

# *Historiography*

in Mass Communication



Volume 9 (2023). Number 1

# *Historiography in Mass Communication*

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# *Historiography*

## in Mass Communication

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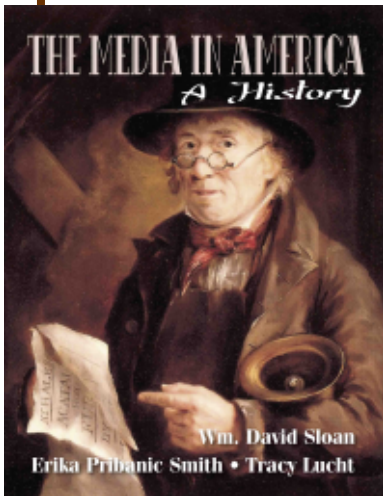
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# Go Big!

By Wm. David Sloan ©



Sloan

I know firsthand about unimportant topics. When I set out to write my doctoral dissertation, my committee gave me little guidance on how to choose a topic. Since I was little more than a raw beginner in studying history, I had only the most meager idea about what to do.

My advisor at the University of Texas, my good friend Dr. C. Richard King, came to the rescue. He told me, “Choose something no one’s ever studied.”

That sounds simple enough — and I nearly succeeded.

But I wondered: How can one be aware of something in history that no one has ever written about? It’s not easy. I went ahead and tried to come up with something.

Later, it dawned on me that the reason no one has written about some topics is that no one’s interested in them. They’re unimportant or boring.

Is it an exaggeration to say that many historians spend their lives dealing with such topics? Or that most waste their time? They’re guided by

*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. He founded the AJHA.*

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the principle that they must write about something no one else has done. They're forever searching for the obscure.

It's a sad situation, but by the time they retire, the work to which they've devoted their careers will be forgotten. Only the authors will remember most journal articles. No more than a few pieces will stick in the memory of other historians. The others will sink into the black hole of oblivion.

That's doubly sad because the historians could have dealt just as easily with significant topics — and made an impact.

If you think we in JMC history don't enthrone the obscure, attend paper sessions at conferences. Or listen to conversations. On more than one occasion, I've heard professors tell students working on their dissertations, "You're taking on a topic that's too big. Don't do that. Find something small. It's a lot more manageable and easier." Those professors were helping another generation waste their time.

Historians sometimes choose small topics because they're the only ones they can find that haven't been done before. The topics therefore usually are inconsequential and make little contribution to our understanding of history.

"But," someone might object, "all the big topics have already been studied. So my only choice is small ones."

On the contrary, many huge topics are in need of investigation. One just needs to know how to identify them.

Whenever historians are considering researching a topic, they should simply ask, "Is the topic important?" That question may seem redundant, but it would have stopped at the outset innumerable projects and saved countless hours of forgettable research.

The point here is not to discourage work on all small topics but rather to emphasize that historians need to understand the value of the

subject when starting out. Small topics can be significant if they relate to the big picture.

When contemplating a small topic, the historian should pay attention to whether it's historically justifiable.

Is another study needed? Can its importance be demonstrated? Where does it fit into older work on the topic? Does it relate in an explainable way to things considered consequential in the past? Does it relate to matters that are important for society to know? If not, it's only of antiquarian value and fails to qualify as a viable topic.

The answers to these questions assume a bibliographic awareness.

Such awareness, in fact, is the key to selecting important topics.

Thorough familiarity with the existing literature should suggest important topics that need to be reconsidered or new topics to be studied. Bibliographic knowledge will make the historian aware of the big questions that other historians have asked about major periods and subjects.

Just because many historians already have written about a topic doesn't mean that it needs no more inquiry. Indeed, the fact that a lot of historians have addressed a topic assures that it *is* an important one — or at least one that historians consider important. And most important topics need continuing study.

Armed with a comprehensive knowledge of the literature, the historian in search of a topic just needs to know how to approach it. There's no secret to it. It's straightforward. It's this: Understand the underlying explanations that earlier historians have given. You can be certain that they've disagreed on the essential nature of the topic. Then today's historian needs only to try to answer the question that is at the heart of their disagreement.

Here are a few examples:

- On freedom of the press in early America: Were Americans' atti-

tudes truly libertarian, or were they limited?

- On the Antebellum press: What impact did it make on America's move toward civil war?

- On muckraking in the early 20th century: Were muckrakers really concerned not primarily with solving social problems but with re-establishing their position in society?

- On advertising in the 20th century: Was the most important influence on advertising that of business and economics, or was it culture and society — or was it some combination of those factors?

- On television in the last half of the 20th century: Was television news so attuned to the profit-making potential of entertainment fare that it forsook its journalistic responsibilities?

A similar way to find an important topic is to know how various schools of historians have explained a topic. How, for example, have Southern Nationalist, Developmental, and Consensus historians differed on press coverage of the Civil War? How have Cultural, Literary, and Economic historians differed on the issue of magazines' role as a medium of popular communication?

In fact, on every major topic, groups of historians have given different explanations. To identify an important topic, historians today need simply to determine what the central disagreement is. To make their research meaningful, all they have to do is offer a valid resolution of the dispute.

Here's a final, simple suggestion for assuring that a topic is important: *Focus on books*.

Is a topic worthy of book-length treatment?

Many topics in history need such study.

But small, isolated topics usually aren't deserving of books. If the historian can't envision a topic as a book, it's probably not worth the



## Go Big!

time one must spend on it. All topics, even small ones, require a large investment of time and work — and one convention paper or one article seems little reward for so much.

When an appropriate topic is found for a book, it offers several advantages over the smaller one.

First, the topic will have to be significant.

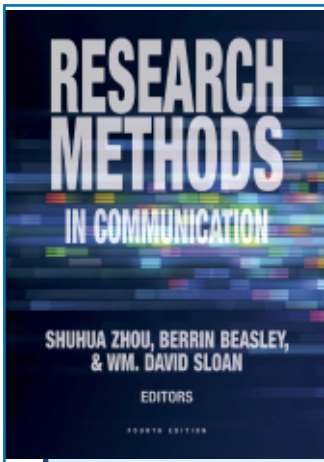
Second, a large topic forces the historian to do extensive research. That's an advantage because the historian collects a large amount of material, becomes intimately acquainted with it and the subject, and then is able to provide a versant account.

Third, book-length studies allow for greater exploration of context and supplemental detail. They open the door for fuller development of episodes and characters and for greater use of background, setting, evidence, and informed observation.

Fourth, once the research has been conducted, the historian has the raw material for several papers and articles in addition to a book. Hour for hour, then, time is spent more economically on a large rather than on a small topic.

Take the big topic, and you won't be wasting your time.

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# Giving Credit Where Credit's Due

By Leonard Ray Teel ©



Teel

Historians have inspired my insights on everything from archives to imagination. Recently in this space I lauded Robin Winks for his conception of how historians resemble detectives.<sup>1</sup> Others who have helped with research and writing include Jacques Barzun, Leon Edel, Peter Gay, and recently in translation from Spanish, Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo. They've provided insights on discovery and interpretation, and characterization, as well as spirit, liveliness, wit and even joy.

Not least among such insights are work habits. Jacques Barzun stressed *regularity* in work. "Only a regular force can overcome inertia. Write regularly, never missing a date with yourself. Start on the dot. Some writing you must do from the hour that is kept sacred. *Skip one writing period and you are set back for days.* Periods must be close enough together to create a *rhythm* of work. Choose a time with no other fixed obligation at the end. When you get stuck in the middle of a passage, re-read the last two or three pages and see if that will not propel you past

*Leonard Ray Teel, professor emeritus at Georgia State University, has published five books, including two journalism histories that won national awards. In 1995 he founded the Center for International Media Education and co-founded the Arab-U.S. Association for Communication Educators.*

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dead center.”<sup>2</sup>

For biography, Leon Edel advises that “a writer of lives is allowed imagination of *form* but *not* of fact.” My interest was in Ralph Emerson McGill who began as a sports editor at the *Atlanta Constitution* then won praise as he expanded with his broader interests in social and political issues from the 1950s through the 1960s. Persuasive writing and his outgoing personality made him a natural choice for promotion to editor and subsequently publisher. His talent for communicating reasonableness reached beyond the South. Eventually he was recognized nationally for persuasiveness in support of the civil rights movement and subsequent legislation. Edel’s advice on biography is superb. “No biography is complete,” he asserts, “unless it reveals the individual *within history*, within an ethos and a social complex.” That gave me the idea to begin the story as McGill began and describe his development. “The fancy of the biographer resides in the *art of narration*,” Edel advises, “not in the substance of the story. The substance exists before the narration begins.”<sup>3</sup>

Peter Gay elucidates how *style* in history is a bridge to *substance*. He cites the British historian Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859), who specified two aspects of style. First, the *professional style* inspires research habits for finding proofs that allowed the historian to “visualize events through the eyes of the past and assess them with its standards.” Second, the “*emotional style* — comes through the tone of voice as it emerges in the tension or repose of phrases, favorite adjectives, selection of illustrative anecdotes, emphases and epigrams.” While emphasizing style, Gay reminds us of the need for serious *detective* work. “But what is not required of art *is required* of history: to *discover*, no matter how shocking the discovery, what the old universe was like rather than to invent a new one. The difference is nothing less than decisive.”<sup>4</sup>

A more recent acquaintance is with the Latin American historian Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo. He can raise one's sight. After I published a piece underscoring the significance of *detection* in history, I found Tenorio-Trillo's advice dealing with matters *beyond* detection. "For historians are *readers and then writers* more than they are *detectives*," adding the fantastic phrase: "and with that comes the risk of being Quixotes." He conjures images of Miguel Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, to lead you into the *historical imagination*. For some time, he states, "it was assumed that the historian was, above all, a *searcher for sources* who did not have much need of *imagination* and must tame it if he had it." He contrasts a down-to-earth factuality represented by Sancho Panza against a seemingly perhaps higher understanding related to the imagination of a Don Quixote — but a *domesticated* imagination. And he concludes: "Because of this long-standing embrace of the domesticated imagination, I see the historian as a bit like Sancho and a bit like Don Quixote. For the historian, a good mix of Sancho and Quixote is in the balance of '*finding*' evidence and '*describing*' it, '*recounting*' it (*measuring* and *narrating* it), and '*explaining*' it."<sup>5</sup>

In retrospect, I know I benefited from all these scholars' coaching. With respect to Tenorio-Trillo's historical imagination — the mix of Sancho and Quixote — that thinking helped me a decade ago when I wrote *Reporting the Cuban Revolution*. I found myself explaining how U.S. journalists failed to understand Cuban political undercurrents in the 1950s. By the 1960s that misreading of Fidel Castro's rhetoric became evident. Decades earlier, journalists, among others, also failed to understand the realities of the Russian Revolution from 1917 to 1920. In retrospect, that reporting about Russia has since been called "nothing short of a disaster" because it was dominated by "the hopes of the men who composed the news organizations ... a case of seeing not *what was*,

but what men *wished to see*.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly in Castro’s era, journalists camping with him and his rebels in the mountains seemed to see “what they wished to see.” Their published reports, highlighting Castro’s pledges to restore democracy, seemed credible.

It is a blessing that current historians receive such advice from scholars who have gone ahead with demonstrated methods to ascertain the facts and portray them reliably with insight and style.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>“History’s Detectives,” *Historiography in Mass Communication*, 7:5 (2021). See also Robin Winks, *The Historian as Detective: Essays on Evidence* (New York, 1969).

<sup>2</sup>Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff. *The Modern Researcher* (New York, 1957).

<sup>3</sup>Leon Edel, *Writing Lives: Principia Biographica* (Ontario, Canada, 1987).

<sup>4</sup>Peter Gay, “Style in History,” *The American Scholar* (Phi Beta Kappa), 43 (Spring 1974): 225-336.

<sup>5</sup>Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Clio’s Laws On History and Language* (Austin, Tex., 2019), 64-74.

<sup>6</sup>Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Nobel Prize Lecture, 8 December 1982.

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# Historical Roundtable: Reflections on the State of JMC History

By David A. Copeland, Wm. David Sloan, James D. Startt,  
Debra Reddin van Tuyll, and Julie Hedgepeth Williams ©

**H**ere at the beginning of the ninth year of *Historiography in Mass Communication*, we think it's a good time to reflect on the state of historiography in the field. As some other benchmarks, we'll mention that the journal *American Journalism* turns forty this year, and *Journalism History* will turn fifty next year. To mark the occasion, we've gathered for this roundtable five of today's preeminent historians of mass communication.

They are David Copeland, David Sloan, Jim Startt, Debbie van Tuyll, and Julie Williams. They have some commonalities. All five, for example, have received the Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement from the American Journalism Historians Association. Besides that, all have been productive scholars, each with several books to his or her name.

Their reflections on the field offer considerable insight on changes that have taken place during the last forty years and on the status of JMC historiography today.

***Historiography:** When did you first get involved in the study of JMC history, and how has the field changed (if at all) since then?*

**Startt:** I first became involved in JMC history in graduate school in the early 1960s. Most of my interest was due to my mentor, Gordon W.

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## Copeland, Sloan, Startt, van Tuyll, and Williams



Copeland

Four members of this roundtable have served as president of the American Journalism Historians Association (and Prof. van Tuyll is current vice president), and all have won its prestigious Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement. Each also has written several books on media history.

