

# Nieman Reports

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## TWO GREAT EDITORS

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*Nieman Reports is published by the Nieman Alumni Council, elected by former Nieman Fellows at Harvard University.*

It aims to provide a medium for discussion by newspapermen of problems common to their profession.

Nine out of ten subscribers to *Nieman Reports* and very many of its contributors are not themselves former Nieman Fellows but share a belief in the purpose of the Nieman Foundation "to promote and elevate standards of journalism in the United States."

# GET WRITING

by Samuel E. Morison

This, from an appeal to young historians by Samuel A. Morison, might equally be addressed to journalists.

A few hints as to literary craftsmanship may be useful to budding historians. First and foremost, get writing! Young scholars generally wish to secure the last fact before writing anything, just as General McClellan refused to advance until the last mule was shod. It is a terrible strain, isn't it, to sit down at a desk with your notes all neatly docketed, and begin to write? . . .

There is the "indispensable beauty in knowing how to get done," said Carlyle. In every research there comes a point, which you should recognize like a call of conscience, when you must get down to writing. And when you once are writing, go on writing as long as you can; there will be plenty of time later to shove in the footnotes or return to the library for extra information. Above all, start writing. Nothing is more pathetic than the "gonna" historian, who from graduate school on is always "gonna" write a magnum opus but never completes his research on the subject, and dies without anything to show for a lifetime's work.

Dictation is usually fatal to good historical writing. Write out your first draft in longhand or, if you compose easily on the typewriter, type it out yourself, revise with pencil or pen and have it retyped clean. Don't stop to consult your notes for every clause or sentence; it is better to get what you have to say clearly in your mind and dash it off; then, after you have it down, return to your notes and compose your next few pages or paragraphs. After a little experience you may well find that you think best with your fingers on the typewriter keys or your fountain pen poised over the paper. For me, the mere writing of a few words seems to point up vague thoughts and make jumbled facts array themselves in neat order. Whichever method you choose, composing before you write or as you write, do not return to your raw material or verify facts and quotations or insert footnotes until you have written a substantial amount, an amount that will increase with practice. It is significant that two of our greatest American historians, Prescott and Parkman, were nearly blind during a good part of their active careers. They had to have the sources read to them and turn the matter over and over in their minds before they could give anything out.

Now, the purpose of this quick, warm synthesis between research, thinking and writing is to attain the three prime qualities of historical composition—clarity, vigor and objectivity. You must think about your facts, analyze your material and decide exactly what you mean before you can write it so that the average reader will understand. Do not fall into the fallacy of supposing that "facts speak" for themselves." Most of the facts that you excavate from the archives, like all relics of past human activity, are dumb things; it is for you to make them speak by proper selection, arrangement and emphasis. Dump your entire collection of facts on paper, and the result will be unreadable if not incomprehensible.

So, too, with vigor. If your whole paragraph or chapter is but a hypothesis, say so at the beginning, but do not bore and confuse the reader with numerous "buts," "excepts," "perhapses," "howevers" and "possiblys." Use direct rather than indirect statements, the active rather than the passive voice, and make every sentence and paragraph an organic whole. Above all, if you are writing historical narrative, make it move. Do not take time out in the middle of a political or military campaign to introduce special developments or literary trends, as McMaster did to the confusion of his readers. Place those admittedly important matters in a chapter or chapters by themselves so that your reader's attention will not be lost by constant interruptions.

Young writers are prone to use quotations in places where their own words would be better, and to incorporate in the text source excerpts that belong in footnotes or appendices. Avoid ending chapters with quotations, and never close your book with one.

Above all, do not be afraid to revise and rewrite. Reading aloud is a good test—historians' wives have to stand a lot of that! A candid friend who is not a historian and so represents the audience you are trying to reach, is perhaps the best "dog" to try it on. Even if he has little critical sense, it is encouraging to have him stay awake. . . .

The reading of English classics will be a painless and unconscious means of improving your literary style. Almost every English or American writer of distinction is indebted to Shakespeare and the English Bible. The Authorized Version is not only the great source book of spiritual experience of English speaking peoples, it is a treasury of plain, pungent words and muscular phrases, beautiful in themselves and with long associations, that we are apt to replace by smooth words lacking in "punch," or by hackneyed or involved phrases. Here are a few examples chosen in five minutes from my desk Bible: 1 Samuel i. 28: "I have lent him to the Lord." What an apt phrase for anyone bringing up their son for the Church! Why say "loaned" instead of "lent?" Isaiah xxii. 5: "For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity." In brief, just what we are going through today. But most modern historians would not feel that they were giving the reader his money's worth unless they wrote, "It is an era of agitation, of a progressive decline in the standard of living, and of uncertainty as to the correct policy . . ." You can find many appropriate words, phrases, similes and epigrams in American authors such as Mark Twain, Emerson and Thoreau. I have heard an English economist push home a point to a learned audience with a quotation from *Alice in Wonderland*; American historians might make more use of *Huckleberry Finn*. . . .

From "History as a Literary Art" by Samuel A. Morison Old South Leaflets, Series II, No. 1. Ten cents a copy from the Old South Association, Old South Meeting House, Boston. This excerpt is about one-third the text.

"I am asking for a more modern test of what is news."

# REPORTING ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

by James B. Reston

*No one excels James B. Reston of the New York "Times" in reporting on foreign policy. This is from his Memorial Guild Lecture at Minneapolis, May 13.*

It is remarkable how much progress the United States has made since 1945 in the realm of foreign policy. If that is to be maintained the institutions to interpret foreign policy to the people must keep pace. These are chiefly the press, the President's press conference and the State Department's public relations. But these have not kept pace.

No official in the world has better reason than the State Department official for knowing that a foreign policy is no better than the public understanding and support behind it. Yet the State Department is still trying to implement a modern foreign policy without an adequate system for explaining it to the people.

It is true that the jobs of responsible officials at the State Department and responsible reporters there are in direct conflict, maybe ten percent of the time. Our job is to report, to explain, and to disclose. Their job, part of the time, is precisely the opposite: in the general interest, they cannot always disclose or explain. But 90 percent of the time, the job of the responsible foreign policy official and the job of the responsible foreign policy reporter are complementary, not antithetical.

Most of the time we are the means to the public understanding and support on which their policy in the last analysis rests. Perhaps 90 percent of the time, therefore, the reporter is an opportunity for the State Department, not a problem, though the tendency is to treat the reporter as a problem most of the time.

It is a fact of some importance, I think, that a reporter for a responsible newspaper like *The New York Times* gets more reliable factual guidance on international issues from the representatives of every other major Western country than his own.

There cannot be an adequate system of explaining foreign policy if there is a lack of confidence between officials and reporters at the Department of State, and this confidence does not exist. The negotiations which led to the ending of the Berlin blockade came directly as a result of the enterprise of a reporter's questions to Premier Stalin. Yet when that reporter (Kingsbury Smith of the *INS*) sent his questions to the Kremlin, the reaction at the State Department was that his questions were an annoyance, an invasion of the province of diplomacy, and an instrument of Soviet propaganda. In the long run, Smith's questions led to the Jessup-Malik conversations, and when reporters sought to check reports that these conversations were proceeding, they were not only evaded (which was all right in the circumstances), but they were misled by a series of half-truths and worse.

Let me emphasize a point here: Reporters have a tendency to wait about the barriers placed before them by officials. Our job is to get all the facts the people need to reach correct

judgments and we would be deceiving ourselves if we thought that anybody cares very much about the problems of newspapermen except other newspapermen.

The question of whether these major questions of foreign policy are fairly and adequately explained to the American people, however, goes far beyond the problems of reporters. It is a question which affects the understanding and support of American policy, and I take it this is a fairly wide and important subject.

The problem at the State Department is not that there is a conscious conspiracy to conceal or mislead, though that happens more often than is necessary. There is, however, nobody working directly and intimately with the Secretary of State who knows the needs of newspapers, the strengths and weaknesses of newspapers, or what to expect from newspapers when information is concealed or disclosed. There is nobody in that position who can look over the vast flow of information coming into the Department and define accurately and fairly what part of the information properly falls within the ten percent that has to be concealed and the 90 percent that can be disclosed, to the benefit of the Department and the public.

On routine questions of getting out texts of speeches and communiques, the system at State works all right. The difficulty is that the system of explanation—which is what we are talking about—always breaks down at the most critical time. When things are going along in a routine way, which isn't often these days, officials who know what is happening are available to reporters. But when the big story breaks, the officials you want are almost always tied up on policy matters and very properly cannot take time out in the crisis to explain sensitive questions to reporters. This does not solve the problem, however, for at such times, the officials who are available to the reporters do not know what's going on, and those who do know what's going on are not available. Therefore, for lack of a well-informed officer dealing with reporters at such times, the reporters either write inadequate or misleading stories, or if they are wise, get their information from reliable officials of other governments.

The State Department has spent a great deal of time studying the technical problems involved in transmitting information abroad. This is important but it is secondary. The primary problem is not how to transmit information abroad, but what information you transmit at home and abroad. It is the old question of form and substance. The substance is the important thing, for unless you get the substance right, a good transmission system will probably do the nation more harm than a bad transmission system. After all the Voice of America is the President of the United States and all the myriad voices beneath him; it is not merely a radio station.

If we in the newspaper business are to raise questions about whether the government and other institutions are meeting the challenge of the time, we should certainly raise the same question about newspapers.

The question we have raised here is whether those who have the responsibility for explaining the foreign policy of the United States are keeping pace with the requirements of what is an unprecedented and even revolutionary foreign policy for America. I have suggested that responsible officials and representatives in the executive and legislative branches of the government have not kept pace. I suggest that the newspapers have not kept pace either.

Again the question is not whether we have made progress but whether we have made adequate progress. Of course we have made progress in the past decade. The coverage of foreign policy news in the American papers is more detailed, better informed, and in truer perspective than it was in 1939. Like the White House, the Congress and the State Department, however, we too are often the prisoners of old techniques and prejudices, which color our judgment of what is news, and how it should be written and displayed.

The news we have to report and explain these days is not only more important because of America's decisive role in the world, but it is more intricate and many-sided. It does not fit easily into the short news story with the punch lead. It often defies accurate definition in very short space. Very often it rebels against our passion for what is bright and brief.

Nevertheless, we still have a tendency to make this complex modern news conform to our old techniques. It is a natural reaction—space is limited and type will not stretch—but you cannot often make an intricate debate on the European Recovery Program sparkle without distorting the whole picture.

In the past, we in the newspaper business have been satisfied too often with reporting the literal truth instead of the essential truth. It may be literally true to report that "Ten Soviet Yak fighter planes roared into the American airlift corridor today outside of Berlin," but if you do not also report that the corridor is twenty miles wide, that the fighters didn't come near our cargo planes and that the incident was only the eighteenth reported in some 10 months and 200,000 cargo flights into the former German capital, you do not report the essential truth.

The bright, the startling, the bold, the sharp and the clear simple fact may make the most interesting reading; they may be "literally true"; but unfortunately, the material we have to report in this field is not always simple or bright or startling, though it may be vital to men's lives and therefore important and newsworthy.

We have no right, therefore, to twist the mass of facts into forms which are exciting but misleading; to take out of it that portion that conforms to our prejudices, to preserve the shocking or amusing, and leave out the dreary but important qualifications which are necessary to essential truth.

Our preoccupation with what happens today, like our passion for the bold and simple, also often minimizes our value as reporters and recorders of great events. If a detailed study of the economy of Europe or the state of the Federal government is released on a Tuesday afternoon, our tendency is to skim it, summarize it briefly and forget it Tuesday night. Wednesday's news may be a compilation of trivia; it may be far less important than the ill-digested document

of Tuesday, but because it happened on Wednesday, we tend to devote all our space to it and abandon the more important question of the day before.

There is another aspect of this today-angle story. It often happens these days that government decisions are taken in private and never reported until some official decides that everything is buttoned up and ready for publication. By that time, however, government commitments may be taken and disclosure cannot lead to objective appraisal by the nation.

Sometimes this is essential, but sometimes it is not. The veto in the United Nations charter was negotiated in private. A commitment was taken by our government to support that veto at the San Francisco conference. By the time an announcement was made about the veto, it was difficult to have an objective debate about it without repudiating the government and embarrassing the President in his conduct of foreign policy.

The time for enterprising reporting in that case was not after the announcement was made but before the commitment was taken. The same thing was true during the negotiations on the text of the North Atlantic Treaty. In that case, Senators Connally and Vandenberg objected in a private meeting with Secretary of State Acheson about making any reference in the treaty to the possibility of using military force against an aggressor. On their objection, the reference was struck out. This fact, however, was ferreted out; a public debate ensued, which indicated that there was considerable opposition to the timid position of the Senators, and in the end, the reference was restored, with their consent.

I am not arguing for less aggressive reporting. Nor am I arguing, believe me, that only the irresponsible can be bright, and that to be accurate you must be dull. I am arguing for a more modern test of what is news; I am arguing for keeping on top of these momentous foreign policy developments while they are developing and not merely after they are announced; for the reporting of ideas as well as the reporting of action; for the explanation of intricate and fundamental issues, even if they have no gee whiz angle.

Good enterprising reporting of ideas on basic issues can in many cases be as important as the reporting of action. The decisive point in many great events comes long before the event happens. It comes in what the diplomats call the "exploratory phase," when influential officials and legislators are making up their minds what they are going to do. The Marshall Plan was a great story in Washington before General Marshall ever heard about it. Few papers, however, paid any attention to it because "it was just an idea." In fact, the idea behind it was all laid out in a speech made by Dean Acheson weeks before General Marshall ever announced the plan at Harvard, and the only paper in the world, to my knowledge that carried the text of that speech was *The Times of London*.

