Historiography

in Mass Communication

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Historiography in Mass Communication

Editorial Purpose

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

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Essays

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

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

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Historiography in Mass Communication

Volume 8 (2022). Number 1

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Gary Lamar Whitby

August 26, 1943 - September 3, 2021

By Wm. David Sloan ©

Gary Whitby

"I was lucky to have Gary Whitby as my father. My childhood with him was filled with stories: stories of people, real and imagined, and their adventures, dreams, what they loved and fought for. My father was a gifted storyteller and academic, and above all else, he was passionate about helping those around him. It gives me so much joy to know that his work left such a lasting impression on so many in the JMC field." — Bess Whitby

Gary Whitby would not have said so, but he was of immense importance to the study of JMC history. When he died September 3, 2021, few in our field were aware of his passing. Yet in the 1980s he played a critical role in advancing historical scholarship. Today many JMC historians who owe a great deal to him would not recognize him other than possibly by name. Yet his legacy to them and to the study of JMC history continues to be great.

Gary was the founding editor of the research journal *American Journalism*. For almost forty years it has offered an outlet for articles on

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

JMC history. Dr. Maurine Beasley, professor emerita at the University of Maryland, a luminary in the field of JMC history, on several occasions has said truthfully that publication in *American Journalism* has to be credited for helping untold numbers of professors get tenure and promotion.

But Gary was more than an editor. He was an astute thinker in the tradition of classical liberalism. He believed students should be exposed to timeless wisdom and that educators must challenge them to think at the highest level so that they can distinguish truth from falsehood.

I've known Gary for forty-eight years. In 1974 I was teaching journalism at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, and he was teaching English at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. Our campuses were thirty miles apart. I was 27 years old, and he was just three years older. Each of us had only a master's degree.

John Brown's English faculty wanted to add a few journalism courses to the department curriculum. Since Gary was the newest member of the faculty, and since the tenured professors didn't want to do the work required to teach a new course, naturally they chose him.

He had never studied or practiced journalism. His background was in English literature. To prepare for teaching journalism, he hoped to take some courses, and he contacted Dr. Jess Covington, the chair of the Journalism Department at Arkansas. Jess suggested he enroll in two courses I was teaching, news reporting and law.

Gary knocked on my office door, introduced himself, and told me his situation. After ten minutes of conversation, it was obvious that he was highly intelligent, was educated far beyond our journalism students, and had a mature sense of personal responsibility.

I told him he could enroll in my courses but that he would be wasting his time sitting in class six hours a week. Instead, he would study on

his own, we would meet once a week in a coffee shop across the street from my office and talk about journalism, and I would try to answer any questions he had. Over the semester, he advanced more in his understanding than did any of the students attending my classes.

From there, our friendship grew.

Gary was born on Thursday, August 26, 1943, on a modest farm near the small town of Friendship in northwest Tennessee. When he was five, his parents — Connie Corinne (Cole) and William Grady Whitby — moved the family to Memphis.

By the time he entered high school, he was a big kid. When I met him, he was 6'4" and weighed about 230 pounds. He became an outstanding offensive lineman for his high school football squad and was named to the All-Memphis team. He was so good that he received college scholarship offers. He turned them down.

He was more interested in academics than athletics, and he enrolled at Harding College, where he majored in English. He worked at odd jobs to pay for his education. One of those jobs was as a deck hand on the last steamboat transporting cargo on the Mississippi.

After graduation, he served stateside in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He studied at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. Upon completing his military service, he earned a Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Arkansas. He then got his teaching job at John Brown University.

Having taught journalism at John Brown, he decided to make his academic career in journalism, but he still was particularly drawn to literature. He enrolled in the University of Iowa Writers Workshop, one of the nation's top programs. He received his Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. He then entered the doctoral program in the University of Iowa's School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

His deepest interests lay not, though, in mass communication but in fiction, philosophy, and poetry, often combined with metaphysics and faith. While he taught journalism, he thought at a different altitude.

Upon learning of Gary's death, Bruce Evensen, an accomplished scholar and historian at DePaul University, emailed me his early recollection of Gary. "It seems like only yesterday," Bruce reflected, "that we were on a bus ride after an AJHA event, and we were talking of our mutual affection for Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish Christian existentialist. Gary was full of excitement, talking about the book that was opened on his lap, recounting Kierkegaard's difficult life and lasting impact on Christian apologetics with his idea that Christianity involved a 'leap of faith' when doubts were cast aside, and one simply accepted — as a matter of faith — the truth of the Gospel and Christ's atoning work on the cross."

At Iowa Gary studied under Jim Carey, who had a lasting influence on his thinking. It was Carey who pioneered a cultural approach to mass communication, an idea that is still popular today. Gary considered Carey to be one of the two or three most provocative and influential philosophers the field of mass communication had produced.

Yet Gary, unlike some of Carey's students, was not slavishly devoted to him. He declared that Carey had a real genius for applying ideas to mass communication, but that he borrowed most of them from others. Gary himself thought at a philosophical level equal to Carey's, and he found fault with several of Carey's ideas. He once wrote, for example, that "Carey's implicit mandate that language, not the economy, be used to expunge dominance is … stilled by a logical contradiction." The contradiction existed in the fact that "Carey seems overly optimistic about the transforming power of language and hardly pessimistic

enough about the economic dimension of technology and how these have shaped both culture and language."[1]

Gary found his Iowa studies satisfying — except in the field of journalism history. That was paradoxical because it was mass communication history in which he and several of his classmates were specializing. He later felt he had been exposed thoroughly to ideas and opinions about history but not to the actual substance of history or how one goes about researching history. He did not remember ever having heard the term "primary source" during his entire doctoral program. Iowa students, he said, could talk glibly, but most had hardly any familiarity with real, documented history or with historical methods.

Absence of training in historical research proved a particular challenge when he began work on his dissertation. It was titled "The New York Penny Press and the American Romantic Movement." He completed it in 1984. It makes the innovative argument that it was Romanticism — and not technology or professional ideas about journalism or any of the other reasons that historians have given — that gave rise to penny journalism and accounted for its distinctive characteristics.

From the dissertation, he wrote, unfortunately, very little. However, he did publish in *Journalism Quarterly* an article titled "Horns of a Dilemma: The *Sun*, Abolition, and the 1833-34 New York Riots."[2] Susan Thompson, today's leading authority on the penny press, said the article is the "best scholarly examination of Day and Wisner's editorial differences on the subject of the abolishment of slavery that anyone has done."

It is regrettable that Gary didn't publish more, but his academic career led him in a different direction.

Lamentably, back when he was doing his dissertation, he hadn't been inspired to love historical research. Philosophical talk occupied his

history classes, and when he began his dissertation he had no guidance on how to do research. So he tried to find his own way. He read, he told me, "every issue" of the newspapers his dissertation covered. The dissertation ran to more than 800 pages. His comment was partially defensive, to indicate that he had been thorough, and partially regretful, to indicate that he bemoaned not having had a better grounding in historical research methods.

After completing his dissertation, he did no more original research in history. I can't say for certain, but I had the impression that reading all the newspapers for his dissertation, and not delving into other types of material, had been grueling and tiresome. He had never experienced the joy that historians derive from digging into a wide variety of primary material. Afterwards, he hardly ever mentioned his dissertation.

From Iowa, Gary took a position at the University of Central Arkansas. It was there that he founded *American Journalism*. I've often been asked how it originated. So here's the brief story of its beginnings.

With the ascendancy of behavioral and social science theory that came out of World War II, by the 1970s historical study in our field was impoverished. "Real" researchers in our colleges of communication either ignored the efforts of historians or looked down their noses at them. Personally, I can recall doing my graduate work in that milieu — and it was not a time that lent encouragement to those of us who wanted to be historians.

It was during that bleak time that the American Journalism Historians Association was born.

In the summer of 1981, Gary and I presented a co-authored paper at the AEJMC national convention at Michigan State University. Because Gary had a phobia of flying, he persuaded me that we should make the long trip from Arkansas by car. I drove from Fayetteville to

Conway, where the University of Central Arkansas was located. We had to delay the start of our trip by a day because Gary, who had a wonderful, full baritone voice, was singing the solos at UCA's summer commencement exercise.

After the AEJMC convention, Gary and I began the return trip on a Sunday. Along the way, we talked about a variety of topics. But we both were excited about history, and as the trip stretched on, we began to talk seriously about it. Among other things, we shared a concern that mass communication historiography did not exhibit the vitality that it needed.

Then, shortly after midnight, as we drove through southwest Missouri and neared the Arkansas border, I suggested to Gary, "You know what is needed? An organization of journalism historians."

Gary agreed, and we talked about the idea for a little while — but then we dropped it at that: just talk.

And it might have remained nothing more than an idea had I not met Don Avery a couple of months later. It was at a symposium in Fort Worth, Texas. I mentioned to him the idea — a fanciful one at that point — of starting an organization of media historians.

Upon returning to my campus, I reflected on Don's enthusiastic reaction to the idea, and I telephoned Gary to tell him that I thought we should do something. He agreed.

A misconception about the AJHA was that it was started as a regional organization. The editor of *Clio* at the time, a professor in a Midwest prairie state, pooh-poohed it as being limited to the South. Gary, who had a sense of humor, wrote him a letter. It was cordial, but it included this line: "Not all of us are fortunate enough to live in Omaha, Nebraska."

We decided that a self-respecting organization needed two things:

Gary Whitby and David Sloan at the AJHA's third conference, in 1984 in Tallahassee, Florida

a national convention and a journal.

But starting a scholarly journal didn't seem to be a goal with much promise. The early 1980s were not the best economic times for universities. Many were reducing their spending and cutting back some of their programs.

Gary, though, said he would undertake the job of founding a journal. And sure enough, at the same time that some of the biggest communication schools in the nation were tightening their belts, his little school agreed to sponsor a new journal. We gave it the title *American Journalism* to reflect the name of the AJHA. Gary, serving as editor, published its first issue in 1983.

Unfortunately, after a year Central Arkansas realized it didn't have the resources to continue supporting the journal. So Gary had to give up its editorship, and *American Journalism* moved to the University of Alabama.

Yet, Gary still had something he really loved: teaching. Along with his campus duties — and even after he retired from his university career — he often served as a volunteer teacher of literature, news writing, and non-fiction for prison inmates and disadvantaged people.

From Central Arkansas Gary moved to Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. SIU had a solid program in mass communication with a reputable doctoral program. He felt the teaching and academic opportunities were better there.

But, as often happens with professors who are good in the classroom, Gary decided to go into administration. Perhaps he wanted to influence mass communication, or perhaps he just wanted higher pay. He never told me his motivation.

First he went to Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama, where he served as a department chair. Then he took the chairmanship of the mass media department at East Texas State University (now Texas A&M-Commerce). ETSU happens to be my undergrad alma mater. That was a coincidence, increasing Gary's and my common interests.

By the mid-1990s he was suffering administrative burnout, and he retired from full-time academic work.

He bought a tractor truck and trailer, and he did local hauls in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. His daughter, Bess, worked at the University of North Texas library in Denton. They were just forty miles apart, and Gary welcomed the chance to spend more time with her.

I asked Gary why he became a trucker, and he answered that the work gave him a considerable amount of break time, which allowed him to write music, fiction, and especially poetry. When he was picking up a job, during the time workers were loading his truck he would work on his poems, writing a line or two, or more if it were a particularly creative moment. Or none, if his creative juices weren't flowing.