David A. Copeland is emeritus professor of journalism and distinguished university professor at Elon University. Along with the twelve books he's written, he's editor of the eight-volume *Greenwood Library of American War Reporting* and chief editor of the Thomson Gale 19th Century Digital Newspapers Archive.



Sloan

David Sloan was selected in 2000, on the ninetieth anniversary of Kappa Tau Alpha, as one of the five "most significant" members in the honor society's history. He has twice won *Choice* magazine's "Outstanding Academic Book" award, and his *American Journalism History* won an American Library Association "Best Bibliography in History" award.



Startt

James D. Startt, in addition to the Kobre Award, has received a variety of other honors, including a Lilly Endowment Grant in 1983 for the development of a program in journalism history. He is a recognized expert on President Woodrow Wilson. He has published numerous articles and books on American and British journalism and diplomatic history.



van Tuyll

Debra Reddin van Tuyll is the author or editor of nine books. Her most recent is *The Midwestern Press in the Crucible of the American Civil War*, an edited work. Her best-known book is *The Confederate Press in the Crucible of the American Civil War*. She has served as head of the AEJMC History Division.



Williams

Julie Hedgepeth Williams is the author of a number of books, including *The Significance of the Printed Word in Early America*. Her dissertation received the American Journalism Historians Association's inaugural award in 1997 for the nation's outstanding dissertation in mass communication history. She teaches at Samford University.



## Roundtable: Reflections on the State of JMC History

Prange. He had just published *Tora, Tora, Tora*, his account of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In his research for that book, he had used newspapers as one of his major sources, and in the process became convinced of their significance in the writing of 20th-century history.

When he discovered I had served in the Army Signal Corps, he assumed, quite wrongly, that it was an experience that equipped me with the tools needed to write a dissertation that had a major journalistic component. Thus began my long adventure of writing about Woodrow Wilson's press relations.

Regarding how JMC history has changed over the years, suffice it to say that it emerged from its amateur status to become a scholarly field of study.

**Sloan:** I began studying JMC history in the mid-1970s when I was working on my Ph.D. The field has changed immensely since then. The journal *Journalism History* had been founded in 1974, and then the AJHA started in 1982, followed by *American Journalism* in 1983.

When I began studying JMC history, the field had a handful of good scholars, but generally it was in a depressed state. Researchers in other mass-comm fields looked down their noses at it. And they probably had a good reason. Few people who claimed to be historians were aware of even such elementary matters as, for example, “primary sources” and “present-mindedness.”

Since then, the level of expertise has greatly increased. There are many JMC historians who have mastered the principles of historical research and teach their students. I credit Jim Startt, the field's leading authority on research methods (and senior author of *Historical Methods in Mass Communication*), for much of the improvement.

**Williams:** I majored in history and English, and though I got a job as a reporter on a small-town newspaper based on the English major, the history major was by far the better preparation for journalism. I thought of my newspaper writing as contemporary information for our readers, but also as the historical record for our county. When I found out you could actually study media history in grad school, I was thrilled! It was a convergence of my two loves — history and journalism. This was the first I had heard of studying media history in a formal way.

How has the field changed? I have my undergrads reading and writing about historic media. I've seen our field open up to younger scholars, which is terrific. The AJHA's Southeast Symposium has been a great facilitator of younger scholars, even my college freshmen.

**van Tuyl:** I got interested in journalism history in my master's program at the University of Alabama in 1979 when I took my first history class with Dr. Charles Arrendale.

J-history has changed in so many ways since then. I think one big change is a product of changes in society, and that is there are areas that are not open for inquiry due to changes in social and political thinking generally, and that is that scholars aren't really free to explore all topics today. For example, study of diversity is limited to race and gender, but there are so many other kinds of diversity that are also worthy of study.

A change for the good has been that we have grown beyond just looking at how the press covered X topic to much more reflective and in-depth attempts to understand how and why our industry has worked and changed through history.

**Copeland:** When you grow up in a town whose earliest dwelling dates to 1718, you cannot avoid being wrapped in history, but I happened

upon journalism history serendipitously. As a master's student in church history, I wrote my thesis on a 17th-century British dissenter who used newspapers and pamphlets as his means of fighting for religious toleration. I realized that the documents I was studying had a huge impact because of the governmental response to them. For doctoral work, I chose communication research.

Most of the earliest media history conferences I attended generally had research focused upon an event, person, or product not necessarily framed in societal context. Today, more focus is rightly on how media have effected change in society and a nation as well as exploring a more macro look at events and how media coverage of those events — or people or product itself — affected those who interacted with the subject of the study.

***Historiography:** What have been the main ideas (e.g., methodological, ideological, etc.) that have influenced the study of JMC history during the time since you began?*

**van Tuyl:** Methodologically, journalism history has become more rigorous and more diverse. We no longer have studies published that have no footnotes or sources quoted, that look beyond how X covered Y to try to reach deeper understanding of the effects of the news industry across time and its place and roles in society. We're open to quantitative studies as well as qualitative, and we're open to experimenting with new methods.

Ideologically, we have followed the academy in broadening our disciplinary perspectives. We are more likely to reach across the academic silos and work with scholars from other fields or with other approaches. We moved away from studies focused on developmental perspectives to

approaches such as structural-functional, critical, and feminist.

**Sloan:** I agree with everything Debbie said.

I would add only a couple of things. Most JMC historians write free of any intentional ideological perspective. That's a good thing. However, Cultural Studies (going back to Jim Carey) has had a strong impact. It's wise to be aware of its ideas, but the bias evident in it presents problems. Likewise, the obvious ideological and partisan bias found in some perspectives represents a clear danger.

Most scholars who write from the Cultural Studies approach draw less from Carey and more from such philosophical perspectives as critical theory, postmodernism, feminist theory, ethnic studies, Marxism, liberation theory, and a host of others.

For the most part, they haven't been trained as historians but have backgrounds in such areas as critical studies or philosophy as taught in schools of communication. Thus, they tend not to employ historical methods rigorously or to exercise the historian's normal caution about drawing conclusions.

**Copeland:** David is correct, I think, in saying that most JMC historians write free of intentional perspective. I think the same is true of theoretical approaches. In fact, years ago, an AJHA panel debated theoretical approaches versus no approaches in doing JMC research. Some argued that theories were necessary to create research that would be more broadly accepted and validated in academe. Others were adamant that applying theory creates bias and perspectives that would not have even been considered in the period being studied. Others believed that too many contemporary approaches create a sense of present-mindedness that clouds original intent. That said, there can be value to applying dif-

ferent approaches to JMC research, as Jim Carey believed.

As for theoretical approaches, I believe that agenda setting and framing in their broadest contexts have been the most influential theories for approaching JMC history research since their creation in the last quarter of the 20th century.

**Startt:** Based on my reading of *American Journalism*, the greatest methodological change that I've observed is in the substance of the articles it publishes. They are better researched, better written, and presented more in accord with the historical standards of good writing.

**Williams:** I see something of an expansion of the concept of "what is media?" In our most recent AJHA convention someone presented research on published songs, and some years ago a student presented a paper on Grimm's Fairy Tales as a mass mediated text. I like that well-researched, well-written pieces might push the envelope on how we define "media."

Otherwise, I've seen an unfortunate attempt to *require* historians to base everything on a theory. I lean the other way. If you go in looking to prove a theory, you can probably find proof. However, you might miss the larger picture that you might have seen if you just approached a study with a blank slate, a determination to see what was out there. I don't mind people trying to prove a theory with historical research, but I do mind when historians say we *have* to do that in order to be "correct."

**Historiography:** *What are the hot topics right now in the study of JMC history, and what makes them hot?*

**van Tuyll:** Based on conference attendance, journals, and conversations with colleagues, the hottest area is diversity — defined narrowly as race, gender, and sexuality. Those have been hot topics for some time now, and I suspect that is because they drive a lot of our public conversations (and have been for a long time now).

I'm a bit disappointed that a field like ours isn't more attuned to broadening the definition of diversity. One of the most important, but neglected, facets of diversity is political diversity, which is a driving force in our contemporary debates and conflicts — as well as our historic ones. Political diversity has played a role in American public life at least since the 1800 presidential election, yet the role of the media in developing and maintaining political diversity is understudied, if it is given a place at the diversity table at all.

**Williams:** Debbie is spot-on. I was going to say race is a hot topic, and for obvious current reasons. On a more subtle basis, I recognize race is an easy topic for students to understand and thus to grab hold of. As a professor, I love that and encourage it! The big challenge is to look at race in the context of its time, not our time. Beyond that, Debbie's point that political diversity is important is indeed true. But the big challenge with political topics is that they can potentially cause strife and upset among my beginner students. Therefore, I don't encourage students along those lines. So ... I'm contributing to the problem.

**Copeland:** Race and gender are hot topics for JMC researchers. It's essential we understand, for example, ways women were portrayed in the press in America from the 18th century through the 20th to explain reactions to the suffrage movement, the failed Equal Rights Amendment, and so much more.

## Roundtable: Reflections on the State of JMC History

Political diversity, which Debbie mentions, requires caution, I believe, because political differences are often created when people hold conflicting views related to traditional diversity frames — race, gender, religion, ethnicity. Politics does drive debate and creates conflict. Much of that is based in ideology — think Federalists versus Republicans in 1800s — and people’s interpretation of law — think second amendment.

An area I do see as a “hot topic” is media bias, which permeates much conversation surrounding today’s media. A partisan press throughout the 19th century is an example, and revealing whether bias existed and how that may have affected those consuming media is critical.

**Sloan:** As I would expect, Debbie, Julie, and David all hit the nail on the head. Gender, race, and politics are the most popular topics, at least for conference papers and journal articles.

I would add to the mix, recent history. By that I mean of the last seventy or so years and particularly the last few decades. What that fascination with the present hints at is that many of today’s professors may be more interested in their favorite contemporary issues than they truly are in history.

I do wonder how much longer gender, race, and politics will continue as the focus of so much historical study. Probably until this generation passes away. But historiographers familiar with the history of historical writing know they will fade. That will be because of tedium, since there are only so many ways historians can make the same point, and because younger historians will discover new interests.

**Startt:** How to define a “hot” topic? If it means a present trend in schol-

arship, I can report that after scanning recently published articles and books in JMC history, no trend appeared. Two possible exceptions are studies on World War II and ones about biography.

What makes a “hot” topic hot? It should be one that is informative about a person, people, or events important during a previous era that has an ongoing generational significance. Two possible examples might be the internationalist-isolationist economic debate of the 1920s and 1930s and why do demagogic political figures win and retain popular support. Hitler, for instance, had the support of most Germans even when the Reich had all but collapsed.

***Historiography:*** *What are the areas of study in JMC history that have room for further exploration?*

**Sloan:** Every area can justify further study. I would especially encourage historians to take up subjects older than 1945. They are neglected by most of today’s historians. A caveat is that new studies must be important. Why should historians waste time on insignificant ones?

The difficulty many historians have is finding important subjects. Part of the reason is that they think they must pick something that hasn’t already been studied. They should take just the opposite approach: Choose a subject that a lot of historians have already studied. That will guarantee that it’s worth studying.

The key is to know what big questions to attempt to answer. To know the questions, historians need only to be knowledgeable about the historiography already written. For example, with the press during the American Revolution, a major issue is what the motivations of printers were. Every important period in history has similar big questions.



**Startt:** Here are my suggestions on fields for additional study:

1. Imperialism in modern history. It's one of the constants of modern times, and, as the Russian invasion of Ukraine reminds us, it shows no sign of going away.

2. International affairs. JMC has long neglected this area. But, with the revolution in modern communications and the growth of economic interdependence among nations, it's time for us to catch up.

3. The study of generations. With the passing of time, they tend to become dimmer and sometimes distorted. The JMC historian is in a good position to bring a sense of reality into the picture. For instance, the generation of 1880-1925, or so, was one of the most consequential in modern times, but we hear little about it. And how often do accounts of the post WWII generation overlook the real danger present in that era?

**Williams:** Jim and David have some good ideas for serious topics in need of attention. Angling as I do from the experiences of my freshman students, I'd also advocate for having fun. It seems fun/ playful/ bizarre topics in the media catch young people's attention and get them invested in research. I remember David Copeland, on our panel, once presented a paper on crime as reported in colonial newspapers. Crime is important today, but few of us have thought about everyday crime in the 1700s. David told the story of the poison pancakes. The culprit intended to poison her husband but first tried out her technique on neighborhood children. So even though those poison pancakes weren't earth-shattering (except to the victims), the topic resonated. The paper had the added benefit of making the audience realize our present-day era is not going to hell in a handbasket; crime was awful then, too.

**van Tuyll:** I can't disagree with any of the answers given so far. I would add one, though, and that's the ethnic press. I've been working on an Irish-American journalism history project, and I've been surprised how sparse the literature is on the ethnic press.

Ok. I have to add one more. I think we need to look at the smaller news organizations — the hometown newspapers and radio stations. They are ultimately more important than the metropolitan press because more people engage with them. In that way, they have a good bit in common with the ethnic press.

**Copeland:** The responses to this question demonstrate that there is still much to be unearthed in JMC history research. Jim's and David's points about looking at periods prior to World War II works with Debbie's idea of looking at smaller outlets. Post WWII, it's difficult not to use national outlets when studying most topics because those outlets are so easily available. Get back into time, and there are multitudes of smaller publications available through databases. Julie's point about how issues from previous time periods can have contemporary relevance is good, as well.