It will take a conscious effort on the part of those who run newspapers to meet the new responsibilities imposed on us by the new responsibilities of our country. The problem, I suggest, is not that anybody in the business is willfully trying to mislead the public or distort the truth. The problem is that we are busily engaged, like Congressmen, and State Department officials, and even Presidents, in acting the way we have always acted, in using techniques we have always used, without asking whether they are the best techniques for America today.

In many ways, the criticisms we make of our officials and our representatives in Congress can fairly be applied to ourselves. They are so busy, we say, that they never have time to enquire or look where they are going. Is this not also true of ourselves?

They are flighty in their criticism; they get all excited about a subject and whoop and holler about it, and then they drop it dead, though the problem remains very much the same. Do we in the newspaper business not commit the identical mistake?

The President, we say, pops off without weighing his words; the Congressmen spend their time scoring debating points against the opposition; the State Department pro-

nounces without explaining—are we not honestly guilty of the very same conduct?

I think we are. I tried to emphasize at the beginning that it is natural that we act as we do—Americans having been required to change their policy so much so fast. But now that we are appraising everybody else, and everybody else seems to be appraising us in the newspaper business, maybe the time has come for a little serious self-appraisal.

We have always been good at reporting wars. We have always been pretty good at winning wars. But the problem is to prevent wars, and the question before all responsible men and institutions is whether they are doing that as well as they could.

## ARE WEEKLIES UNECONOMIC?

by Charles T. Duncan

City newsmen who are interested in the weekly field without knowing much about it can be divided conveniently, if not accurately, into two broad categories: those who think of it as a hand-to-mouth existence, and those who believe you have to hire two husky boys to lug the week's profits to the bank every Saturday.

Both kinds can usually cite examples—which is precisely why both impressions are wrong.

Economically, weeklies in the United States today range from marginal one-man propositions to big, modern plants employing 50 or more people and supporting the boss in two-vacation style.

It is the exceptional operation—at either end of the scale—that one is most likely to know about and upon that to base his ideas. The economic nature of the thousands of weekly newspapers in between—the “average” weekly—is little known and understood.

The misinformed non-weekly man is not greatly to be blamed for his lack of reliable information, for there exists no ready and accurate source of data, covering the nationwide picture, on the economics of the weekly press.

Census Bureau reports are inadequate in this respect. Some state press associations are good sources, but most are not. Journalism school research facilities, with a few exceptions (notably Iowa State), are either lacking or too busy with other projects. And the dedicated soul who will write his Ph.D. dissertation on the economic nature of the weekly press has yet to appear.

Rash then is he who, without months of arduous digging, attempts to disprove such statements as “. . . Country weeklies, over the nation and over the years, are uneconomic institutions.” (That pronouncement was made by the editor of a Cleveland suburban weekly upon its demise late in 1948.)

There is a good deal of evidence tending to support even so sweeping a generalization as that. The strongest item of such evidence lies in the mortality rate of weekly newspapers.

From a high point of 16,899 weeklies, semi- and tri-weeklies in 1910, the number fell rapidly and steadily: 14,405 in 1920, 13,079 in 1930, 11,208 in 1940. (N. W. Ayer and Sons figures.)

To take a couple of states as examples: Nebraska has lost 126 weeklies in the past 16 years. In Minnesota 249 papers, of all kinds, went to the wall from 1915 through 1945. The great majority of these were weeklies.

At that rate it would seem as though the American weekly newspaper had about the same life expectancy in 1945 as the passenger pigeon had in 1890.

It appears, however, that this dismal trend has not only stopped, but has reversed itself. Thomas F. Barnhart, University of Minnesota journalism professor and an authority on the weekly press, says that the numerical decline was halted in 1947. A slight upward climb has been seen in the last year or so.

The high death rate from 1910 to 1940 indicates that there have been many uneconomic weeklies in the past. Figures for 1940 through 1945 reflect wartime help and material shortages rather than the ordinary economic factors. The fact that the mortality curve has now leveled off suggests that a great many economically weak papers have been weeded out.

The net effect of the 40-year trend has been to leave the weekly newspaper, as a segment of the nation's press, economically sounder and more stable than ever. What the bald figures do not show is that in many a small town where one newspaper now survives out of two or three, the single paper is bigger and stronger than were the several all together.

Undoubtedly there yet remain a good many shaky publications whose editors, like the Cleveland man, will sooner or later be called upon to pen the swan song. They will not necessarily agree with him that the institution as a whole is no good and never has been.

Daily newspapers have experienced numerical attrition relatively more severe than that of the weeklies, and perhaps less justifiable in view of the relative population changes for rural and urban areas.

The Pennsylvania Newspaper Publishers Association is conducting an excellent continuing survey of income and profit among weeklies in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Ohio. In the most recent report Theodore A. Serrill, associate manager, concludes that “weekly newspaper publishing continues to be a profitable business for most of those engaged in the field.”

On the other hand, there is little to support the belief—seemingly prevalent these days—that the weekly is a soft touch for any man with a little money, some gumption and a few ideas.

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Reporter, ad chaser, and editor, in that order, on three Minnesota weeklies in five years, Professor Charles T. Duncan has been a teacher of journalism since 1940 except for three years in the Navy. He is now at the University of Minnesota.

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To enter the field today—on anything above the one-man or man-and-wife level—doesn't take a little money; it takes quite a lot. It doesn't call for some gumption; it demands absolute acceptance of one fundamental fact: that running a weekly newspaper is hard work.

In addition, it calls for a quality not often demanded of big town editorial workers, namely, business acumen.

Hard work?

"The physical job of putting out a newspaper is just about getting beyond me," a small town editor-publisher wrote me recently. "We just got out the paper this morning after three and a half days of hell, eating sandwiches while operating the Linotype with the other hand. I haven't shaved for three days and am filthy from head to toe.

"Recently I worked night and day to get out one 10-page and one 12-page paper. I set all the type, wrote all the news, solicited and drew up all the ads, read and corrected proofs and made up the pages myself, in addition to helping with the last press run and the mailing. While I am making money (boldface mine), I have come to the conclusion that it simply isn't worth it from the physical standpoint."

(Note: he's still at it.)

If that case is a bit atypical, the next one is less so.

The editor of this county seat weekly—a bigger and better-staffed paper than the one above—writes all the news, all the editorials, plus a "column," sells all the advertising, and makes up the pages for a 16-page paper every week. In addition, he takes a whirl at the Linotype when the pressure is on, lends a hand in the job department and supervises front office work—subscriptions and the books. His salary a year ago was over \$5,000, plus 20 per cent of the net profit after taxes—and the net wasn't bad. Last year he did better.

A member of a prominent Wisconsin publishing family circulated his fellow publishers last winter with a printed gripe which was headlined, "Are We in the Wrong Business, or Are We Gluttons for Punishment?"

## Who Should Run Weeklies?

Peninsula, Ohio

The country weekly controversy has enlivened recent issues of *Nieman Reports*.

We have just disposed of one (Dave Schonberg, publisher, and Bob Bordner, editor) to a nice young man who, probably, will make a good living out of it.

We didn't.

We didn't intend to.

We both had other incomes.

That's why we could get out a rip-snorting, hell-raising, unique, slick-paper weekly with a policy considerably left of liberalism, in a rural Republican Ohio valley where Truman is considered a socialist.

We didn't make money.

But we did have fun. And so did our readers. For ten lovely years.

I just wanted to say that our experience backs up the notion that the editor of such a paper can most easily be successful financially if he himself is the kind of guy who believes the Kiwanis Club, a committee of small-town business men, and Bob Taft ought to take over and run America right.

You can't fake being that kind of guy. You get ulcers.

"Is an editor-publisher entitled to the same wages per hour as paid to a bricklayer, a carpenter, a trucker or a plumber?" he demanded to know. "Many editors are putting in 80 to 90 hours a week. . . . Many of them are charging the same prices as when butter was 20c a pound, meat 15c to 20c, eggs 12c, shaves 15c and new cars \$750."

Right there is where the hard-work qualification meets that other essential of successful weekly publishing—a head for business.

Press association managers for years have been urging country editors to raise prices on subscriptions, advertising and job work. The trend has indeed been upward since the war, but there are still many publishers like the one in a Nebraska town of 700 who in ten years has not raised his national or local advertising rates or his subscription price from 30c, 25c and \$1.50 respectively. Yet that publisher's costs for newsprint and labor have zoomed as much as 300 per cent, not to mention what has happened to his personal cost of living.

Such newspapers are uneconomic. Whose fault is it?

Country publishers seem to have a delicacy that amounts almost to an obsession about raising prices for their product and their services. Cautiously, apprehensively, apologetically, they will announce a 50-cent increase in a year's subscription. Then they sit waiting for the wrath of their readers to break, cancellations to come pouring in. When, after a month, all is yet serene in the community and circulation goes right on climbing, they kick themselves for not having done it a year ago. The same thing happens in the case of advertising rates.

Unquestionably there have been, are and will be uneconomic weekly newspapers. But the fault lies not so much with the field itself as in the way the individual unit of journalism's most individualistic branch is managed.

Of course House Waring, out in Colorado, is something special. He and a few others like him around the country, are the exceptions that prove the rule.

The only thing I wish to suggest in this controversy is that it is mainly the wrong kind of people who get moonstruck with this "country weekly dream."

They are usually the liberals, the torch-bearers, the serious do-gooders, the imaginative and intelligent. (I use these nice words because I am one of them).

They should never dream about running a country weekly except for fun. If they have to make a living out of it, they are the very people least likely to succeed.

If they try they get taken. Either they get sick and fail, or they become converted and fail themselves.

The kind who can succeed comfortably with the country weekly are exactly the kind who do not go around having "dreams."

Yours for more dreamers—

Bob Bordner

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Bob Bordner, of the staff of the Cleveland Press, edited the weekly, *Grist Mill*, serving northern Summit and southern Cuyahoga Counties in Ohio for ten years until last Winter.

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# THE PEIPING CASE

## How Chinese Communists Treat Correspondents

by Robert (Pepper) Martin

*Robert (Pepper) Martin, a veteran China correspondent, represents Overseas News Agency, the New York "Post," and CBS.*

When the Chinese communists banned 17 foreign correspondents from working in Peiping this spring, and refused to permit them even to send dispatches, censored or otherwise, most correspondents in Shanghai relaxed, waiting for denunciations from Washington, London and a few way-points.

Surprisingly, the anticipated "bang" wasn't even a dull thump; rather, it somewhat resembled the pricking of a half-filled balloon. Washington failed to react, and most newspapers in the U. S. apparently ignored the episode.

The Foreign Correspondents Club of China heatedly debated the question of what action to take. Almost everyone considered that the ban violated freedom of the press, but no one was quite sure what should be done about it. A Russian correspondent argued that no action should be taken, since the FCCC was a "social" rather than a professional organization—a definition which was almost unanimously discarded. Several correspondents wanted to protest as a matter of principle, theorizing that the best way to get freedom of the press is to fight for it on all levels and on all occasions.

The problem, however, was a ticklish one. The communists do not as yet have a central government, and have no international recognition whatever. There was also the serious question of dealing with burgeoning Chinese "nationalism." A protest might only make the communists react more vigorously against correspondents in the future.

A compromise was reached, and the FCCC cabled Chou-En-lai in Peiping or thereabouts, since his exact residence was not known, asking for a "clarification" of communist policy. Chou was asked whether a similar ban would be imposed on other areas which the communists might "liberate" in the future. This seemed to be of valid interest because of Shanghai's proximity to the communist armies north of the Yangtze river.

The "Peiping case" is of more than passing interest because of the curious history of the episode, the unprecedented manner in which a wholesale ban was instituted, and the uncertainty about the future which resulted from the communist action.

First indication of trouble came when the communist radio scathingly attacked two correspondents, Spencer Moosa of AP, and Michael Keon of UP for their reports from Peiping during the take-over period. Both were accused of being agents of American "imperialism." Moosa is British and Keon Australian. On at least one occasion, Moosa was censured for a story which originated in the Shanghai office of AP.

The New China News Agency, on Feb. 15, reported: "The messages sent out of Peiping by the correspondents of AP and UP have begun to assume the pattern of calculated pro-

vocations . . . . These two British reporters do not need any leaven of truth in order to cook up a very large propaganda story suitable for their American employers."

The communist-controlled newspapers in Peiping published a series of vitriolic letters and articles attacking the two "reactionaries." According to the communist radio, Peiping students, professors' and workers' organizations demanded expulsion of the two correspondents.

Keon's permit to file press telegrams from Peiping was withdrawn with the explanation that his press credentials (issued by the Nanking government) had expired. The communists thereby destroyed one excellent weapon they might have used against correspondents. They acknowledged that possession of Nanking credentials was the *sine qua non* for working in China. Theoretically, they could not in the future bar correspondents who had been working on the Nanking side of the civil war with the excuse that they had "enemy" status.

On Feb. 27, the communists lowered the "bamboo curtain" and North China underwent a news "blackout" relieved only by communist radio broadcasts.

Correspondents were divided about equally into three groups when the case was discussed. One group commented smugly, "We told you so—communists are the same the world over." The second group was honestly surprised and puzzled; they had believed the communists would respect their oft-repeated pledges to guarantee freedom of information and the press in their areas. A third group clung to the belief that the ban was completely justified, but that in the end the communists would soften their policies toward the foreign press.