In 2012 his poetry collection *The Weather of One Another* was published. A reviewer wrote that "among the vast unexplored territories in American poetry that await discovery, Gary Whitby's work looms large." The poems display the variety of his style. Some are free verse, while some use traditional devices. Despite their stylistic variety, most of the poems reveal the emotions in human relationships. Many speak of love and death with tender understanding and with sure and certain faith.

After selling his truck rig, Gary taught English part-time at community colleges around Dallas, Denton, and Ft. Worth. He had a love of both the language and the students. He continued until medical problems prevented him.

He and I talked by phone frequently. He wanted to know how my wife and children were doing. He kept me updated on Bess and his son, Cole. We talked about my work in history and his progress on a novel and another collection of poetry.

Then he fell, broke his leg, and was immobilized for months. He began to suffer dementia and had to enter an assisted-living facility. He fell again, and his health rapidly went down. He died not long after his second fall.

He had not worried about dying, other than leaving behind his daughter and son. In one of his poems in *The Weather of One Another*, he reflected on the end of life.

> One day when we've left this place,
> one day when the songs have ceased
> for us, and all that we once leased
> of flesh and blood, of eye and face,
> has gone to staring tombstone words,
>
> What of us then will remain
> except some kindly spoken day,
> when all we did was make our way
> along a thunder, then a rain,
> that washed the air entirely clean
>
> Of hurt inside a loved one's heart,
> and listened to the flooding tears

the way a bird uncounts the years
and leaves a limb to take its flight,
One day when mind and soul are full

So full of words they cannot speak,
so clogged with days they cannot walk,
so choked with love they cannot talk,
so full of feeling what they seek,
then won't we lift and wing away?

I'm glad Gary came into my life back when we were young professors. I cherish his friendship. He improved me. I miss him, but I'm glad he helped me see things on a higher plane. I wish more JMC professors had had the opportunity to learn from him. For the opportunities that *American Journalism* provides, all should thank him.

NOTES

[1]Gary L. Whitby, "James Carey and the Cultural Approach," in *Makers of the Media Mind*, ed. Wm. David Sloan (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1990), 174.
[2]*Journalism Quarterly* 67 (1990): 410-419.

Gary Whitby: A Really Decent Human Being

by Pamela Brown
Journalism professor emerita, Rider University; AJHA President, 1992-1993

I would never have imagined that Gary Whitby and I would become friends. He was already in the Iowa PhD program when I arrived in Iowa City, so he was not in my

PhD cohort. Gary towered over my 5 feet so I was certainly aware of him in the hallways, but I don't recall ever being in a seminar together.

My first real memory of Gary was when he was preparing to teach an undergraduate public relations course that was new for him, but which I had previously taught. At that point I barely knew him. He phoned me and asked if he might borrow my notes and other course materials. I was living in an apartment outside of Iowa City and, in those pre-email days, I invited him to come there to get the materials. He came with another student, someone from my cohort whom I knew well. What still makes me smile about this memory is that the student who came with him told me later that Gary, who was married, thought it would not be proper for him to come to my apartment alone in the evening. He was such an old-fashioned southern gentleman. I found that quality so endearing.

A second important memory of Gary for me came some years later when the AJHA held its annual convention in Philadelphia in 1991. When I encountered Gary at the convention hotel he asked me to go for a walk with him. I recall us stopping somewhere on the street to sit down on a bench and chat, at which point he asked me if he could nominate me for the presidency of the AJHA. I was startled and humbled that he thought I could actually be elected — but he convinced me to run. I suspect that Gary then did a lot of "campaigning" for me in conversation with other members because, to my amazement, I was elected. My term as president was a great experience, and I owe that opportunity to Gary.

Over the years we stayed long-distance friends, talking on the phone frequently, discussing our classroom experiences and life in general, and he often shared his poetry with me. This past year was the first in many years that I was not able to speak to him on his birthday in August.

Gary was the only poet-truck driver-PhD I've ever known. That wonderful mix of interests and experiences made him a fascinating conversationalist and a really decent human being. I'm lucky that our Iowa time brought us together.

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Donald L. Shaw

October 27, 1936 - October 19, 2021

By Erin K. Coyle ©

Shaw

Coyle

Donald Shaw made significant contributions to mass communication historiography, scholarship in mass communication and political science, and education. He is remembered as a brilliant, innovative, collaborative scholar with a keen commitment to research, teaching, and community. He died in October 2021, at age 84, after a brief illness.

Shaw received the 2006 Paul J. Deutschmann Award for scholarly achievement and a 2007 Presidential Citation Award for career achievement from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. In 2010 he received the Hazel Dicken-Garcia Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Journalism History at the Symposium on the 19th Century Press, the Civil War, and Free Expression. A year later, he and his co-author Maxwell McCombs received the Helen Dinerman Award for Public

Erin K. Coyle studied with Donald L. Shaw at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Shaw served on her doctoral dissertation committee and as her mentor. She is an associate professor of journalism at Temple University. She has published a book, The Press and Rights to Privacy*, in addition to peer-reviewed scholarly articles on free expression and privacy rights, free press-fair trial rights, and journalism history.*

Opinion Research from the World Association for Public Opinion Research in Amsterdam. Shaw and McCombs also received the American Political Science Association Murray Edelman Award for distinguished communication in political communication.

"The fields of history and social science have lost an irreplaceable voice, a defining genius in two fields whose innovative work has expanded the potential and impact in multiple disciplines besides those he principally worked in," said Thomas Terry, a professor in the Department of Journalism and Communication at Utah State University. Shaw served as the chair of Terry's master's thesis and dissertation committees and principal investigator for his post-doctoral fellowship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Shaw brought content analysis techniques and theory building to historical research. His significant contributions to historical and mass communication research started shortly after he joined the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill faculty in 1966. In 1967, *Journalism Quarterly* published his research on the influence of the telegraph on news coverage and bias in the Wisconsin press from 1852 to 1916.[1] The same issue included research he and John D. Stevens completed on news and newspapers as sources in historical journals.[2] Throughout his career, he used content analysis techniques to study southern history and news coverage of campaigns, American slavery, sensationalism, and women and minorities.

"His work in content analysis solidified and legitimized newspapers as primary sources in historical research in all areas of inquiry, not just his primary areas," Terry said.

Shaw also addressed mass communication history's research methods and relevance. He encouraged scholars to go beyond traditional Whiggish approaches to journalism history. In a 1974 *Journalism Edu-*

cator article, he proposed journalism history should seek new ways to identify important periods and move beyond using dates, wars, and famous people's names. He wrote:

> [W]e must as surely seek what is common in the development of the press as what is unique, focus on relational questions as much as on people. This is not an argument that we substitute charts and graphs for colorful editors; it is an argument that the field of communications history must take a deeper and more balanced view of its mission to students and to the growing body of communications scholarship.[3]

A 1987 *Journalism History* article he co-authored with doctoral student Sylvia L. Zack praised journalism historians for "producing insights into 'new' subject areas, such as women and minorities, and familiar subject areas, such as the muckraking years." The article asserts that journalism historians "need to provide new perspectives that place journalism history within the context of American history."[4]

"In the field of JMC history he probably did more than anyone else to try to apply theory to history and to use quantitative methods to give an accurate account of the past," said David Sloan, editor of *Historiography in Mass Communication* and University of Alabama Professor Emeritus.

Shaw is perhaps most renowned for a 1972 *Public Opinion Quarterly* article he co-wrote with Maxwell McCombs on the agenda setting function of the media.[5] McCombs is a University of Texas at Austin professor emeritus. Agenda setting posits that the press helps indicate what is important enough to be on the public agenda. That article has been cited more than 15,000 times. Shaw subsequently published mul-

tiple books, book chapters, and articles on agenda setting, history, and agendamelding, including a 2019 book on news, social media, audiences, and civic community. He wrote that book with his UNC colleague Deb Aikat and with Chris J. Vargo and Milad Minooie, who both were his doctoral students.[6]

"Had it not been for his extensive contribution to the field of agenda setting, he would still be a renowned and influential scholar for his work on journalism history, agendamelding, and civic community," said Minooie, an assistant professor at Kennesaw State University who was Shaw's final doctoral student.

After the bombing of the Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City, Shaw focused more on what factors — in addition to media — have shaped the public agenda. He drew upon historical research for his agenda-melding theory, which attempts to explain the public agenda that cannot be explained by traditional media coverage. He believed people had always received information through a variety of means, and advances in technology allowed people to form communities across geographical areas.

"Don produced some enduring historical research as well as his more widely known contributions to agenda-setting, and agenda-melding, research," said David Weaver, an Indiana University Distinguished Professor Emeritus who was Shaw's first doctoral student.

In the 1990s, Shaw delivered several lectures on the rise and fall of media. He predicted the fragmentation of media and agendas now seen today. When he addressed this topic in a Roy Howard lecture at Indiana University in 1991, there was so much demand for copies from journalists and scholars that Weaver recalled the university ran out.

Shaw was committed to innovation in research and high-quality education. He was on the journalism faculty at the University of North

Carolina at Chapel Hill for more than forty years, and he continued collaborating with students and colleagues to publish research after he retired as a Kenan Professor Emeritus. He loved sharing ideas, encouraging others to make new scholarly contributions, and helping prepare undergraduate students to be journalists.

Debra VanTuyll, an award-winning historian and an Augusta University Professor Emerita, recalled that Shaw regularly attended the Symposium on the 19th Century Press, Civil War and Free Expression, where he frequently presented research and "went out of his way to help researchers improve their work." He was charming and asked penetrating questions with a gentle southern accent.

"He stood as a role model of excellence for many of us, and few words of praise have ever meant as much to me as those from Dr. Shaw," VanTuyll said.

He was devoted to helping faculty and students succeed. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in 1966, the same year Ruth Walden started there as a freshman. When she later joined Shaw on the UNC faculty, he recognized her as a fellow Wisconsin graduate and took an almost fatherly interest in her professional progress. He often dropped by her office to check how she was settling in.

"When I became the Associate Dean for Graduate Students, I truly appreciated that Don showed that same kindness, concern and support for our graduate students, always welcoming those who sought his guidance, wisdom, and encouragement," Walden said.

Shaw often included students and faculty members as collaborators in his research. He also read and edited their manuscripts and used a developmental editing process. The Rev. Dr. Fatimah S. Salleh recalled Shaw printing her dissertation and spreading out each page on a conference table. He read them, then used a printer's ruler and tape to cut and

Don Shaw drove from North Carolina to Iowa for Erin Coyle's wedding. Photo by Joey Wallis

paste paragraphs he moved from one section to another.

"He would physically move around the shorn pieces to restructure the flow of my writing," Salleh said about her dissertation co-chair. "He was kind, patient, and always learning."

Shaw cared deeply about teaching and recognized that his greatest contribution, which was least likely to be known, was working with hundreds of students who went on to be journalists. In 2009, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching U.S. Professors of the Year Program recognized him as the UNC-Chapel Hill winner of the U.S. Professor of the Year Award. He also received the UNC School of Journalism & Mass Communication David Brinkley Teaching Award in 2001.

Shaw taught news writing, journalism history, communication theory, agenda setting, and other courses at UNC and four other universities, where he served as a visiting professor. Graduate students recognized his outstanding teaching when he was a visiting professor at the University of Tennessee and Syracuse University.