David's point about knowing the previous research is vital. Understanding how historians have approached topics from certain perspectives gives a researcher the opportunity to revisit the issue through a different lens.

Finally, I mentioned this in an earlier question, and David reiterated when he mentioned printers' motivations above, and that is: What factors might drive content? Further exploration is needed.

***Historiography:*** *What is the weakness in JMC historical study that is most in need of improvement?*

**van Tuyl:** Gosh, that depends on how you define weakness.

The first one that comes to mind is the lack of support in the academy for journalism history. Dedicated classes have been removed from so many curricula, or a formerly required class is now optional. As Fred Blevins used to like to say, history has been trampled by the emphasis on tools and toys classes. Of course, this is something the AJHA has been aware of for years and tried to combat. Our successes have been limited.

Another is that so many of our studies focus on newspapers because it's so much harder to access broadcast media for historical study.

And, I don't know that we've found a good way of studying the history of digital media yet. Of course, that may come with time.

**Williams:** I was going to say what Debbie said about a lack of media history courses even being available for students. "Tools and toys" DO seem to rule.

AND YET universities periodically do hand-wringing over courses that don't cause students to research, think, analyze, actually write rather than bubble in answers. In that case, I say, "Keep media history, media departments! Our students must research, think, analyze, and actually write something longer than a brief news story." Many of us remember the dreadful several years when media departments were under attack in universities, which were told by ignorant powers-that-be, "All you do is teach a trade. You don't have students doing rigorous academic work." In that case, I say, "Look at media history! We DO have students doing rigorous academic work!"

**Sloan:** I'm going to go out on a limb on this one.

Many people who work in JMC history aren't really historians.

They're less interested in history than they are in such matters as politics, professional practices (the "tools and toys," as Debbie, per Fred Blevins, says), various forms of ideology, etc. Several years ago at an AJHA convention, an eminent historian looked around the room and asked me, rhetorically, how many of the attendees I thought were real, dedicated historians. He answered, "I would say only about a dozen."

For *JMC* history to become *history*, scholars need to think as historians, rather than to think they're historians because they do occasional historical research or attend conferences of the AJHA or the AEJMC's History Division. They must make history their main focus. They must immerse themselves in it.

**Williams:** And immersion is so much more fun than the occasional venture into it!!!

**Copeland:** JMC history needs a broader reach. Its lack may be our fault because of the things that David, Debbie, and Julie have mentioned. If most of what's being published in media history journals or presented at conferences, as David suggests, lacks depth, then acceptance into the broader dialog by historians will rarely happen.

Years ago, I had breakfast with Maureen Dowd. She said the best writers at the *New York Times* were immersed in history and literature. Today, I see fewer stories that offer historical perspective for the news. I do read a newsletter each day from a historian who takes current events and places them in historical perspective. It makes what's happening easier to understand and more relevant. History is secondary or nonexistent for almost all students we're training to be journalists. This fact and our inability to counter this in our programs are huge weaknesses.

**Startt:** There is too great a tendency among JMC historians to produce studies of particular people important to the field and to matters of limited interest. The problem is not that they are not significant — they are. But they are mainly interesting to ourselves. They are important to know about in order that we create a fuller picture of media history.

However, to achieve maximum outreach, they need to connect with wider significant topics of general history.

**Williams:** An interesting angle on fitting in with the broader realm of historians: A woman from, as I called it, “pure” history (that is, not “media” history) came to our AJHA conference several years running. I referred to her as being from “pure” history. She said, “You all have an inferiority complex! You ARE real historians! Don’t doubt it!”

***Historiography:** Has JMC historical research been properly integrated into overall historical research? If not, what can be done to make research being conducted by media historians more widely available?*

**van Tuyl:** No, it hasn’t, and I don’t know if it can be. In my experience, we don’t think like other historians. I base that on my experience as a Ph.D. student at the University of South Carolina who minored in history and now having a former top student in that same program who’s having the exact issues that I had there twenty years ago. In both our cases, the history department’s faculty were never satisfied with our writing or our approach to answering research questions. I got accused of counting too much (as in bringing in quantitative approaches). I think there’s a fundamental distinction in our modes of thinking that makes for an unbridgeable gap.

For what it’s worth, I’m married to a military historian, and he

finds the same gap between his field and other historians. So, I think there's something about certain specialty fields and standard history that makes them incompatible.

**Sloan:** I doubt that there's a simple answer to the situation. For as long as I can remember, JMC historians have wrung their hands over it.

Part of the cause of the problem may be that many JMC historians write about the media as an insular field, with no connection to the outside world. They don't associate them with the issues that interest historians in a larger field — such as, let's say, American history.

Several years ago, Jim Startt and I edited a book titled *The Significance of the Media in American History*. It has sixteen chapters written by different historians. Each one makes a case for the broad importance of the mass media. With that approach, rather than writing, for example, about something such as how the press covered World War I, historians might focus on the question of how it contributed to America's entry into the war.

**Startt:** Believing that history is history, I like to think there is no real difference between its various fields. There is no reason to think that our best articles should not find a place in well-established journals, but I fear that few have. Why not? Nor can I imagine that many of the topics we research should not be welcome at historical conferences. A few years back, Jean Palmegiano and I submitted two proposals for a regional history conference. Both were accepted and led to a most worthwhile professional experience.

How can our research be more accepted?

Start by searching the listings of journals for ones that either might fit your research interest or accept articles of general interest. Produce

an article that links your topic to the interest of general readers. Most of all, make sure your work conforms to the standards of good history. Finally, try attending an historical conference or scan various historical journals to grasp the lay of the land.

I think the history we produce deserves a wider audience and that we should seek it.

**Williams:** I see the question in two halves:

1. Has JMC been properly integrated into historical research? Jim took a good academic angle, but here's a more "content" reply. Early media is available more and more readily and more and more searchably online, and that puts more media into historical studies as primary sources.

The second question returns to the academic angle:

2. What can be done to make research being conducted by media historians more widely available? Good question! I did donate most of my paper copies of *American Journalism* to our university library, which was thrilled to have it.

**Copeland:** I have long felt research by historians trained in JMC historical studies has not been properly integrated into the overall body of historical enquiry. Answering why has also baffled me. Maybe we have focused too much on revealing pieces of the historical puzzle without placing our findings into the larger scheme of things.

The answer probably lies in Jim's suggestion to broaden presentation and publication outlets. There are media historians like David Nord and Betty Houchin Winfield who publish in assorted journals, but most of us don't. We stick to *American Journalism* and *Journalism History*, which don't appear in all online databases.

Media are obviously sources for historians of many foci. So there is historical literature available where media are central to the study. Often, it lacks the critical eye that historians trained in the history of media possess, and that, I believe, is the issue.

**Historiography:** *How can professors “sell” media history as relevant in a discipline where students focus on practical career skills?*

**van Tuyll:** What worked for me was getting my undergraduate students involved in research. About a decade ago, a journalism history class actually wrote and published a book on the history of a local radio station that was celebrating its 70th anniversary. Since then, I’ve encouraged students to present at national and international conferences, write book chapters, and publish journal articles based on research done for the journalism history class. I found the students were more enthusiastic about digging into historical research (once they discovered it was more than reading a bunch of library books) and more likely to encourage other students to take the journalism history class.

That all made a big splash with administrators, too. Administrators today are all about “high impact educational experiences,” and research is considered to be one. Since journalism history research is relatively cheap, it ticks off a lot of administrative priorities.

**Williams:** Great answer! Administrators ARE impressed by students presenting research, indeed. I appreciate Debbie’s efforts to get students published in the *Southeastern Review of Journalism History*. Student publications are so impressive to administrators ... and everyone.

**Sloan:** I agree with Debbie about the importance of getting students



involved in both research and publishing. Research gets them excited, and publishing encourages them to aim at professional quality.

I will add something about how to “sell” history to fellow faculty members — most of whom come out of social and behavioral studies, have never been interested in history, don’t think it’s important, and think its research methods are soft. They might never be convinced that history is critical for a well-rounded mind.

However, if history students present papers at conferences and if you (as well as your students) have productive publishing records, other professors and administrators pay heed. As we all know, research institutions like to count papers, articles, and books. Once you have their respect, then you can have meaningful discussions about the rigor of historical research and about the value of history in developing a critical analytical ability.

**Copeland:** If you teach in a program that offers opportunities to do in-depth research papers, another course doing the same is no selling point. Expansion of media platforms requires students to know how to present information in them; exit media history.

Perhaps the best way to ensure media history is part of curricula is to create courses that present history under the guise of current media issues and practices. My friend Anthony Hatcher developed such a course and called it *Journalism in a Free Society*. The course “focuses on the role and contemporary practices of print, broadcast and online journalism. Students examine freedom of expression and the value of journalism in society, the historic evolution of news, the rise of participatory and citizen journalism, and changing business models and entrepreneurial efforts that support journalism today.” History weighs heavily, and no one will accuse you of offering antiquated course content.

**Startt:** This is an excellent question. Further, it's one akin to the problem in all of the liberal arts, and it has been since the early 20th century. What might we do to counter it?

When I taught JMC history, I would distribute some statements that a few important editors made about the importance of JMC history in their own careers, hoping the students would take them to heart, and maybe use them in essays I planned to assign. The results were not encouraging.

If I were to teach JMC history again, the first assignment would be to write a short comparative essay on the free press in the U.S.A. and the controlled press elsewhere — perhaps in Russia. Selected sources would be provided. More important, I would inform them that a question on their final exam would be this: How did freedom of the press originate and evolve in America, and has it remained free today?

**Williams:** Of course students should learn practical skills, and we're happy to offer them. We wouldn't want nursing students never to have the skills courses in their discipline, and it's the same with ours.

However, for reasons of pure prejudice against student media, in the recent past universities have complained that journalism is a "skills only" discipline and needs to be relegated to trade schools (this was a POPULAR fuss a few years ago). It seemed complaining administrators needed convincing that journalism/media students could think, analyze, dissect primary material in an academic way, write longer than a few paragraphs, etc.

Well, if YOUR university goes on this ridiculous tear at some point, media history is your answer. It's the rigorous academic course that complainers complain that we don't have. Well, we have it. So there!

**Historiography:** *What do you think is the potential of JMC history, and how might it be reached?*

**Startt:** I firmly believe that JMC history has a promising future. It's more difficult, of course, to be definite about how that future can be achieved.

The answer, in my judgment, lies in the richness of the subject itself. For example, is it possible to think of any social or political reform, any revolutionary movement, any modern imperialistic expansion without acknowledging the role the media played in it? Is there a more important challenge in education than to have students, or people in general, understand the importance of reaching factual conclusions about conditions and events that affect them or their nation? How important is it for them to know the difference between news and propaganda? Has not the failure to recognize that difference caused many of today's problems.?

In short, the growth of the discipline depends on the ability of JMC historians to interest students in such questions.

**van Tuyl:** Because journalism has the power to bring about change, it is an essential part of the history of just about everything. If we can move it more toward general history, we have a greater chance to explain historic events accurately, and maybe address causes more fully.

So, I think journalism history has the potential to broaden our understanding of how and why we got where we are, but only if we pay attention to it.

I think throughout this discussion, we have identified how journalism history can reach its potential, but the starting point is getting it taken more seriously by academic administrators who have the power

influence curricula. We have to educate people in the history of journalism and mass communication before we can begin to consider reaching our potential.

**Williams:** Journalism history can be a good way for young people — college freshmen, high schoolers — to get into more general history. If we can convince educators to try historic journalism for their students, I think they'll find students grabbing hold of history rather than nodding off in class.

Resources such as the on-line historic *Virginia Gazette* and *Chronicling America* are so accessible. How fascinating it has been for my freshmen to contemplate runaway slave ads — or ads for beer or stories of murder — as they were written in the day. One of my students told me, “This is a great class. Everyone can find something they're interested in to study!” Agreed! Truly, journalism history is a way for young people to come to love and understand history — a pretty important thing for society as a whole.

**Copeland:** JMC history *is* the history of America because, as Jim pointed out, there really is no movement within the history of this nation that has not been driven by media. Julie's research has pointed out how colonization literature spurred people to leave Europe and settle in the New World. Then, from the printing of the first newspaper in America through the digital world, we can see media as the catalyst for — and against — all aspects of society, whether the focus of our research is news, entertainment, or advertising. I used to joke that our university should really be a school of communications because so many departments added media-centric courses to their curricula, yet students still flocked to our majors.

## Roundtable: Reflections on the State of JMC History

When, within our research, we successfully reveal media's role and significance in all elements society and the nation, then JMC historians will be meeting the discipline's potential.

**Sloan:** The mass media are one of the most important forces in our world. Not the most important, but certainly one of great influence. Throughout most of American history, they have been significant factors. It's not difficult to identify a number of the ways they have played a meaningful, even at times a central role. JMC history is inextricably woven into the history of America.

The key to JMC history reaching its potential is to have excellent historians, and not just a dozen or so but scores.

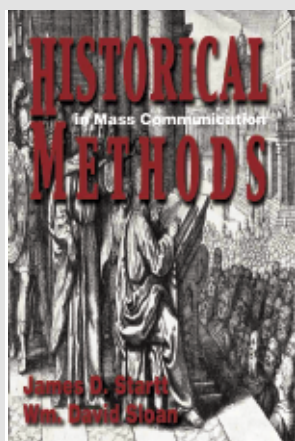
It won't happen overnight. We know that from looking at history. The AJHA, for example, began four decades ago. It has helped improve the field, but even today much needs doing.

