. When I started my research around 2009, there had been only a handful research monographs and articles in Chinese. The most notable was a monograph published in 2003 by Gao Weijin, a veteran filmmaker who had spent her formative years in the Communist base area of Yan'an during the Sino-Japanese War and worked for many years as a documentary filmmaker within the state studio system. Drawing from her life-long work, her book identified significant films and filmmakers, provided synopses, biographies and production context, and was very informative. It did not engage in textual analysis, nor did it enter into conversation with documentary and media studies literature elsewhere,

or seek to make conceptual or theoretical interventions.

In the English language, there was almost no research literature, as most scholarly attention — including my own — has been centered on independent documentary. The only treatment of documentary history I could find was in the first few chapters of Yingchi Chu's monograph, *Chinese Documentary: from Dogma to* Polyphony (2007). As the book's overall argument is that Chinese documentary filmmaking prior to 1993 followed a "dogmatic mode" while the reform period brought filmmaking in polyphony (hence the title), it mainly offers a cursory treatment of pre-1993 filmmaking, with compilations of film titles and brief discussions on changing state policies governing filmmaking, while paying more attention to developments after 1993. The scarcity of literature has to do with challenges in locating sources and in finding methods to engage with deceptively "simple" but in fact opaque films. We can get to this a bit later.

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

Qian: This book has taken a long time to write. It began as a doctoral dissertation on Chinese socialist documentary (1949-1988) that I completed in 2013. When turning the dissertation into a monograph, I did more research on early documentary. I found that many practices we observe in the Maoist period, from docu-fiction to documentary dramaturgy, had emerged in much earlier historical periods. So I decided to extend the time period covered by the book to the turn of the twentieth century.

I was particularly interested in the omnipresence of documentary in

a variety of social arenas such as industrial and agricultural production, diplomacy, class struggles and law and order, so I worked with a large variety of sources. Historical documentary films constituted a bulk of source materials for the book, and it took substantial research time to locate them in film archives and private collections in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and the U.S. I also worked with a large range of published materials and archival materials: newspapers, film magazines and journals, internally published studio reports, professional journals for film distributors and mobile projectionists, filmmakers' diaries and memoirs, oral histories, and local historical gazetteers. As my aim is to write media history into political and social histories, I also made use of a large number of secondary historical scholarship.

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

Qian: Yes, there are many other sources that I would have wanted to consult but aren't available to me. A large number of early documentary films had been lost in war. More recent documentary films are often inaccessible due to political obsolescence. Archives of film and television studios contain records of film production, and would have been an important source to consult, especially the archives of the Central Newsreel and Documentary Film studio and the China Central Television, both in Beijing, but these are unfortunately not open to researchers.

Access to historical documents can never be taken for granted, and what gets preserved and elided in the archives is highly political. Documentary filmmaking is often seen as a form of archiving activity, and the politics of inclusion and exclusion, visibility and obscuration, is discussed extensively in the book.

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

Qian: Audio-visual materials have become an important part of the sources that historians will use to study the 20th and 21st centuries. This book urges historians to take documentary film seriously as valuable historical sources, and proposes an "eventful" approach that strengthens formal analysis of documentary film texts with the examination of documentary as material, relational and epistemic practice. It pays attention to the power relations across and around the documentary camera, and to documentary's work in shaping political relationalities and in grasping and inscribing the new and emergent to guide knowledge formation amidst social change. I think this book is useful to historians beyond the China field for this methodological input.

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

Qian: One challenge is the unavailability of film texts, due either to wartime destruction or to state-enforced political obsolescence associated with regime change. This difficulty has now been overcome to an extent: access to some Mao- era documentaries has improved over the past decade or so, thanks to private collectors who have digitized their collections and made them available online.

Even when film texts are available, there is still the question of how to engage with these documentaries, particularly those made for propaganda purposes. Many propaganda documentaries looked deceptively simple; their matter-of-factness contributes to their "reality effect" and power of persuasion. What these simple film texts have obscured is the

production process and the complex power relationships across and around the camera. It took a lot of research to learn something about documentary production: what problems these productions attempted to solve; whose visions, scripts, and directions were followed; and what inclusions and exclusions. Understanding the production process helps us move beyond a simplistic Cold War era understanding of propaganda as state-orchestrated manipulation, falsification, or brainwashing, while at the same time retaining our evaluative capacity to assess the political, ethical, and epistemological implications of propaganda production. I show that propaganda documentaries do not simply communicate a predetermined message sent by an external, stable, and bounded actor called the State or the Party. Rather, the State, the Party, and the various institutions and ideologies that appear stable and coherent are heterogenous and changing entities. They are repeatedly constituted, maintained, and transformed by many different processes of mediation including propaganda production.

Another challenge had to do with the contentiousness of the Chinese revolutions. As I said earlier, documentaries from the Maoist period would elicit polarized responses, largely because people often have fixed ideas about what the Chinese revolutions were, whether they were good or bad, even when these ideas do not do justice to the extreme complexity of revolutions as historical processes. What I wanted to impart on the readers was the importance of media and mediation — the act of forming specific relationships — in constituting pivotal institutions such as the Party, the State, and the Masses. The book title, *Revolutionary Becomings*, serves to remind the readers that many possibilities existed at times of political and social change, and the role of media in exploring or shutting down these possibilities.

Historiography: *What findings most surprised you?*

Qian: As the new media technology of the 20th century, cinema was present in many arenas of social life beyond the movie theater. I was excited to find that cinema was part of political organizing since its earliest years. For example, Umeya Shokichi, the Japanese film pioneer, had been a supporter of Sun Yat-Sen's revolutionary organizing since 1895. His film career relied on Sun Yat-Sen's transnational revolutionary network while also funding it. In 1911, when the revolution erupted to topple the Qing Dynasty, Umeya's film company not only funded the revolution, but also had it filmed and circulated the resulting documentary to immigrant communities in Japan, the U.S., Southeast Asia, and Australia. In other words, the globe-trotting revolutionary and the itinerant filmmaker shared resources and networks between the mass politics of revolution and the mass medium of cinema. I was also surprised by documentary's important role in propelling the Great Leap Forward campaign (1957-1960). Industrial films offered templates on how to build backyard furnaces and construct waterworks, much like DIY videos of the present day. And the practice of "documenting tomorrow" brought the Communist future into palpable view, inculcating beliefs in the production campaign's inevitable success despite its highly experimental nature. The Great Leap Forward ended in wide-spread famine and devastating losses of lives. The heavily mediated industrial campaign and the scarcely photographed or filmed Great Famine alert us to media's imbrications in the energies and entropies of China's radical experiments.