First of all, it should be understood that the Chinese communists had what might be called a "favorable" press. This was not because correspondents in China were pro-communist, but because, being human beings with a certain sensitivity, they were appalled by the corruption, inefficiency and the oppressive nature of the Nanking government. Almost any group which promised honest government would get a "favorable" press.

Personal resentment did not becloud the issue. Correspondents had enjoyed more or less complete freedom of movement in Nationalist China, and there had been no censorship since mid-1946.

Correspondents admitted they had insufficient knowledge of actual conditions in communist areas. Most of them had visited Yen-an at one time or another and were impressed by the simplicity, the honesty and idealism of the communists. Admittedly many of their questions went unanswered, and they were subjected to heavy indirect indoctrination.

Other communist areas, however, were nearly inaccessible.

Occasionally a few correspondents reached these areas and stayed there long enough to realize that the communists, good as they were, still had many shortcomings.

In general, therefore, it can be said that the largest proportion of foreign correspondents in China had had some contact with the communists, and most of them were more or less favorably impressed. Some, of course, made rather severe mental reservations. There was another group of correspondents who had never been in communist territory and had no interest in or incentive for reporting from "the other side." (AP was the only agency which tried to maintain a correspondent in communist areas. *Time & Life* correspondents during the past three years have rather pointedly ignored the necessity for an occasional visit to communist areas. Neither Scripps-Howard nor UP has made any attempt to get first-hand reports on the communists.)

The communist black-out of 17 correspondents was unprecedented as far as this writer can recall. Individual correspondents have been deported from many countries. Others restrict the number and type (judged by their political inclinations) of correspondents. In time of war, correspondents have been interned or repatriated. But in Peiping, left-wing, right-wing and middle-of-the-roaders were blacked out.

There is no full and adequate explanation. The communist claim that the ban was imposed because of the military situation seems unrealistic.

This is the viewpoint of an American correspondent who is more-than-friendly to the communists:

"I want freedom of the press as much as you, but in all conscience I cannot see why the communists should treat as friends the nationals of a country that has tried to destroy them via Chiang Kai-shek; and that has declared its intention of disrupting them from within; and that continues to arm Chiang Kai-shek's mercenaries for continued civil war; that has transformed Formosa into a military, naval, war and industrial base against the new China; and that puts its faith in every s.o.b. (shades of h.s.t.) who will kill a communist.

"I am sorry for the blackout and yet I can understand it. I understand it because I know what we did in America during the revolution and what the north did during the Civil War."

Randall Gould, of the American-owned Shanghai *Evening Post & Mercury*, spoke for the correspondents in general in his editorial of March 1, which said "this action comes as a discouragement and a shock." The editorial recalled the numerous pledges by communist leaders guaranteeing freedom of the press, and pointed out that such correspondents as Theodore White, Guenther Stein, Harrison Forman and Edgar Snow had many times emphasized the moderate attitude of the communists toward the foreign press.

"This rich heritage of foreign journalistic good-will represented a tremendous prestige asset," the editorial continued. "But like a woman's good name, this sort of asset is a highly vulnerable possession. It can vanish very quickly indeed. That the Reds are reckless with or careless con-

cerning such an asset is amazing, yet we have the fact to face.

"Let the issue be made clear. If the reason for this press ban is as stated, that considerations of military security require it, the order is an ignorant mistake which should be corrected by competent authority without delay. Obviously there is no military jeopardy in Peiping at this time. If on the other hand the Chinese Communists are lowering a journalistic Iron Curtain in what is becoming traditional communist style, let there be no possible doubt as to the vicious truth."

The writer has no information not available to other correspondents on why the ban was imposed. At the time, I thought it possible the communists wanted to choke off all reports on the peace talks which were scheduled to be held in Peiping or Shihchiachuang. The communists had neither the machinery nor the trained personnel to establish censorship; so rather than jeopardize their position through possibly premature reports on the negotiations, they chose to end all reporting from that area.

There was also the possibility that when the communists exploded into the larger cities, and had their first contacts with the urbane and sophisticated world, they were psychologically unprepared. They acted like children suddenly thrust into a new environment, and retreated into a self-imposed isolation. Contact with the outside world was almost completely eschewed, and the foreign correspondents were victims of this psychology.

The communists were encountering tremendous difficulties in their new role of controlling the large cities. Economic problems could not be solved easily and quickly. And the correspondents naturally reported that conditions were very far from rosy. The communists accept criticism from their own people, but criticism by outsiders apparently rankles.

Looking back on the "Peiping case" now, it seems to have been well-engineered. The communists were not responding to a spontaneous "public" demand for action against the correspondents. No one in Peiping could have known about or objected to the stories sent by Moosa and Keon unless the communists themselves wanted that information publicized.

Subsequently, an American (Hugh Deane of Telepress) and a French (Henri Cartier-Bresson, Magnum photographer) correspondent attempted to enter communist territory from Tsingtao. They were able to get 75 miles from Tsingtao, and then spent nearly six weeks in a small communist village. The communists were friendly enough, but kept them more or less confined to the compound where they lived. They returned to Tsingtao when it became fairly obvious they would not be permitted to proceed farther into communist territory.

As Randall Gould said: "The deepest disturbing factor is this—do the communists wish to turn inward, taking China backward and away from the world? If that is the case, suppression of the press is a logical part of the picture."

The answer to that question may not come soon.

# Canada Prints More News

by I. Norman Smith

*Mr. Smith is associate editor of the Ottawa "Journal," most quoted paper in Canada.*

*This is from a lecture given at the College of Journalism, University of Colorado, May 13.*

In the U. S. there are 1781 daily newspapers, or one to every 83,000 people. In Canada we have only 96 daily newspapers, one to every 137,000 people.

The average circulation of your daily papers is 29,000. Our average is 33,000.

You know of course that Canada reached her national status in 1867, less than 100 years ago. But there were stirrings in our wastes before that. Our first Canadian newspaper was founded in 1752, and incidentally a few years later your Benjamin Franklin founded another with the hope of enlisting sympathy of French Canadians in the revolt of the American colonies.

In 1911 when our population was 7,200,000 we had 143 daily newspapers. Today our population is 13,000,000 and we make all those folks struggle along on only 96 newspapers. But circulations have gone up and are today at peak. Those 143 papers in 1911 had a combined circulation of 1,324,909. Our 96 papers today sell to 3,277,898.

This reduction in the number of our daily newspapers has meant that 24 of our cities which used to have two newspapers have only one. Today there are only 12 cities in Canada with more than one newspaper. You have experienced the same trend and know the reasons. Newspaper publishing is big business. It is a case of the survival of the fittest—and the wealthiest. You will not expect me to say that the wealthiest are necessarily the fittest.

Morning papers are not strong in our country. They account for only 20 percent of our circulation compared to your forty. Tabloids we do not care for, apparently. We have them in only two cities and they total only five percent of our circulation. Three tabloids alone in your country make up eight percent of your daily circulation.

Nor do we take to Sunday papers. We're really an awfully good crew up there you know; either that or we have to work so hard in six days to survive our rugged life that on the seventh we simply have not the strength to confront a Sunday issue. About 600 American newspapers have Sunday editions. We have I think five, but they are published on Saturday because our blue laws prohibit Sunday publication except in British Columbia—a distant sort of province apparently either behind or ahead of our parade. (And in British Columbia if a paper publishes Sunday it may not publish Monday.)

There are only two newspaper chains which cross our provincial borders. The Southern Company owns seven newspapers strung out from Ottawa to Vancouver. The Sifton family owns three newspapers, all in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. There are other groups of papers owned by one man or one company, but they compose smaller papers and thus far their empires do not cross any provincial border.

Speaking of borders, I may say that your newspapers flow into our country scarcely at all. The *New York Times* and *News* and *Mirror* attract their respective reader groups but in little number. Our leading French language newspaper, on the other hand, *La Presse* of Montreal, sends 7,500 copies into the United States every day.

We have a smug way of saying in Canada that Canadians combine the best features of the Englishman and American. I think if you cornered a Canadian newspaperman and hit him until he spoke he'd admit that the same is true of Canadian newspapers. We think we've put together the integrity of Britain's better papers and the brightness of your better papers. We think we've retained some of the literary quality of England's essayists and yet given them your broader horizons and quicker humor. We think we've maintained the principle that news must come before frills, that responsibility must have priority over circulation.

C. E. Montague of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote in his exquisite little book, *A Writer's Notes on His Trade*, that there were three ways of trying to make things attractive when uttered. "You may state them about twice as big as they are, or about half as big as they are, or, if you have skill and complete confidence in your skill, you may state them only just as big as they are." Canadians like to nurse the suspicion that the British understates, the American overstates and the Canadian hits things just to a nicety.

I think we do avoid some of the extremes. But then we're that way as a nation; we're a land where compromise is essential.

Yes, I fear Canadian papers do run to a uniformity, a constancy in make-up and content and atmosphere that lays them wide open to charges of dullness. I have lived and worked in both the United States and Great Britain. I believe that generally speaking Canadian newspapers keep their news columns freer of editorial opinion, keep their selection of news freer of prejudice, control more rigidly the slanting of headline writers and clever reporters.

But I admit too that Canadian newspapers probably rarely annoy or please quite as much as British or American; they rarely present that complete surprise in writing or treatment. Canadian papers seem always conscious of their sobriety, a little too conscious. Our writers are almost encouraged to beware of any divine spark that might kindle them.

Perhaps some of this middle-of-the-roadness is forced upon us by our physical size. Our communities are far apart. One newspaper must serve reasonably well the laborer, the capitalist, the foreigner, the conservative, the jitterbug, the artist and the little man. Our community populations are not large enough to enable two or three newspapers to pre-

sent special wares to special groups. Geography does this to us, plus the smallness of our numbers.

This leaning over backwards to be responsible and fair frequently or even constantly makes us dull. Sometimes it makes us ludicrous in others' eyes. Let's take another example from my own paper—a daily published in the capital of Canada and therefore exceptionally aware of its responsibilities in the governing of the land. I hope you see I am saying that with a slight smile.

Do you remember a chap named Gousenko? We do. He was a member of the Russian Embassy who in 1946 decided Russia was doing too much spying against Canada and walked out of his office complete with a lot of incriminating evidence against his countrymen and some Canadians to boot. He came into the *Journal's* office with his story; lurid, a bit panicky, naturally fearful for his life. Our people could see he had the granddaddy of all spy stories in his mitt and that we could break it alone and shake not only Ottawa's staid pillars but perhaps some of the Kremlin's too.

Well, we sent him to the police, the Mounties with the red jackets, and told him for his own protection to keep quiet until he saw them. Sure enough, the Russians raided his flat but he had fled in time. His story set off a Royal Commission enquiry which found eleven persons guilty and sent seven to jail. Had the *Journal* broken the story wide open the R.C.M.P. would not have been able to do the job they did, guilty people would have been able to destroy evidence, to hide or get away.

We've been kidded by some people for missing the story of the age. Hollywood even made a movie out of the thing, with Hollywood's usual degree of accuracy, and the movie made us look like dopes. Yet here we are still boasting of our decision to follow the prosaic path of public duty. May I end this little story by saying I strongly suspect 95 percent of Canada's newspapers would have done the same thing?

Our Canadian Press closely resembles your Associated Press. This is a news-gathering cooperative, a partnership through which most of the country's dailies exchange their own Canadian news and bring foreign news from outside. CP operates 13,000 miles of leased wires, maintains bureaus in London, New York, Washington and six principal cities in Canada.

The foreign report CP presents Canadian newspapers is worth thinking about. CP in its offices in New York and London receives the whole of the Associated Press world and American report, uses what it wants, as it stands or after shaping and editing it to suit Canadian knowledge or to fit into CP's own stories on the subject. In addition to this CP in New York and London gets Reuters report of world news, using it similarly as Reuters or as information to be inserted or rewritten into Canadian Press stories. And all the while Canadian writers working for CP are themselves watching the world's main news breaks: Britain's Parliament, the United Nations in Paris or New York, Congress in Washington.

All this should combine to make one of the broadest and least 'nationalistic' foreign news reports the world knows. I believe it does. Admittedly it is "agency reporting"—with all that that implies in speed, safeness, lack of interpretation, unimaginative but straight writing, integrity, freedom from bias in politics, philosophy and device. Some Canadian papers send their own reporters into the foreign field to supplement this comprehensive picture of world affairs, but most papers rely on CP and make good use of it.

May I insert immodestly that during the war we had a frequent comment from visiting Americans: that in our papers they got a better idea of how the whole world was going than they did in most of the American newspapers. It seems many of you covered it as an American war—a natural thing theless sometimes missed perspective or lost focus.

to do—but great as was your part, indeed decisive, you never-

I think Americans will be surprised to know the degree of use we make of our foreign report. In 1937 a study was made of the news content of 51 Canadian newspapers, 41 English and 10 French, published on six consecutive days. Measurements were compared to the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *Boston Post*, the *London Times*, the *Liverpool Post* and the *Belfast Telegraph*.

Every Canadian newspaper studied led all six of these papers in the percentage of space given to foreign news. The amount of foreign news presented in the *New York Times* was greater than in MOST Canadian papers, yet of three Canadian papers published in cities under 1,000,000 population, each had a greater amount of foreign news than the *New York Times*.

Now partly that is caused by the fact that we run a lot of American news which is foreign news. But even subtracting all American news from our figures 25 percent of the Canadian papers measured carried a higher percentage of foreign news than did the *New York Times*. Moreover, you will note that the U. S. and British papers we ventured to compare ourselves with were very high class papers indeed. A different selection or more average selection might have shown still more clearly that Canada's newspapers are wider-horizoned than most any other newspapers in any other country.