For the study of JMC history to reach its potential, it needs motivated, imaginative, energetic historians who don't think of history as just a sideline but who devote their careers to it.

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# Historian Interview

Rob Rabe ©



Rabe

**R**obert A. (Rob) Rabe, a professor of journalism and mass communication at Marshall University, is the founding editor of the *Journal of 20th Century Media History*. He maintains a personal website — History of Mass Communication in America: An Internet Bibliography — that lists more than 4,500 articles and books in media history. He was formerly the book review editor for the JHistory list-serv. He specializes in the history of mass media during the Cold War and has published several articles and book chapters. He received his Ph.D. in mass communications from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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

**Rabe:** I grew up in Nebraska and Iowa, in a number of different small towns. My dad was a teacher and coach and many of my relatives were in education in some way, which I suppose had an effect on my thinking about my future career. I went to college at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln and majored in U.S. history. I didn't take any classes in journalism or media history. I was already interested in the Cold War

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years at that time. I remember writing a paper about the Cuban Missile Crisis

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

**Rabe:** I worked for a few years at the university library in Lincoln and then took a job at the *Dubuque Telegraph-Herald* in Iowa. I was a news archivist and research assistant there, and wrote a small number of short pieces, album reviews and that kind of thing. It was fun to help the reporters and editors find information to use in their stories. This was when the Internet was still pretty novel and it wasn't as easy to look up basic information quickly. The paper probably doesn't have somebody in this position anymore because reporters can easily do their own research from their desks (or anywhere). I enjoyed the newsroom so much I decided I wanted to be a news reporter myself, which is why my wife, Cory, and I moved to Madison, Wisconsin. I enrolled at UW as a part-time student and planned to get a second BA in journalism and try to make a career of it. I met the late James Baughman that first semester when he gave a guest lecture in my introduction to mass communication class. I decided right away to go to graduate school instead and study journalism history.

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

**Rabe:** I was a teaching assistant while I was in grad school at Wisconsin. I was a TA for the gigantic introduction to mass communication course and the history of mass communication class, several times each and under several great professors. I've been at Marshall my entire career as a



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professor and have taught a lot of different classes, including undergrad and graduate media history classes and many special topics and honors seminars that deal with media history in some way. I also teach some basic reporting and writing classes, as well as our seminar on race, gender, and media. My favorite honors seminar is about the media and the civil rights movement in the 50s, 60s, and 70s.

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

**Rabe:** I have been interested in history since childhood. I used to read everything I could about it, especially military history at that point. My parents were generous about getting me books and would always take me to the library when I was a kid. And then I majored in history at UNL and so had a lot of exposure to history and the rudiments of historical research. I was very fortunate during my graduate training. At that time Wisconsin had to be about the best place to study media history. Jim Baughman and Steve Vaughn were both teaching in the j-school and I loved every minute I spent with them, either as a student or as their teaching assistant. They have a world-class history department there as well and our program encouraged us to take classes outside the j-school. The Wisconsin Historical Society has dozens of archival collections related to media history and the UW library system has almost everything you could want, old trade magazines, any book you could think of. It was amazing. My wife is also a historian (art and visual culture) and it was exciting when we were both at UW taking classes and writing. I was able to experience some of what she was learning and the way she was being trained in that field. It was a fun time.

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

**Rabe:** Well, it would be hard to overstate how important Jim Baughman was to me. He was a perfect model of an academic who published first-rate scholarship, but also cared a great deal about teaching. I couldn't begin to list everything that I learned from him, both in the classroom and from just talking with him in his office or while walking with him from Vilas Hall to wherever the history class, J560, was held that semester. And he was tough. He was my advisor for both my MA thesis and my Ph.D. dissertation, and he pushed hard in terms of analysis and scope. And the writing itself. Now that I think about it, his emphasis on the art of history writing might be the most important thing I took from that experience. I remember the time I got a dissertation draft chapter back from him and he had written "Wow" in the margin and how happy that made me.

Steve Vaughn was much the same. I learned a great deal from him and his history writing is just as good. It was wonderful to be able to work with both of them. What I most appreciate about Steve was his insightful and sometimes pointed questions. Often when talking with him about my work he would ask what at the time seemed like an odd question. Then later I would realize the amazing insight that emerged as I puzzled my way toward an answer.

I can't really pinpoint other historians whose books have influenced me. All of us in this line of work read extensively, and I am still thrilled when I come across a writer whose work is both insightful and beautifully written.

***Historiography:** What are the main areas or ideas on which you concen-*

*trate your historical work?*

**Rabe:** Almost everything I have worked on is related to U.S. media history between the 1930s and 1970s. I briefly dabbled with a potential dissertation that was going to look at newspapers and historical memory in the late 19th century, but I wasn't ever able to really conceptualize what I wanted to do. But everything else has been mid-20th century. I have written about radio history and advertising history, but for the most part now I would say that I study newspapers and political reporting. I've been working forever on a book about the newspaper columnist Marquis Childs and I've written quite a few papers that have to do with reporters and the Vietnam War. One of my long-running side projects has to do with *The New Yorker* magazine and its coverage of that conflict.

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

**Rabe:** I haven't been nearly as prolific as many other historians. I am still working on my first book, which I mentioned above. I had a sabbatical leave last fall semester and I think I am almost ready to send out a book proposal. I have published a few articles and book chapters about different topics and a whole lot of book reviews, which I really enjoy writing. I haven't written many lately because I have been a review editor, but I look forward to getting back to it.

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

**Rabe:** I think my favorite published article is my first one, which appeared in *American Journalism*. It was about NBC's efforts to set up a shortwave radio network in Central and South America before World War II. The NBC corporate records are at the Wisconsin Historical Society and it was very enjoyable to hunt through that extensive collection to put together my article. This is also when I came to realize the tremendous value of old trade publications as historical sources. So just in terms of enjoying working on the project and feeling satisfaction with the final product, this is my favorite.

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

**Rabe:** As I said, I haven't published all that much, but I think I have contributed a lot to the field in other ways. I have been compiling an online bibliography of sources in mass communication history for around 20 years now. There is really nothing else like it, at least that I've ever encountered. I haven't counted lately, but there are more than 4,500 books, articles, dissertations, and other sources listed there, maybe nearly 5,000 now. I am always looking for additional citations and I try to update the site at least once a week. I've got a good seven or eight pages of new citations now that need to be added when I can get to them. It started out as a list of books, categorized by topic, from which my students were to select a title for a book review assignment. It just grew from there.

I mentioned book reviewing earlier. One aspect of my career that I really enjoyed was serving as the book review editor for the JHistory list.

## Historian Interview

I think I started doing that in 2015 and held the position until last summer. It was really enjoyable to scout out new books in our field and try to match them up with suitable reviewers. It was a great way for me to keep up with the new publications that were coming out and I met a lot of really great historians through the process of trying to solicit reviewers. I stepped down because I have a new role as a review editor and I felt that it would be a conflict of interest to have both positions.

What I hope will eventually become my biggest contribution to the field is the academic journal that I recently created and will edit, which is called the *Journal of 20th Century Media History*. We haven't put out the first issue yet, but I do hope that over time it grows into a respected publication that attracts high quality articles. There is no shortage of academic journals these days, but I did think that having another one that focuses specifically on media history was a worthy endeavor. It is taking longer than I expected to get it going, but we have a good editorial board and I'm sure it will take off. For the time being I am also the book review editor for the journal, which is why I left JHistory as I mentioned a moment ago.

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

**Rabe:** I have sometimes thought that I might have been happier in a history or American studies department, rather than a j-school. Teaching media history has been a relatively small part of my overall work load here at Marshall, whereas in a history program I would be able to dedicate more of my time to it. However, I do think training the next generation of journalists is an important task and I find it very rewarding. I certainly would not trade the experience I had at UW for anything.

**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.*

**Rabe:** I don't think I have a philosophy of history, but I do respect the basic principles of history that I learned during my years of training. Our scholarship should be rooted in archives and primary sources as much as possible, and we must be intellectually free to examine all aspects of the past. We should seek to tell broad and diverse stories that respect the full range of what happened in the past, regardless of whether that makes some people unhappy. We should do our best to ensure that people are historically literate so they can better understand where we come from and how to make decisions based on sound historical context.

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

**Rabe:** I am very excited about the quality of history being done today. As I've mentioned, I try to keep up to date with the new books and articles and add them to my bibliography. Needless to say, I don't have time to read everything. What I do read, though, is usually very good. And I am very happy to see scholars outside of mass communication programs writing JMC history. I am also glad that media historians seem to be re-evaluating the place of race in the history of American journalism. Kathy Roberts Forde and Sid Bedingfield's recent collection *Journalism and Jim Crow* is just one example. I know my approach to teaching the survey history class has been informed by this work and the class is stronger for it. I do occasionally come across a publication that

seems pretty thin, especially in the sense of not being grounded in primary sources or not appearing to be aware of important earlier scholarship. Not everyone who writes about history has the same level of training and experience.

***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?*

**Rabe:** I find that most people in JMC education value history in the abstract, but it is sometimes hard to convince them of its value when discussing which courses should be required, rather than electives, or getting a history class on the schedule often enough to ensure any interested student has an opportunity to take it. I do my best to advocate for it when the circumstances arise and at Marshall I have had the chance to offer my courses pretty much as often as I wish to.

I'm sure some history department historians look down at scholars working in different fields. It is the case that many JMC historians have a different kind of graduate training coming up through mass communications programs and, as I mentioned before, not all of the work that gets published is amazing. I do think media history as an area of study is respected in the wider field. As I said, some excellent media history is coming from scholars in history and American studies programs. I guess we just need to make sure that we are doing the best work that we can and get it out where scholars in other areas will see it. I sometimes like to present my work at conferences are not JMC history specific. I usually find that there is an interest in it.

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

*future?*

**Rabe:** I think the whole field of academic history is facing serious challenges. Many universities are focusing more and more on STEM or business programs; and history, and the other humanities, struggle to get the support they need. It seems like enrollment in history departments has been declining for quite a while. It doesn't help that elected officials in some states are openly hostile to the work of historians and real history education. I don't know how it is other places, but right now at Marshall our j-school enrollment has declined across all majors, which makes it hard to argue that we need to offer more JMC history classes. There is also less funding available for travel. Good history requires a lot of trips to libraries and archives and when there is less funding there will be less good history. I'm sure we have all paid out of pocket for research trips, but you can't (or don't want to) do that all the time.

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# Book Award Interview

Geoffrey R. Stone ©



Stone

**G**eoffrey R. Stone won the Goldsmith Prize from Harvard University in 2006 for the year's best book for *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime: From The Sedition Act of 1798 to the War on Terrorism*. He is the Edward H. Levi Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago, where he joined the faculty in 1973. He previously served as provost of the university and dean of its law school. Before going into teaching, he had served as a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, Jr.

He has written numerous books on constitutional law and is an editor of a 25-volume series of books on the subject titled *Inalienable Rights* (Oxford University Press).

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

**Stone:** As the title suggests, *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime* explores the history of government efforts to suppress free speech — especially speech critical of the government in times of war. It begins with the Sedition Act of 1798 and then explores the Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War. It ends with some preliminary thoughts about the War on Terrorism. As someone

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who has devoted most of his scholarly work to the First Amendment and to the freedoms of speech and of the press, it has long been evident to me that it has been in times of war that our nation's commitment to the principles of the First Amendment has most been threatened. What this book does is to explore this phenomenon and show how in such eras we have almost always failed to preserve our nation's most fundamental values. But what it also explores is how we — and the Supreme Court in particular — have over time learned from its mistakes.

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

**Stone:** As I often tell my students, it is always important to be open to the unexpected. In the fall of 2001, shortly after the September 11 attack on the United States, I decided it was time for me to step down from my position as Provost of The University of Chicago. By that time, I had served a total of fifteen years as Dean of the Law School and Provost. It was time, I decided, for me to end my time as an administrator and to return full-time to the Law School faculty. Shortly after I made that announcement, a reporter for the University's newspaper made an appointment to interview me about my time as Provost. Near the end of the interview, he said, "You must be eager to go back to being a full-time teacher and scholar. You must have lots of ideas you now want to write about. Can you tell me what most excites you?" Frankly, the last thing on my mind during my fifteen years as an administrator was what major scholarly projects I would now pursue. But I couldn't very well tell the reporter that I had no ideas at all for major scholarly projects. That would be humiliating. So, because this was soon after 9/11 and because my scholarly career had been focused mainly on the First Amendment, I responded off the top of my head: "I plan to

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write a book on free speech in wartime.” He was excited by my answer, and, with a sigh of relief, I was glad I had dodged a bullet.

But it was not so simple. After the article appeared, I received e-mails from more than a hundred faculty members from across the University telling me that this was a critical and exciting subject for a new book, especially in the moment. This made me very nervous because I really had no idea if I was even remotely up to the task. Several weeks later, when I returned to the Law School, I puzzled over my proposed project and soon concluded that I had no idea what to say about it. “Never mind,” I thought to myself. I have to give myself more time.” A few days later I joined my Law School colleagues at our three-times per week faculty “roundtable” — a lunch we have at literally a roundtable at which we discuss whatever ideas anyone wants to consider. To my utter dismay, one of my colleagues said, “So, Geof, you’re going to write a book about free speech in wartime. Tell us about it.” I was mortified. But rather than confess that I had no ideas on the subject, I bluffed. It turned into a lively and spirited discussion. When I left the roundtable, I was excited to write the book — and so I did.