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

terpreting research?

Qian: Yes, it is possible to get too invested in one aspect of the story, become tunnel-visioned, and inadvertently close off space for other interpretations and views. In my view, empathy, openness, inclusivity, and evaluation with reflexivity are key qualities that good historians and documentary filmmakers share. While I have argued in the book that documentary "objectivity" is a myth, documentary filmmakers have continued to strive for fairness, inclusivity, and openness in their work. They do this by being reflexive of their positionality, by creating healthy collaborations with their subjects, and by making their criteria of evaluation and judgment explicit. I believe historians very much share these strategies.

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The Media and Diffusion of Innovation

By Jana Hyde Neugebauer ©

NOTE: This is the fourteenth article in our series "How Media History Matters," dealing with the significance that the mass media have had in American history. We think the series will appeal especially to historians who believe historical claims need evidence to support them. It's easy, someone has said, to suggest explanations if one doesn't have to worry about facts. Many ways exist to justify JMC's historical importance. JMC historians make a mistake if they focus on just one explanation, whether it be "cultural history," materiality, Progressivism, or any other interpretation. They shouldn't put all their eggs in one basket. One monolithic explanation won't work.

In the following essay, Jana Hyde Neugebauer adapts diffusion theory to history and posits that the mass media "hold a vital place in American society because of their ability to quickly diffuse change and innovation among large numbers of people." Because of the process of diffusion, the media have helped to influence American culture. For a case study, she examines the phonograph and radio in the early 1900s.

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As the speed of communication has increased over the last hundred years, so, too, has the spread of technology, ideas, and culture. The media technologies perfected during the last century allow the rapid transmission and diffusion of all types of cultural innovations across the United States and around the world. For this reason, the mass media have significantly affected American life.

The mass media are so called because they reach many people with the same information. Unlike face-to-face communication, which spreads information one person at a time, the mass media can reach many people at the same time. This unique characteristic has allowed the mass media to play an important role in revolution and war, politics, fads and fashions, and entertainment. The media hold a vital place in American society because of their ability to quickly diffuse change and innovation among large numbers of people. Both the government and the people recognize the importance of the media to American society and culture. The evidence of this lies in the protection given the media in the Constitution and in the myriad regulations imposed on those who control it. The mass media allow citizens to expand their knowledge of the world around them and discover new ideas and cultural forms. Without the ability to rapidly spread these new ideas, American culture would not exist as we know it today.

In order to understand the impact the media have had on our culture, we must understand the process by which the media affect us. Simply observing changes over time does not give a complete explanation. The changes had to occur somehow, and describing the process leads to an understanding of the nature of those changes. Diffusion of innovation theory presents an excellent model for the process of change expedited by the mass media.

The theory of diffusion of innovation offers an explanation of the

process by which the media have helped to spread new cultural forms to the public. Diffusion theory is used in many different disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, and marketing. It is especially suited to application in the mass media because of the numbers of people involved. Everett M. Rogers defined an innovation as "an idea, practice or object perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption."[1] A unit of adoption is any group of people who actually use the innovation, such as an organization or social group. Rogers' simple model outlining the steps necessary for diffusion to take place can be applied to any number of cases. In the model, he stated that *an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system.*[2] The process of diffusion occurs over a period of time which may vary in length according to the situation. The process itself, however, remains essentially the same.

In the first stages of adoption, a few opinion leaders learn of and accept the innovation. Rogers defined an opinion leader as "an individual able to influence other individuals' attitudes or overt behavior informally in a desired way with relative frequency."[3] After the opinion leaders adopt the innovation, a larger number of individuals follow their example, and the adoption rate grows more rapidly. The rate slows after the majority adopts the innovation and only a few have yet to adopt it.[4] Diffusion theory does not try to imply that every individual will adopt a new technology or idea. Examples include people who refuse phone service or do not want a television set. Rather, diffusion theory applies to those likely or willing to adopt. A noted characteristic of diffusion of innovation theory is its applicability to many different situations. Hence, this theory is easily applied to the mass media, and more specifically to the phonograph[5] and radio.

All the mass media have participated in spreading innovation in

cultural forms of one sort or another, but the phonograph and the radio tremendously influenced American musical culture in the first half of the twentieth century. Prior to the introduction of the phonograph in the late 1800s, expense limited formal musical exposure primarily to the middle and upper classes. They could afford to purchase opera or concert tickets, hire musicians for parties, and pay for musical instruments and lessons. In addition to having the money to pay for music, their higher level of education included an appreciation for and understanding of classical music. Affluent, educated people often rejected popular music. They referred to classical music as "good" music, implying that any other kind of music was less than desirable. When the phonograph became available to consumers, however, its moderate price and ease of operation brought music within reach of even the most modest budgets, thus democratizing music and spreading new musical styles to a wider range of people than ever before possible.

The broadcast media, because they are the most prominent form of mass communication, have had even more impact. Broadcast messages reach large numbers of people with a speed and directness no other medium can transcend. Information and entertainment of all kinds travel the airwaves as far as the city limits or to the other side of the globe, reaching up to several million people instantly.

The introduction of the phonograph and the subsequent democratization of music give an excellent illustration of diffusion theory. In applying Rogers' definition of innovation to the phonograph, the musical entertainment offered by the phonograph is the "idea or practice perceived as new" by the "unit of adoption," or the public. In applying his model to this example, the idea of musical entertainment in the home through phonograph records was communicated to the American public through such channels as friends, popular magazines, newspa-

pers, and nickelodeon parlors over about four decades from 1877 until the mid 1920s. Although consumers continue to buy phonographs to this day, the radio took over the task of popularizing music by the mid-1920s.

Diffusion theory applied to the radio has similar aspects. Consider musical entertainment offered by the radio as the "new idea" and the public, again, the "unit of adoption." In the model, then, the idea of musical entertainment in the home via radio was communicated through channels such as friends, popular magazines, newspapers, and department stores over a period of about twenty years from 1920 to 1940 when penetration reached more than eighty per cent of U.S. households.[6] Radio still plays a large part in popularizing music today, but this discussion focuses on an era when the public still considered radio an innovation; hence the ending date of 1940.

This essay will examine the effect that the phonograph and the radio had on the spread of music in American society. The study of that process will serve as a demonstration of how the media can act as a diffuser of cultural innovation.