His teaching related to his work as a journalist in North Carolina between 1960 and 1966. He worked for newspapers in Burlington and Asheville after earning an associate's degree at Mars Hill College in 1957 and bachelor's and master's degrees from UNC in 1959 and

1960, respectively. He was inducted into the North Carolina Media and Journalism Hall of Fame in 2012.

"I never met anyone who didn't respect Don for his accomplishments or for simply the humble person he was. It is unlikely we will have many more like him," Sloan said.

To show humility and encourage graduate students to pursue innovative ideas, Shaw sometimes shared that the seminal 1972 agenda setting article he wrote with McCombs was rejected from a conference before it was published. He would joke that he knew he must really be onto something if a reviewer recommended rejecting a paper.

"He was kind, gentle, and unfailingly friendly, willing to spend his time with you as if your project was the most important one in the world," Terry said.

Michael Fuhlhage, an associate professor at Wayne State University who studied with Shaw and published research with him, said Shaw showed genuine concern for students' growth as human beings and as scholars. He built community among students, faculty, and scholars across institutions by gathering groups for meals in Chapel Hill and at conferences and by offering agenda setting and agendamelding seminars at multiple universities.

"Dr. Shaw had an expansive heart to go with his expansive mind," Fuhlhage said. "He modeled collaborative scholarship. He encouraged us to think big and to notice the connections between seemingly unrelated things."

The AEJMC History Division named its senior scholar award for excellence in journalism history research the Donald L. Shaw Senior Scholar Award. He wrote, co-wrote, or edited thirteen books and more than seventy articles and book chapters. He also presented research on five continents, including as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar in Tbilisi,

Georgia, in 2011.

Shaw also served as editor of *Journalism Quarterly* from 1989-1992, the journal's associate editor for historical research for five years, and its book review co-editor for nine years. He also served as the AEJMC History Division head, an editorial board member for *Journalism History*, and an editorial board member for *Journalism Monographs*.

In addition to his notable research and service to his scholarly disciplines, Shaw was the founder and director of the UNC Media & Faculty Development Center, which served approximately 2,000 faculty members. Throughout his career, he demonstrated how to balance professional and personal life. He held workshops on this topic and mentored students and faculty members in this area.

Shaw regularly welcomed graduate students who could not go home for holidays to join his family in Chapel Hill. He was married for more thank fifty years to Ilse Feichter Shaw, who died in 2015. One of their four children once joked about not quite knowing how many people he would bring each year to join his four children, eight grandchildren, and six great grandchildren for holidays. All were welcomed as family.

He recognized that Ilse, who was a gifted teacher, provided him with unparalleled support for him to be a productive researcher throughout the years. Scholarship is who he was. He told Terry he never looked behind him. Shaw considered momentum to be a trait of a successful scholar.

"Like Patton, always keep moving your scholarship and research forward," he told Terry. "I don't understand scholars who say they're waiting until the summer to do their research. You don't wait until then to shower or brush your teeth."

In addition to being a scholar, Shaw was a writer and a public ser-

vant. He wrote more than 600 poems, many of which he presented before state or local poetry groups. He also served in the U.S. Army reserves for thirty-two years. He started as a private in 1960 and retired as a full colonel in 1992. During Operation Desert Storm, he worked in the Pentagon. He also served as the North Carolina director of the Selective Service System for fifteen years. In 2011, he received a Selective Service System Distinguished Service Award.

"Don thought of himself as a communication historian and theorist, a journalism professor, a retired U.S. Army Reserve officer (full colonel), and writer, as well as a father and grandfather. He was all of these things and more — much more to me, his family, his friends, and his many students," Weaver said.

NOTES

[1] Donald L. Shaw, "News Bias and the Telegraph: A Study of Historical Change," *Journalism Quarterly*, 44, no. 1 (Spring 1967): 3-12, 31.

[2] John D. Stevens and Donald L. Shaw, "Newspapers as Sources in Historical Journals," *Journalism Quarterly*, 44, no. 1 (Spring 1967): 129.

[3] Donald L. Shaw, "J-History Requires Ongoing Themes — Not Just Names Dates," *Journalism Educator*, 29, no. 2 (Summer 1974): 33-36.

[4] Donald L. Shaw and Sylvia L. Zack, "Rethinking Journalism History: How Some Recent Studies Support One Approach," *Journalism History 11*, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 111-117.

[5] Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36, no. 2 (Summer 1972): 176-187.

[6] Donald L. Shaw, Milad Minooie, Deb Aikat, and Chris J. Vargo, *Agendamelding: News, Social Media, Audiences, and Civic Community* (Peter Lang 2019).

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How Historians Can Help Tell the Story of Pandemic Journalism

By Erika Pribanic-Smith ©

Pribanic-Smith

Recently an article came up in my Facebook feed about how future historians would look back on the Covid-19 pandemic. It's one of many such articles I've seen in the past couple of years. These articles tend to have similar themes.

Many of them outline key moments of the timeline as areas of focus: the first news of this strange new virus, the first identified cases in the U.S., the spring 2020 shutdown and ensuing tensions between public health and the economy, the rollout of vaccinations, the emergence of new variants, legal scuffles over mask and vaccine mandates, and so forth. They also often point to specific efforts by museums and libraries to preserve the human side of the story — beyond the stats and news reports — including oral history projects and requests for artifacts and documents. As an essay in *Nature* pointed out, much was lost from earlier pandemics, so "twenty-first-century ar-

Erika Pribanic-Smith is an associate professor of journalism at the University of Texas at Arlington. Executive director and former president of the AJHA and former chair of the AEJMC History Division, she is the co-author of Emma Goldman's No Conscription League and the First Amendment *(Routledge, 2018) and co-editor of* The Media in America: A History *(Vision Press).*

chivists are trying to think ahead, to save material that might otherwise pass into oblivion."[1]

One of the more interesting articles I've come across appeared in *History Today*, in which four historians pondered how living through a global crisis changed their views on the nature of crises in history. They spoke about the diversity of experiences and the need to focus on one particular aspect of the crisis, to tell one smaller story well rather than try to reconstruct the bigger picture.[2] Though several entities collecting pandemic stories have cast a wide net, others have focused on the stories others might ignore. For instance, the Voces Oral History Center at the University of Texas's Moody College of Communication is focusing on how the coronavirus pandemic has affected Latinas/os disproportionately in its Voces of a Pandemic project.[3]

The scholars in the *History Today* article also spoke about empathizing with the emotional responses — the anger, the confusion, the resilience — of those who have endured crises in the past. They spoke about how past crises have become more real, more vivid in their minds.[4] I thoroughly identified with what those historians discussed. Much of my research is set at crisis points in American history, whether it's the Civil War or the Red Scare. I have a much deeper understanding now of the mindset of people in those tumultuous eras.

What's more, I identify with the museum curators and archivists who have scurried to collect anything and everything in an effort to ensure that nothing is lost to history and future historians are able to tell the fullest possible story. As the co-editor of a media history book in which one chapter explores contemporary media, I have spent a great deal of time during these pandemic years making notes and saving articles so that we can explain the particular aspect of this era that is of most interest to us: the story of journalism during the Covid-19 crisis. Email

newsletters from Poynter and the National Press Club Journalism Institute have been particularly helpful resources for finding stories, but as time has gone on, the mountain of information has become daunting indeed.

When living through an historic moment, it's difficult to predict whether what seems important to me will be considered important in the future. I've tried to use my judgment gleaned from studying the past to inform what I've saved, what I've noted, because it is truly impossible to take it all down. I've also gained some perspective from the aforementioned *Nature* essay. Writer Laura Spinney explained that those seeking to preserve the history of this era are focusing on the local and specialized stories as well as the global, interconnected ones.[5]

Future journalism historians easily will notice the big headlines: allegations of misinformation and panic-stoking, Covid deaths of notable journalists, media closures and furloughs, the double-danger of covering protests during a pandemic, and the challenges of covering national politics in the Covid era — including a controversial election. However, as the essays and articles on historians of the future have noted, it's also important to focus on the local and the specialized, and to include diverse voices. That goes for journalism historians, too.

I hope future historians will examine the struggle of Asian journalists working in an atmosphere of rampant anti-Asian racism. I hope they will explore the challenges and triumphs of journalists covering local news during the pandemic; the ingenuity they demonstrated to obtain crucial information and relay it to their communities during widespread lockdowns; and the efforts they made so the marginalized voices in their communities were heard. I hope they will explain how journalists with children coped with the same issues many working parents did, juggling their important jobs with caring for and educating

their children at home.

As museums and archives have shown, it's not too early to start collecting and preserving these stories. In fact, given the prominence of digital media and the unpredictability of its preservation, it is important to think about this now. It may be easy to access the products of major news outlets decades from now, and prominent journalists may save their personal documents for posterity. But what about the small community newspapers and local broadcast outlets? Will those media still be available when future historians want to read or watch them? Will the day-to-day experiences that local journalists have been recording on social media and in emails be preserved and accessible? If not, how will their stories be told?

Some journalism historians already have taken the initiative to record the stories of community journalists. Teri Finneman and Will Mari conducted oral histories with journalists in North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana about their experiences covering the pandemic in 2020.[6] Their important work covered a small swath of the nation, though. Plenty more journalists have local, specialized, and diverse stories to tell. I would encourage more historians to think ahead and make sure those stories don't pass into oblivion.

NOTES

[1] Laura Spinney, "What Are Covid Archivists Keeping for Tomorrow's Historians?" *Nature*, Dec. 17, 2020, https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03554-0.

[2] "The Pandemic and History," *History Today*, June 2021, https://www.historytoday.com/archive/head-head/pandemic-and-history.

[3] "Voces of a Pandemic," Voces Oral History Center, Moody College of Communication, University of Texas, https://voces.lib.utexas.edu/voces-pandemic.

[4] "The Pandemic and History."

[5] Spinney, "What Are Covid Archivists Keeping for Tomorrow's Historians?"

[6] Kristen Hare, "The Essential Workers," Poynter, March 2, 2021, https://www.poynter.org/the-essential-workers/

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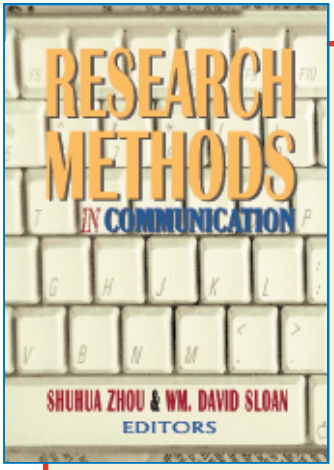

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Historian Interview

Bruce Evensen ©

Evensen

Bruce Evensen is an emeritus professor in journalism at DePaul University in Chicago. For twenty-five years he directed the university's journalism program and in 2019 received DePaul's highest honor — the Via Sapientiae Award — for outstanding contributions to the university community. In 2016 he received the Harold L. Nelson Award from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for his distinguished contribution to research in journalism and mass communication education. In addition to winning an outstanding faculty paper award from the American Journalism Historians Association and an Excellence in Teaching Award from DePaul, he has had fellowships with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Fulbright Council for the International Exchange of Scholars. In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, he traveled to Bahrain through a State Department grant to teach a course on the role of a free press in newly emerging democracies. He also directed a special reporting institute, funded by the McCormick Foundation and the Poynter Institute, on how to report meetings of the G8 and NATO member nations. He has written six books and numerous research papers and articles. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin.