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

**Stone:** There was, of course, a great deal of historical literature about each of the specific periods in American history that I addressed in my book, but almost all of these works focused on specific moments in history rather than pulling all of the history together in a single work. Of course, the historical literature was profoundly important to my ability to write *Perilous Times* because I am a constitutional law scholar rather than a historian, but none of the individual works of history captured

the full scope of what I was attempting. Moreover, because much of the book is about the complex evolution of constitutional law from the founding until 9/11, none of the history books I was aware of attempted to address both the historical and constitutional issues together. My primary contribution, I think, was to bring these perspectives together in a single volume.

***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?*

**Stone:** The research was daunting. Most of my historical research was focused on books and scholarly articles that had already been published. But each chapter of the book focused on a very different historical era, and so I had to rely on a large number of secondary sources for each of these moments in American history. I also relied heavily on legal sources, including scholarly publications, Supreme Court opinions, sources on Supreme Court history, sources on the lives and experiences of individual justices, and the Congressional Record for information about the debates over the many and varied laws that were enacted — or not enacted — during each of these periods in American history.

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

**Stone:** I suppose the sources I would most like to have examined — to the extent they exist — would be records of the behind-the-scenes deliberations of the many Supreme Court justices involved in these decisions. Some of that information exists, but it is limited. It would be

## Book Award Interview

fascinating to have had a fuller sense of the negotiations and compromises that went on among the justices as they reached these profoundly important decisions. As I noted earlier, one central theme of the book is the evolution of First Amendment jurisprudence over time as the justices learned from their past mistakes — by giving too little protection to free speech in wartime — and how they gradually changed their jurisprudence to give ever more protection to the First Amendment rights of the American people. Some of this is evident in their opinions, but it's often quite difficult to discover the private debates among the justices themselves. There are, of course, excellent historical and legal works addressing these questions, but they are limited to the information available to them.

***Historiography:** Based on your research for the book, what would you advise other historians in the field of free expression or mass communication generally about working with sources?*

**Stone:** This is pretty obvious, but it's very important to explore sources other than those in your own field. By focusing on historical sources in writing *Perilous Times* I learned a lot about the legal and constitutional issues that I would otherwise have missed. In other words, even if the book was meant to be focused specifically on the legal and constitutional issues, I would have missed a lot of significant information if I had focused only on the law and hadn't also explored the history scholarship. With that experience in mind, I would encourage historians writing about free expression or mass communication to explore the legal, constitutional, and technological issues that can add greater perspective to the historical focus. The other advice I would give is to give lots of workshops and talks while working on a book. Even experts can learn a

lot by hearing the perspectives of others — even in their own field. In writing *Perilous Times*, for example, I gave more than a dozen workshops and talks at universities and other organizations around the nation, and I gained a lot from getting that feedback.

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

**Stone:** As should be evident from all I've said above, because *Perilous Times* was truly interdisciplinary, the greatest challenge I faced was learning the history that went well beyond the legal and constitutional history with which I was familiar. To do that, I gained a lot from colleagues from throughout the University and beyond who were generous enough to educate me about potential sources I might not otherwise have found. This enabled me to write a much more complex and enriching book than would otherwise have been possible for me.

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

**Stone:** Because I'm not a historian I can't address that question specifically in the context of historical research, but the same question is certainly applicable to those doing legal and constitutional research. In my world, there is a great difference between writing scholarship and writing a legal brief. The latter is expressly focused on persuading judges and justices to reach what one regards as the "right" decision. The best legal scholarship tries not to do that, but instead to present the many sides of an issue in a fair and objective manner and then to offer one's own con-

clusions about the best “answer.” But, of course, the world of the law is much more advocacy-focused than the world of history, and maintaining a true neutrality in legal scholarship is probably much more difficult than it is in historical scholarship. But the best way to be as neutral as possible is, of course, to share one’s thoughts and manuscripts with others to get their feedback on whether one’s work is in fact neutral or not.

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

**Stone:** To be candid, *Perilous Times* offers new insights to pretty much all readers because it covers a series of complex constitutional and historical issues that haven’t usually been brought together in this manner. Except perhaps for a very small number of scholars, pretty much anyone reading *Perilous Times* will gain a broad range of insights about constitutional law, freedom of speech, the challenges of maintaining fundamental values even in wartime, and many facets of history relating to those conflicts. Most fundamentally, I suppose, *Perilous Times* offers important insights about challenges to democracy, the essential role of courts in protecting freedom in times of crisis, the failure of our judiciary to figure out how to do this when in the midst of national controversy, and the ability of judges (and others) to learn from the mistakes of the past.

***Q:*** *What findings most surprised you?*

**Stone:** I suppose for me it was coming to understand many of the strong disagreements within the Executive Branch, and especially within the White House, in these many eras of American history. In other words, even among individuals in the same political party there were

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sharp conflicts within the government about when to suppress speech, what should be the limits on the authority of the FBI, and how to “justify” what even they knew to be highly questionable decisions and policies. The divisions within the Supreme Court and Congress are generally pretty accessible to the public, but the often strong disagreements within the White House are much less visible to the public. Historical research can be especially valuable in gaining and making public such information over time.

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# How Media History Matters

## The Media and Community Cohesiveness

By Bernell E. Tripp ©



Tripp

NOTE: This is the fourth article in our series “How Media History Matters,” dealing with the significance that the news media have had in American history. We think the series will appeal especially to historians who believe historical claims need evidence to support them.

It will become clear as we publish other essays that many ways exist to justify JMC history. One monolithic explanation won't work. Bernell Tripp's essay focuses on the media's role in helping resolve differences with-

in society.

American society operates on the premise of freedom of choice and the right to be a freethinker. Thus, on a day-to-day basis the public is confronted with numerous opinions and positions on a variety of issues and topics. The majority of these tend to have some type of impact, directly or indirectly, on the lives of the members of society. Each topic or issue encompasses a multitude of aspects or concepts that can range from simple to complex. It becomes the mass media's responsi-

*Bernell Tripp is an associate professor of journalism at the University of Florida. She is the author of *Origins of the Black Press* and several book chapters on the Black press' development. She received her Ph.D., with a specialization in media history, from the University of Alabama.*

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bility to collect information about the topics from differing perspectives in order to present the audience with a more complete picture of the situation.

This role increases in difficulty the more the perspectives differ from one another. Major differences between factions represented in an issue could lead to confusion and to a splintering of groups or communities who need to remain together in order to survive. The media's role becomes increasingly significant as society searches for a solution or a plan of action that is representative of the community as a whole.

In each case the media examine the issue within the appropriate social context before drawing a conclusion and promoting a specific position. Input from changing factors in the community, in addition to knowledge about the particular social environment, allows mass media practitioners to form opinions about what strategy or tactic would best serve the needs of the public. The media assume the task of a leader who directs the public away from an assortment of alternatives, some particularly dangerous or detrimental, and onto a single directive or objective.

This guidance process was most noticeable in previous years when the country was smaller and constantly striving to advance. Two hundred years ago, the readership of a few major newspapers was conceivably the entire country. Since the United States today comprises vast numbers of communities or subcommunities within a much larger society, the role of the mass media as the community leader and the developer of community cohesiveness is most recognizable in the smaller, regional mass media outlets. The small-town television station, grass-roots radio station, or community dailies or weeklies emphasize issues they perceive as most important to members of their audience within a radius of only a few hundred miles. In these smaller mass media outlets, audience members respond to the well-known faces, voices, or bylines

## The Media and Community Cohesiveness

of the journalists, who assume the responsibility of community leaders — determining what the public needs to know, when they need to know it, and from whom do they need to hear it, based on the journalists' perceptions of any given situation.

In short, the media serve to bring the members of their audiences together to form a united position for or against certain aspects of a topic, event, issue, or series of related issues — taking a stand against weakening a pre-existing or growing support network, while attempting to create one pervasive way of thinking. By becoming an integral part of the constantly shifting American society, the mass media have learned how to ascertain the major predilections of the audience members and have developed the ability to epitomize their political, cultural, and social attitudes and values.

While this significant role is a continual one, it is most evident at the times when the mass media audience is divided over a particular issue or concern. The media help to shape and mold societal attitudes and opinions based on present-day traits, objectives, and values. These influences are applicable to all types of mass media.

### THE BLACK PRESS AND THE COLONIZATION ISSUE

However, this idea was particularly true in the 19th-century Black media, at a time when the race was fragmented by a variety of circumstances and desperately needed an identity and a sense of group-belonging. Both before and after the Civil War, Blacks were faced with a major decision about the future development and well-being of the race. By the middle of the century, the colonization/emigration issue threatened to destroy the sense of brotherhood that free Black leaders had worked so long to construct. Ironically, those same leaders who op-

posed colonization and immigration before the Civil War eagerly supported a later exodus to the West as Blacks attempted to escape the difficulties and unfair treatment during Reconstruction in the South.

More than four decades before the Civil War, Blacks were torn over whether to remain and learn to assimilate in a country that continuously denied them equal treatment, to settle in the hostile and unknown regions of Africa with the hopes of starting a new and independent Black-controlled society, or to seek a settlement area less hostile than Africa, where they had a broader range of freedoms than the United States offered. Colonization represented an opportunity to start a new life as the masters of their own destiny in the country of their ancestors or as equal members of a welcoming society — a chance to leave another country behind that still refused to accept Blacks as full citizens. For anti-colonizationists, remaining in the United States would provide an opportunity for Blacks to carve a niche for themselves in an existing society and to claim the fruits of their past labors in the only place they knew as home. They also saw it as their duty to oppose this attempt to deny Blacks a chance at equality.

In view of the varying perspectives, it became clear that Blacks in the community needed some method of determining which stance approximated their own beliefs. The task fell to the Black writers and editors to serve as an instrument of social interpretation and to take a stand that would reunite the community against the common cause of slavery.

By the early 1800s, the ramifications of the slavery system were being discussed openly among both Blacks and whites. One of the recurring questions in most of the discussions was: what would become of American society if all the slaves were emancipated? In 1810 there were 1,378,000 Blacks in America. Of that number, only 186,466 were free

Blacks. Many felt that the United States was not quite ready to deal with a large, and decidedly different, social class. Too often the nation's leaders had heard the horror stories of what would happen if former slaves were allowed to "run amuck" without white supervision. Virginia Assembly representative Charles Fenton Mercer introduced a series of resolutions in 1816 that would ask the federal government to establish a settlement in the North Pacific where free Blacks and those to be emancipated in the future could be sent. He explained to the Assembly that he and other slave holders were unable to manumit their slaves "by the melancholy conviction that they [the slave holders] cannot yield to the suggestions of humanity without manifest injury to their country."<sup>1</sup>

Mercer was one of many who saw colonization as the logical solution to the moral and social dilemmas associated with widespread emancipation. This flurry of discussion and support eventually led to the creation of the American Colonization Society, originally called the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States.<sup>2</sup> The society's objective was contained in the second article of its constitution, which read:

Art. II. The object to which its attention is to be exclusively directed, is to promote and execute a plan for colonizing (with their consent) the free people of color residing in our country, in Africa, or such other place as Congress shall deem most expedient. And the Society shall act to effect this object in cooperation with the general government and such of the States as may adopt regulations on the subject.<sup>3</sup>

*Freedom's Journal and Opposition to Colonization*

Throughout the North, free Blacks joined together to oppose the colonization idea. The society was given notice that this attempt at “social engineering” would not be tolerated.<sup>4</sup> Newspaper correspondent and author David Walker expressed the sentiments of many of his peers when he wrote, “America is more our country than it is the whites — we have enriched it with our blood and tears ... and will they drive us from our property and homes, which we have earned with our blood?”<sup>5</sup>

These anti-colonizationists opposed any movement of Blacks outside the United States. They reasoned that this movement was designed to weaken the cohesiveness being formed among Blacks for the abolition of slavery. For many it was a “vicious scheme designed to perpetuate slavery by removing the bondsman’s natural ally from America.”<sup>6</sup>

Colonization eventually became an anathema to the antislavery movement. Free Blacks sent to Africa were dying at an alarming rate. Of the 4,571 settlers sent to the Liberia colony during the first twenty-three years, only 2,388 were still living in 1843.<sup>7</sup> Most Blacks, particularly journalists, considered the Society to be a deportation organization “whose members believed both in Black inferiority and in the necessity of ridding the country of its free Black population in order to preserve the institution of slavery.”<sup>8</sup> Two months after the March 16, 1827, appearance of *Freedom's Journal*, editors Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm began an anti-colonization campaign with a letter written by Black abolitionist James Forten, under the pseudonym “A Man of Colour.” Forten criticized Congressman Henry Clay for supporting colonization and refuted previous statements by Clay that Blacks were unanimously in favor of colonization plans.