The Phonograph and Radio Broadcasting

When Thomas Edison introduced the phonograph in 1877, he maintained several thoughts about its potential use. He outlined some of his ideas in 1878 in the *North American Review*. He saw it primarily as a form of communication for businessmen, replacing letter writing. He designed it specifically for that purpose, seeing great advantages in having it replace the stenographer. Edison also suggested that those with visual handicaps use it to listen to books recorded on its tin-foil cylinders. Third, Edison saw the phonograph as an educational aid, especial-

ly in the memorization of spelling and literary passages. In fourth place, he predicted that the phonograph would "undoubtedly be liberally devoted to music," although he viewed it more as an aid to music teachers or as an item for novel entertainment. For instance, amateur musicians could record their efforts and play them back for company, much as we use home video cameras in the 1990s. Other uses he listed included recording the "sayings, the voices, and *the last words* of the dying member of the family," phonographic books other than those for the blind, music boxes, toys, clocks, advertising, and the preservation of the voices and speeches of great leaders. Edison also predicted that the phonograph would "*perfect the telephone*" by giving it a means with which to record conversations.[7] All of his predictions have come to pass one way or another, but the most successful and predominant is that which he consigned to the fourth most likely use — music.

Due to the scratchy sound of the phonograph, for many years the public considered it a mere novelty. Although improvements followed its introduction, they made little difference in the way the public viewed the machine — more as a toy or curiosity than as a business machine or a form of serious entertainment. Edison's business manager, Frank Dyer, wrote in 1910 that the phonograph at that time "continued to be a theme of curious interest to the imaginative, and the subject of much fiction, while its neglected commercial possibilities were still more or less vaguely referred to."[8] Even with all the imperfections and novelty status, middle America eagerly embraced the phonograph. Sales of the instruments rose steadily from its introduction, exploding between 1914 and 1919. Manufacturers shipped 514,000 phonographs to dealers in 1914, but by 1919 that number rose to 2.2 million.[9]

As the phonograph grew in popularity, some feared it would undermine other traditional forms of entertainment such as theater and

vaudeville. Entertainment at home grew more appealing, especially with improvements in recording and reproducing quality. The *New York Times* touted the phonograph as rivaling the automobile in popularity, estimating that consumers bought an average of thirty-five records for each machine.[10] Years later, sociologists observed that the phonograph had done no great harm to other amusements. "The phonograph did not injure the musical comedy or disperse to the homes the audiences at the opera or concert," wrote Marshall Beuick in 1927.[11] It did, however, negatively affect sales of sheet music, which up until that time had been the primary means of popularizing a song. Until the phonograph's swift rise in popularity, sheet music sales had been the main source of income for composers, authors and music publishers.

The Democratization of Music

At its introduction, intellectuals and posturing journalists hailed the phonograph as a new democratizing force in music. The phonograph, they declared, brought music from the concert hall into the living room. The moderate price of the phonograph and the minimal skill required for its operation made music accessible to many American families that had previously been unable to enjoy music in their homes. Fred Gaisberg, an early recording industry executive, remarked that the phonograph was a token of culture in even the humblest family.[12] *Current Literature*, in 1907, stated, "No longer is the world of music barred from those who are unable to pay the tribute of the rich."[13]

The music to which most of these intellectuals referred was "good" or classical music. Popular music did not impress these "cultured" folk. They envisioned the phonograph as a way to educate the masses of the beauty of the great compositions. Snobbish appeals to guide musical

taste away from jazz[14] and toward classical music appeared often in the periodicals of the day. *The Musician*, a magazine for music teachers, rallied the faithful. "There is no reason," it declared, "why ten jazz records should be bought to one selection of good music except that public taste is not sufficiently guided."[15] This implied that the record-buying public did not know what was good for it. But it also inadvertently conceded that popular music had strong appeal.

In spite of the condescending denunciations of the prevalence of jazz, the phonograph apparently did have an impact on appreciation of classical music. Visiting a lunch-hour phonograph demonstration, one author observed blue-collar men and women requesting classical pieces. Although the factory workers and department store clerks mangled the names of the artists and composers, he said, they knew what they wanted to hear.[16] Many music teachers developed teaching methods using phonograph records of accomplished artists to demonstrate proper technique to their students. Some amateur musicians used phonograph records to help them learn new pieces of music.[17] *The Musician*, editorializing on the benefits of the phonograph, attested that it had helped make fine music available to more people, improved the taste in music, and "enlarged the field from which music teachers and the concert artists may draw their clientele."[18] Some viewed the phonograph as an aid to symphony orchestras, claiming that future audiences were "unconsciously receiving invaluable preparatory training."[19] Although Thomas Edison said he did not know to what extent the phonograph had influenced public taste in music,[20] sociologist Beuick felt, "If the phonograph did anything it indirectly increased attendance at these musical performances by whetting the public's appetite in the home."[21]

The volume of complaints about jazz music, however, indicates that the phonograph was indeed spreading the popular forms of music

around the country. Articles by journalism's elite condemned the predominance of popular music, referring to it as "candy" compared to the more substantial classical music.[22] "A balance of ten for noise and St. Vitus, as against one for real music certainly does not bode well for the development of musical taste in a community as a whole, does it?" asked *The Musician*, which seemed to seesaw in its opinions about the phonograph.[23] Composer Sir Edgar Elgar, more charitably perhaps, believed that the average person asked for recordings of popular music because he or she was better acquainted with it and not because it had more value than classical music.[24]

Perhaps the most eloquent expression of the impact the phonograph had on the musical taste of America came from writer Robert Haven Schauffler: "I believe the invention of the phonograph has done more to spread culture broadcast than anything else since the invention of printing ... and has done it a hundred times as far and fast."[25]

The Growth of Radio

Radio grew in popularity much more quickly than the phonograph. In April of 1922, the Bureau of Standards in Washington, D.C., estimated the radio audience at nearly one million people.[26] By September of 1924, that audience had grown to around five million.[27] An industry publication estimated the 1926 audience to be close to twenty million strong and twenty-six million the following year.[28] By the time of the 1930 census, over twelve million American families, or forty per cent, had radios in their homes.[29] A 1933 study commissioned from the Bureau of the Census by the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) estimated that 16.8 million families owned radios. With an average family size of nearly four people, that meant an audience of nearly sixty-one

million people after about thirteen years of existence.[30] Radio appeared in even the poorest homes; of families with incomes under $1,000 per year, thirty-six per cent owned radio sets in 1933.[31]

Radio broadcasting also played an important role in diffusing new musical forms and new programming ideas around the country. By the time broadcasting began, jazz music had a firm hold on the interest of the general public. Radio's wide reach made possible the expanded appreciation of new music as well as the increased exposure of songs and performers.