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

Evensen: Johannes Kepler was a good historian and even better cosmologist who said his professional journey started with his conception, naming the very hour and minute on May 17, 1571, when it occurred. I don't know when I was conceived, but do know that I was the middle of three sons born in Chicago on February 4, 1951, to a Jewish mother, whose family survived Czarist pogroms and fled to America in May 1906. My father was born in Norway and was brought to America by his mother in 1925 when he was one after the Norwegian banking system went bust and left the family foraging for food on a stony, hard scrabble farm near Arendal.

Like Kepler's universe that helped displace the earth as the center of the universe, the America I grew up in was in transition too. It was only 13 miles from where we lived in Chicago to where we moved in the northwest suburbs in the summer of 1955, but my aunts, crying, asked my mother when they would ever see us again. Eisenhower's Interstate Highway System reached Des Plaines, Illinois in December 1958, ending our isolation. My father still hunted pheasant in our backyard beside our water well and an oil tank that heated our home — a three-bedroom brick ranch worth $9,000 with a $98 monthly mortgage. Dad worked as a permit electrician. Mom boxed perfume at Avon.

The day we fixed an aerial on the roof changed everything. Half of all American homes had televisions in 1955, and the Evensens had theirs. I'd sit in front of it on Saturday mornings, watching the Indian head test pattern, and waiting for the shows to start. That box brought *Mighty Mouse* and *Captain Video*, *Flash Gordon* and *The Lone Ranger*, *Ding Dong School* and *Howdy Doody* into our home. These were the kind companions of my adolescence. This was a new, wired world coming into view. Eventually, the nightly news with Walter Cronkite, Huntley and Brinkley and Howard K. Smith were watched from tray

tables, where the potato pancakes and corned beef were piled high. Then, one terrible Friday, we learned President Kennedy had been shot and killed in Dallas. Most of us never forgot where we were when we heard that news.

My first job was as a newspaper boy, delivering the *Chicago Daily News* from my Schwinn bike. My second was salting fries and making shakes at the neighborhood McDonald's. Ray Kroc had opened his first McDonald's in Des Plaines the very year we moved there. Eventually, I saved up $600 to buy a five-year-old Chevy Biscayne in 1969 when I graduated high school and drove it to Northwestern, where I majored in journalism, taking a bachelor's degree in 1973 and a master's in 1974.

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

Evensen: I went into journalism because I loved to write. That writing seemed a way of describing, even investigating, reality.

Between 1970 and 1974 I worked part-time as a neighborhood news reporter and magazine writer, covering suburban school board and village board meetings that seemed to go on interminably. I made five dollars a story, regardless of its length, and five dollars for every photo I got published. My employer decided — retroactively — to cut the picture price to $2.50 when he decided I was making too much.

My first full-time job after graduation was assignment editor for a Rockford, Illinois television station. I then worked as a news director for a Rockford radio station, waking at four in the morning to check the city blotter before voicing newscasts at 6, 7, 8, 10, and 12. I returned to my apartment and slept for three hours before covering city council and

school board in the evenings. Then I'd sleep another four-hour shift and get ready for the next day's news. After several years of ambulance chasing and chronicling who hit who in the head overnight, I wearied of the project.

Between 1977 and 1982, I served as news director for the Christian Broadcasting Network, when it was rolling out its news division, first in Virginia Beach, then in 1980 when I launched its news operation in Washington, D.C. Between 1983 and 1984 I was its Jerusalem bureau chief, directing coverage of the intractable Israeli-Palestinian dispute and wars in Lebanon, Iran, and Iraq.

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

Evensen: Stays in Washington and Jerusalem were an exercise in reporting the serious unsettlements between political actors, and sometimes, sovereign states. And on a good day, you could see your way clear to offer — what the post-war Hutchins Commission sought of all journalists — the context that gave certain facts meaning. The explanatory potential of the press powered my way into journalism education. In the winter of 1985, I taught for a trial semester in Jefferson City, Missouri at Lincoln University, liked it, and then taught broadcast journalism courses at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, while getting a doctoral degree in journalism and mass communication from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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?*

Evensen: Choosing to study journalism history with Steve Vaughn and Jim Baughman, two amazing historians at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, was the single best professional decision I ever made. Steve and Jim are consummate professionals who graciously guided me into an early appreciation of primary collections and a broad exposure to significant secondary sources, focusing on research methods, diplomatic and intellectual history, and agenda-setting. Wisconsin's program enabled me to take electives in history and political science with world class faculty, deepening my appreciation of historical writing and my respect for the work and thoroughness that goes into first rate historic research.

Chaim Weitzman, Israel's first president, observed that most American correspondents and diplomats knew little of the complexities of the Middle East when they arrived in the region, and were more ignorant when they left, mainly because they thought they knew something, when they knew nothing. I didn't want to be that correspondent or that journalism historian, so I began an intense study of the critical months leading up to Israeli independence in May 1948. It became my doctoral dissertation and my first book — *Truman, Palestine and the Press: Shaping Conventional Wisdom at the Beginning of the Cold War*.

In my thirty-five years as a journalism historian, much of it spent while building and directing a journalism program at DePaul University in Chicago, I operated under two primary enthusiasms. I tried to get as close to the bottom as I could of stories in journalism history worth telling, while sharing this absolute delight with readers of what I'd found. I also integrated my research and teaching in building a program where faculty and students have a shared, historic understanding of the social responsibility of journalists to serve citizens with news worth knowing that contributes to the construction and mainte-

nance of a more civil society.

When Routledge published *Journalism and the American Experience* in the fall of 2018 it grew from a class I had taught for years that investigated notions of American Exceptionalism; journalism's central role in the trans-Atlantic Enlightenment; journalism's influence in the American Revolution; Jefferson's effort in the Early Republican Period to build through the Party Press what he called an "Empire of Liberty"; the role of the penny press in the emergence of mass democracy; and the "New Birth" Lincoln spoke of in the lead up and experience of the Civil War. Subsequent chapters of the book and weeks of the class highlight the role of "New Journalism" in an era of urbanization and industrialization; journalism's central contribution to the Progressive Period; journalism's bleak history in building public opinion for the Great War; the eruption of Jazz Journalism; journalism's chronicling of the misery and fortitude of the Dust Bowl and Great Depression; the rise of Franklin Roosevelt and the radio republic; journalism's contribution to the frames that informed the Cold War and Kennedy's "New Frontier"; and the American nightmares of the Kennedy assassination and the abyss of Vietnam. The book finishes with journalism's role in the struggle for civil rights; broadcast journalism's promotion of the space program; the long "national nightmare" of Watergate; Reagan's "shining city on a hill"; the Clinton impeachment by cable news; and reporting 9/11, Wars on Terror, and the Obama and Trump presidencies in the Age of the Internet.

Historiography: *Who or what have been the major influences on which you concentrate your historical work?*

Evensen: I am amazed at how little American history and journalism

history are understood by students planning careers in journalism, practitioners making careers in journalism and participants in the political process who rely on the transmission of information in the construction of informed consent. Each book and the courses leading from this research aim to shed light on the discrepancy.

When Dempsey Fought Tunney: Heroes, Hokum and Storytelling in the Jazz Age (1996) grew out of a professional quarrel carefully chronicled in the *Problems of Journalism* maintained at the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Reston, Virginia. The old guard hoped to quarantine interwar journalism from the contagion of the jazz age, which played sports to the limit because it sold newspapers. I sought to illustrate this dispute within journalism by focusing on the Jack Dempsey-Gene Tunney heavyweight championship fights of 1926 and 1927. This book's approach confirmed a pattern I had begun in *Truman, Palestine and the Press*. In that case, it was journalism's relationship to the policy-making process that I investigated through the use of primary and secondary sources. In this case, it was journalism's intersection with professional sports, which is embedded in the ongoing quarrel of journalistic professionalism and what many in the journalistic establishment considered journalism's promiscuous part in the rapid growth of the entertainment industry.

In both books, I am interested in journalism's intersection with worlds much larger than itself, and what those historic intersections tell us about the world then coming into view. In each case — and in the books that followed — I'm investigating the meaning-making role of the press, how these meanings are constructed and struggled over, and how they guide the conventional wisdom and taken-for-granted frames of self-understanding. The German word "Waltanschauung" comes close to capturing the worldview that guides understanding so uncon-

sciously that one thinks he or she is thinking originally, rather than derivatively. What I am interested in is journalism's role in creating and maintaining these understandings.

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

Evensen: Just as the internet has changed nearly everything it has come into contact with, so has journalism. So, I look for the best evidence for these changes and try to tell the story of these changes in a way that will widen a reader's understanding of the role journalism has played in our nation's history. When Vision Press and Peter Lang gave me the opportunity to develop a collaborative project on *The Responsible Reporter*, I sought out historians, political scientists and politicians, professional coaches and religious leaders, urban experts and community builders, polling specialists and legal eagles, representatives of underserved minority groups and first responders — the wide range of people that reporters interview in pursuing their stories. We asked them what they wish journalists knew about the worlds they knew so well.

When Oxford brought out my book *God's Man for the Gilded Age: D. L. Moody and the Rise of Modern Mass Evangelism* in 2003, I was communicating a deeply personal project to what I hoped was a wide readership that had given little thought to journalism history. The study showed how D. L. Moody used Charles Finney's "all available means" in creating the 19th century's mass media revival. The study was personal, because in June 1962, I became an 11-year-old convert to Christianity at a Billy Graham meeting in Chicago. It is probably the most significant event in my life. So, I am sympathetic to those who testified to transformation in their own lives as a result of Moody's meetings in

Britain, Brooklyn, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York between June 1873 and April 1877. Moody was a layman with an eighth grade education who had gone into these meetings almost utterly unknown. In four years, however, he was the best-known evangelist in the English-speaking world. Across a quarter century his voice was heard by more people than that of any other man, thereby reducing the population of hell by one million, his supporters insisted.

The book shows how a personal interest can become a scholarly one. What I am examining is the role mass media played in the large urban revivals Moody led and his carefully coordinated embrace of the press in making his campaigns successful. Primary collections at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and extensive newspaper collections at Kew Gardens in Britain, as well as in the American cities that Moody evangelized, contribute to an understanding of the strategy of revivals. Newspapers saw circulation soar as Moody urged seekers to "expect a blessing of unusual magnitude." No single church could hold the crowds that came, so municipal building projects had to be undertaken. Jonathan Edwards would have deplored "getting up a revival" by "man-made means." But Moody was a late-19th century man who understood the power of the press in putting on public spectacles that became "a marvel to many people."

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

Evensen: Each of the book projects I've described represents a three-to-six-year file folder in my professional life. *Journalism and the Meaning of America*, a manuscript I began last year, is the latest example. The book's purpose is to give voice to many groups of Americans — Native

Americans, African Americans, women, Jews, Catholics, immigrants, children's rights activists, sporting cultures, the environmental movement, public interest groups, advocates for the homeless and anti-war activists — groups who used the press in their efforts to create a more civil and inclusive America.

The origin of this work was the *Encyclopedia of American Journalism*, which I wrote and edited with Steve Vaughn and Jim Landers for Routledge in 2008. I focused on sixty entries of individuals who made significant contributions to journalism history, although many of their names and stories are not well known. Over the past twenty-seven years I've also contributed over 100 entries to Oxford's *American National Biography* and Scribner's *Dictionary of American Biography* and *Encyclopedia of American Lives* series. This enables me to build narratives describing the significance of lives in journalism history and the arts.