Mr. Clay's proposal is to remove annually six thousand of those persons, and thus he says keep down their alarming increase; this he avows to be the grand object of the Society. The Baltimore Memorial, to which he adverts, was not the unanimous sentiments of the colored people; for I am credibly informed, that at least two-thirds of the meeting dissented from it. At a meeting lately held in Philadelphia, of the most respectable people of color, consisting of nearly three thousand persons, to take this subject into consideration, there was not one who was in favor of leaving this country; but they were all opposed to colonization in any foreign country whatever.<sup>9</sup>

When denounced by white colonizationists for publishing Forten's letter, Cornish defended the right of his paper to address the issue by reiterating past arguments against colonization — that it did not aid in eliminating the slave trade; that the notion of Blacks being better suited to the African climate was false; and that the philosophy created by colonizationists that Blacks would never achieve full equality in the United States was also untrue. As for his own activities in using *Freedom's Journal* to oppose the Colonization Society, he added:

That we have made any effort, through this Journal, to prejudice the minds of our brethren against the Society, or render them suspicious of its motives, we positively deny: but that we are opposed to colonization in PRINCIPLE, OBJECT, AND TENDENCY, we as unhesitatingly affirm. We have never desired to conceal our sentiments. In soliciting patronage to our Journal among Colonizationists, we expressed ourselves to many of them as opposed to colonization in any shape, unless it be merely considered as a mis-

sionary establishment; yet, if we were wrong our minds were open to conviction, and we wished to see the subject discussed; they were generally pleased with the idea...<sup>10</sup>

The *Freedom's Journal* editors also welcomed the contributions of others willing to discuss the topic of colonization. Bishop Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, chastised colonizationists for attempting to send “neither civilized nor christianized” Blacks to a hostile country and for sending free educated ones away, while requiring those who chose to stay in America to exist as uneducated slaves.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, William Watkins, one of the Black abolitionists credited with helping to convert William Lloyd Garrison to the anti-colonizationist cause, wrote to the paper, criticizing the Society for the hypocritical attitude of its members. He argued that many of the “most distinguished of that society” were slave holders who could more easily display their benevolence by alleviating the degraded condition of those “directly under their observation.” He also questioned why, if colonizationists were eager to help Blacks establish a separate and equal community, did they require the colony to be so far away from the United States? He asked,

[W]hy this strong aversion to being united to us, even by soil and climate? Why this desire to be so remotely alienated from us? Is it to extend to us in the hour of danger, the friendly hand of assistance? Or rather is it not to get effectually and for ever rid of that heterogeneous, or supposed ‘dangerous element in the general mass of free Blacks,’ who, it is said, ‘are a greater nuisance than the slaves themselves?’<sup>12</sup>



## The Media and Community Cohesiveness

The effectiveness of the persuasive powers of the Black media became evident when Russwurm assumed sole editorship of the *Freedom's Journal*, the first and most influential Black newspaper of the period and one of the leaders of the anti-colonization movement by the end of the 1820s. Russwurm eventually altered his position on colonization, a change considered to be one of the reasons for Cornish's resignation as senior editor. Russwurm's obvious change of view elicited irate responses from his readers. He explained:

The change in our views on colonization seems to be a 'seven days wonder' to many of our readers. But why, we do not perceive; like others, we are mortal; like them, we are liable to changes, and like them, we should be allowed the privilege of expressing our sentiments, a boon which is not denied to the most abject being in this country. We are sorry there are those who are unwilling to grant us this liberty, but as *Freedom's Journal* has ever been an independent paper, we shall continue to express ourselves on colonization, and on all other subjects which we may deem proper.... Our columns have ever been open to a free discussion of this important subject and they are still open; but is it reasonable to suppose that we should grant freedom of enquiry to others and deprive ourselves of it? We live in a day of general illumination, and it is our happiness to be among those, who believe in the feasibility of establishing a flourishing colony in Africa, which in progress of time, may be the means of disseminating civilization and Christianity throughout the whole of that vast continent.<sup>13</sup>

Russwurm's change in attitude more than likely precipitated the end of his reign as *Freedom's Journal* editor and his simultaneous deci-

sion to leave for Africa with the help of the Society. Cornish returned to re-establish the paper under the name of *The Rights of All* and attempted to clear up any confusion that Russwurm's apostasy had caused among the Black community. Cornish reiterated his opposition to colonization, assuring his readers of his personal knowledge that "the views of the intelligent of my brethren generally, are the same as ever in respect to colonisation."<sup>14</sup>

The constant attacks on colonization eventually led to a general condemnation of all forms of emigration. Cornish's anti-colonization position, reinforced in his later newspaper the *Colored American*, became the dominant view of black Americans by the 1830s. Some, none in any position of stature, continued to migrate to Africa, but in small numbers. Numbers for society-sponsored emigrants to Africa dropped to forty-seven in 1839, down from 109 the year before and 138 two years earlier.<sup>15</sup> The disinterest was probably due to a variety of factors: anti-colonization hostility, the failure of the Haitian emigration movement, and the shift from the movement for gradual emancipation to immediate emancipation among antislavery advocates. Also, the proliferation of antislavery societies and more Black-owned newspapers, along with the onset of Black national conventions, allowed the race to have a greater voice in its own future.

The society's managers were well aware that the African colonization movement evoked hostility among most free Blacks. Reports of apathy flooded into the society's Washington headquarters. In New York City they complained that the Liberian authorities "withheld trading privileges from colonists, denied settlers a voice in the government, and refused return passage to dissatisfied emigrants."<sup>16</sup>

### *The Emigrationist Movement*

The colonization issue did not emerge again until the 1850s when the United States moved closer to civil war. Led by Martin R. Delany, a Pittsburgh physician and former editor of *The Mystery*, the emigrationist movement of the 1850s and 1860s sought unity and racial solidarity outside the United States in order to achieve full equality. The major premise of the group was the idea that a prosperous and independent community of free Blacks would do more to facilitate emancipation than any abolitionist speech. Some Blacks held the belief that slavery would never end until the race demonstrated to the world that they were capable of managing their own affairs. This could only be accomplished outside the constrictions of U.S. authority. For these purposes, Africa would not be suitable, but Canada, Central America, and the Caribbean were all strong prospects.<sup>17</sup>

Delany, a former co-editor of Frederick Douglass' *North Star*, maintained that Blacks could no longer depend on others to solve their problems of racial discrimination or slavery. He believed that Blacks could prosper only if they attempted to better themselves in such places as Canada or Central and South America where resources were plentiful and they could contribute to the commercial productivity of the region.<sup>18</sup> In August 1854, Delany issued the "Call for a National Emigration Convention" to be held the next year to consider plans for emigrating to countries in the Western Hemisphere. His announcement elicited twenty-six signers, including eighteen of Delany's Pennsylvania associates.<sup>19</sup>

One of the supporters of the emigration convention was James M. Whitfield, a Black poet whose lengthy letters to *Frederick Douglass' Paper* in 1853 sparked an extended debate over Delany's emigration

movement. While Whitfield espoused the benefits of a nation where Blacks could elevate themselves and eventually their enslaved brethren, Douglass' associate editor, William J. Watkins, depicted emigration as capitulation to the white racists who saw Blacks as outsiders who could never become a part of American society.

As the most influential Black journalist of the period, Douglass played a vital role in determining the type of support the emigrationist movement would receive. However, almost all of the items he printed — meeting reports, correspondence, convention news — condemned the movement. One Pittsburgh correspondent doubted whether “any considerable number of our Pittsburgh people will subscribe to this movement.”<sup>20</sup> David Jenkins, editor of the *Palladium of Liberty* in Columbus, Ohio, directed opposition against all emigration movements. He also urged Cleveland Blacks not to allow the emigration convention to be held in the city as scheduled. He added, “Let us, if possible, keep our State from this great curse and pollution.” Douglass also reported on a statewide convention of Illinois Blacks who perceived the emigration move as a “spirit of disunion which, if encouraged, will prove fatal to our hopes and aspirations as a people in this country.”<sup>21</sup>

The emigration movement also received an unexpected blow from the Black community in Canada West. Aware that Delany favored emigration to Central and South America over Canada, editors at the *Provincial Freeman* questioned the motives and intentions of the nationalist-emigrationists. The *Freeman* also took the position that support of black nationalism would negate Canadian Blacks' present allegiance to Great Britain in favor of a separate nation. Instead, the paper urged Blacks to come to Canada to be a part of the “Colored British nation” that “knows no one color above another, but being composed of all colors ... is evidently a *colored* nation.”<sup>22</sup> In one attack on the idea of a

colony in Central or South America, the editors queried:

What will you do ... when surrounded by big spiders, lizards, snakes, centipedes, scorpions and all manner of creeping and biting and things? Do you want to be sun-struck? Do you court yellow fever and laziness, haughty employers, and contemptible black prejudice? If you do, go in peace.<sup>23</sup>

This type of disagreement among emigrationist supporters helped to weaken the influence of the movement. Delany eventually won over *Freeman* editor Mary Ann Shadd and her brother Isaac D. Shadd after modifying his previous opinion on Black emigration to Canada. However, despite the conversion of the Shadds, Delany's movement continued to lose ground as its members pursued diverse interests. James Theodore Holly, an Episcopal minister, implemented an exodus to the already established Black nation of Haiti with the dual purpose of strengthening the existing nationality and promoting the Episcopalian religion. The Reverend Henry Highland Garnet, a militant abolitionist, supported the move to Haiti in a letter to the *Weekly Anglo-African*, creating a debate with James McCune Smith, a prominent Black doctor in New York City and one of the country's leading intellectuals. Smith saw emigration to Haiti as more proof to confirm the theory that Blacks were too inferior to thrive on an equal basis with whites in a white-dominated country. His response to Garnet's endorsement of Haiti concluded:

Your duty to our people is to tell them to aim higher. In advising them to go to Hayti, you direct them to sink lower. You and those with whom you are immediately identified — nay the most if not

all of our people in the free States — believe themselves of equal force and ability with the whites, come whence they may. We affirm by our lives and conduct that if degraded, it is not by our innate inferiority but by the active oppression of those who outnumber us.<sup>24</sup>

Garnet's reply questioned Smith's contributions to the improvement of the lifestyles of Black youth and also focused on his lack of patronage of his race's labor. He wrote:

You pass by the black tailor, mantua-maker, milliner, and shoemaker, and carpenter, and employ white people who curse you to your teeth. Why, your own party will not even employ a black doctor as a general thing.... There is one colored tradesman whom you patronize, that is the black 'barber' for no one else will shave you!<sup>25</sup>

However, it was not Smith's remarks, but the reports of sickness, death, and poor living conditions that provided anti-emigrationists with ample evidence against the Haiti plan, and also influenced the reaction of former emigration allies. The *Weekly Anglo-African* argued that Blacks should not migrate to a nation where already rich soil was being further enriched by the bodies of the dying emigrants or where religion was controlled by the white Pope. In Canada the worst abuse came from Mary Ann Shadd Cary, who denounced the Haitian movement for reviving the previously discredited ideas of the African colonization movement, retaining emigration agents who stifled public disagreement with their views, and proving to be a death trap for Blacks from North America.

Because of the Christian commitment to the move, Delany could

not join Holly and Garnet in the Haiti venture. He believed that “excessive religiosity weakened the capacity of Blacks to labor for their own interests.”<sup>26</sup> Therefore, in an effort to rebuild the movement and rejoin his former allies, Delany made preparations for an emigration project to Africa, conducting his own exploratory visit to the African continent.<sup>27</sup> Despite returning to Canada and locating potential emigrants, Delany failed to achieve a community consensus supporting his efforts.<sup>28</sup> From 1861 to 1864, only 169 society-sponsored emigrants traveled to Africa.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, the outbreak of the Civil War in the United States diverted attention away from the issue of emigration. As the war progressed, emigration became less important, and the focus of concern shifted from outside the United States to the plight of the slaves in the South. Not until after the war did emigration re-emerge as an alternative way of life for Blacks. This time the concern centered on settlement within the United States and further West. Again, it was time for the Black media to take a stand, and this time they endorsed migration.