Initially, radio went through the same sort of expectations as the phonograph. The intellectual elite viewed the radio, or "wireless," as a way to educate the masses. They reasoned that lectures, news reports, readings of fine literature, and "good" music received from the radio could only help lift the common man from his lowly position. Many intellectuals initially approved of music on the air and thought it a good thing for the cultural education of the American public.[32] The cultural awareness stimulated by broadcasts of live classical, or "good," music pleased many of those who usually criticized radio for its light entertainment programs. Radio garnered praise for educational potential, much as the phonograph had years earlier. "Programs of classical music have given emotional pleasure and cultural stimulus to millions who only knew jazz before the advent of the radio," declared broadcaster H.V. Kaltenborn. "They may never have bought records of high-class music for their phonographs, but they cannot help occasionally bringing in good music on their radio sets."[33]

As with the phonograph, some people feared the radio would destroy other forms of entertainment. Radio did create a significant decline in the phonograph industry for a few years, but eventually helped boost record sales. Concert halls, theatres, and movie houses also

feared adverse effects, but Beuick's 1927 study suggested that man's natural need to congregate would override radio's attractions, and the more social forms of entertainment would be safe. Radio, he said, was a more isolated form of entertainment. He compared radio to the phonograph, "which has already assumed its place in our social life without destroying other forms of entertainment."[34] Not until the Depression, when discretionary income dwindled, did radio seriously affect other diversions.

Radio seems to have had an uneven effect on the musical instrument industry. One Chicago piano manufacturer blamed radio for the decline in piano sales and quit making upright pianos, one of the most popular models of the day.[35] The number and value of radio sets rose while the number and value of pianos continued to decline. Band instruments, on the other hand, generally increased in number.[36] A survey of 700 music stores around the country found many anticipating a greater demand for musical instruments as a result of radio. Radio received credit for increasing sales of jazz instruments (such as trumpets, banjos, and clarinets) as well as some kinds of pianos.[37]

Many music publishing companies felt radio killed songs too quickly through overplaying. In 1924, Gene Buck, president of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), claimed radio had caused a fifty per cent decrease in sales of phonograph records.[38] Since records, along with sheet music, now made up the song writers' incomes, they felt this decrease very keenly. Radio broadcasting did tend to "wear out" some songs. "It used to be that a song hit meant the sale of three million or four million copies of the sheet music, but now if we sell 700,000 we think we have made a great success," declared E.C. Mills, ASCAP manager. He cited an example of one song which had been "strangled at birth by the radio." Mills claimed he heard the

song "I Love You" broadcast eleven times in one night. "The song," he said, "was exhausted so far as I was concerned right then. Certainly no one would buy it after hearing it that often."[39]

Some publishers, however, viewed the radio as a fantastic opportunity for free publicity and took steps to assure success of their songs. Eugene McDonald, who headed the Chicago Radio Laboratory, declared, "There are numerous independent song publishers and song writers who are only too anxious to have us broadcast their selections."[40] The *New York Times* reported that one artist who appeared on station WEAF in New York City sang several older songs which had not been in demand on phonograph records. "Several music stores in Brooklyn reported a sudden demand for records of these songs, and upon questioning purchasers it was found that the renewed popularity was caused by the broadcasting of the selections."[41] In another instance, popular tenor John McCormack performed a song on radio before it had been released. The *New York Times* reported:

> On the following morning orders for the new record began to pour in upon local dealers. The date for the release of the record was advanced five days to meet this demand....
>
> ... The record was placed on sale in New York at 10 o'clock one morning. Several dealers arranged to have the song played so that it could be heard on the sidewalks before their stores. The average record played in this way would attract little attention, but the new McCormack song quickly attracted crowds on the pavements. It was evident that the average man in the street, or many of them, must have heard the song broadcast a few days before.[42]

A letter to the editor of the *Times* from New York City Marshal

Henry F. Tiernan offered a similar impression, "Many people I know have, and I have myself, bought records of which I would not have known if I had not heard them on my receiving set."[43]

ASCAP eventually decided to withdraw its music from radio unless broadcasters agreed to pay royalty fees. Since ASCAP licensed most of the popular and jazz music, broadcasters would have to operate without unless they paid the fees. Most broadcasters fiercely disagreed with the suggestion that they should pay royalties, arguing that they offered the songs free publicity. The vehemence with which the broadcasters fought ASCAP intimates the extent to which they relied on popular and jazz music for their programming. Paying fees for broadcasting copyrighted music was "out of the question" for most broadcasters.[44] The broadcasters said they refused to submit to a "holdup on the part of the music trust" and that they would not be "bulldozed" by ASCAP.[45] Broadcasters sought legal and legislative solutions to the dilemma, but to no avail; they eventually paid the fees.

Critics of radio broadcasting often claimed that jazz music made up too much of radio programming. One wrote:

> The trouble with broadcasting programs ... is that they have been too heavily loaded with this orchestra and that, playing the currently popular tunes. Too much of the program has been devoted to dance orchestras, or to soloists who had nothing on their repertoire but whatever numbers were being sold in the music shops as "the latest thing" or, worse, to song "pluggers" in the employ of the music publishers.[46]

One critic went so far as to sample radio programs, looking for programs of orchestral music. He spent two evenings looking for orchestral

programs, listening to stations all over the country. He found few classical works broadcast. The sample contained "a lot of inanities that only the veriest imbecile, with the meagerest amusement resources conceivable, could dignify with the name of worthwhile entertainment."[47] Harsh words for the middle class which listened to and enjoyed the music he condemned.

The public, however, repeatedly told broadcasters they liked jazz. According to an article outlining behind-the-scenes events at station WOR in New York, listeners told programmers they liked jazz best.[48] Philadelphia listeners preferred dance music three-to-one over classical music.[49] Three Chicago stations asked their listeners to send in letters stating the kind of music they preferred to hear over the radio. In this instance, jazz and popular music categories were separate, jazz receiving over eighteen per cent of the vote, and popular music twenty-nine per cent. Votes for classical music of various types did not even equal the votes for popular and jazz. But the Chicago stations, true to the elitist form of the day, reported a high number of classical fans, citing letters from people of all classes "giving testimony of how the human heart whether in the mansion or in the hovel beats response to good music."[50] Some stations did claim to have more classical than jazz fans, but jazz was not far behind. WEAF in New York, cited letters from listeners indicating a preference first for classical, then jazz music.[51] A *Wireless Age* survey reported that stations programmed classical most often, followed by jazz.[52]

Conclusion

The phonograph and the radio provide good examples of how the media diffuse innovation. Without the popularity of these two media, the

popular music industry, for better or worse, would not have reached the stage of development it has reached in the 1990s. In addition, classical music would probably be relatively unknown today. It is reasonable to believe that the radio and the phonograph hastened new developments, such as jazz, in American popular music. Before the phonograph, music was popularized primarily by sheet music played at home and at public concerts. A popular song could sell several million copies of sheet music and remain a top seller for more than a year. The introduction of the phonograph reduced that time to months. Radio decreased it to a matter of weeks.