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

Evensen: I feel like a father to each of my books. When I look at each fresh face it is a little like seeing our son Steve and our daughter Kate for the first time. So, I love them equally. *Truman, Palestine and the Press* was the first. It is the most thrilling because I realized at forty-one the ambition of writing a book. *Journalism and the American Experience* was the most ambitious book I wrote. Those six years and 18 chapters, summarizing much of what I had learned in three decades as a journalism historian, were exhilarating.

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 history, what would they be?

Evensen: I have tried to show that when it comes to the construction and maintenance of American political and social institutions, the achievements of American reform movements, the decision to go to war or refrain from violence, and the inclusion or exclusion of citizen groups in the American journey, one can hardly exaggerate the significance of journalism and its central role in the American experience.

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

Evensen: In 1952, Gene Kelly was at the top of his game. He had just finished *An American in Paris* and *Singin' in the Rain*, two of the greatest movie musicals ever. But Kelly was now 40 years old. His career as a dancer was essentially over. He later regretted how very brief that career was.

Many journalism historians, as we approach retirement age, feel somewhat similarly. I wish I had been more efficient, so I could have been more productive. I had more than 100 notebooks of 175 pages apiece of notes and printed material in preparing the Moody manuscript. It was a good deal more than I needed. I was later able to contribute about a third of those notebooks to the historical collections office of Chicago's Moody Bible Institute. So, the work wasn't wasted and is available to future historians. However, when I produced the manuscript for *Journalism and the American Experience* it was — once again — forty percent longer than the book Routledge published.

I've urged my son Steve, who plans a career in the academy, to

apply paint as painters do. Once you have decided the scope of the chapter, begin painting. When you see or read something that has real value to what the chapter is arguing, put it on your screen, like a paint swatch. Keep assembling and then arranging your swatches. Don't file them away in your notes and hope you'll find them again. You'll save so much time and have a better chapter. Good writing starts with critical thinking and good writing, but ends with better editing.

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.*

Evensen: What I see in the most compelling histories I read is excellent storytelling. It is achieved by rigorous research and executed by searching for the key details that best express what the book is arguing or illustrating. It has a human dimension that connects with a reader, not only intellectually but emotionally. It is the depiction of a lived experience that is often discovered by historians who see before defining, rather than the reverse. These histories privilege the voices of those who are the cast of characters in this story. These individuals help tell a story with the complexity it deserves.

Historiography: *What should be JMC historians' perspective on their work?*

Evensen: Each journalism historian will decide what he or she leaves behind. Our time to do this remarkable work is so brief. I urge them to share with students and readers what stories in journalism history engage them most and to communicate the basis of that enthusiasm in

their work. If they do, they'll have created — rightfully — a larger space for the teaching and reading of journalism history and will have built a career that has lasting value in making America a more civil society.

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

Evensen: There is some wonderful work being done and there should be even more of it. Collections are now available digitally that those of us over fifty could not have dreamed of when we were beginning our careers as journalism historians. These collections make it more possible than ever to access information, to deepen analysis, and to hear testimonies from individuals muted in the past. The result should be a generation of journalism historians widening the understanding of people inside and outside the academic community on how wide and deep the potency of media representations is in the manufacture of the way the world "ought" to be and the role of individuals and their communities in bringing the "ought" into existence.

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?*

Evensen: In building a widening space for journalism history at DePaul, I started with what subjects interested me most, and I tried in every class to bring that enthusiasm to my students. Essentially, I saw teaching as an extension of my reporting. So, I sought to illustrate what I meant to say. I started not with readings, but what I had seen visually, often in television news, within the last 24 or 36 hours, as the starting

point in attempting to engage students. I went from the present to the past.

I remember a seminal moment half way into the very first time I taught History of Journalism. Initially, I came to each class with a script that I read to an understandably indifferent response. Then on Wednesday, January 27, 1988 — for the first time — I included in my class a clip I had recorded the night before when CBS news anchor Dan Rather and Vice President George H. W. Bush got into a shouting match on the growing Iran-Contra scandal, an on-the-air dispute that raised intriguing questions of journalistic professionalism and the agenda setting function of the elite media in the political process. I suddenly found a high level of student engagement. Many had seen the imbroglio and had chosen sides of who was at fault. Discussion broke out. I was able to use the episode to trace for students the long history of partisanship and objectivity in the press and its relationship to political actors and the commerce of news making. That date marked the last lecture I ever gave in a history class.

I built a video archive of thousands of video clips over three decades. Each clip, running ninety seconds to three or four minutes, was aimed at winning a hearing for journalism history in the classroom and in the curriculum. Reading lists supplemented this content with primary and secondary sources. The classes moved briskly, giving students a new way of looking at history and — for the first time — understanding the significance that journalism has played — and is playing — in American history and how we are a different country as a result of this service.

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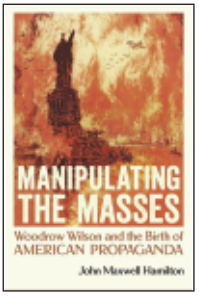
Book Award Interview

By John Maxwell Hamilton ©

Hamilton



John Maxwell "Jack" Hamilton won the American Journalism Historians Association's award for the outstanding book of 2020 for *Manipulating the Masses: Woodrow Wilson and the Birth of American Propaganda*. It is the second time he has won the award. In 2010 his book *Journalism's Roving Eye: A History of American Foreign Reporting* also received the award. He is the Hopkins P. Breazeale Professor of Journalism at Louisiana State University and a Global Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars.

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

Hamilton: The best way to do that is to quote straight from the first paragraph:

"This book is about the profound and enduring threat to American democracy that rose out of the Great War — the establishment of pervasive, systematic propaganda as an instrument of the state. That horrific conflict required the mobilization of entire nations, no less in the United States than in Europe. The government in Washington exer-

cised unprecedented power to shape the views and attitudes of the citizens it was supposed to serve. Its agent for this was the Committee on Public Information, the first and only time the United States government had a ministry of propaganda. Nothing like it had existed before, and it would be dismantled at the end of the war. But the CPI endured as a "blueprint" for the Information State that exists today in peace time as well as during war."

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

Hamilton: The CPI is mentioned routinely in histories of World War I and in books on propaganda generally. But no one had done the entire history, both in showing fully what the CPI did but also in providing the context for the CPI's work. This seemed like a worthwhile subject to pursue. And as it came to pass, it was much more interesting and relevant that I suspected. This gets us to the next question.

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?*

Hamilton: If I were going to write a book that could be considered definitive, I decided that I had to look well beyond the CPI materials in the National Archives. I mined manuscript collections for individuals and for organizations that interacted with the CPI. As this search continued, I came to see links with propaganda by other countries, something the CPI denied. That prompted me to look abroad. In the end, I examined almost 200 collections of papers and used something from about three-quarters of them. My motto was "turn over every rock that

I can find." This proved time consuming and profitable, and explains why I worked on the book for nearly a decade.

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

Hamilton: No. But I did wish there were some that existed that I could have examined. Edgar Sisson, an associate director of the CPI, was responsible for a number of CPI initiatives, including one especially significant blunder in which the CPI was duped by White Russians. In hopes of unearthing his papers, I went so far as tracking down his grandson's widow in California. But Sisson seems to have left nothing behind. There are a few other individuals like that.

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

Hamilton: Here is one that applies to this book and others I have written: It is much better to look at original materials than relying on what others say about the materials. This is because others often arrive at problematic interpretations or simply get the meaning wrong.

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

Hamilton: One challenge was that the CPI was involved in so many different aspects of American life, from labor to immigration, from religion to universities, that I had to dive into a number of fields of research with which I had little familiarity. Another challenge was that the head

of the CPI, Geroge Creel, was voluminous in his writing on the CPI and utterly unreliable.

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

Hamilton: Yes, it is possible to identify with the subject or participants in a way that is counterproductive. The techniques for maintaining independence are roughly the same as those for journalists, I would say. But I would also note that historians and journalists should have empathy with their subjects and seek to understand them.

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

Hamilton: There are many, but here are two. The way that presidents campaign — that is, the communication tools they use — shape how they communicate when elected. Woodrow Wilson's 1916 campaign for reelection was the incubator for the CPI. More recently, the Obama administration came to office having made effective use of social media and then established an office of social media in the White House that was much larger than its press office. A second insight, if it can be called that, is that we do not have adequate mechanisms to fence back presidential propaganda powers. On that point, everything we see today can be traced to the CPI.

Historiography: *What findings most surprised you?*

Hamilton: The seductiveness of propaganda. The story of the CPI is a

story of good people wanting to do good things but falling in the trap of caring more about the ends they hoped to achieve than the damage that did in the process to the democratic values they said they wanted to preserve.

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

Hamilton: Read widely around your subject. The more angles of vision you have, the more creative you can be.

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The Professional

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Historical Roundtable: Reconceptualizing Journalism in an Age of Misinformation

By Thomas A. Mascaro, Stephen Bates, Edward L. Carter, David Mindich, Victor Pickard, and Rosalie Westenskow, with a Response by Penelope Abernathy ©

Mascaro

After Donald Trump lost the 2020 election, One America News (OAN) assigned Christina Bobb to cover the audit of Arizona ballots. Bobb, however, had also set up a fund to pay for the audit. She appealed for donations on OAN to finance election challenges and directed viewers to her nonprofit website.[1] This anecdote is indicative of OAN's willingness to traffic in ideological propaganda masquerading as "news." The First Amendment protects OAN's right to publish information and perhaps even to call it "news." The ethical lapse in which a "reporter" is assigned to cover a story she is involved in financing, though, as well as the effort to gen-

Thomas A. Mascaro, a Professor Emeritus at Bowling Green State University, is working on a second edition of William E. Porter's *Assault on the Media: The Nixon Years* for University of Michigan Press (orig. edition 1976) and a sequel on the NBC Washington documentary unit, working title "Hard Truths: The Documentary Odyssey of Bob Rogers and Rhonda Schwartz."


Bates


Carter


Mindich


Pickard


Westenskow

erate "news" by advocating an election audit, clearly violate standard practices of professional journalism. The digital age offers a firehose of information, but what we need, as these historians explain, is sustainable journalism. If the pandemic and the "Big Lie" about the 2020 presidential election taught us anything, it is that journal-

Stephen Bates's latest book received the Goldsmith Prize from Harvard's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy. He's been a fellow of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Annenberg Washington Program in Communications Policy Studies, and Shorenstein Center.

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David T.Z. Mindich is the journalism chair at Klein College of Media and Communication at Temple University. He worked as an assignment editor for CNN before earning a doctorate in American Studies from New York University. He was a visiting scholar at NYU in 2015-2016.

Victor Pickard is Professor of Media Policy and Political Economy at the Annenberg School for Communication. He's taught at NYU and the University of Virginia and held visiting appointments at Cornell, Goldsmiths, and London School of Economics. He has co-authored major reports on media and democracy.

Rosalie Westenskow is founder and owner of Nonprofit Law Northwest, LLC, a law practice devoted to nonprofit entities. She is a member of the Oregon State Bar Association and Secretary for the Executive Committee of Oregon's Nonprofit Organizations Law Section.

ism remains essential to democracy and is under siege by efforts to devalue shared, agreed-upon evidence. Journalism history informs the debate about how to chart a better future. The panelists of this email roundtable have considered questions about the health of journalism and its role in a democracy, underpinned by historical evidence. I've invited each because of their recent scholarship, as introduced in the bios on page 50.