I believe our newspapers also publish more national news than yours. That is, our papers outside of Ottawa give more news of parliament and government than your papers outside of Washington devote to your Washington report. I'm not certain of this but I suspect it.

But if we can boast about all this stolid sobriety we must admit to lack of enterprise and imagination. Do you know there is not one columnist in Canada who might be called a national commentator in the manner of your Lippman or Thompson? Some of our papers use your columnists; some of our papers have their own columnists; but no Canadian columnist has won a national place for opinions in the editorial column and nowhere else.

Do you know that probably 95 percent of the comics, puzzles, health notes, Dorothy Dix stuff and assorted miscellany we use is of American origin? (I think we get our chess column from England!) Do you know that only a dozen Canadian newspapers are using wirephoto today? Do you know that we are so old-fashioned as to put out our morning papers in the early morning and our afternoon papers in the early afternoon? Do you know our financial pages are shockingly routine, ill-informed and unhelpful? Science and economics have out-run our staffs. We're trying to overtake them—but just trying.

We cling to the idea that our editorials are the only place for opinion. Perhaps I'm particularly interested in this because our own paper, the *Journal*, has been happy to enjoy for many years the top position among Canadian newspapers for the number of quotations taken from us by other papers. Mind you, not always are we quoted with approval! Sometimes an editor puts our viewpoint into his column only to

kick it into the middle of next week. But quoted we are, and happy.

By the way, not long ago one of those pollsters surveyed the scope of topics used for Canadian editorials. The job was done by economists of the Royal Bank of Canada. Of 305 editorials examined there were 94 on international topics, 76 on national; 22 on provincial and 24 on municipal subjects. The rest was made up of welfare, health and social, 22; economics and labor, 27; obituaries, congratulations and other personal references, 21; religion, 4; science, 2; odds and ends, 12.

Another poll, this one by Gallup, found a short while ago that in Canada the daily newspaper still remains the strongest influence on peoples' opinions. The question was: "What influences you most in your opinions?" The answer found 44 percent for newspapers, 36 percent for radio, 14 percent for magazines, 6 percent for books.

That's nothing to make us throw our hats in the air. It seems to me newspapers should run higher than 44 percent. I think you would find a general readiness by Canadian editors to admit that times are changing, that the newspaper must do some very careful thinking about the changes. The radio is taking the cream off our news breaks, the radio commentators are crowding our editorial writers and columnists.

Are we to abandon our emphasis upon news and stress entertainment and interpretation and background? I don't know. But I'm glad to say we've been sufficiently nudged from our complacency to want to know. There is more to this than our economic survival. There is our conviction that newspapers are needed in our way of life. If our way of life is changing it does not follow that we are less needed. Our problem is to meet the change.

## SUNSET AND MORNING STAR

by Kenneth N. Stewart

From Park Row just fifty years ago City Editor Lincoln Steffens rejoiced in the "happy crowd" that worked with him on the old *Commercial Advertiser*.

"I have the beginnings of one of the best staffs of reporters ever organized in this city," Steffens wrote to his father. "Nearly all of those I have brought to the paper with me are writers, educated, thoughtful fellows with character and ambition, who are hand and glove with me in the conspiracy to make a newspaper that shall have literary charm as well as daily information, mood as well as sense, gayety as well as seriousness. We are doing some things that were never done in journalism before, and I think some of our issues are better in quality and higher in spirit than any of the magazines . . ."

For those of us who arrived on Park Row in the twenties the *Commercial Advertiser* of Steffens' day was not even a memory but we saw in the *World* some of the things he spoke about.

When the *World* was sold down the river in 1931 we on the other papers sat through the night, as at a wake, thinking and talking of the *World* that was.

Every good Guildsman knows that story and remembers what Heywood Broun said: "A newspaper is a rule unto itself. It has a soul for salvation or damnation. The intangibles of a newspaper are the men and women who make

it. Newspapermen are blandly and, I think, blindly, individualistic. But for a time down in the *World* office there was the excitement, the hip-hip-hooray—call it even the hysteria—of mob movement, of people rubbing shoulders and saying, 'We are in this boat together.'"

The late Will Irwin was a little impatient at the "collective wail" we set up over the passing of "the newspaperman's newspaper."

He wrote in his autobiography: "Journalistic memories are short. They had forgotten that this was for thirty years the nickname of the *Sun* . . . a unique newspaper with a unique atmosphere."

Irwin described the old *Sun* as a paper where good journalistic writing, with humor at a premium, was the ladder to advancement. Reporters had to write lucidly and with an effect of ease, to avoid stock phrases, refrain from slopping over, never overlook the human lights and color touches, show up fakes, puncture windbags, but always with the light, satiric touch. It was no accident that in that period the *Sun* was the most prolific feeder of American literature.

Then one dark day Frank A. Munsey announced without warning in a double-leaded editorial that he was selling the *Morning Sun* to the *Herald*. Only the *Evening Sun* shone on.

"Not a word of regret," Irwin noted, "for a newspaper which initiated 'penny' journalism in the United States, which under Dana had made and unmade administrations and national policies, and which for many a decade stood as the model for most American newspapermen!"

PM, which became the *Star*, was born into a different and grimmer day. Perhaps in the same sense it never quite stood as a model of a newspaperman's newspaper but it had the kind of soul that Broun meant. Last January death came for the *Star* as surely as it had for other Stars—morning and evening—that skimmed across New York's journalistic skies over the years.

Unlike the last issue of the *World*, with its brave and challenging words from Lippman and F.P.A. and the rest, the last issue of the *Star* said nothing worth saying.

But Don Hollenbeck of CBS did send Ed Scott down to Duane Street that night with a recorder to pick up for a Saturday morning broadcast the immensely moving sighs and sounds of farewell.

"It was part of our life," said Matilda Landsman, "and you always hate to see part of your life die."

As the words came over the air to our dinner table the youngsters wondered why we swallowed so hard.

The Guild can rightfully take credit for removing much maudlin sentimentality from newspapering but, let's be thankful, not the honest sentiment. Although we are no longer—if we ever were—a bunch of boozy romantics willing to starve for the dear old Bugle, we can still hope for a happy crowd on a unique newspaper in a unique atmosphere that thinks it is doing things that never were done in journalism before. Meanwhile we may be permitted to shed a tear or two into our beer for those who tried it and lost out.

—From Page One, N. Y. Guild

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Kenneth N. Stewart, professor of journalism of New York University, is author of "News is What We Make it." A Nieman Fellow in 1941-42, he was one of the original staff of PM

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# O. K. BOVARD

## A Great Managing Editor --- A Complex Man

by Irving Dilliard

*O. K. Bovard, a legendary figure even while he was still the active managing editor of the St. Louis "Post-Dispatch," is remembered here by one of his juniors, Irving Dilliard, editorial page editor of that paper. He was one of the first group of Nieman Fellows, in 1938. He is author of the sketch on Bovard and many others in the "Dictionary of American Biography." This piece first appeared in the program of the 1948 Page One Ball of the St. Louis Newspaper Guild.*

Not the least of the problems in writing about the complex man who was the great managing editor of the St. Louis **Post-Dispatch** for 30 years—from 1908 to 1938—is the question of what to call him.

His parents named him Oliver Kirby Bovard. Since he regularly threw the blanks from **Who's Who** in America in his vast, desk-high waste basket, it is doubtful whether his full name appeared in print more than a few times in the 73 years of his life.

When he was a young reporter, his intimate **Post-Dispatch** colleagues called him Jack. He himself wrote "30" to that nickname. He was still Jack to fellow reporter Harry James one hearty night in 1900. The next morning James called the office, then on the east side of Broadway between Olive and Pine. James was unaware that his associate of the night before had been promoted to city editor, effective that day. The new city editor answered the telephone.

"Hello, Jack," said James.

A cold voice at the office end of the telephone said formally: "This is Mr. Bovard, the city editor. Please keep that in mind, James."

He signed himself O. K. B., on office memos. Using the editor's blue pencil, he wrote his initials, not large, not small, usually on an upward slant, and all connected, with a quick, encircling loop of the blunt pencil for emphasis. When his devoted stenographer, Phil O'Connell, typed memos for him, they closed with the same three letters, O. K. B. Yet he did not call himself O. K. B. and it is unlikely that many persons, if indeed anyone at all, addressed him in conversation as O. K. B.

In all his dealings at the office as city editor and as managing editor, he was simply and plainly just "Mr. Bovard." That was the way he identified himself on the telephone. That was the way his editors and reporters spoke to him. Paul Y. Anderson, who was for years his favorite reporter, once said: "We never addressed our superior except as 'Mr. Bovard.'"

He was a fine figure of a man. He was tall and erect and carried his handsome head high. He kept himself in excellent physical form by daily exercises. His eyes were gray steel and just as sharp and at times equally hard and penetrating. His lips were firm and tight. There was a suggestion of a downward turn at the corners of his mouth, but it could and often did break into a smile, which now and then was the quick forerunner of a rich laugh. His nose was long and straight and seemed somehow to suggest its acuteness for news.

He spent much of his time away from the **Post-Dispatch** in the out of doors. A consequence was that his face was tanned

almost around the calendar. In later years, hair that turned from gray to white was a striking complement to the bronzed skin. He would have made a magnificent Indian chief.

Mr. Bovard ran a one-man school of journalism throughout nearly 40 years of news planning and editing on the **Post-Dispatch**. His course of instruction was particularly severe and intense when he was city editor, from 1900 to 1908. One of the cubs in that period was Charles G. Ross. Not long after Ross came to the staff, Mr. Bovard sent the freshman reporter to get the facts about the fall of a painter from a high smoke stack in the extreme southwestern part of St. Louis.

It was a hot summer day and a trip to the scene of the accident was a long one. Not only was transportation slow and involved, but it ended much too soon and when the youthful news gatherer alighted from the last street car, he had a lengthy walk. At last he found the factory, where he proceeded to collect information—name, address, and age of the painter, the place, how he happened to fall, the extent of his injuries and so on. The reporter then reversed the weary transportation process, returned to the office and wrote the short item which was indicated. Thinking he had done a good job, he turned the item in to the city editor.

Mr. Bovard glanced over the few lines and called his cub to the desk. "Ross," he asked, "how tall is this smoke stack?"

The new reporter could not say. He gave an "about so-and-so" estimate and repeated that it was quite "tall."

The one-man school of journalism said firmly: "Ross, 'tall' is a relative term. I want you to go back and find out the exact height of that smoke stack."

Young Ross retraced the long, hot trip to the factory. When he at last returned to the office, his weary day had passed into night. But he had the precise height of the smoke stack in feet and inches.

Forty-two years later, as he recalled this journalism lesson, Charles G. Ross sat in the office of the presidential press secretary at the White House. He was not sure whether the short item about the painter's fall found its way into print. But printed or not, it taught him a lesson he has never forgotten—"get the facts, including the color of eyes—and the exact height of all smoke stacks."

Richard L. Stokes was another cub in the days when Mr. Bovard rode the city desk. One of Stokes' first assignments was City Hospital, where the reporter noted that a particularly fat orderly was much in evidence. Stokes soon found occasion to write about the orderly and, describing him, quoted Hamlet: "Oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt."

When this passed under the eye of Mr. Bovard, the city edi-

tor called the City Reporter before him and said: "Stokes, I want to realize on your sense of humor." He issued certain instructions, preparatory to giving the reporter assignments which would permit him to employ humorous and descriptive writing. Not long afterward Stokes was entrusted with writing the story of the Veiled Prophet's ball. It was a big assignment for a young reporter and he threw every adjective in the dictionary into his story.

His masterpiece at length completed, the glowing young author delivered it to the city desk. In due course Mr. Bovard began to cross out a word here and a word there. He kept on crossing out words down through the first page. Stokes could tell that all his cherished adjectives were going out, one by one.

When the reporter could stand it no longer, he went to the city desk and said: "Mr. Bovard, if you cut that, it will bleed."

Mr. Bovard did not look up. He said, "We will staunch the flow," and went on cutting out adjectives.

In the early 1930s, Marquis W. Childs was writing features for the *Post-Dispatch's* Sunday magazine. Mr. Bovard watched Childs' work with much interest and satisfaction. When Harry Niemeyer retired to Hollywood, Childs applied to Mr. Bovard for the vacant post of movie critic.

"Childs," said Mr. Bovard, "you don't want to write about movies. I'll have to find something for you. Leave the matter with me."

Within two weeks, Childs was assigned to the *Post-Dispatch's* Washington Bureau.

The editor who sent Ross back to get the exact height of the smoke stack, who took the adjectives out of Stokes' magnum opus and who assigned Childs to Washington rather than let him write movie reviews was one of the most paradoxical of men any newspaper ever saw.

He was cold and ruthless and even rude. He could end a telephone conversation with "I've heard enough of this" and hang up. He could close a conference at his desk without so much as formal dismissal. Times without number he merely picked up the latest edition on his flat top desk and began to read.

The same Mr. Bovard was warm and considerate and generous. Raymond P. Brandt thinks of him, as do many others who came up under his editorship, as the reporter's friend. Behind the stern task master was an editor who was after all only the master reporter. When a reporter had proved his trustworthiness, Mr. Bovard placed full confidence in him. Then Mr. Bovard trusted the reporter just as he trusted himself.