It is probably true that radio "wore out" songs, since broadcasters played the popular numbers often enough and to large enough audiences that soon almost everyone heard them. The public began to demand more variety as they tired of songs. New musical styles heard on phonographs and the radio, such as race music or blues, filtered into popular music, eventually evolving into what we call rock and roll. The radio and phonograph also helped spread the new American musical forms, such as ragtime and jazz, around the world. In fact, researchers recognizing the phonograph's ability to diffuse musical culture early on recorded the music of primitive peoples and foreign civilizations, giving Western societies the chance to hear these different forms of music.[53]

The term *broadcast* comes from an agricultural technique of sowing seeds; it means "to scatter or spread widely."[54] Certainly that is a fitting description of the function of the mass media. Broadcasting, and the mass media in general, widely scatter or diffuse innovations and cultural forms such as music. The speed with which the media can scatter the seeds of innovation allows the public to receive and either accept or reject the new idea. Thus, in the twentieth century, the diffusion of innovation cycle is completed in a comparatively short amount of time.

There is no question the mass media have fostered the diffusion of innovation in American society. One has only to turn on the radio to hear new punk-influenced popular musical forms called "industrial," "house," and "alternative." New influences from older styles of music finally are permeating mainstream American musical culture: Louisiana Cajun and zydeco music, and Hispanic music. These are still being spread by the radio, but also by television. Another example is "world beat," a combination of different musical styles from around Europe, Africa, South America and the West Indies. These innovations ultimately prevent the stagnation of society. Intellectuals may argue the relative merits of each innovation, but that does not dull the effect the mass media have on the process of diffusion of those innovations. The mass media diffuse innovation rapidly, extensively. They *broadcast,* whether the airwaves are their medium or not.

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NOTES

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., 120.

[4] Ibid., 71-72.

[5] The term "phonograph" is used in its generic sense in this essay and does not refer specifically to Thomas Edison's version of the talking machine.

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[10] *New York Times*, 12 March 1922, section 2, 10.

[11] Marshall D. Beuick, "The Limited Social Effect of Radio Broadcasting," *American Journal of Sociology* (January 1927): 618.

[12] Fred W. Gaisberg, *The Music Goes Round* (New York: Macmillan, 1942), 41.

[13] "The Democracy of Music Achieved by Invention," *Current Literature* (June 1907): 670.

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[17] Frederic S. Law, "A Gramophone Method of Singing," *The Musician*, September 1910, 618; Louise Gunston Royston, "Play Duets with the Masters," *The Musician*, May 1922, 2.

[18] "Science Again Comes to the Aid of Music," *The Musician*, November 1925, 9.

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[21] Beuick, "Social Effect of Radio," 618-19.

[22] Robert Haven Schauffler, "The Mission of Mechanical Music," *Century Magazine*, December 1914, 294; "Canned Music — The Phonograph Fan," *Collier's*, 23 April 1921, 10.

[23] *The Musician*, "A Great Force...."

[24] Frank Crane, "Sir Edgar Elgar and the Phonograph," *Current Opinion*, October 1921, 432.

[25] Schauffler, "Canned Music."

[26] *New York Times*, 2 April 1922, section 7, 2.

[27] *New York Times*, 21 September 1924, section 8, 14.

[28] *New York Times*, 3 January 1926, section 8, 13; 9 January 1927, section 8, 11.

[29] U.S. Department of Commerce, *15th Census of the United States: 1930, Population, Volume VI, Families* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), 33.

[30] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Vertical Study of Radio Ownership* (New York: Columbia Broadcasting System, 1933), 50-1.

[31] Ibid., 16.

[32] National Broadcasting Company, Inc., *Broadcasting* (New York: National Broadcasting Company, 1935), vol. 2, *Music, Literature, Drama, Art*, 7, 13, 26.

[33] H.V. Kaltenborn, "On the Air: Radio's Responsibility as a Molder of Public Opinion," *Century Magazine*, October 1926, 672.

[34] Beuick, "Social Effect of Radio," 621.

[35] *New York Times*, 14 May 1925, 21.

[36] U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1931* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931), 862, 864.

[37] *New York Times*, 7 June 1925, section 9, 16.

[38] "American Society of Composers Confident of Victory Over Radio Interests—Senate Committee on Copyrights Hears Song Writers," *Billboard*, 26 April 1924, 12.

[39] *New York Times*, 18 April 1924, 1.

[40] *New York Times*, "Radio Fight for Music," 24 April 1923, 44.

[41] *New York Times*, 23 March 1924, section 9, 16.

[42] *New York Times*, 18 January 1925, section 8, 13.

[43] Henry F. Tiernan to the Editor, *New York Times*, 30 April 1923, 14.

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[46] Kingsley Welles, "The Listeners' Point of View," *Radio Broadcast*, December 1925, 177.

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[53] Kelley, "Library of Living Melody."

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News & Notes

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

2025 AJHA Convention, September 25-27

The 44th annual national convention of the American Journalism Historians Association is scheduled for September 25-27 in Long Beach, Calif. Program details and registration information are available at this link: https://ajha.wildapricot.org/Long_Beach_welcome

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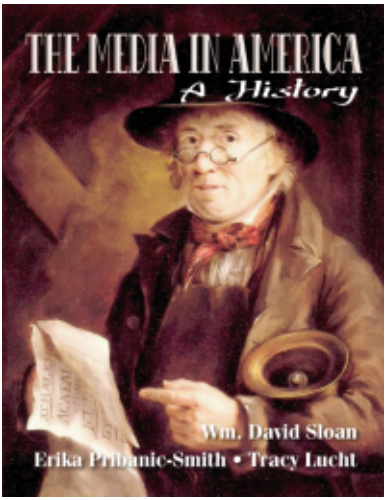

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Research Paper Awards

During the general business meeting, the AJHA will give out the following research awards for top papers at the convention.