***Mascaro**: Please summarize the core point of your recent writing on journalism.*

Pickard: As local media institutions collapse and news deserts continue to sprout and expand across the United States, commercial journalism faces a profound crisis. At the same time, major media outlets — from Facebook to Fox News — continue to spread misinformation. However, these crises are symptomatic of deeper structural pathologies in the American media system. In my recent book, *Democracy without Journalism?*, I argue that too often we overlook the root causes of these problems, especially run-amok commercialism. Bringing this "original sin" into focus, my work traces the historical antecedents, market failures, and policy inaction that led to the implosion of commercial journalism and the proliferation of misinformation through both social media and mainstream news. The problem isn't just the loss of journalism or malfeasance of Facebook, but rather the very structure upon which our profit-driven media system is built. History tells us that the market *never* supported the levels of journalism that a healthy democracy requires — especially for communities of color — and today these long-term defects have metastasized.

Bates: The Commission on Freedom of the Press, chaired by University of Chicago president Robert Maynard Hutchins, met from 1943 to 1946, and in 1947 published its report, *A Free and Responsible Press*. In writing *An Aristocracy of Critics: Luce, Hutchins, Niebuhr, and the Committee that Redefined Freedom of the Press,* I was particularly struck by what hasn't changed in the intervening 75 years. William Ernest Hocking said that a partisan news outlet can make money by stoking the audience's rage against political adversaries, as we see now with cable news. Reinhold Niebuhr talked of media-made demagogues — Charles Lindbergh in their day, the star of *The Apprentice* in ours. Prefiguring our concerns about post-truth politics, the commission worried that citizens might get confused and frustrated, reject all information sources as unreliable, and retreat from the public sphere. Unthinking *dis*trust, said Harold D. Lasswell, is as dangerous as unthinking trust. The constraints that commission members confronted also remain. When they contemplated legislative solutions for the problems they diagnosed, they kept running into what Hutchins termed a "hindrance": the First Amendment. As for what has changed since the 1940s, I'm especially struck by one thing: commission members, despite occasional long-windedness and bullheadedness, plus a few bits of chicanery on Hutchins's part, mostly listened to one another's arguments and reexamined their own premises; and sometimes they changed their minds. They were, to be sure, a homogeneous group: all white men, all with graduate degrees, all with experience working in universities. Even so, the group had intellectual diversity, including communitarians and individualists, idealists and pragmatists, a preacher and an atheist. Their style of deliberation and collaboration seems a lost art.

Mindich: The example that Dr. Mascaro cites in the introduction — a

journalist who is also a shill for a political operation — would rankle anyone who values independent journalism, but until the 1830s, the American press was almost completely controlled by partisans. James Watson Webb egged on and helped plan election riots during the Jacksonian Era. Later, many of the giants of 19th-century journalism, including Greeley, Raymond, Dana, Pulitzer, Hearst, and Douglass, ran for office or served in some capacity. What we recognize as "objectivity" took the better part of the 19th century to unfold; I argued in *Just the Facts, How "Objectivity" Came to Define American Journalism,* that the white-dominated press in the 1890s covered lynching through a white supremacist lens, making balance and objectivity impossible.

Westenskow & Carter: Many U.S. newspapers face a financial precipice, just one of many factors undercutting journalism as a cornerstone of democracy. We argue that the nonprofit model offers a more sustainable option for many newspapers and analyze how *The Salt Lake Tribune*'s recent transformation into a 501(c)(3) public charity presents a promising route to economic safety for other traditional news organizations. As the first major daily newspaper to become a 501(c)(3) organization, the *Tribune's* leap to tax-exempt nonprofit status is a historic event — one that other newspapers, and their legal counsel, can learn from.[2] We explore how such status provides newspapers new funding sources through access to private foundation grants and gives individuals tax incentives to donate funds. In addition, income is generally not taxed, and such entities can still receive traditional revenue streams from subscriptions and advertising. In addition to potential financial advantages, tax-exempt nonprofit status may also provide a better environment for cultivating the high-quality journalism that is essential to preserving our democracy. The rules governing 501(c)(3) public charities,

in addition to their unique ownership structure, lend themselves toward more community buy-in and public support, which, in turn, is more likely than today's commercial model to drive hard-hitting reporting on the most important issues. This is particularly true for local publications, often the only watchdog for local decision-makers and public bodies.

At the heart of this discussion is the argument that journalism is a public good, and thus a natural fit for 501(c)(3) status. Public goods are those essential to health and/or society; they are "non-rival," meaning one person's production does not inhibit another's; and "non-excludable," meaning a producer cannot prevent a consumer from using them without paying. Clean air and national defense are essential goods that arguably cannot be sustained by market forces alone. Researchers have documented journalism's necessity to maintaining a healthy democracy; however, current market forces are no longer sustaining the type, quality, and amount of journalism needed to provide those societal benefits. The advent of the Internet (making most high-quality journalism free to share and disseminate) and major changes in ownership structures (making news organizations less responsive to the needs of their communities) have contributed to this crisis. In this climate, journalism fits squarely into the category of public goods, and the nonprofit, 501(c)(3) model provides one possible road to funding this essential service.

***Mascaro**: What are your concerns today in terms of journalism's role in democracy?*

Pickard: I am concerned with the disappearance of journalism, but also the overall degradation of our entire news media system that serves commercial interests instead of democratic imperatives. This manifests

in a low-quality information environment in which important stories are trivialized or omitted, and far too much news content is driven by click-bait values emphasizing conflict, outrage, and sensationalism. While much popular concern has focused on the social harms of overt dis/misinformation, this softer form of misinformation, especially over time, is arguably more detrimental. So instead of being fixated on blocking dangerous content, we should be equally concerned about guaranteeing reliable and diverse news and information. Ultimately, these are systemic problems requiring structural remedies.

Mindich: The *New Yorker*'s David Remnick asked Jon Stewart in late 2021 about *The Daily Show*'s ability to impact the world. "The lesson I learned from *The Daily Show*, it's that cultural power isn't power," said Stewart. "It has an effect. It's not nothing. But I think the narcissism of media, and I include myself in that, is that we believe that the halls of pontification are actually the halls of power. And they're not." Stewart's point echoes the concern many of us have long had about journalism. In the 1990s, when I was Jay Rosen's graduate student at NYU, he was helping to create a movement around this very question: what should journalism do if the public and the levers of power do nothing in the face of good journalism? This question becomes more pressing when we face monumental challenges, including the 2021 attempted coup [to overturn the 2020 election of President Joe Biden] and a national reckoning over systemic racism following the murder of George Floyd and others.

Bates: My principal concern is that journalism's role in democracy is shrinking fast. Social media have become the principal forum for political speech in the United States, the de facto public square. Maintaining

the public square is not a task for corporations. This transformation places too much power in private hands, and however wisely they exercise it today, there are no guarantees about tomorrow. Reinhold Niebuhr liked to say, "When private property ceases to be private, it no longer ought to be private" — in other words, an organization that performs inherently public functions should be treated as public. For social media, that would mean maximizing openness by removing prior restraints on speech, and by imposing subsequent penalties only after conducting non-algorithmic, individualized inquiries, through a process that provides a right to counsel, a public hearing, and a mechanism for appeals — i.e., the First Amendment's terms of service.

Westenskow & Carter: Our list would be similar to the concerns articulated elsewhere: decreased local ownership, decreased newsroom budgets, increased verbal and physical attacks on journalists, increased distrust in news media due to destabilization by certain political actors. In addition, journalism's practices and ethics have been manipulated by savvy individuals and entities to distort facts and reality. Journalists do a disservice to the public if they uncritically report on statements by bad-faith political actors engaged in manipulation. While journalists are uncomfortable becoming judgmental about truth and lies, failure to do so in upcoming election cycles appears likely to exacerbate divisions and disinformation. News organizations should consider adopting NYU journalism professor Jay Rosen's idea of the "truth sandwich," in which a public official's lies are contextualized with the substantive truth. As the old saying goes, journalists need to report not just the facts but the truth about the facts. At times, journalism organizations may need to go even a step further. Steve Bannon called the news media the "opposition party." Although most reporters and editors rejected that characteriza-

tion, it may be time for news organizations to engage bad-faith actors on those terms, particularly in the case of a dominant one-party rule when the In party is committed to maintaining power through all means. American news organizations may have little choice, then, but to adopt tactics of the opposition press that have helped restore democracy after periods of autocracy or dictatorship in countries like South Africa and Chile.

***Mascaro**: What are one or two historical points covered in your work that inform journalism's function in today's democracy?*

Westenskow & Carter: We argue in "Journalism as a Public Good" the nonprofit model has the potential to foster and encourage higher quality journalism than today's predominantly for-profit model.[3] One reason is that the nonprofit ownership model puts the interests of the organization's decision-makers more in line with the average citizen. To explain this, we briefly examine the history of U.S. newspaper ownership, particularly changes in recent decades. In the 20th century, newspapers were primarily owned by wealthy families with close connections to the communities their papers covered. Newspapers were a long-term investment — owners had a personal interest in the paper's success as well as its community image and prestige. However, an increasing number of U.S. newspapers have been subsumed by investment entities, which arguably have little interest in the product or services of the paper other than as a diversification of their portfolios. The historical conditions that allowed this to occur were triggered by the migration of readers to digital news in the early 21st century, followed by the Great Recession [2007-2009], resulting in a plunge in print newspaper valuations. Hedge funds and private equity funds swept in to acquire news-

papers at low prices. By 2014, investment entities owned the majority of U.S. newspapers.[4]

Understanding how newspaper ownership has dramatically shifted in recent history is vital to understanding the current state of journalism and why the nonprofit ownership model might be more advantageous. Passive investors care primarily, if not solely, about profits, and own newspapers as one piece within larger portfolios, making them arguably much less interested in the quality and long-term longevity of their publications, unlike historical owners and, potentially, future nonprofit owners. Nonprofits do not have an owner, per se; no individual can benefit from the financial growth of the organization (other than being paid as an employee) or take the assets of the organization upon dissolution. This cultivates a mindset of nurturing the organization to maximize its mission, as opposed to leaching its resources. A volunteer Board of Directors comprises individuals who make decisions bound by legal, fiduciary duties to the organization (not their personal interests). Directors are legally bound to optimize the organization's ability to fulfill its mission. Ideally, directors are chosen because of their emotional and personal investment in the work, connections in the community, and applicable skillsets. In today's climate, where journalism remains essential as ever but is increasingly less profitable, having a locally connected, civic-minded Board of Directors seems preferable to a remote investment entity.

Pickard: My recent book presents a counter-narrative to the market ontology that pervades most discourses about journalism's role in a democratic society. I try to show how the modern journalism crisis stems from the historical over-reliance of commercial news media on advertising revenue — exacerbated by the more recent ascendance of media

monopolies and a long-standing lack of government and public oversight. Previous policymakers had at least an intuitive sense that leaving our news and information entirely in the hands of concentrated corporate interests was dangerous for any society that aspires to be democratic.

Bates: The Hutchins Commission suggested that a democratic media system operates on two strong but rebuttable presumptions. The first, in a framework that comes from Reinhold Niebuhr, favors freedom over two competing values, order and justice. The presumption in favor of freedom is strong, but under exceptional circumstances, it can be overcome. The problems of freedom, Niebuhr said, aren't necessarily solved by more freedom. Second, and related, is the presumption in favor of nongovernmental sanctions over governmental ones. If state intervention is a cure worse than the malady, as *A Free and Responsible Press* suggests, then media constraints must come from elsewhere: conscience and a commitment to the common good, professional norms and enforcement mechanisms, critics and nongovernmental oversight bodies, advertisers and subscribers, pressure groups and boycott threats, or, in the view of the Hutchins Commission's principal funder, Time Inc. editor in chief Henry Luce, God. From the perspective of the Hutchins Commission, private entities must regulate and penalize offenders.