When a voice in his telephone complained about a news story written by Grattan Kerans, for years the *Post-Dispatch's* highly competent City Hall reporter, Mr. Bovard said:

"I have never had the pleasure of meeting you. I do know Mr. Kerans. Good bye."

He did more than stand behind the reporter. He put himself in the reporter's place. He knew that it took a long time to get some stories. When he allowed a reporter six weeks for an assignment, he meant the reporter had that much time in which to do everything necessary to bring in the completed work. Long before the coming of the guild, he was quick to reward outstanding performance with bonuses and extra holidays.

As Paul Anderson said, if Mr. Bovard was the highest-salaried managing editor in the country, he more than anyone else probably was responsible for the relatively high reporters' salary scale in St. Louis. He was sparing in his praise, but

when he sent a reporter congratulations it meant something and the reporter knew it.

Although Mr. Bovard was severely reticent about details of his life, he did finally prepare a short statement of "biographical facts." This was after "differences" with the publisher, which he described as "irreconcilable," led him to announce his retirement July 29, 1938.

The typed account said that he was born in 1872 in Jacksonville, Ill., "the son of Charles W. and Hester (Bunn) Bovard, natives of Ohio and Illinois respectively." Editing it, he wrote in his birthday, May 27. The account then told that the family removed from Springfield, Ill., to St. Louis in 1880, that the father was a printer, later an editorial worker, that for several years before his retirement in 1904, the father was telegraph editor of the *Post-Dispatch*.

Continuing in the third person, the sketch reported how its subject's "Formal education ended with grammar school; he passed the entrance examination for high school at the age of 14, but was unable to go to high school. He worked at various clerical jobs for several years, and took his first job as a newspaper reporter on the *St. Louis Star*, in 1896. He joined the *Post-Dispatch* staff in 1898, and was made city editor two years later."

The next paragraph recounted how he made a decision not to go to New York. It read as follows.

"He was made managing editor in 1908, but in 1909 was sent to the *New York World* on an indefinite assignment for examination and training by direction of the elder Joseph Pulitzer, founder of the *Post-Dispatch*, and then still directing head of the *World* and the *Post-Dispatch*. Mr. Bovard spent a week with Mr. Pulitzer at Bar Harbor, Me. At the end of 10 months in New York he was offered his choice between remaining on the *World* as assistant managing editor, or returning to the *Post-Dispatch* with 'increased authority and emoluments.' He chose St. Louis in preference to 'playing second fiddle' to the man who had been selected for first place on the *World*."

In this self-prepared sketch, Mr. Bovard took notice of only one thing in his 40 years on the *Post-Dispatch*. He wrote:

"When the false report of the signing of the Armistice came Nov. 7, 1918, four days before the actual signing, Mr. Bovard gave it no credence, and the *Post-Dispatch* at no time published it. The report that the Armistice had been signed was available to the *Post-Dispatch*, and could have been played up in the paper. The Associated Press carried the fact that such a report, not officially verified, had been picked up in a cable message intercepted by the Navy Department's intelligence service."

Another paper had issued an extra, "out about noon of the 7th," which said that "the signing took place at 11 a. m., French time." Mr. Bovard did not fall into the error, this despite the fact that he was subjected to tremendous pressure, not only from outside, but within his office. *Post-Dispatch* newsboys were stoned on the streets and angry crowds gathered at the doors of the *Post-Dispatch*. But Mr. Bovard sat at his desk, immovable and seemingly calm. In explaining why he did not join in the common error, he continued:

"Analysis of the official news from France at the time showed that the German armistice commissioners had not entered the French lines up to that hour, and that Pershing's army was heavily engaged in front of Sedan as late as 1:45 p. m. It was further obvious that the signing in all probability could not take place for several hours after the meeting of the parties. Finally, the message bore no inherent mark of truth; no authority was given. It was mere assertion. While this

was not a factor in reaching the decision, it was interesting to note."

Below that in the familiar blue pencil, the connected initials, "O. K. B.," the enclosing loop, and the date, "August 1938." Thus he ended his sketch of himself.

One by one his star reporters received Pulitzer prizes for distinguished work which he guided or in which he in effect collaborated. John T. Rogers was awarded the reporter's prize for 1927 for the news investigation which resulted in the resignation under fire of Federal Judge George W. English of Illinois. Two years later another reporter's award went to Paul Anderson for work in the oil reserves-missing-bonds discreditors.

In 1932, Charles Ross received the Pulitzer prize for correspondence for a piece of work which Ross himself is the first to say was in considerable part the planning of Mr. Bovard. This was "The Country's Plight," an extended analysis of the economic troubles of the United States at that time, together with challenging suggestions as to "what can be done about it." In 1937, under Mr. Bovard's direction, the news resources of the newspaper were thrown into an investigation of election frauds in St. Louis. The findings were strikingly portrayed with photographs of empty houses and the number of ghost voters written across the pictures. This graphic campaign brought the *Post-Dispatch* the public service award in 1937.

Mr. Bovard's capacity as a directing editor was shown by two vastly different stories. One was the baby hoax of Nellie Muench and the ramified disclosures which went with that fabulous case. The other was the detailed, almost sociological analysis of Chicago as an American phenomenon which was one of Paul Anderson's most incisive pieces of work.

For years his special delight was his Washington bureau, which he often telephoned five or six times a day. So complete was his confidence in the men he put there that not once did he enter the bureau in the 20 years that he directed its operations. He did not attend a Washington Gridiron dinner until 1939, the year after his retirement, and it was then that he first saw the inside of the Washington office to which he gave so much thought and energy.

A scene, never to be forgotten, after that Gridiron dinner, was a forensic battle between Mr. Bovard and Mr. Justice Frankfurter. With a roomful of spectators ringed about for many minutes, the two strong men locked themselves in verbal combat. The judge told the editor how to run a newspaper and the editor countered by telling the judge how to conduct his business on the Supreme Court.

In his latter years, Mr. Bovard became intensely interested in political philosophies and systems. He printed articles by Mussolini on Fascism in Italy. He gave a great deal of attention to what went on in Russia and ran the text of the Soviet Constitution. His columns were the only ones in the country to carry in full an epoch-making speech by Stalin, sent to St. Louis by Brandt who was then in Russia.

Mr. Bovard always knew what he wanted to accomplish and he planned accordingly. In 1931, Brandt collected a wealth of material on Russia and came home in the summer to write a series of articles. The managing editor held up the publication of the series until fall. He would not print the articles in August when many of the very people he wanted to inform were out of the area on vacations in the North and East.

Over the years he developed a department which became known in shop talk as the "dignity" page. Heading the edi-

torial section Sunday and daily, it presented well-thought out articles on serious subjects and notable personalities. In time it became an outstanding vehicle in American journalism for news interpretation and appraisal.

Mr. Bovard had blind spots and every reporter who worked with him could name one or more. Like as not they grew out of his lack of formal education. For although he was among the most intelligent of men, he often discovered late in life facts or ideas with which a university education would have equipped him in his early twenties. Had he met Marxism as a college student, he doubtless would have been less taken with the idea in his sixties.

In the Bovard book, Franklin D. Roosevelt was "the Kerensky of the American Revolution." He thought the New Deal President should have nationalized the banks at the outset of his administration and taken other steps to control capitalism. While some persons hated F. D. R. for going too far, Mr. Bovard criticized him for not going far enough.

But this intensely political editor was Mr. Bovard in his last years. Mr. Bovard who was the great editor was the man of an earlier time.

The earlier Mr. Bovard developed the memos that were models of clarity. He was the editor who laid out the grand strategy and left it for his reporters to execute the tactics. He was the editor who could celebrate brilliant achievement with one breath and condemn slovenliness with the other. He was the editor who looked askance at comics and the other entertainment features of newspapers, the editor who sought to make the newspaper he served into a daily "people's university." He was the editor who held himself aloof from the business office, who took satisfaction in demonstrating that an advertiser enjoyed no special privileges in the news columns.

To a degree that he himself probably never recognized, Mr. Bovard was successful because of conditions around him. The first of these was the fact that his publisher, Joseph Pulitzer, gave him the widest opportunity to exercise his remarkable talents. The second was his access to seemingly unlimited resources for expensive news investigation and coverage. The third was the corps of editors and reporters under him: he could have done little as chief of staff without officers to assist and advise him and carry out his mission.

Whether it was due to an appendicitis operation that scared him or to something else, Mr. Bovard mellowed toward the end of his editorship. A human-side, personal recollection of the writer, who was one of the last cubs to come on under Mr. Bovard, seems a fitting way to close this sketch.

Mr. Bovard came one day out of retirement to the *Post-Dispatch* lunch table at Speck's, where he talked about the sad state of the world and the mess his times had made it. The writer suggested the possibility that things were improving from one generation to the new, and cited the reactionary Hiram Bingham's progressive son, Alfred, and Capitalist Thomas Lamont's son, Corliss, as evidence.

The great editor put his hand on the writer's shoulder and said, "Yes, but you don't understand. I can't wait for these young men to grow up."

Mr. Bovard, reported to the Greatest Editor of All, November 3, 1945. He did not need to wait. He did not need to see. He had done his part and more by helping shape, from his desk in the news room at Twelfth and Olive, the new world in which uncounted young men might work for a more generous life.

# HENRY WATTERSON

## “A Man of Salient Characteristics”

by Tom Wallace

*Tom Wallace broke into newspaper work under Henry Watterson, great Kentucky editor. Now Wallace has retired as editor of the Louisville “Times”. His profile of Watterson is in the courtly, colorful style that recalls the Watterson day in journalism with which Tom Wallace is a living link and a grand example.*

I am not attempting biography, or authoritative evaluation. I am speaking as an ordinary newspaperman who, when he was a young man, worked for an old man who was an extraordinary newspaperman.

You may believe I have wandered from my subject when I begin by saying that at a farm auction in Henry County recently I bought two cows, a work horse and a wheat drill and looked about for a truckman. The man I found was elderly and of Falstaffian figure.

It is not easy to unload from a large truck, in the dark where there is no loading platform, the mixed cargo which my newly-acquired riches constituted.

The truckman, disappointed in a device he tried, grunting and sweating under the fardels he bore, said: “Henry Watterson used to say, ‘What is the good of a cow that gives four gallons of milk and then kicks the bucket over?’”

A few evenings later I sat with 600 editors at a banquet in the Presidential Room of the Statler Hotel in Washington. The Ambassador from Great Britain made the address. The United States Marine Band provided the music.

I wondered if one among the 600 would be remembered as affectionately, quoted with as much gusto, as Henry Watterson is to this day, by the man at the plow handles, the man at the truck’s tail, and be at the same time a man of legendary fame in newspaperdom.

Physical aspects influence lives and affect reputations.

Possibly the handsomest Kentuckian of Henry Watterson’s time was Colonel Nicholas Smith of Shelbyville, who distinguished himself by marrying a daughter of Horace Greeley, and by saying, when newspapers had spoken lightly of him, that he did not understand when he married the daughter of a famous editor that he must accept the American press as his mother-in-law.

Mr. Watterson’s figure was not commanding. At play in boyhood he suffered the loss of an eye. He never sought the aid of surgery; never used an artificial eye. The disfigurement was great and he was throughout life sensitive about it. Yet he was so striking that in any crowd, anywhere, in any hotel lobby or street group, he was observed and remarked. Anyone who saw him was sure he was a distinguished man. Sculptors admired his brow.

Among men of picturesque lives of Mr. Watterson’s period were Buffalo Bill, Mark Twain and John Hunt Morgan.

He possessed the circus instinct of Buffalo Bill, the personal glamor of Mark Twain and the dash of General Morgan. Kentucky’s cavalier of boots and saddles required, for brilliant performance, independence of action and of decision. That was true no less of Kentucky’s cavalier of pen and inkpot.

Watterson, who won international celebrity by writing unsigned articles in a newspaper which had less than 20,000 circulation in his heyday, said the only editor who could amount to anything was a man of salient characteristics owning a majority of the stock. Watterson had Morgan’s faculty for arriving at the right time. His pen was, like the white plume of Henry of Navarre, an inspiration to lesser men, but without freedom he would have been a hobbled horse in a cavalry charge.

In nearly all pungent generalities there is exaggeration. Mr. Watterson, a man of salient characteristics, did not own a majority of the stock. But he had freedom because his publisher, Walter N. Haldeman, was wise enough to realize that it would be profitable to the *Courier-Journal* for him to refrain from interfering with his editor.

The latter-day editor who stands next to Watterson in celebrity, William Allen White, did own a majority of the stock, and had salient characteristics. He won instant national recognition by a single editorial headed, “What’s the Matter With Kansas?,” not because the Atlantic Seaboard and the Pacific Coast were concerned about what was or might be rotten in young Hamlet’s distant Denmark, but because the article was written strikingly. But throughout his career White was perhaps known more widely as a result of his authorship of substantial books than because of his caliber as an editorial writer. His name is, however, associated lastingly with the editorial I have mentioned and with one under the heading, “Mary White.”

His fame as a writer was not as wide as Watterson’s nor was his fame as a personality. But Watterson might have cited White in support of his theory of how to make an editorial page readable.

Mr. Watterson did not like the formula; did not think the contents of the editorial page, in form or in substance, should be arrived at in conference.

He believed each editorial writer should be, and should feel himself to be, a doer of creative work, not a doer of another’s bidding.

He believed that the directed, or suggested article, in newspaper vernacular, “assigned,” would not be as live, be it grave or gay, as the article written by the same man upon impulse and upon a theme of his own choice.

Wishing to be free personally, he applied the golden rule in handling his subordinates. He once said to me, “Every editorial writer is an egotist. Only an egotist would seek to earn his daily bread expressing his opinions.