Wm. David Sloan Award for Outstanding Faculty Paper: Rich Shumate, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, "Taking It to the Screen: How JFK's Live TV Press Conferences Created a New Paradigm for the Bully Pulpit." Honorable mention: Jason Peterson (University of South Carolina-Beaufort)

Maurine Beasley Award for Outstanding Paper on Women's History: Kaelyn L. Hanna, graduate student at the Elliott School of Communication, "Too Loud for a Lady: Anna E. Dickinson and the Politics of Madness." Honorable mention: Thérèse L. Lueck (University of Akron)

J. William Snorgrass Award for Outstanding Paper on Minority Journalism History: Felecia Jones Ross, Ohio State University, "The Attempted Rescue of Ensign Jesse L. Brown: A Model of Interracial Cooperation During the Korean War." Honorable mention: Pamela E. Walck (Duquesne University)

Jean Palmegiano Award for Outstanding International/Transna-

tional Journalism Research: Anna E. Lindner, Nazareth University, "A Microtextual Approach: Theories and Methods for Studying Enslavement and Colonialism in Communication, Media, and Journalism History." Honorable mention: Erin K. Coyle (Arizona State University)

Wally Eberhard Award for Outstanding Paper on Media and War: Mark Bernhardt, or Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi, "Friend and Foe: The Racialized Portrayal of Cubans and Spaniards in the New York Press Coverage of the Spanish-American War." Honorable mention: Mary M. Cronin (New Mexico State University)

33rd Annual Sachsman Symposium on the 19th Century Press, Nov. 13-15, 2025

The Society of Nineteenth Century Historians, in partnership with the Pamplin College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at Augusta University, will present the 33rd Annual Sachsman Symposium on the 19th Century Press on November 13-15 (Thursday through Saturday) at Augusta University in Augusta, Ga. The symposium was formerly known as the Symposium on the 19th Century Press, the Civil War, and Free Expression.

Registration for the conference is free.

Angela M. Zombek, an associate professor of history, an authority on the Civil War era, at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, will deliver the Hazel Dicken-Garcia address, the symposium's signature event.

Of particular interest this year are research papers and panels related to 19th century media law and ethics; international coverage of the American Civil War; and the 19th century minority and foreign language press.

Location: The conference will take place at Augusta University. We

strongly encourage on-site participation to take advantage of collegial, collaborative scholarship and discussion; public history experiences; and networking opportunities. A Zoom option is available upon request.

Recognition: Top papers will be recognized. The top student paper will be honored with the Sachsman Family Award for outstanding student research. Financial assistance may be available for in-person presentations by undergraduate and graduate students thanks to the Schmitt Family Fund, which is dedicated to encouraging student research.

Publications: Papers presented at the Symposium may be considered for a future book publication with the author's permission. In addition to dozens of collaborative and independent publications by participating researchers, the Symposium has produced nine books covering a broad range of subjects. These include *The Civil War and the Press* (2000); *Memory and Myth: The Civil War in Fiction and Film from Uncle Tom's Cabin to Cold Mountain* (2007); *Words at War: The Civil War and American Journalism* (2008); *Seeking a Voice: Images of Race and Gender in the 19th Century Press* (2009); *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th-Century Reporting* (2013); *A Press Divided: Newspaper Coverage of the Civil War* (2014); *After the War: The Press in a Changing America, 1865-1900* (2017); *The Antebellum Press: Setting the Stage for Civil War* (2019), and *The Civil War Soldier and the Press* (2023). Panel presentations from the 2020, 2023, and 2024 Symposiums were recorded and aired on C-SPAN and C-SPAN 2.

For More Information: Contact: 19thCenturyHistorians@gmail.com or visit 19thcenturyhistorians.org for the latest information on the Society, links to publications, upcoming book projects, and other news.

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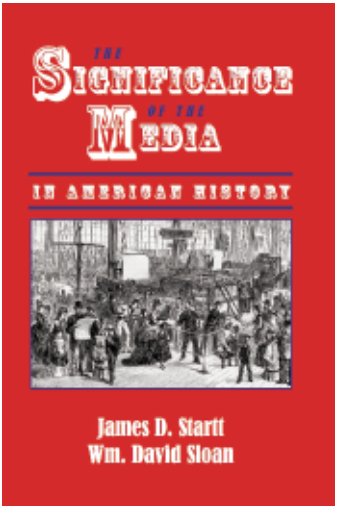

To purchase a copy, or to learn more about this important book, click on the cover image.

Contact Information
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Patrick Cox Selected for Kobre Lifetime Achievement Award

The American Journalism Historians Association Service Awards Committee selected Dr. Patrick Cox as the 2025 recipient of the Sidney Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement, AJHA's highest honor.

Cox is retired from the University of Texas at Austin where he was associate director of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History and taught at the UT Austin College of Journalism. He is a Distinguished Alum of Texas State University. Prior to his academic career, he was an award-winning journalist at The Wimberley View newspaper in Wimberley, Texas.

He is the author and editor of 10 books, including *The First Texas News Barons, Picturing Texas History* and *Ralph W. Yarborough - the People's Senator*. He was a finalist for the Robert F. Kennedy National Book Award, the Western Writer's Association Book Award, the Texas Philosophical Society Book Award and many others. Cox has also served two terms on AJHA's Board of Directors, was the association's convention sites chair for 12 years, and has received two President's Awards for Distinguished Service to AJHA.

First awarded in 1986, the Kobre Award recognizes individuals with an exemplary record of sustained achievement in journalism history through teaching, research, professional activities, or other contributions to the field of journalism history. Cox will receive the award at the AJHA's 44th annual convention to be held Sept. 25-27 in Long Beach, California.

"I am very grateful and honored to be the AJHA Kobre Award for

Lifetime Achievement recipient for 2025. We have a very distinguished group of recipients in the history of the Kobre Award, many of whom I had the pleasure to know and work with over the years," said Cox.

Cox received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Texas at Austin. He is a sixth generation Texan and lives in Wimberley, Texas with his wife, Brenda.

Janice Hume Selected for Shaw Senior Scholar Award

The History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication has selected Dr. Janice Hume as the 2025 recipient of the Donald L. Shaw Senior Scholar Award.

A prolific and accomplished scholar whose work has focused on journalism history and public memory, Dr. Hume is currently the associate dean for academic affairs at the University of Georgia's Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, where she has taught since 2001 and holds the Don E. Carter Chair for Excellence in Journalism.

Established in 2020, the Shaw award honors a scholar who has a record of excellence in media history that has spanned a minimum of 15 years, including division membership. It is named in honor of the pioneering journalism theoretician, distinguished journalism historian and former head of the History Division, who taught for almost half of a century at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Hussman School of Journalism and Media.

The award committee was unanimous in its choice of Dr. Hume and its praise for her career. "In influential

Over the course of her academic career, Dr. Hume has written three books, one monograph, and more than twenty peer-reviewed journal articles, on topics ranging from newspaper obituaries to Civil

War memory to the 9/11 terror attacks. She has received numerous awards recognizing her excellence in research, teaching, and service, including most recently (in 2022) the Sidney Kobre Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Journalism Historians Association.