Mindich: When you are a historian, you see repeats, echoes, and rhymes everywhere. I believe the newspaper landscape of New York City in the 1830s can teach us where we are now and where we're going. Similar to the media environment in our age, the penny press was a time in which James Gordon Bennett, Sr. could start the *New York*

Herald with $500 and a dream. Innovation and independence began to flourish, but it was also a time when the need to attract a crowd had serious consequences. Fake news, including the "Great Moon Hoax" [about a lunar civilization] abounded, as did sensational crime coverage, like that of the murder of [prostitute] Helen Jewett. The *Herald*'s pages of the era provide a master class in innovation, but also in jingoism, xenophobia, sexism, and a decades-long apologia for slavery. We might ask ourselves if the next decade's journalism will be a period of innovation, independence, intelligence, sensationalism, jingoism, or racism. If we look to the 1830s as a template, the answer might simply be, "yes."

***Mascaro**: In what way(s) do you value or define journalism as uniquely positioned to serve democracy compared to other kinds of information?*

Bates: Journalism has lost its uniqueness in some respects. To a greater extent than in the 1940s, citizens can talk to masses of other citizens without having to go through journalists. Citizens and government officials can talk to one another directly, too. Yet journalism retains two singular functions. First, news organizations can hold powerful institutions and individuals to account through investigative reporting. The Hutchins Commission largely overlooked this watchdog function. Second, news organizations can help structure the public debate in a nonpartisan fashion. For the press to undertake meaningful investigative reporting, and for it to organize and clarify the public debate, it needs two things that seem to be in short supply: money and trust. Maybe public policy can mitigate the money problem somewhat, but rebuilding trust is likely to require a fundamental shift in political attitudes.

Westenskow & Carter: We define "journalism" and "news" worthy of 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, quite narrowly to include only "a good-faith effort to discover and disseminate truth, especially about matters of public interest such as elections, politics and the performance of public officials."[5] Such journalism requires thorough fact-checking, focuses on matters of serious social and political concern, and always places stories in context. This does not include distortion of fact, nor does it include information that is solely opinion.

Information has never been available on the scale it is today, but not all information has equal value to society. While the provision of much information is motivated by personal, financial, or political gain — or any number of other, lesser purposes — the goal of journalism as we define it speaks to its importance. Such journalism seeks to reveal truth, foster dialogue, and provide factual information. High-quality journalism plays an undeniably important role in civil society, as it advances the realization of human rights, enhances the public's understanding of vital social issues, empowers individual participants in a democratic system, places a check on the wealthiest and most powerful, sets the agenda for important public policy debate, and encourages political participation as well as societal cohesion.

Pickard: Journalism's aim is to provide original reporting and present a broad array of diverse views, voices, and stories. Its primary function isn't just to keep a watchful eye on those in power and hold them to account. It also must create spaces for *all members* of society to both receive and create their own media. Therefore, newsrooms should look like the communities they purportedly serve — they should be owned and controlled by these communities and by journalists themselves.

Mindich: As Jay Rosen has often written, we must seek to preserve the press's unique role in the media universe. And that role comes with sets of practices and ethical considerations that are uniquely arrayed to serve democracy by presenting facts and opinions, holding leaders accountable, strengthening deliberative democracy, and endeavoring to spread an appreciation of our common humanity.

***Mascaro**: Protecting journalism going forward may require legislation to distinguish evidence-based reporting from other kinds of protected speech, possibly through labels for "commentary," "editorial," or "commercial endorsement." Suppose we were to convene a brainstorming conference to draft "The Media & Democracy Reform Act." What is one topic or principle you would toss in for discussion about the future of journalism as a public good?*

Bates: In terms of punishing irresponsible speech, I think the Hutchins Commission struck the right balance when it recommended condemnation rather than legislation except as a last resort. In terms of rewarding and amplifying responsible speech, I'm interested in proposals to subsidize private media or to create generously funded public media. The proposals can be characterized as positive liberty as stipulated in Isaiah Berlin's framework — negative liberty entails a government that lets you do as you please within the limits of your resources, whereas positive liberty entails a government that, in theory, gives you what's needed to do as you please. These proposals raise four issues. First, in the case of subsidies, what neutrality rules apply? If the government gives money to the *Los Angeles Times*, must it also give money to the *Daily Stormer*? Or can a "National Endowment for the News" operate on the model of the NEA and the NEH, with expert panels making funding decisions? If so, then in news as in the arts and the humanities,

will the program end up favoring establishment speakers and ideas over radical ones? Second, if a tax-funded American BBC, with no paywall, has the effect of depriving the *Washington Post* of subscribers and profits, should the *Post* have a First Amendment case? Is there an argument for prohibiting an official "establishment" of press, akin to the establishment clause concerning religion? In other words, should the First Amendment be construed to require a wall of separation between press and state? Third, in the case of subsidies or public media, can the program be insulated from politics? Finally, *should* it be insulated? According to Berlin, the risk of positive liberty is that the state will help you do what it wants, not what you want. In his analysis, whereas negative freedom can lead to injustice, positive freedom can lead to tyranny.

Mindich: My thinking about this topic has evolved over the past five years. I used to regard social media giants as a sort of replacement of the classic urban newsstand. Regulation, as I was envisioning it, would be about encouraging or demanding that social media giants cede more of their valuable virtual real estate to traditional news organizations to present the news they see as important, unaffected by user choice. My thinking was that a part of Facebook's newsfeed should be given to national and international newspapers that have garnered widely agreed upon measures of respect, like Pulitzer Prizes. But research over the past five years has convinced me that social media in general — and Facebook in particular — can no longer be trusted as neutral players in democratic countries. We need to enact legislation to protect us against algorithms that are designed to make citizens angrier, more divided, and more susceptible to snake oil salesmen.

Westenskow & Carter: Certainly it is vital that the regulations govern-

ing 501(c)(3) organizations and what constitutes "charitable" and "educational" purposes under that regulatory framework be further clarified to ensure that daily newspapers and other legitimate journalism providers are not disqualified from receiving 501(c)(3) status. In the past, the IRS has sometimes responded negatively to organizations seeking 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status whose primary purpose is to disseminate information. Its recent decision granting the *Tribune* such status could be bolstered to ensure the IRS does not change its interpretation of key requirements and definitions in that decision. We would be interested in delving further into these regulations and examining effective ways to leave this avenue open for other qualified news organizations and publications.

However, this road also presents First Amendment issues. As noted earlier, we argue that the type of journalism deserving of 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status is limited, and only includes certain types of information. Evaluating information to see if it meets this standard without violating First Amendment concerns is an approach we would be particularly interested in addressing as we brainstormed. These include a variety of issues, but of particular relevance is the "Methodology Test," which requires that certain types of entities demonstrate the *content* of their publications is "educational" and their methods of preparing the material is "generally accepted as 'educational' in character."[6] This test will apply to many, if not all, news organizations that apply for 501(c)(3) status and has been challenged for unconstitutional vagueness. Critics argue that it could be used to censor the free-speech rights of nonprofit organizations, as it requires an examination of the content of the speech. Although the IRS has stated that it focuses not on content or belief in applying this test, but solely on the methods used by the organization to "develop and present its views,"[7] this is still an issue that needs to be

explored and examined.

Pickard: Toward imagining what a new kind of journalism might look like, we should consider the need for publicly owned and democratically governed news outlets. Given the growing scrutiny of unaccountable monopoly control over media institutions, the worsening journalism crisis presents us an opportunity to address fundamental flaws in commercial news and information systems and push for public alternatives (in my recent writings I have advocated for guaranteeing a "public media center" in every community across the country). Ultimately, our goal should be to reinvent our news media. But this can only happen if we unhook journalism from the market, de-commercialize, and, most importantly, *democratize* it.

NOTES

[1] Sarah Mimms, "Pro-Trump OAN Reporters Are Blatantly Raising Money for a Bogus Election 'Audit' in Arizona," BuzzFeed.News, May 18, 2021, https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/sarahmimms/arizona-election-results-oan-reporters-fundraising accessed November 2, 2021; Media Matters for America, https://www.mediamatters.org/media/3945236 from May 2, 2021 edition of One America News' Weekly Briefing. See also https://voicesandvotes.org. Links courtesy of Ralph Beliveau.

[2] The *Tribune* recently transitioned away from publishing daily hard-copy editions but was still doing so at the time it received 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

[3] Rosalie Westenskow and Edward L. Carter, "Journalism as a Public Good: How the Nonprofit News Model Can Save Us from Ourselves," *Communication Law and Policy*, 26:3, 2021, 336-75.

[4] Penelope Muse Abernathy, "The Rise of a New Media Baron and the Emerging Threat of News Deserts," Center for Innovation & Sustainability in Local Media, 2016, 27, http://newspaperownership.com/new-media-barons.

[5] Edward L. Carter & Rosalie Westenskow, "Freedom of Journalism in International Human Rights Law," *Communication, Law and Policy,* 25:2, 2020, 113, 133.

[6] Rev. Rul. 67-4, 1967-1 C.B. 121; note that there are other requirements of this

test, not specifically related to content.

7 Rev. Proc. 86-43, 1986-2 C.B. 729.; see also Ward L. Thomas and Robert Fontenrose, Internal Revenue Service, "Education, Propaganda, and the Methodology Test," 2020, 91, https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/eotopich97.pdf

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History as Benchmark for the Future: The Path Forward[1]

By Penelope Muse Abernathy ©

Abernathy

The media-executive view aligns with that of historians about where we've been and need to go. This response essay by Penelope Muse Abernathy addresses themes from the roundtable above as we consider historic challenges facing journalism in a democracy. Abernathy is a visiting professor at Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications. She has been an executive with the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* and was the Knight Chair in Journalism and Digital Media Economics at the University of North Carolina, 2008-2020. She has thirty years of journalism and senior executive experience, specializing in preserving quality journalism during the digital revolution, in particular regarding the emergence of U.S. "news deserts."

We are at a moment of reckoning. The local news ecosystem is in peril. We must decide what to save and what must be reinvent-

ed. Media historians, as illustrated in the Roundtable above, have much to offer as we consider the path forward.

During the past fifteen years, America has lost one fourth of our local newspapers, historically the prime source of credible news in small and mid-sized communities. Inner-city neighborhoods, suburbs, and rural villages that have lost a newspaper are struggling economically — with as much as a third of residents living in poverty. Many are home to ethnic and minority populations historically overlooked by mainstream news organizations. Without strong local news coverage, the voices of residents in overlooked and underserved communities will not be heard, and their stories will go untold — to the detriment of democracy and society.

In a *Washington Post* column, "The Local News Crisis is Destroying What a Divided America Desperately Needs: Common Ground," media critic Margaret Sullivan writes: "One of the problems of losing local coverage is that we never know what we don't know. Corruption can flourish, taxes can rise, public officials can indulge their worst impulses."[2] Whereas in the early decades of the 20th century, journalists established codes of objectivity and fairness, the challenge of the 21st century is to honor those codes while *also* ensuring no community is disenfranchised because its residents lack access to critical information. The burden for accomplishing this mission rests not only on journalists and journalism historians, but also on community activists, philanthropists, owners of news organizations, and government officials to equip and staff newsrooms that enfranchise everyone.