“It is impossible to get good work out of a writer without allowing him to retain his self-respect and feel that he enjoys the respect and confidence of his superiors.”

I asked him if he could give me any suggestions as to how

I might improve myself; what I might read; how I might proceed in selecting subjects.

He said: "No, I don't believe I can be of any service to you. I can only suggest that you read what you like and write as you like. I am told you can read. If I find you cannot write, one of us will have to resign—and it might be you. In the meantime, you might try associating with me. It will not hurt your mind, but it may ruin your morals."

I cannot recall his ever giving me other suggestions beyond advising me not to rely on memory when quoting directly.

As a result of that advice I bought a copy of Bret Harte's short stories because I wished to quote a character in "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," Mother Shipton.

After my editorial was published, Marse Henry said: "Do you remember what I told you about verifying quotations?"

I said I did.

"Well," he said, "you didn't pay much attention. Now if there is one author I know from cover to cover it's Bret Harte. You quoted Mother Shipton. You will see I corrected the quotation, for the good of your soul and your education. I chanced to see the proof of your article and averted an error."

I told him that I had observed the amendment and charged it to Harrison Robertson (the leading associate editor), but that my quotation was copied from the book.

Marse Henry, much surprised, said that at any rate the incident proved him right in advising me not to trust, in such matters, to memory.

Mr. Watterson rarely saw proofs of articles other than his own. Usually he saw them first in print. As a result, articles which did not reflect his personal view sometimes were published. Such articles were subject to criticism as his work. That did not disturb him. He thought a vital page preferable to one made by a regimented group of editorial writers, who might produce a dull page.

He sometimes referred to "the irrespressible young man"—in print—but he did not repress the young man.

News articles which misrepresented him often were sources of embarrassment to him but he was always kind to the transgressor.

One night short-handedness resulted in the sports editor's being put in charge of the telegraph desk.

A dispatch said that the Democratic National Committee had made Henry Watterson campaign fund collector and that because he knew so many distillers, and was a prominent wet, he would line the distillers up and collect a victory-making fund.

Mr. Watterson said in an editorial that the young man who had allowed that scandalous falsehood to get into the *Courier-Journal* had been summarily discharged from further responsibility; in fact, thrown, kicked or rolled out of the organization and that, in addition, he had been hanged, drawn and quartered, eviscerated and thrown out of a window.

He walked around to the sports department, showed a proof to William Withers Douglas, sports editor, and said: "There, Billy, you will see what I have done to you, and if you ever do anything like that to me again, I shall take you off football, baseball and horse races and put you to reporting sermons."

When I was assistant city editor of the Louisville *Herald*, the Pope was on his deathbed. We had to take turns "sitting up with the Pope," as we called it; staying on late watch to get out an extra in the event of the death of His Holiness after 3 a. m.

When everyone else was tuckered out, the sports editor, Screw Sanders—whose real given name, rarely used, was Verney—took the desk in charge.

The managing editor, John Nelson, a cousin of Thomas Nelson Page, was a former professor of Greek at Pantops Academy. The city editor was a former jailer of Jefferson County. Mr. Sanders had formerly been connected with the Turf Exchange or some comparable establishment.

I was amused but the former professor of Greek was horrified, the next morning by an eight-column front-page *Herald* headline, "Pope Leads Death By a Nose."

Mr. Watterson's theory about the editorial page's being more live if not formed under formula is, perhaps, supported by the fact that the most famous editorial in United States files was written by an obscure associate editor in response to a letter from a little girl who asked if Santa Claus were real.

No editorial conference would have assigned such an article perhaps. And surely none would have assigned the article "Mary White," which Mr. White wrote when his daughter met death in an accident.

I wish to say something about Mr. Watterson as a phrase-maker. Sometimes he plucked his phrases from the soil, not, I believe, because he aimed them at a close-to-the-soil audience, but because folk sayings are vigorous and picturesque.

He also contrived phrases, sometimes more sounding in an editorial than sound under analysis, and used any one of them as often as he liked, holding that a phrase used only once in a daily newspaper is virtually thrown away.

As a maker of such phrases he was as robust, as buoyant, as self-pleased, as the Blacksmith in Robin Hood who sings: "The broadsword's the weapon to conquer fields. Honor the lad who shakes it. But naught is the man who the broadsword wields compared with the man who makes it."

His "To Hell With the Hohenzollern and the Hapsburg," was a general heading over a series of First World War editorials which were translated into many languages. The series resulted in his winning the Pulitzer Prize. At a grand banquet in New York at which Mr. Watterson was honor guest, electric lights at one end of the banquet hall screamed "To Hell With the Hohenzollerns" and at the other end electric lights shouted "To Hell With the Hapsburgs."

Both royal houses have, by the way, gone—somewhere.

The Watterson phrase "through a slaughter house to an open grave" hasn't much meaning, perhaps, but it attracted more attention than "a precarious course," which a scholarly editor might have used.

"The star-eyed goddess of reform" isolated from time, text and theme, may be a bit stilted, but in an editorial pulsating with emotion it served. The editor who hasn't emotion and does not awaken emotion may be judicious, logical, learned, but will not affect anyone or anybody, except that he may cure insomnia.

Mr. Watterson, often bellicose in print, was as often philosophical. He could, upon occasion, in words of Bottom the Weaver, roar you as gently as any sucking dove.

For example, he once wrote an editorial headed "Ida Sar-ton McKinley," celebrating the love of an invalid Penelope for her Ulysses.

Her Ulysses was a President of the United States upon whose head Marse Henry had played his battleax in the hearty manner of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's bloody-handed knight,

Sir Nigel, who referred to his encounters as a little pleasant bickering.

The editorial has been called the essay form nearest conversation. That is a good characterization, but at its biggest and best it is somewhat akin to oratory.

Oratory is emotion reduced to sculptured sentences.

It has been said of sculpture: "The more the marble wastes the more the statue grows."

The editorial writer is Phidias in a rush.

He does not devote enough time to the marble, but he does approach oratory, in mood and manner.

At a newspaper banquet in Columbus, Ohio, some years ago I sat next Sir Wilmott Lewis, Washington correspondent of the *London Times*, a great admirer of Watterson. I told him that I had heard often the saying that no man is great to his valet, but that it did not apply to my appraisal of Marse Henry.

Sir Wilmott quoted a philosopher as having said: "It is true that no man is great to his valet but that is because a valet is only a valet."

That encouraged me.

Not all that is said of Henry Watterson in newspaperdom is praise. Had he cocked his ears he might have heard in his Louisville newspaper group, in Ingersoll's words, "the hiss of envy's snakes."

Neither Kentucky nor Louisville has formally recognized Henry Watterson. There are in Louisville under his name a cigar and a hotel. As a result, and for lack of other information, some Louisvillians believe he was a cigar manufacturer and a hotel proprietor.

Here my simple, if insufficiently short, annals of the great should end. But I am tempted to say in conclusion a word about the private life of Henry Watterson.

There is a vast difference between legend and scandal. Most of the tales that are told of Marse Henry heroize him; but make him the hero of tales which present him with some inaccuracy.

They make him a devil-may-care genius, a child in money matters and a devotee of the gaming table and the flowing bowl.

An oft-told story is that he was accustomed to replenishing his draw poker funds by going to the *Courier-Journal* cash drawer and scooping up money; that someone remonstrated, saying it was all right for him to draw cash as needed, but that in behalf of the bookkeeper he should leave a note saying what he had taken. As runs the tale, he left, next time, the note, "All—H. W."

With a pile of reprints of that story on his desk one day he said to me: "The boys mean well. The publicity is useful, and it is accepted gratefully. But if I should die tonight my affairs would be found in order in a tin box. All the administrator would have to do would be to say to one heir 'Here's yours' and to another 'There's yours,' and I would leave each of my children about \$100,000. I have never made money—getting a major objective but I have taken excellent care of what I have had the opportunity to save."

It so turned out.

Mr. Watterson had no puritanical aversion to merry evenings but, I believe, little experience of melancholy mornings.

He was steadfastly interested in his interior; said he considered the wines which were customarily served with a formal dinner, beginning with sauterne and running through red wines into champagne and liqueurs, indigestible. He liked champagne and agreed with Horace as to its being all right to unbend.

In the Chile Con Carne Club, his afternoon, after-work, hideout hung the well-known toast:

"Look not upon the wine when it is red,  
but drink it instead.  
And if it's white, all right."

But at the Chile Club, where he often played pitch with his dear friend John Macauley, he drank beer.

At what he called his crony dinners at his home, informal stag dinners—I am not trying to elevate myself to cronyhood, and I am sure I was invited for the benefit of my mind rather than for the value of my company—nothing alcoholic was served. Mr. Watterson did not drink for stimulation, declared whisky unfit to drink, and lived a long life uninjured physically by alcohol.

I shall not dwell upon the wide range of his social contacts, which revealed the breadth of his sympathies and enriched his stock of editorial material, further than to say that he liked literati, actors, musicians, prize-fighters, opera singers, princes, merchant princes and all the rest, and was liked by them.

One evening at a crony dinner he told of an adventure which resulted from exhibition, in a Louisville theater, of an animal billed as the learned pig.

"Just a big rough hog, a whale of a hog," said Marse Henry reminiscently.

The learned pig played cards. The impresario challenged any human player to try to beat him.

"Dave Yandell and I accepted the challenge," said Mr. Watterson. "We sat at a table with the hog, on the stage, and did our best. The hog beat us. He did not handle the cards, but he indicated the cards to be played. I couldn't understand it, nor could Dave."

From all of his widespread contacts Marse Henry got something which broadened him. And he gave to all his associates—with the exception, perhaps, of the learned pig—something that broadened them.

(Copyright 1949 by Tom Wallace)

## Newsprint Shortage

I can report that American newspapers are now being printed on paper made of wood and straw. In Chicago the editor-in-chief of one of the journals told me that the cost of newsprint is one of the heaviest expenses of publication. The first task of anyone who begins to publish a newspaper is to buy or rent a stream, the water power of which can be used to make paper of the nearby forest."

Report of Charles Boissevain (1881).

(From Oscar Handlin's *This Was America* by permission of the publishers, Harvard University Press; copyright 1949.)

# Journalism Schools --- Guardians of the Press

by Ernest H. Linford

From an address to the American Association of Teachers of Journalism,  
Boulder, Colorado, September 1, 1948.

The hard-bitten newspaperman who has worked his way up and learned the ropes "the hard way" is traditionally expected to be antagonistic to journalism schools and their products. I am not conscious of any such prejudice.

I am an enthusiastic believer that the journalism schools are doing much and can do more in raising standards of newspapering, both through the young men and their direct influence on newspapers. From the journalism schools may come a genuine newspaper conscience, a true code of ethics, a high standard of public responsibility. Journalism schools are in a sense GUARDIANS OF THE PRESS.

Two decades as a reporter and editor, and a few months in the ivory tower of an editorial writer have convinced me that a newspaperman should know everything possible about everything. It is difficult to say what is MOST important, everything is so important. Let me give you an example from my own experience.

Two years ago, after "reaching middle age" in the newspaper game, I had the rare opportunity of returning to college to pick up what I had missed. At Harvard I found myself so anxious to make up for lost time, to fill in the many voids of my academic education that I spent about a third of the time frantically sampling courses, trying to crowd altogether as much as possible into a few months. At the end of the year, which proved highly beneficial and enjoyable, I compared my course with those of other Nieman Fellows, all working newspapermen. No two were alike. There is no such thing as a newspaperman's course. Nieman Fellows strike out in all directions.

I finally settled down to courses in foreign relations, American social and intellectual history, western history, labor relations-economics, and social relations. I even took a course in writing. I would recommend these studies for other newspapermen and future newspapermen.

If I were prescribing courses for journalistic students I should include philosophy, perhaps psychology (certainly social relations), a great deal of history, as much government and political science as could be crowded in, all economics possible, courses in foreign relations, some sociology and if possible a course in human relations. I would list languages, mathematics, physics, music, public speaking and scientific courses in the "luxury" bracket, depending upon whether the student had decided to specialize. Certainly, the newspaperman should be well acquainted with the classics, should know something about poetry, the Bible and Shakespeare. I don't know about writing courses. Presumably the person who chooses journalism for a course already has a flair for writing, though this isn't always the case. If he doesn't have, I don't know what he can do in a composition course. If he does, his style can be improved in a properly-taught writing class. If I had my college days to live over, I would acquire a working knowledge of shorthand, even if it crowded out another "must." To take down verbatim what is said is a tremendous advantage.

In my experience there have been two general types of young journalists. (1) Those who are imbued with the love

of the game, who have a nose for news, a sense of high adventure and all the qualities but the ability to write. (2) The other type writes smoothly, knows his grammar, has a feeling for words, but lacks the old spirit of do-or-die for the Daily Bugle, a necessity to the game. There are exceptions. Some people have both talents, but I have run into very few.

We have to admit that standards are improving and reporters are better than they were a decade ago. Fortunately for the newspapers, journalism schools are weeding out some misfits, drifters and derelicts (though they may also screen out persons of competence and genius). Anyway, the days when all it took was a jaunty air, a gift of gab and unlimited guts are gone—forever, I hope. Our reporters don't have to wear Phi Beta Kappa keys, but they are a more sober, better educated, more dependable, earnest lot—and journalism schools have played a part in improving them.

Today's reporter carries a heavy responsibility to society. The broadest kind of training is hardly broad enough. Young people can learn types and counting headlines in the news room and shop. They have no time to catch up on history and economics there.