Dr. Hume will be recognized during the History Division's Awards Gala in conjunction with the AEJMC annual meeting, to be held in San Franisco from August 7-10.

Keith Greenwood Selected for AJHA National Award for Excellence in Teaching

Keith Greenwood, associate professor and co-director of the McDougall Center of photojournalism and department chair of Journalism Studies in the University of Missouri School of Journalism, has been selected to receive the 2025 AJHA National Award for Excellence in Teaching.

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

Greenwood, who serves on the doctoral faculty with expertise in visual journalism history and preservation, expressed his excitement upon learning he had received the award and his enthusiasm for teaching.

"I truly enjoy teaching journalism and photojournalism history. Every year I am invigorated as students see the history they know in new ways and make new connections to the world they are preparing to enter. Recipients of this award have been amazing and inspirational teachers. To be included among them is an honor."

The selection committee was impressed with his project-based

assignments and his focus on connecting the past to the present, which "made his application stand out."

"It was an easy call. The committee noted the many years of dedicated teaching, particularly in the realm of history and photojournalism, and Dr. Greenwood's emphasis on centering practice in historical context. We are thrilled to offer him this award," said Amy Lauters, chair of the AJHA Education Committee.

Greenwood will receive the award at the 44th annual AJHA national convention in Long Beach, California, scheduled for Sept. 25-27.

AEJMC History Division Selects Two Books as Year's Best

The History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication has selected two books as winners of its award honoring the best journalism and mass communication history book published in 2024.

The two books are Dr. Gwyneth Mellinger's *Racializing Objectivity: How the White Southern Press Used Journalism Standards to Defend Jim Crow* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2024) and Dr. Ying Qian's *Revolutionary Becomings: Documentary Media in Twentieth-Century China* (Columbia University Press, 2024).

It is the first time the division has awarded two winners.

Dr. Mellinger is a Ruth D. Bridgeforth Professor of Telecommunications at James Madison University. The judges were impressed with *Racializing Objectivity's* deep research and important contributions to our understanding of both the Black press and the way that white journalists used "objectivity" to attack African Americans.

Dr. Qian is an associate professor of East Asian languages and cultures at Columbia University. The committee was impressed with her deeply researched exploration of the history of Chinese documentary

films. One judge wrote, "In *Revolutionary Becomings*, Dr. Ying Qian speaks not just to scholarship on mass communication but expertly combines film history and the history of political propaganda to tell a new story of documentary in China during the twentieth century."

Drs. Qian and Mellinger will each receive a plaque and a cash prize. Both will be recognized during the division's awards gala, Aug. 6 at 7:30 p.m., at the 2025 AEJMC National Convention in San Francisco."

AJHA Announces 2025 Book Award Winners

The American Journalism Historians Association has named *Racializing Objectivity: How the White Southern Press Used Journalism Standards to Defend Jim Crow* by Gwyneth Mellinger the winner of its 2025 AJHA Book Award. Mellinger is the Ruth D. Bridgeforth Professor of Telecommunications at James Madison University.

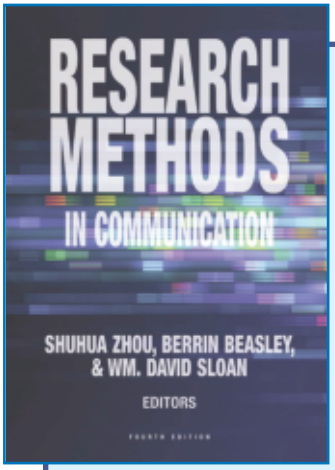
Mellinger's work, published by University of Massachusetts Press, uses archival materials from editors, reporters, and leaders of wire services to expose how the white Southern press used journalism standards to rationalize white supremacy and resist desegregation.

The AJHA also named the following three unranked runners-up for the annual book award:

Ira Chinoy, associate professor emeritus at the University of Maryland's College of Journalism, won for his book "*Predicting the Winner: The Untold Story of Election Night 1952 and the Dawn of Computer Forecasting*, published by Potomac Books at the University of Nebraska Press.

Tactical Inclusion: Difference and Vulnerability in U.S. Military Advertising by Jeremiah Favara was also named a runner-up. The book is published by the University of Illinois Press.

Newshawks in Berlin: The Associated Press and Nazi Germany by



The Best General Methods Book for History Students

Research in communication offers a wide array of methods. Social science methods remain important even as methods in the humanities – such as *historical methods* – and professional studies have gained increasing emphasis. Yet most textbooks barely mention the latter methods.

Research Methods in Communication includes them all. We think you will find that it is clearly the best book for covering the wide range of methods – not only the quantitative but the qualitative ones also – that scholars in the field use.

To make certain *Research Methods in Communication* provides your students the best instruction, each chapter is written by an expert on the chapter topic. So you can be confident that, as your students begin to study methods, they will have the very best guides.

A **teacher's manual** is available when you adopt the book. The manual contains sample syllabi, 25 PowerPoint presentations (one for each chapter), and multiple-choice quizzes for each chapter.

To request an exam copy, email vision.press.books@gmail.com

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Larry Heinzerling and Randy Herschaft, with Ann Cooper, published by Columbia University Press, was also named a runner-up. The judges described the book as tackling "a difficult topic — the role of journalists who remain in a country under censorship." Another judge commented, "This was a challenging read — not because of the writing, but because of the horror of the events. The story was compelling and complex."

The authors will participate in a panel discussion of their books and receive their awards during the 44th annual AJHA National Convention scheduled for September 25-27 in Long Beach, California.

Sundaramoorthy Wins Blanchard Dissertation Prize

The American Journalism Historians Association has announced Robin Sundaramoorthy as the winner of the 2025 Margaret A. Blanchard Dissertation Prize.

The Blanchard Prize, awarded first in 1997, recognizes the best doctoral dissertation dealing with mass communication history. Three other scholars received honorable mentions for their dissertation work from the AJHA Blanchard Prize Committee.

Sundaramoorthy's dissertation, "Black Radio Ownership and the FCC's Failed Attempt to Diversify the Airwaves," was completed under the direction of Linda Steiner at the University of Maryland.

"I am incredibly honored that my dissertation won the AJHA Margaret A. Blanchard Doctoral Dissertation Prize. Radio has been called 'the background sound of our lives,' but for far too long, African Americans and other marginalized groups of people were denied the chance to have their voices heard on the airwaves," said Sundaramoorthy.

Holly Swenson, a postdoctoral teaching fellow at Northwestern

University, received an honorable mention for her dissertation "Cultural Commerce: How Media Exports Made the British World in Australia, 1850-1990," written under the direction of Deborah Anne Cohen at Northwestern University.