The collapse of the commercial model that sustained newspapers for two hundred years has scrambled legacy and start-up news organizations to scrounge for revenues from digital subscriptions, memberships, crowdsourcing, and nonprofit grants. It remains doubtful any single

revenue source can compensate for lost advertising dollars. Local newspapers have engaged in ceaseless rounds of cost-cutting, causing the loss of half of newspaper journalists during the past decade. While some deep-pocketed benefactors have purchased larger, well-known newspapers — or financed the start-up of a local or statewide digital site — hundreds of dailies and weeklies have been shuttered in small and mid-sized communities. Asking these residents to pay more for their news only worsens the chasm between communities that can afford quality journalism and those whose residents cannot.

Journalism has historically been considered a "public good" because, in theory, informed citizens make better decisions that enhance their lives. Yet, the United States is unique among democracies in its lack of government support for public media. Even the public broadcasting mainstays, PBS and NPR, rely primarily on nonprofit, not taxpayer, financial support. Nonprofit support of local news, though, constitutes a minuscule fraction of what is needed to replace the loss of revenue that has supported on-the-ground reporting, the subject of so much of our media history. Increasingly, it appears that the only way to ensure all communities have access to critical information, such as on health and public safety, is to allocate more public funding toward local news by building out the PBS/NPR model of sustained editorial independence in support of legacy and start-up news organizations with taxpayer money.

We are a nation divided digitally between those who have access to high-speed internet and those who don't. Even in communities where broadband and wireless are available, many residents cannot afford the monthly fee to access those services. Bypassed by the technological revolution, residents of inner-city neighborhoods, as well as rural communities and Native American reservations, struggle to get timely informa-

tion about the spread of the coronavirus, for example, and their children are unable to participate in online instruction when schools are closed. Without a significant commitment at the local, state, and federal levels to build the digital infrastructure that will connect them with the rest of the country, these communities — many of which are poor and have large populations of minority residents — will wither and die.

Nearly three fourths of the people surveyed in 2019 by the Pew Research Center were unaware of the financial difficulties confronting local newspapers and digital sites. The variety of policies currently being considered and supported by legislators and government agencies in Washington, D.C., speaks to an awakening at the federal level of what is at stake. However, many of the proposals overlook the underlying historical issues. In order to meet the needs of the 21st century, new policies and regulations need to simultaneously acknowledge historical precedents and address the interconnectedness of the journalistic mission to business models and technological capabilities. Addressing these issues will be fraught with controversy in a polarized nation. In order to succeed, there needs to be a coordinated effort among government officials and ordinary citizens at national, state, and local levels — one informed by media history.

NOTES

[1] Adapted from Penelope Muse Abernathy, "News Deserts and Ghost Newspapers: Will Local News Survive?" Center for Innovation and Sustainability in Local Media, Hussman School of Journalism and Media, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, https://www.usnewsdeserts.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020_News_Deserts_and_Ghost_Newspapers.pdf

[2] Margaret Sullivan, "The Local News Crisis is Destroying What a Divided America Desperately Needs: Common Ground," *Washington Post*, August 5, 2018.

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News and Notes

Mike Sweeney

Mike Sweeney died Saturday, January 14, after a long bout with cancer. He was a historian of the first rank. *Historiography* will publish a memorial essay in our March issue.

Call for Proposals: 2022 Joint Journalism and Communication History Conference

The Joint Journalism and Communication History Conference, co-sponsored by the American Journalism Historians Association and the History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, is accepting submissions for its 2022 conference, to be held virtually via Zoom.

This free, one-day, interdisciplinary conference welcomes faculty, graduate students, and independent scholars researching the history of journalism and mass communication. Topics from all geographic areas and time periods are welcome, as are all methodological approaches. This conference offers a welcoming environment in which participants can explore new ideas, garner feedback on their work, and meet colleagues from around the world interested in journalism and mass communication history.

When: Friday, May 13, 2022, 9:00am to 5:00pm Eastern (U.S.) time

Where: Virtual (Zoom)

Proposals for paper presentations, research-in-progress presentations, or panels are all welcome. Your proposal should detail your presentation topic and offer a compelling rationale for why this research would interest an interdisciplinary community of scholars.

Papers are completed research studies. The paper should be attached to the submission (as a Microsoft Word document or PDF) along with an abstract of up to 500 words.

Research-in-progress (RIP) proposals are projects that are currently underway and that would benefit from collegial feedback in a conference setting. The JJCHC eagerly welcomes such work and prides itself on being a forum for generative thinking and feedback. RIP proposals should be described in an abstract of up to 500 words.

Panels are pre-constituted presentations from multiple scholars working on similar topics or using similar methodological approaches. Panels generally consist of 3-4 scholars. To submit a panel proposal, please include an overview of the panel along with abstracts for each of the individual projects/presentations. The overview and the individual abstracts each may be up to 500 words.

Submissions should be emailed to JJCHC2022@gmail.com. Please remove any identifying information from your abstract and attach it to your email as a Microsoft Word document or a PDF. In the body of your email, please include your name, preferred email address, and institutional affiliation and title/rank (if applicable). If you are submitting a panel proposal, please include that information for all panel par-

ticipants.

The deadline for proposal submissions is **March 1, 2022**. Authors will be notified as to whether their proposal was accepted no later than April 13, 2022. Please direct any questions to one of the conference co-chairs: A.J. Bauer (ajbauer2@ua.edu), Matthew Pressman (matthew.pressman@shu.edu), or Rich Shumate (rich.shumate@wku.edu).

Best Journalism & Mass Communication History Book Award

by Gerry Lanosga

The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication History Division is soliciting entries for its annual award for the best journalism and mass communication history book. The winning author will receive a plaque and a $500 prize at the August 2022 AEJMC conference in Detroit, Michigan. Attendance at the conference is encouraged as the author will be invited to be a guest for a live taping of the Journalism History podcast during the History Division awards event. The competition is open to any author of a media history book regardless of whether they belong to AEJMC or the History Division. Only first editions with a 2021 copyright date will be accepted. Entries must be received by February 15, 2022. Submit four hard copies of each book or an electronic copy (must be an e-Book or pdf manuscript in page-proof format) along with the author's mailing address, telephone number, and email address to:

Gwyneth Mellinger, AEJMC History Book Award Chair
James Madison University
54 Bluestone Drive, MSC 2104

Harrisonburg, VA 22807
mellingx@jmu.edu

If you have any questions, please contact Book Award chair Gwyneth Mellinger at mellingx@jmu.edu.

History of Media Studies, an Open Access Journal

History of Media Studies (https://hms.mediastudies.press/about) is a new, peer-reviewed, scholar-run, diamond OA journal dedicated to scholarship on the history of research, education, and reflective knowledge about media and communication — as expressed through academic institutions; through commercial, governmental, and non-governmental organizations; and through "alter-traditions" of thought and practice often excluded from the academic mainstream. The journal publishes high-quality, original articles, reviews, and commentary on the history of this inter- and extra-disciplinary area as it has intersected with other fields in the social sciences and humanities — and with social practices beyond the academy.

The journal has three overlapping aims:

1. to address the absence of publishing outlets for rigorous work on the history of the overlapping fields of communication research, cultural studies, film studies, information science, media studies, speech, and rhetoric.
2. to provide a platform for scholarship on these fields' complex institutional, social, and intellectual histories from around the world, reaching beyond the North American and Western European lens of much existing literature.
3. to take advantage of open access, multimedia publishing, on the

assumption that historians of media studies might illuminate these fields' pasts in dialogue with new forms of scholarly communication

History of Media Studies is published by mediastudies.press, a scholar-led, no-fee nonprofit publisher established in 2019. The journal is edited by three established scholars in the history of media and communication studies field: David Park, Peter Simonson, and Jefferson Pooley. The journal's Editorial Board includes scholars from nearly all continents and regions, with the aim to broaden the field's traditional scope.

Open Access

All articles are published free and open access online, with downloads available in PDF and a range of eight other formats, including machine-readable JATS XML with swift and accurate Google Scholar indexing. Authors retain copyright and select an open Creative Commons license.

History of Media Studies is committed to a rigorous set of Open Access Principles. The journal does not levy article processing charges (APCs), as a matter of principle. Its editors believe that open access for readers should not be traded for new barriers to authorship. The journal is supported, instead, by direct subsidy from libraries and other funders, through the Open Access Community Investment Program (OACIP).

Its commitments include transparent nonprofit governance, the use of open infrastructure wherever possible, transparent finances, author copyright, open licensing and citations, and the no-fee policy. Authors select the peer-review model, with a double-anonymous default and options for signed and community review. The editors are committed to a

humane, care-based, and developmental review process, with the goal to improve manuscripts through collegial exchange.

History of Media Studies is published on the open-source PubPub platform.

Working Group, Newsletter, & Bibliography

In loose affiliation with the journal, the co-editors have established the History of Media Studies working group at the Center for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine (CHSTM). At each monthly session, a scholar presents on a work-in-progress in remote sessions attended by academics from around the world. Membership is free and welcoming.

The journal also sponsors the *History of Media Studies Newsletter* (monthly and free to sign up) and maintains an affiliation with the History of Communication Research Bibliography at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication Library Archives (ASCLA).

Memberships & Affiliations

The journal's publisher, mediastudies.press, is a member of Crossref, the Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association (OASPA) and the Radical Open Access collective, with vetted affiliations including the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB), Project MUSE, and OAPEN. History of Media Studies will apply for listing in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and membership in the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), when eligible after one year of operation.

Margaret A. Blanchard Dissertation Prize

Submission Deadline: Feb. 15, 2022

The American Journalism Historians Association's Margaret A. Blanchard Doctoral Dissertation Prize, given for the first time in 1997, is awarded annually for the best doctoral dissertation dealing with mass communication history. An honorarium of $500 accompanies the prize, and a $200 honorarium is awarded to each honorable mention.

Eligible works shall include both quantitative and qualitative historical dissertations, written in English, which have been completed between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2021. For the purposes of this award, a "completed" work is defined as one which has not only been submitted and defended but also revised and filed in final form at the applicable doctoral-degree-granting university by December 31, 2021.

To be considered, please submit the following materials *in a single e-mail* to the address below:

1. A cover letter from the applicant containing complete (home and work) contact information (postal addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses). The letter should express a willingness, should the dissertation be selected for a prize, both to attend the awarding ceremony and to deliver a public presentation based on the dissertation at the 2022 American Journalism Historians Association Annual Convention, Sept. 27 to Oct. 1, 2022, in Memphis, TN.

2. A letter of nomination from the dissertation chair/director or the chair of the university department in which the dissertation was written.

3. A single PDF containing the following (with no identifying information):

- A 200-word abstract.
- The dissertation table of contents.
- A single chapter from the dissertation, preferably not exceeding 50 manuscript pages (not including notes, charts or photographs). The chapter should, if possible, highlight the work's strengths as a piece of primary-sourced original research.

4. In a separate PDF but in the same e-mail, a blind copy of the complete dissertation.

To be considered, all identifying information — including author, school, and dissertation committee members' names — must be deleted from items 3 and 4 above.

Nominations, along with all the supporting materials, should be sent to AJHAdissertationprize@gmail.com.

Questions also should be directed to AJHAdissertationprize@gmail.com.

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