If I were a teacher—in any department—I should be acutely concerned today over the freedoms which are coming in for so much attention. Journalism teachers, especially, should be aware of challenges and responsibilities in connection with these freedoms. I would spend much time and thought—as I already do—trying to figure out formulas and ways to help people think straight.

I want to read from an editorial of a metropolitan paper. It is entitled "If Government Were Perfect." The earlier paragraphs point out that genuine Americanism is "the dearest thing in life. It is the highest form of government on earth," etc.

This is the closing paragraph, the punch line—

"Our institutions of learning should come out affirmatively for freedom and democracy. They should teach freedom, design their courses to show why a planned economy can lead only to socialism and dictatorship; they should establish in the minds of all their students the pre-eminence of our system over any other."

Editorials like this should set us wondering about the curious interpretations being placed on freedom by some editorial writers, and by powerful groups everywhere. It wasn't so long ago that Hitler was promising freedom by the method of private regimentation.

How can we best teach the pre-eminence of our system? Only by honest, objective and thorough teaching with an aim of equipping the students to base their convictions and loyalties on clear reasoning. This is quite different from a program of indoctrination. No doubt our schools and colleges should present a clearer and fuller picture of American history and political science. No American can possibly know too much about our country, our past, our institutions and people. While stressing the meaning of freedom and democracy, it would be a grave mistake to fall into the per-

verted educational system for which we condemn the Soviets or which debased Hitler's Germany.

There is no call for teaching that America has always been right, that its heroes always led perfect lives, that American methods and institutions are always above reproach—that Americans generally are superior. Such teaching can defeat its own purpose.

There is a grave danger from those who call themselves Americans who are "dedicated" to principles of "the overthrow and destruction of the United States government . . . by force and violence." Our government must protect itself from attack within.

But some phases of the current witch hunt bring under suspicion anyone capable of intellectual curiosity. The prospect is chilling indeed should this become more of an accepted principle of American government.

As teachers of young people who are expected some day to stimulate ideas and help mould public opinion, this problem is your problem. You are doubly involved because it is a problem of education and of information—of the schools and of the newspapers.

There is altogether too much standardization of ideas today. I doubt that there ever was a time when so many experts were so busy doing the thinking for the masses. And very naturally, some editors are falling into the "booby traps" skillfully set up by these experts—unwittingly becoming their tools. They shout their opposition to governmental regimentation, meantime pushing us further into corporate regimentation. Without realizing it, we parrot the propaganda and smart-sounding phrases of these wise publicity people who in effect have the potent power to change mass thinking on a push-button basis.

The "line," of course, is opposition to change, to block any thought or movement which would disturb things as they are. These propagandists make fine use of fine, old American clichés, all to the benefit of greed and the status quo. We have the finest system on earth. Anybody who doesn't agree, who dares to criticize a loftily-worded creed may be classified as a "Red" or a "pink." This period in history might well be called the era of the nasty little names. People and things are being ruined by them. Letter combinations are also being given an evil connotation, such as TVA, MVA, planned economy.

Some of the west is paralyzed by what has been called the **cattle baron state of mind**. Many of our stockmen's associations—the western entrenched interests in control—go along with the National Association of Manufacturers and the U. S. Chamber of Commerce in matters far beyond the stand on high tariffs, and opposition to river authorities and reciprocal trade treaties.

It wasn't an alert western press which discovered the far-reaching effects of the attempt of a relatively few stockman permittees to acquire ownership of millions of acres of public land at low prices. It was a transplanted westerner, an ivory tower man, a former professor named Bernard DeVoto, who first sounded the warning. He did it in *Harper's* magazine, the circulation of which is not large, but it reached a sufficient number of the right people to start the ball rolling. By poking fun at western foibles, DeVoto made westerners angry. (I went to see him at Cambridge.) Well, to shorten a long story, the Western press went to work to prove DeVoto was wrong, that the press didn't "kow-tow" to the cowmen. And much to the surprise of organized stockmen, who hadn't been challenged in their own bailiwick since the early-day troubles with the grangers, they had opposition

at home. Now the land grab has been stopped dead in the cow tracks.

It used to be that the editor had to keep a six gun in his desk to back up his opinions in case an irate reader sought to put the debate on a demonstrative level.

Paul Gallco expressed it effectively recently: "Today it is different. Lash out at some industry, organization and individual in the course of your fearless upholding of the honest ideas of something or other, and what happens? Your telephone rings. You take the instrument off the hook. Treacle pours from it, followed by oil and molasses.

"A soft, smooth and loving voice says, 'Great little piece you had, old man. The Big Chief was mightily interested in what you had to say, mighty interested. Say, what about having lunch with us some day next week and talking things over? We might be able to give you some more information, etc.'

"They no longer shoot you. Instead they invite you to lunch . . ."

Unions and farm organizations are learning the techniques of modern public relations, but nowhere perhaps is the propaganda machine—the whip hand—held more tightly than by the power interests. A complete service, cross indexed and kept up to date, is furnished every private utility, and if ever an editor by chance happens to mention TVA in a favorable light, either in news or editorial columns, he is subjected to smoothly-put, potent arguments over the scotch and soda. Unless you are a specialist in engineering and accounting or have a staff of experts at hand you cannot effectively debate the issues with these "missionaries" who present their arguments so well.

In the old days I was chased out of the railroad yards and threatened with arrest for trespassing if I ever returned, after offending the officialdom with news or editorials that all was not well with operation. Now, a polite, scholarly delegation calls on me, spends a whole afternoon courteously and insistently pointing out the faults in my thinking, and presenting an impressive array of facts and figures I don't understand. I suspect that many an editorial blast on the Bulwinkle bill died aborning because editors felt incapable of arguing it out endlessly with the trained economists and debaters of the railroad lobby.

Yes, a newspaperman has to know economics—and tricks of public relations.

You don't have to go out and crusade against this situation, but you have a solemn obligation to acquaint your students with the condition of the American press, to prepare him for a life that will not be without troubles or frustrations. He will need to be able to face facts without developing ulcers.

The sad story of the liberal press is well known to you. The demise of *PM* is one of the dismal chapters in the story, and chargeable to mismanagement or not, the failure of *PM's* original purpose is a loss to American journalism. The Chicago *Sun's* near setting is another disappointing story as is the heartbreak of the Magazine '48 to make the grade. The Boetiger experiment in the southwest and its failure, the slow poisoning of the *New Republic* by Henry Wallace, the experience of Bill Townes in Tacoma, the firing of *Collier's* editor who was brave enough to publish some articles "on the other side," all add up to a situation where there are fewer and fewer publications willing to fight the battles of the little fellow.

As *GUARDIANS OF THE PRESS*, these problems are your problems. You are to train the bright young men who

will take up these problems where we oldsters leave off.

There is a brighter side, and I am heartened by a number of things.

The fact that there has been so much criticism of the press—even within its own columns—indicates that there is more widespread realization of its faults and the need for cleaning up.

Some 75 years ago Bill Nye founded the Laramie **Boomerang** with about \$1000 of his own money. Today you couldn't establish and keep going a daily paper in a small town for much less than a quarter of a million dollars. But there are changes in the wind. For the first time in 50 years, some important inventions are being tried out in the publishing business. Processes are being perfected which may bring back a competitive press, which may break up some of the monopolies which are a cancer on communities and even whole states and regions. The government printing office has a machine in use which bypasses the typewriter and linotype. You are acquainted with the varitype and the experiment in Chicago while the printers are on strike. Ironically, it could be that the Chicago strike may advance newspapering methods—and freedom of the press—many years.

Many metropolitan papers are fully alert to their responsi-

bilities, and their total effect is good. The constructive things being done with the New York **Herald Tribune**, the courageous, intelligent and continuous fight for the common man of the St. Louis **Post-Dispatch**, the completeness of the New York **Times**, the freshness and quality of the Chicago **Daily News'** foreign service, the objective, high standard of service of the Baltimore **Sun**, the Atlanta **Constitution**, Louisville **Courier-Journal**, the **Christian Science Monitor**—you can name others—show that good journalism is far from dead. In some plants it is getting better all the time.

Dwelling away from the market place as you do for the most part, you are in a position to see the whole forest as well as the trees. You have the advantage of a viewpoint from the outside, and if you are practical-minded, you see the inside too. In your ivory tower you are in a position to survey the scene, to help us to develop more responsibility and public conscience.

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Ernest H. Linford, editorial writer on the Salt Lake City **Tribune**, was until last year the editor of the Laramie (Wyo.) **Republican-Boomerang**. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1946-7, has contributed other articles to **Nieman Reports**.

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## “THE AP SAYS . . .” (The Stringer's Lament)

by Russell Collins

The shrill ringing of the telephone shatters the sleeping quiet of my apartment. I fumble for the 'phone, my mind registering automatically that it is 2 a.m. by the bedside clock.

“Hello.” My throat is choked with sleep.

The voice on the wire tells me it's the Boston **Globe** calling. Consciousness begins to seep through.

The **Globe** man is apologetic without saying so.

“Russ,” he says, “the story you filed tonight says the mayor of West Berlin will arrive at Westover Field at 6:35 Sunday morning. The AP says he'll be in at 4:30. How about it?”

There it is again. “The AP says . . . The AP says . . . The AP says . . .” “The AP says this,” or “The AP says that.”

I feel like screaming into the telephone, “I don't give a god-damn what the AP says—the mayor of West Berlin will arrive at the time I said. To hell with the AP.”

But I know it isn't the fault of the nice guy from the **Globe** with whom I'm carrying on this foolish conversation at 2 in the morning. I know exactly what happened in the **Globe** office that led up to this business.

On the city desk at the **Globe** are two news stories. One is from Russ Collins, the **Globe's** Springfield correspondent. Its physical appearance is poor, uninspiring. It's a pasted-up conglomeration of teletype tape that came from the Springfield correspondent via the Western Union teleprinter in the **Globe** office.

Lying beside it is a crisp, commanding bulletin on clean, white stock, hot off the AP wire in the **Globe** office. It looks authoritative. It commands respect. Everything about it is positive, inspiring confidence. Factually incorrect—but positive.

The man at the city desk studies both items. The **Globe** stringer's story says one thing. The AP says something else. What to do is obvious: call the stringer and find out if he's wrong.

The man at the city desk cannot reach any other intelligent answer to his problem because he doesn't have all the facts in the case.

He doesn't know, for instance, that his man Collins in Springfield has talked with Westover Field as late as 11 p.m., the last possible hour for checking plane arrivals.

He doesn't know that the AP correspondent in the area didn't bother to check again after 4 p.m. because when you work as a stringer for AP it just isn't worthwhile.

This will come as a blow to many newspapermen—especially publishers—who look upon the AP as something sacred (the late PM once said that criticizing AP was like spitting on a cathedral) but the AP pays its correspondents the munificent sum of 50 cents a story.

That's right—50 cents a story.

It doesn't matter what the story. If it happens to be a little item about the city council it's 50 cents. Or if it happens to be a major news break, it's still 50 cents.

I must correct myself at this point. The AP has paid more than 50 cents a story. I know one fellow who is an AP stringer. He gave AP 48 stories in one month and every one of them was used on the wire. He got a check for \$25 which amounts to 52.8 cents a story. So the AP actually does pay more than 50 cents a story, if you want to get technical, provided you give them enough stories. Pardon the sarcasm.

Seriously, though, the whole point I'm trying to make is this: the AP is no better than its correspondents in the field.

Personally, I have never worked for AP and hope I never

do as a stringer. The Boston Globe pays me well for the work I do for that paper. So do Time and Life which I also represent in Western Massachusetts. The result is that these publications get the best coverage I can give them.

But take the AP stringer in Springfield or Walla-Walla or Medicine Hat. How far will he move from his desk to get an accurate set of facts for AP when he knows he will be paid 50 cents a story?

And I want to make one fact clear. Most of AP's stringers are top-grade newsmen who know their jobs and know their territory. It's merely that they are motivated by fundamental economics when the payoff is 50 cents.

The result is that the fellow representing AP in the field—after he gets over the neophyte's thrill of bragging that he works for the AP—is going to give them exactly 50 cents worth. And 50 cents doesn't go far in the newspaper business today.

As the largest newsgathering organization, the Associated Press takes great pride in its coverage and in looking down its nose at its competitors. It even has, in New York City, something it calls the "World Desk." (A cynical friend of mine, upon hearing about the AP's World Desk, wondered if God is the slot man and the archangels sit around the rim.)

But when I see an AP story from Athens or Rangoon or Delhi, I wonder if some stringer out there is getting 50 cents

a story. And then I start comparing and when I do, the reputation of AP suffers. Because I know that the little stringer in Blost, Iran, isn't going to break his neck for AP when he's getting paid at the Iranian equivalent of 50 cents a story.

To be objective about this problem, though, one acknowledges that AP has some of the world's most capable newsmen in its bureaus. I wouldn't question for a moment the ability of 90 per cent of them because I know and respect many AP men. They are capable and—these days—quite well paid. So it's likely that AP's reputation for excellent coverage in its bureaus is justified.

My only suggestion to AP is this: bring up the stringer to the level of work you expect in your bureaus. Then AP's reputation for the best coverage—which to me means accurate coverage—will be justly deserved.

How? Pay him more money.

I suppose at heart I share a desire with everyone in the newspaper business to see the lot of the individual newsman improved. But I have an additional, selfish motive in making public my complaint about the AP's scandalous treatment of its stringers.

I hate to hear the 'phone ring at 2 a.m. because the conversation always starts the same way:

"The AP says . . ."