Robert O'Sullivan, a postdoctoral teaching fellow at the University of Notre Dame, was honored for his dissertation, "Revolutionary Nationalism, Imperialism and Anti-Slavery in the Trans-National Irish-American Press, 1840-1865," completed under the direction of Gary Gerstle at the University of Cambridge.

Karlin Andersen Tuttle, an instructor at Penn State University, received an honorable mention for her dissertation, "Your Trusted Friend: Untold Histories of Five Christian Women's Magazines, 1974-2023," written under the direction of Ford Risley at Penn State University.

All four scholars will present their research on the Blanchard Dissertation Award Panel at the AJHA National Convention in Long Beach, California from September 25-27, 2025.

Roelsgaard Wins Rising Scholar Award

Natascha Toft Roelsgaard of Muskingum University was named the winner of the 2025 Rising Scholar Award by the editors of *American Journalism*, the peer-reviewed quarterly journal of the American Journalism Historians Association. The award is given annually to a scholar who shows promise in extending their research agenda.

The award will support travel for archival research as part of Roelsgaard's work on a book project that examines the work of nineteenth and twentieth-century women reporters who employed what she terms "structural witnessing" to injustice and employed journalism as a moral and political intervention, using counter-storytelling and an

ethics of care approach, to document systemic injustices.

"I am incredibly honored and grateful to receive this year's Rising Scholar Award. The funds will support visits to three archives that are essential for my book project. Since attending my first annual conference in 2018, the AJHA has proven to be the most supportive academic community any scholar could wish for, and the continued support and encouragement mean a great deal to me," Roelsgaard said.

"Natascha's research expands our knowledge of the Black press and the activism of Black women," said Rachel Grant, associate editor of *American Journalism*. "She conceptualizes 'structural witnessing' as framework to address the historical criminalization of Black persons. The contemporary relevance of this topic is one of the many reasons we funded this project."

Roelsgaard will receive a $2,000 award during the AJHA's 44th Annual Convention, to be held Sept. 25-27 in Long Beach, California.

Suzannah Evans Comfort Wins *American Journalism* Best Article Award

Suzannah Evans Comfort of Indiana University has been named the 2025 winner of the Best Article Award presented by *American Journalism*, the peer-reviewed journal of the American Journalism Historians Association. Her article, "Before the Environment Was News: Outdoor Writers and the Boundaries of Journalism," was published in the journal's third issue in 2024.

The award honors research published in the journal between Summer 2024 and Spring 2025 that is original, rigorous, and makes an outstanding contribution to developing scholarship in the field of journalism and media history.

Comfort's article was selected by members of the *AJ* editorial advi-

sory board. As one board member noted, "This study expands historical knowledge about environmental writing, while providing a thoughtful discussion of how this genre's conservation advocacy was seen as a violation of the journalistic norm of objectivity."

American Journalism also selected three other finalists for the award:

"Who Has a Right to Protest: Institutional and Student Media Coverage of a 1927 High School Student Strike," by Caitlin Cieslik-Miskimen, Idaho

"'Now We Are One': How Japanese American Internment Camp Newspapers Helped Create Communities, 1942-1943," by Glen Feighery, Utah

'"The Outlook for Pugilism is Black": Representations of Prize fighter Jack Johnson in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch," by Bryan Denham, Clemson

Comfort and the other finalists will be recognized during the 44th annual AJHA National Convention scheduled for September 25-27 in Long Beach, California.

Lindsay Palmer Wins Journalism History's Covert Award

Dr. Lindsay Palmer, University of Wisconsin-Madison, has won this year's Covert award for her article published in *Journalism History*, "The Reagan Doctrine or 'Sandinista Chic'? Political Balance in the Committee to Protect Journalists' 1982 Mission to Central America."

From the press release:

"The article was a strong contender throughout the competition judging phases and received the top marks and praise by judges. 'It's a great piece of transnational research that does an excellent job triangulating numerous historical sources, from oral histories to news content, to government documents and other archives," said one judge.

'The author has begun - and will continue, I hope - the essential archival work of reclaiming and critically analyzing the origins of the international press freedom movement. There are dozens, perhaps more, local, national, and international press freedom groups, and they deserve a history,' wrote another judge."

Internet Histories Volume 9, Issue 1-2 Is Online

This is a special double issue: Gender in Internet and Web History.

Guest Editors: Leopoldina Fortunati, Autumn Edwards & Janet Abbate

The full issue may be accessed at

https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rint20/9/1-2

List of articles:

Leopoldina Fortunati, Autumn Edwards & Janet Abbate: Introduction: (re)writing gender in Internet histories

Jane Vincent: "She does a good job for a woman" — the challenges for women enablers in the era of internet histories

Steve Jankowski: Becoming Wikipedian women: a sociotechnical history of the Gender Gap Task Force (2013-2023)

Will Mari & Fanny Ramirez: Gendering of the "ideal user" in 1990s-era internet magazines

Anne Kustritz: The politics of the digital transition: lessons from slash fan fiction communities at the turn of the millennium

Emily Lynell Edwards: Digital pioneers: Mormon mommy bloggers and building the "Bloggernacle"

Roberto Carradore & Tiziana Pirola: Streaming out of the spiral of silence. Women's visibility in gaming community and on twitch

Kat Brewster: Network breakdown: the queer anarchist politics at the heart of the 'net from FidoNet to HOMOCORE

Shell Avenant: (Un)scaffolding gender: social media and the evolution of nonbinary identity

Beatrice Melis, Marta Fioravanti, Chiara Paolini & Daniele Metilli: How have you modelled my gender? Reconstructing the history of gender representation in Wikidata

Jesper Verhoef: Doing LGBTQ internet histories justice: a queer web archive manifesto

Shana MacDonald, Brianna Wiens & Nick Ruest: Dwelling with feminist media archives in the age of big data

Roundtable:

Researching gender in the history of the Internet and the Web. A roundtable at the SHOT 2023 conference (Janet Abbate, Cassius Adair, Avery Dame-Griff, Autumn Edwards, Leopoldina Fortunati, Deena Larsen, Laine Nooney & Valérie Schafer)

New Titles of Interest in Media, Journalism, and Communication

JHistory, the H-Net network on the History of Journalism and Mass Communication, has added a continually updated listing of new book titles in areas relevant to our work. You can find this resource by going to our home page (JHistory) and scrolling to the bottom. This feed is made possible through H-Net's Book Channel. We hope you will check it out and find it useful in keeping up with the latest scholarship in our field.

Gerry Lanosga, Editor

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