### *The Black Movement to the American West*

Reconstruction in the South proved to be a disappointment to the recently emancipated Blacks. Promises of equality were slow to be implemented or never materialized at all. Meanwhile, in some Southern states, passage of Black Codes restricted the race’s progress almost to the point of continuing the institution of slavery. Black leaders soon recognized that an effective way to combat racism and to build successful communities without prejudice and oppression was through westward migration within the country. An editorial in the *New National Era* of December 12, 1872, proclaimed:

Statesmen and friends of the latter races urge emigration to the fertile fields of the West, where cheap lands and good climate await the earnest toil of enterprising laborers to return wealth aplenty. We say to the colored people of the South, though you may be able to obtain employment at home, the time seems to be far distant when you can become owners of the soil, and consequently independent of the will of land-owners. Until you are independent of those who own the land and who can dictate the terms upon which you will be employed, you will be but little better than slaves.<sup>30</sup>

Life in the South ceased to appeal to Blacks. Secret organizations denied them access to the political process. Republicans found it difficult to conduct governmental activities because of interference from white Southern returnees from the war. Lynchings were a common occurrence. Voting rights were violated by moving voting sites without notifying Blacks, or by establishing poll tax requirements and other legal barriers to Black suffrage. Those who had worked in agriculture all their lives could not buy their own land, but were forced to work as tenant farmers or sharecroppers.<sup>31</sup>

One newspaper placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of the owners. The editorial read, “[N]ot the land agents, not the attractions for a colder though more invigorating climate, but in the action of the planters themselves must the causes for the exodus be found.”<sup>32</sup> The return of ex-Confederate officials to power, rumors of rich opportunities in other places, and unfair and cruel treatment all stimulated a stampede out of the South and into the West.<sup>33</sup> Africa never became a viable solution at this point. In 1879 only ninety-one Blacks moved to Africa under the colonization society’s protection. Ten years later the number had dwindled to sixty.<sup>34</sup> By comparison, the West became the



## The Media and Community Cohesiveness

“promised land” for those who lived in fear of racist groups and unscrupulous Southern officials. The editor of the *American Citizen* in Topeka, Kansas, wrote:

Knowing as we do the brutality of southern bulldozers, the depravity of the midnight assassin, and the ballot box thief, the heartlessness and cruelty of the southern planter and taskmaster, we do not wonder that the Negroes are up in arms to leave the seemingly justice-forgotten and God-forsaken section of the country; but [we do wonder] why they should flee from one den of ravenous and beastly thieves to seek refuge in meshes of another.... Come West, friends, come west, and grow up in God’s country.<sup>35</sup>

Thousands of Blacks left Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana, heading for land in the North and the West. Henry Adams of Louisiana and Benjamin “Old Pap” Singleton of Tennessee assumed leadership of the move to Kansas in 1879. Adams claimed to have organized 98,000 Blacks for the exodus, while Singleton distributed a circular on “The Advantage of Living in a Free State,” causing several thousand to leave. Between 1875 and 1880, Singleton settled 7,432 “exodusters,” according to railroad and steamboat officials.<sup>36</sup> An article written by Will M. Clemens of Jacksonville, Florida, cited more than 3,000 emigrants from North Carolina alone by 1887.<sup>37</sup>

One Baltimore newspaper identified westward emigration as the only viable solution to end the harsh treatment inflicted by whites on Southern Blacks. It said:

For colored men to stay in the rebel-ridden South and be treated like brutes is a disgrace to themselves and to the race to which they

belong. The only way then that lies open to our people is to leave the South and come to the West. While we don't favor the colony idea very much, believing that the best course is to get as near other people as you can, yet, we would prefer that to being cheated and abused by the whites. When the South begins to lose her laborers in great numbers, then she will begin to see the folly of her course towards them, and her own necessities will force her to change her policies.<sup>38</sup>

Although conditions were hard for the settlers in Kansas, Black editors continued to promote the emigration plan to Blacks in the South. They pointed out the crude living arrangements as merely a short-term inconvenience that would eventually lead to better circumstances. One wrote:

Many good people in the East have probably heard of a "Kansas dugout" and have thought of it as a sort of human habitation peculiar to partial civilization and frontier barbarity. This is by no means a fair conclusion. "Dugouts" are not simply holes in the ground. They are generally dug into a side hill.... Though comparatively few in number at the present time, they are still foremost among the best devices for building a fortune from the ground up.<sup>39</sup>

As Kansas reached the saturation point with emigrants, the Black media began to encourage Blacks to consider a move to the Oklahoma Territory. They urged "every colored man who wants 160 acres of land [to] get ready to occupy some of the best lands in Oklahoma." If this land should be opened up, "there is no reason why at least 100,000 colored men and women should not settle on 160 acres of land each and

## The Media and Community Cohesiveness

thus establish themselves so firmly in that territory that they will be able to hold their own from the start.”<sup>40</sup>

Kansas and Oklahoma were not the only areas that attracted Black settlers. The Dakota Territory received several settlers from Chicago, who took over “several thousand acres of land at Villiard, the County seat of McHenry County.”<sup>41</sup> Likewise, emigration to the Indian Territory presented the opportunity to obtain land and to exercise self-determination. One editor concluded:

In the Indian Territory, which lies south of the state of Kansas, there is situated a fertile tract of land, almost entirely occupied by the Cherokee Indians and Negroes. The latter were slaves of the Indians before the war and have lived with them ever since the emancipation. They are believed to be entitled to a considerable portion of the land in the Indian Territory, and application has been made to the government for an investigation and decision upon their claims.... [I]f the claims of the colored people to some of the land should be allowed, a vast field would be opened for them to become producers of wealth. Those who have struggled on in the various States of the South, unable to do more than make a bare living, owing to the better part of their earnings going to the storekeeper, would find an opportunity to settle and make homes for themselves.<sup>42</sup>

By the fall of 1889, colonization fever had struck among the Black population, and several organizations had made plans to move Blacks farther southwest into Mexico.<sup>43</sup> Colonization continued through the turn of the century, causing a drain on the labor supply in the South and subsequent positive changes in the way those Blacks who remained

were being treated. As early as the summer of 1889, Blacks were being courted by officials in the Mississippi delta with offers of more favorable conditions and more promising future prospects in the Delta.<sup>44</sup>

At the close of the century, the issue of colonization/emigration no longer threatened to further fragment an already divided society. The importance of the media was critical, since it provided a forum for the Black populace that allowed them to voice support for or opposition against a particular individual or plan of action.

## CONCLUSION

As depicted in the preceding evidence, community leaders, through the utilization of the mass media as a forum for voicing specific opinions, maintain the ability to propagate support for a particular concept, based on their perception of what the community wanted and needed. Input from the community and involvement in community activities provided them with clues as to what topics were of major concern to their audience.

With the constant threat of perpetual confusion or the danger of being misled, members of the mass media audience have always welcomed the guidance of a leader who is not afraid to speak out on their behalf and to help them determine what is right or wrong. The emergence of the highly motivated and outspoken mass media not only creates a platform for expression to bring together those of similar viewpoints, but also helps to shape the opinion of the uninformed.

The opinions expressed within the mass media articulate various alternatives for survival within the American social structure. In each case, they examine the social implications of the plan of action before rendering a judgment on the pros and cons of each alternative. Thus, a

decision is not necessarily made for members of the public, but the media allow them to view the situation in context and to make up their own minds based on the information.

As community leaders, the mass media have represented more than a choice of viewpoints in key social issues, but they have also epitomized political, social, and cultural thoughts of their audience, creating one dominant and pervasive way of thinking. As in the case of the Black media, this role was a necessity for societal survival. Without some type of community direction, Americans would have faced the threat of foundering in their own indecision. In each instance, the media assumed the role of social interpreter and leader, pulling together a divided society by determining what its overall wishes were. The obligation to serve the needs of the community dictates the issues and topics to be addressed in the media — the media as servant, chronicler, spokesperson. In another sense, the media serve to unite the members of its audience by providing them with common causes to support and by helping to create a set of personal and public standards, values, and modes of behavior for its audience — the media as leader, teacher, counselor.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Henry Noble Sherwood, “The Formation of the American Colonization Society,” *Journal of Negro History* 2: 3 (July 1917): 212-13.

<sup>2</sup>Tom W. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land: A History of Afro-American Settler Society in Nineteenth-Century Liberia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 6.

<sup>3</sup>William Jay, *Miscellaneous Writings on Slavery* (John P. Jewett & Co., 1853), 15.

<sup>4</sup>Louis R. Mehlinger, “The Attitude of the Free Negro Toward African Colonization,” *Journal of Negro History* 1: 3 (July 1916): 276-301.

<sup>5</sup>David Walker, *Walker’s Appeal, in Four Articles, Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (Boston: By the Author, 1830), 21.

<sup>6</sup>Shick, *Promised Land*, 7.

<sup>7</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, *U.S. Navy Department, Tables showing the Number of Emigrants and Recaptured Africans sent to the colony of Liberia by the Government of the*

*United States ... together with a Census of the Colony and a Report of its Commerce &c., September, 1843: Senate Document No. 150*, 28th Congress, 2d. Session, 1845.

<sup>8</sup>Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 54.

<sup>9</sup>*Freedom's Journal* (New York), 18 May 1827; Forten is identified as "A Man of Colour" in the *Colored American* (New York), 13 May 1837.

<sup>10</sup>*Freedom's Journal*, 8 June 1827.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 2 November 1827.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 6 July 1827.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 7 March 1829.

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<sup>15</sup>*Fifty-second Annual Report of the American Colonization Society, with Proceedings of the Annual Meeting and of the Board of Directors, January 19 and 20, 1869* (Washington, 1869).

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<sup>17</sup>E.U. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 21-23.

<sup>18</sup>Martin R. Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* (Philadelphia: By the author, 1852).

<sup>19</sup>*Arguments, Pro and Con, on the Call for a National Convention, to be Held in Cleveland, Ohio, August 24, 1854* (Detroit: George E. Pomeroy & Co., 1854), 7.

<sup>20</sup>*Frederick Douglass' Paper* (Rochester, N.Y.), 16 September 1853.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 23 October 1853; 31 March 1854; 30 September 1853.

<sup>22</sup>*Provincial Freeman* (Chatham, Canada), 15 April 1854.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 20 May 1854.

<sup>24</sup>*Weekly Anglo-African* (New York), 12 January 1861.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 19 January 1861.

<sup>26</sup>Miller, *Black Nationality*, 171.

<sup>27</sup>Martin R. Delany and Robert Campbell, *Search For a Place: Black Separatism and Africa, 1860* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1969). This version is a reprint of Delany's *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party* in 1859 and Campbell's *A Pilgrimage to My Motherland: An Account of a Journey among the Ebans and Yorubas of Central America in 1859-60*.

<sup>28</sup>*Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet*, 29 March 1861.

<sup>29</sup>ACS Annual Report (1869).

<sup>30</sup>*New National Era* (Washington, D.C.), 12 December 1872.

<sup>31</sup>John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 227-50.

<sup>32</sup>*People's Advocate* (Washington, D.C.), 19 April 1879.

<sup>33</sup>Franklin and Moss, *Slavery to Freedom*, 253.

<sup>34</sup>ACS Annual Report (1869).

<sup>35</sup>*American Citizen* (Topeka, Kansas), 22 March 1889.

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<sup>36</sup>*Colored Patriot*, 22 June 1882.

<sup>37</sup>*Freeman* (Indianapolis), 22 January 1887.

<sup>38</sup>*American Citizen*, 26 July 1878.

<sup>39</sup>*Kansas Herald*, 6 February 1880.

<sup>40</sup>*American Citizen*, 1 March 1888.

<sup>41</sup>*Cleveland Gazette*, 29 December 1883.

<sup>42</sup>*New York Globe*, 14 April 1883.

<sup>43</sup>*Plaindealer* (Detroit), 11 October 1889; 18 October 1889.

<sup>44</sup>*Freeman*, 24 August 1889.

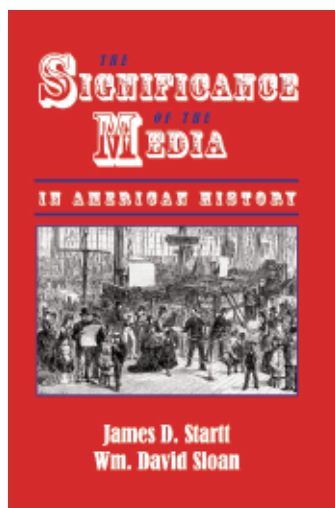
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# News & Notes

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

## Communication History List

The [Communication History List](#) disseminates announcements, calls for papers and participation, and other news related to media and communication history. The list is maintained by [Dave Park](#) (Lake Forest College) and [Jeff Pooley](#) (Muhlenberg College), and is affiliated with the [Communication History Division](#) of the [International Communication Association](#).

If you have an announcement you would like to share with the list, please write to [discussion@communicationhistory.org](mailto:discussion@communicationhistory.org). In your email, please include a “subject:” subject line and the body of your announcement, in plain text or [Markdown](#).

## Call for Submissions: *Journal of 20th Century Media History*

The *Journal of 20th Century Media History*, a new peer reviewed online academic journal, is soliciting original scholarly article manuscripts for its first issue. The journal is designed to be broadly interdisciplinary and address current scholarship across a wide range of subject areas. As the title suggests, the editors are looking to publish historical work about topics that, in the main, focus on people, events, ideas, and practices

from the 20th century. Article submissions that make use of innovative research techniques and methodologies are highly encouraged, as is research that draws attention to previously marginalized or under-represented groups or forms of media practice. The journal can be found at <https://mds.marshall.edu/j20thcenturymediahistory/>

[Journal of 20th Century Media History | Marshall University](#)

Possible subject areas for articles include:

- Journalism and news
- Broadcasting (entertainment or non-fiction programming)

Film

- Propaganda and public opinion
- Political communication
- Books, reading, and print culture
- Digital communication
- Media technologies
- Law and ethics
- Advertising and public relations
- Visual communication and visual culture studies
- Biographical studies

Article manuscripts should be submitted through the link on the left hand column of the journal website. Because the publication is entirely digital, it doesn't have a set word count or page limit. However, manuscripts should be carefully focused and written in a format commonly used in academic publishing. Submissions should not be previously published or under consideration with another journal, and authors should secure any necessary permissions prior to submitting the manuscript. Please use the current edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* as a guide to formatting and usage. Citations should take the form of endnotes.

The journal is edited by Dr. Robert Rabe (Marshall University, ([rabe@marshall.edu](mailto:rabe@marshall.edu)) and Dr. Cory Pillen (Fort Lewis College, ([cjpillen@fortlewis.edu](mailto:cjpillen@fortlewis.edu))). Questions about the journal or the submission process can be addressed to them. The journal will also publish reviews, and scholars interested in reviewing should contact the editors.

### **XVIII Congress of AsHisCom: Debate History, Communication and Memory**

September 14-15, 2023

Almada Negreiros College - ICNOVA Lisbon

The Association of Historians of Communication invites researchers to participate in the XVIII Congress of AsHiscom, which will take place on the 14th and 15th of September in Lisbon, organized by the Communication Institute of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

The main theme is Communication, History and Memory, and all works that contribute to debating the production and communication of collective memory in Ibero-American space and promoting the search and analysis of fair memory policies are welcome.

### ***Journal for the History of Knowledge:***

#### **Call for Special Issue Proposals 2025**

by Kevin Hoogeveen

The *Journal for the History of Knowledge* features an annual special issue, compiled by guest editors, which explores a theme central to the journal's scope. The special issues of previous years have been [Histories of Bureaucratic Knowledge](#) (2020), [Histories of Ignorance](#) (2021) and [Situated Nature](#) (2022)

We are accepting proposals for the 2025 Special Issue. Proposals should contain the following:

- A description of the proposed theme (1500-2000 words) highlighting its significance for the history of knowledge
- A table of contents (typically 8-12 articles of 8000 words)
- Abstracts of the articles
- Two-page CVs of the editors; short biographies of the contributors
- An outline of the production process up to manuscript submission. All manuscripts must be submitted to the journal by 1 May 2024.

Please send your proposal to: [jhokjournal@gmail.com](mailto:jhokjournal@gmail.com)

Proposal deadline: 1 May 2023

Notification of acceptance: by 30 June 2023

After submission, all manuscripts will go through a process of peer-review, author's revisions, and copy-editing. *JHoK* is a diamond Open Access journal, at no charge to the authors. The journal will be available in print (on demand) at Brepols Publishers.

Details of [the journal's scope](#) and a full list of [the editorial team and advisory editorial board](#) is available on the journal's website.

## **New Mexico Public Media Collection, Exhibit at the American Archive of Public Broadcasting**

by Michael Grasso

The American Archive of Public Broadcasting (AAPB) has released the [New Mexico Public Media \(NMPM\) Collection](#), which brings together more than 8,000 items from public media stations across the state, including full television and radio programs, as well as interviews and

footage documenting New Mexico's social, political, artistic and cultural history between 1963 and 2020. As part of this innovative statewide collaboration, five stations, coordinated by New Mexico PBS, worked to digitize programs that resided on obsolete and deteriorating audio and video formats, making accessible historic public media from an underrepresented region. The collection includes programs by Indigenous producers, Emmy and Peabody Award-winning documentaries, bilingual and Spanish language series, Vietnam War protest coverage and more.

More than 6,000 NMPM Collection items are available to stream online with the remainder accessible on-site at the Library of Congress and at GBH in Boston.

For a behind-the-scenes look at the creation of the NMPM collection and exhibit, visit New Mexico PBS's special [New Mexico Public Media Collection](#) web page with additional information including a blog and highlights from the collection.

*About the American Archive of Public Broadcasting:* The [American Archive of Public Broadcasting](#) (AAPB) is a collaboration between the Library of Congress and the WGBH Educational Foundation to coordinate a national effort to preserve at-risk public media before its content is lost to posterity and provide a central web portal for access to the unique programming that public stations have aired over the past 70 years. To date, over 150,000 digital files of television and radio programming contributed by more than 150 public media organizations and archives across the United States have been preserved and made accessible for long-term preservation and access. The entire collection is available on location at the Library of Congress and GBH, and more than 90,000 files are available online at [americanarchive.org](http://americanarchive.org).

## **American Journalism Historians Association Invites Nominations for Two Awards**

The American Journalism Historians Association invites nominations for two awards honoring significant service to the study and understanding of media history.

The Sidney Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism History is the organization's highest honor. The Kobre Award recognizes individuals with an exemplary record of sustained achievement through teaching, research, professional activities, or other contributions to the field of journalism history. Award winners need not be members of the AJHA. Nominations for the award are solicited annually, but the award need not be given every year. Those making nominations should present, at minimum, a cover letter that explains the nominee's contributions to the field and a vita or brief biography of the nominee. Supporting letters for the nomination are welcome and encouraged. For a list of past winners, see <https://ajha.wildapricot.org/kobre>.

The Distinguished Service to Journalism History Award recognizes contributions by an individual outside our discipline who has made an extraordinary effort to further significantly our understanding of, or our ability to explore, media history. Nominations are solicited annually, but the award is given only in exceptional situations and, as such, is not awarded every year. Those making nominations for the award should present, at minimum, a cover letter that explains the nominee's contributions to the field, a vita or brief biography of the nominee, and an accounting of the richness of the nominee's service to journalism history. Supporting letters for the nomination are welcome and encouraged. For information about past winners, see

<https://ajha.wildapricot.org/distinguished-service>.

The deadline for submitting nominating materials for either award is May 15, 2023.

Electronic submissions are preferred via email to: Dr. Willie Tubbs, Assistant Professor, University of West Florida, [wtubbs@uwf.edu](mailto:wtubbs@uwf.edu).

Alternatively, postal submissions may be sent to the following address:

Dr. Willie Tubbs  
AJHA Service Awards Chair  
Communication Department  
Building 36, Room 183  
University of West Florida  
11000 University Pkwy  
Pensacola, FL 32514

### **Conference on Photography and Culture Industries: From Leicas to Likes**

Call for Papers

**Date:** May 31, 2023

**Location:** Portugal

Organized by the [Centre for Intercultural Studies, Porto Accounting and Business School, Porto Polytechnic](#) (CEI-ISCAP, P.PORTO) and the [Centre for Languages, Literatures and Cultures \(CLLC\), University of Aveiro](#)

This conference is widely concerned with photographic representations and the uses ascribed to them. It intends to explore the meanings and

implications of a vast array of approaches to photography, its uses and consumptions, in order to understand the — semiotic, cultural, social, economic, etc. — motives and values that are encoded/decoded in the content of a photographic image. The construction of people, objects, places and events captured in photography rests as much on how they are represented by the choices of the photographer as on how they are interpreted by the gaze of the beholder.

Papers are invited on specific aspects of the following topics:

1. Architectural photography
2. Cultural photography
3. Drones & phones
4. Family albums
5. Fashion photography
6. Fine art photography
7. Humanist photography
8. Nature photography
9. Photography and other culture industries
10. Photography as business
11. Photography as dissent
12. Photography in Literature
13. Photojournalism
14. Portrait photography
15. Product photography
16. Queering photography
17. Social media
18. Sports photography
19. Still photography vs. the moving Image
20. Travel and photography

We welcome submissions in English by 31 March 2023, to be sent



to the email address [cei.photographyconference@gmail.com](mailto:cei.photographyconference@gmail.com), with the following information:

- Title
- Author(s), institutional affiliation, contact email(s)
- Conference topic (see list above)
- Extended Abstract (200 words)
- Bionote (100 words)

*Registration Fees:*

100 euros — Employed Academics

50 Euro — Graduate Students

Registration is free for members of CLLC, U. Aveiro and CEI, ISCAP-P.PORTO

Contact Email: [cei@iscap.ipp.pt](mailto:cei@iscap.ipp.pt)

URL: <https://www.iscap.pt/cei/CEIphotoconference/index.html>

**Periodicals and Belonging: CFP: European Society for Periodical Research conference**

27-29 June 2023, Leeds School of Arts, Leeds Beckett University, UK

The 11th annual conference of the European Society for Periodical Research (ESPRit) will be held in Leeds, UK, on the theme of “Periodicals and Belonging.” This fruitful and timely theme is designed to encourage discussions and collaborations on the ways that ideas, emotions, declarations and imaginings, of belonging or not belonging, manifest in relation to periodical production and reception.

The notion of belonging to a family, a local culture, a national, regional and international group, or a diaspora, including a host of cultural and political ideas, is intrinsic to periodical studies, as is research on communities of authors/contributors, readers, literature and the arts,

history, cultural history, linguistics, sociology and memory studies among other disciplines. Constitutive to *belonging*, is the notion of *not belonging*, and as such, we are interested in exploring themes of exclusion, forms of othering, racialisation, agonism and conflict.

The conference aims to further problematise concepts of association and organisation such as communities (e.g. ‘imagined communities,’ ‘interpretive communities’), groups etc., to periodical readerships; enquire into notions of belonging as oppression (periodical policing of boundaries, identities or stereotypes); the use of belonging in marketing/advertising of periodicals, and the role of labour in periodical production (e.g., staff who belong loyally to one publication versus freelance journalists who sell their labour to many titles).

Lastly, the conference will consider periodicals as visual and material objects that belong to certain places and spaces (e.g., when used as props or symbols by artists, photographers, film directors and others, or in dentists’ waiting rooms), as well as in circulation and movement across geopolitical locations and chronological periods.

The conference is hosted by the *Leeds School of Arts, Leeds Beckett University*, in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire in the UK.

## **Call for Journal Submissions: Information & Culture**

*Information & Culture* is an academic journal printed three times a year by the [University of Texas Press](#). It publishes original, high-quality, peer-reviewed articles examining the social and cultural influences and impact of information and its associated technologies, broadly construed, on all areas of human endeavor. In keeping with the spirit of information studies, we seek papers emphasizing a human-centered focus

that address the role and reciprocal relationship of information and culture, regardless of time and place.

The journal welcomes submissions from an array of relevant theoretical and methodological approaches, including but not limited to historical, sociological, psychological, political and educational research that address the interaction of information and culture.

Articles published with *Information & Culture* will go through a rigorous peer review process conducted by subject experts and members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board, will be included in online and hard copy versions of the journal, and will be promoted on social media and relevant listservs to diverse audiences.

To learn more about our submission standards or submit an article for publication in *Information & Culture*, visit our [submissions page](#).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Information & Culture at [iceditor@ischool.utexas.edu](mailto:iceditor@ischool.utexas.edu).

## **2023 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, will be held virtually via Zoom on April 15.

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 com-

munication history.

When: Saturday, April 15, 2023, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern (U.S.) time

Where: Virtual (Zoom)

Please direct questions to one of the conference co-chairs: A.J. Bauer, [ajbauer2@ua.edu](mailto:ajbauer2@ua.edu); Theresa Russell-Loretz of Millersville University, [theresa.russell-loretz@millersville.edu](mailto:theresa.russell-loretz@millersville.edu); Ray Begovich of the University of Indianapolis [begovichr@uindy.edu](mailto:begovichr@uindy.edu).

### **ECREA Communication History Section Workshop 2023**

“War, Communication, and Media Resilience in Europe”

Lund University, Sweden, 23–25 August, 2023

Through concepts such as residual media or remediation, historians can shed light on processes of media convergence and divergence in wars of the past, but also old media persistence, resistance, or resilience in new wars.

The aim of the 2023 ECREA Communication History workshop is to invite a scholarly discussion on war and media resilience in terms of, first, the ability of media and communication agents, cultures, and institutions to act in, resist and recover from disturbances caused by war and armed conflicts. Second, it engages with media technologies and materialities, not least in terms of the stability or instability of analogue or digital communication infrastructures. And third, the concept of media resilience raises issues of media ethics, sustainable war reporting and photojournalism, and the spectacles of suffering. Media in contemporary armed conflicts need to be put in context and analyzed alongside their historical precedents. Historical perspectives are necessary since media resilience addresses issues of media change and transformation,

the ability of media technologies and media agents to absorb change or the stubborn persistence — or even comeback — of old media in disruptive times.

The workshop will begin late afternoon on the 23 and end at lunchtime on the 25 August.

The conference is organised by the ECREA Communication History Section and the Section for Media History at the Department of Communication and Media at Lund University in collaboration with The Centre for European Studies at Lund University. Local organisers are Allan Burnett, Marie Cronqvist, Rosanna Farbøl, and Martin Lundqvist.

More information and updates on the COHECREA homepage: [ecreahistorysection.com/2022/12/09/ecrea-communication-history-workshop](https://ecreahistorysection.com/2022/12/09/ecrea-communication-history-workshop)

### **CFProposals in Periodical Studies by Brill**

by Anna Maria Popo | Brill

Call for Proposals: Early Modern History and Period Studies, Literature

We are happy to announce the first publication in the new series on Periodical Studies, published in Open Access: *Periodical Studies Today*.

The new publication offers a platform for multidisciplinary discussions on periodical studies. This volume aims to examine how magazines, newspapers, and other serial print products shape our opinions and help us form like-minded communities.

This publication is part of Brill's new series, *Studies in Periodical Cultures*. The series focuses on various forms of media in (trans)national contexts. This book series looks at how periodicals evolve in and through networks of people, material infrastructures, media markets, and changing technologies to assess their role for processes of cultural

transfer and translation.

Is this your field of research?

You are invited to submit your book proposals to the Acquisitions Editor at Brill, Christa Stevens.

Contact Email: [christa.stevens@brill.com](mailto:christa.stevens@brill.com)

URL: <http://www.brill.com/SPC>

[Read more or reply](#)

### **Award Call: Covert Award in Mass Communication History for Articles, Essays, or Book Chapters Published in 2022**

Deadline: March 31, 2023

The Covert Award recognizes the author of the best mass communication history article or essay published in the previous year. Book chapters in edited collections published in the previous year are also eligible. The AEJMC History Division has presented the award annually since 1985.

The \$400 award memorializes the esteemed Dr. Catherine L. Covert, professor of journalism at Syracuse University (d.1983). Cathy Covert was the first woman professor in Syracuse's Newhouse School of Journalism and the first woman to head the History Division, in 1975. Prof. Covert received the AEJMC Outstanding Contribution to Journalism Education Award in 1983.

Submit an electronic copy in pdf form of the published article/essay/chapter via email to Professor Thomas A. Mascaro, [mascaro@bgsu.edu](mailto:mascaro@bgsu.edu), by March 31, 2023. The publication may be self-submitted or submitted by others, such as an editor or colleague.

The following link connects to an article providing more background on Dr. Covert:

<https://surface.syr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1063&context=sumagazine>

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