## Reviews

# For A More Independent Press

by Grady Clay

**Freedom of Information.** By Herbert Brucker. Macmillan Co., New York. \$4.00. 291 pp.

This is a book about a double image. One shows the world as we see it; the other shows the world as it truly exists. Herbert Brucker wants to bring the two images closer together. His book is a rewarding account of the hellish difficulties in that process.

"Like the victims of Nazi and Soviet rule, we think we know the real world we live in. But we don't. . . . We are at the mercy of the news we get, of the facts—true or false, adequate or not—that come to us from the outside world."

Brucker is convinced that American readers are on a mighty thin diet. And he is equally convinced that the diet is better than the rest of the world's; and better than in the unlamented days of Horace Greeley and the viperish party press.

How should the diet be improved? Mr. Brucker's answers are scattered throughout this well-written and enjoyable book. He is not a dogmatist, but more the family doctor passing out prescriptions along with gossip, bright briefs of history, good advice and diverting comment. He is editor of the *Hartford Courant*, and a veteran of the Pulitzer School of Journalism faculty, the old *New York World*, and the *O. W. I.*

Journalism can't be improved merely by letting reporters write under by-lines and color stories as they see them without trying to give both sides, says Mr. Brucker.

Nor by creating an endowed press. For an endowed press "might approach theoretical perfection, but alas the more perfect it was, the fewer readers it would have."

Nor by wiping out newspaper ownership of radio stations. He deduces from the F.C.C. hearings that there was "no concrete evidence of bias stemming from newspaper control of radio."

Nor by Morris Ernst's "whole drawerful of remedies, every one of which would force a change by law. . . . If his-

tory shows anything it is that legal compulsion alone does not bring social change."

The Brucker prescription calls for:

1. Publisher and editor reform. They "must give up, not only outwardly but in their hearts, all liaison with economic and political groups. They must sponsor no Committee for Constitutional Government, no partisan tax doctrine or labor policy, nor any cause other than independent journalism. They must not hanker after political office. They must not own a paper as an incident to owning or managing some other business. They must fight until there is not a paper left in the country with the hooks of a bank in its financial nerves. They must battle for independence until no paper or power company, no department store, no great copper or chemical industry, is so much as suspected of participating in the ownership of any medium of public information."

As far as I am concerned, he could have stopped right there and made his case. But he kept going.

2. More newspapers should shift to the readers' side in public debates. Long ago the press was the little fellow's spokesman against big government. But now "Instead of identifying himself with it (the press), the citizen regards it as a big powerful and remote entity, with motives and interests that may well be entirely different from his own. He believes in the free press still, but no longer with fire in his eyes."

3. Russian newspapers, with their peculiar addiction to self-criticism, plus a flow of folksy copy from their readers, are examples more American newspapers should follow, says Mr. Brucker. "These (Russian) amateur contributions give to Soviet readers a sense of personal participation in the work of the press. Such a direct personal interest, as distinct from a spectator interest, is unknown to the readers of even our smaller and therefore more intimate American dailies. Somehow the Russians have won a devotion from their readers that American papers used to enjoy, but have to a con-

siderable extent lost as they became bigger and more impersonal."

4. Publishers must give up party ties too. Mr. Brucker believes that "either party allegiance or devotion to the interests of one economic group among the population is, today, a betrayal of the newspaper's trust. . . . Once the publishers get to the point where they would rather be right than Republican, our press will fulfill a function not unlike that of the independent voters."

5. And of course the Hippocratic oath of truth and devotion to the public good. But not for young reporters; they hardly need it. "Rather it is the men and women who manage, and still more those who own, the press and its allies."

6. The rising labor press. "This looks like the most hopeful of the lot (among proposals to endow papers) because labor's interests are close to the interests of the mass of men. Thus the labor press might represent precisely the part of the population that the standard press, because of its big-business foundation, tends to neglect. . . . It can fill the holes left in the commercial press's presentation of the physical world."

Mr. Brucker appears worried over the American Newspaper Guild's efforts to organize everybody in the shop. He compares it to some of Dr. Goebbels' devices for controlling German editorial workers—a comparison which seems to me pretty far fetched.

7. None of these prescriptions is as close to Mr. Brucker's heart as the one he saves for the end of the book: the divide-and-rule philosophy of ownership, now visible in the *Milwaukee Journal*. Its employes now control the paper through ownership of the stock. Mr. Brucker believes this "financial control by a widespread group of the men who get out the paper offers the most hopeful approach to the freedom of information that society needs."

When the *Chicago Tribune* is sold to its employes; when the last front-office must be thrown in the wastebasket; when the last publisher resigns from his local Republican hierarchy; then Mr. Brucker's dreams will come true. I hope we're both around to see it happen.

# A Reporter Looks at Missouri Valley

by Robert de Roos

**The Missouri Valley.** By Rufus Terral. Yale University Press. \$3.75. 274 pp.

A lot has happened in the great valley of the Missouri between the time Daniel Webster described it as "this region of savages and wild beasts, of deserts, of shifting sands and whirlwinds, of dust, of cactus and prairie dogs" and today when a couple of Federal agencies are fighting for a chance to spend a billion dollars there.

Mr. Terral takes a newspaperman's look at the valley. He, like Webster, sees its dust and whirlwinds, its erosion, floods and shifting river channels. He sees, too, the strangely isolated people who live in this semi-arid land, notes their needs and their relation to the rest of the country.

The Missouri Valley is a spectacular monument to America's get-rich-quick dream. Into it, in the years following the Civil War, poured the thousands who were hungry for lands of their own and a chance to make a living in a new country. Most of them were ignorant of the conditions of the valley. Many of them went broke. Those who returned to the East were replaced by newly-arrived hopefuls, no less ignorant, no less certain they could make a go of things.

The plain fact of the matter, as Mr. Terral makes clear, is that they tried to farm lands which were never meant for the plow. They turned under the tough plains grasses and prayed for rain. They sent too many cattle against the grass. In short and in a short while, they mined the country of its riches.

"In most of the Missouri Valley . . . riches accumulated through unimaginable lengths of time in the soil have been squandered in a single lifetime," Mr. Terral says. "In Kansas, 40,000,000 acres, three-fourths of the state, have been eroded. . . . And an area of 28,000 miles is eroded in southwest Nebraska, more than a third of the state. . . . The soils of North Dakota have been so much depleted by blowing that none are now classified as first grade. . . . Of the 316 million acres of land in the Missouri Valley it is estimated that more than two-fifths has been damaged by erosion."

When prices are high and the rains come, the farmers have lush times. But

high prices and rains are not consistent and the farmers hum a sad refrain:

"Boom and bust  
Plague of dust."

The valley takes in all of Nebraska, most of Montana, the Dakotas, north-eastern Colorado, parts of Wyoming, Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota—529,350 square miles. In all this great territory, only the meandering Missouri River is a unifying force. The river is the common denominator and the common hope and problem.

It is a hope because some believe it can be used for greatly increased navigation, which, among other things, would bring railroad rates down. It is a hope because of irrigation water it carries. And it is a problem because these same waters contribute heavily to dangerous floods.

Mr. Terral's early chapters are sad ones. And yet he tells the story of the discovery of the high plains, of their despoliation by a careless generation as a man who feels at home in the turbulent valley and who knows the moods of the land. His is not a hopeless story.

For there are ways that the Missouri Valley can be returned to sound and productive use. Not as good as new, perhaps, but in excellent shape as reconditioned real estate. The methods will be expensive. There is no assurance, either, that the proper methods will be selected.

For a large part of his book, Mr. Terral saltily examines the conflicting positions of the Bureau of Reclamation and the War Department's Corps of Engineers. He finds a fine mess. It is evident, from his account, that these Federal agencies are not so much interested in redeveloping the area as they are in maintaining their own positions as free-spending dam and levee builders.

Both the Bureau and the Corps have rushed at the valley as though it were a prize. They work at cross purposes and are bitterly competitive. Both agencies have developed "plans" for the valley; plans little better than jottings on the back of an old envelope. These plans were presented to the people of the valley and Congress as a sure cure-all for the valley's ills. The plans differ widely in aims and in construction details.

The Corps plan—the Pick Plan—calls

for 22 dams and reservoirs to store flood waters and an ambitious levee and channel program. The Bureau's plan—the Sloan Plan—is even more ambitious and grandiose. Each agency has called the other's plan foolish, a waste of taxpayers' money.

And yet, under the threat of a Missouri Valley Authority which would develop the river and the entire resources of the valley, the Corps and the Bureau embraced publicly and made up. They produced the Pick-Sloan Plan by the simple expedient of combining their mutually exclusive "plans." The move has been happily termed "a shameless, loveless shotgun wedding."

The facts of the Missouri Valley make it plain that no plan can now be arrived at with any degree of comprehension. The engineers simply do not have the facts necessary to plan efficiently. They do not know how much water would be needed to maintain a navigation channel. They do not know how much water would be needed or is available for irrigation. Mr. Terral calls for research:

" . . . a study of all the region's primary resources, a study which considers every resource in its relationship to the whole. . . . But there is yet no such study, no such plan, no such activity. There is not even any agency of government with a broad enough mandate to perform them."

To Mr. Terral, the answer is obvious and relatively simple: the creation of a Missouri Valley Authority which would be above the battle between the Corps and the Bureau; a government corporation which would be able to assess the true resources and needs of the vast valley. The prototype for this new agency is the TVA, Mr. Terral says, and he believes that an MVA could profit by mistakes made by TVA.

Only by creation of a government corporation, he believes, can the Missouri Valley be treated as it should: as a region, with a region's resources, problems and potentialities considered toward a regional solution.

Mr. Terral, a member of the staff of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, has supplemented his text with an excellent bibliography.

## Reviews

### The Saga of Bill McDougall

By Eastern Windows

By William H. McDougall, Jr.  
Scribners, New York. \$3. 343 pp.

When Bill McDougall writes of how men die, he knows. He was there and ministering to the dying when the beriberi song was the only chant for the dead.

Through more than three years he lived with death in a Japanese prison, to survive—miraculously as he literally believes, and to tell his story. It is a great story and greatly told to reach heroic heights, both by the fine craftsmanship and the deep spiritual quality of the writer. A grand reporter before the war, Bill McDougall experienced in his years of captivity both an extreme sharpening of sensitivity and a spiritual transformation. These join to heighten and deepen the power of this saga of travail, of suffering, starvation and death in an enemy prison.

The book is a sequel to his *Six Bells Off Java*, which was his *Odyssey* of escape from China and from shipwreck in the Java Sea. This second book begins with his recapture to chronicle the weary and terrible years of waiting for the war to end.

He manages to deal with his captors with almost incredible detachment, and this is only partly to be accounted for by his reporter's training in objective narration. The larger factor is the religion which came to permeate all of his being during the years in the Java prison. It left him with no hatred for anyone, even his Japanese jailers. This will be less difficult to understand and accept by those who have known Bill McDougall in the years since the Japanese prison. For the book reflects the nature of the man, who found the capacity to lose himself wholly in such ceaseless service as the prison years invited for the weaker, less resolute and less inspired of his fellow prisoners.

The clew to Bill McDougall's nature after the prison experience is in his concluding lines:

"Conference tables and peace treaties and international covenants mean nothing as long as one man hates another. If I hate the Japanese because of what happened in Sumatra, or if they hate me because my country crushed them, there can be no peace, only a truce.

"The first job is to stop hating. But hate does not cease because it is willed to cease. Something else just as solid

and powerful has to push out hate and fill the place it occupied. That is the biggest and the hardest job—filling the vacancy with positive action. For the replacement must live and breathe and burn as fiercely for the good of man as does hate for his destruction. What shall we call the replacement? Christ called it love.

"If I can get on my knees tonight and, with a full heart, pray,

"God, please help Seki and his interpreter—and have mercy on Tojo, too,"

"Then my private battle against hate is half won. The other half will be continuing in this prayer every day. When all the men of all the earth do that for one another there will be no more war. And until they do, war is inevitable.

"There is no possible disarmament except in the hearts of men."

But this is by no means a representative selection from his book, which is as graphic and realistic an account of escape, capture, endurance, disease, brutality, death, and the effect of all these on the bodies, minds and souls of men, as one is apt to find. He details the

smuggling forays to rustle food and the deals and discussions with the Japanese jailers by which some sort of relationship was maintained. The role of spokesman, leader and chief smuggler often fell to him. It is incredible that he survived the almost infinite chances of death, and it is necessary to look beyond the spiritual quality of the survivor-author. He clearly had exceptional qualities for survival. He had a rare capacity to take care of himself in an infinite series of deadly situations: the hard shrewd judgment that guided his escapes, the forehandedness to provide, the cunning to steal, smuggle, raid, save, trade and connive for food, medicine, space and shelter, and the subtle qualities, which, though he doesn't say so, clearly marked him both among his fellow captives and his jailers as a man to whom a certain status is accorded even in prison. So he was freer than most and used this freedom to keep many men alive and to ease the death of many more.

—Louis M. Lyons

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William McDougall, Jr. was a UP China correspondent until the war, and a Nieman Fellow after it, in 1946-7. He is now on the UP cable desk in Washington.

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### A Vivid, Sensitive Story

by Francis P. Locke

*Lonesome Valley*. By Henry Hornsby.  
William Sloane Associates, New York.  
\$3.50. 385 pp.

This vivid, sensitive story of a lonely mountain boy and his search for love and truth is a sort of lineal descendant of *The Big Sky*, A. B. Guthrie Jr.'s monumental best selling novel of two years ago.

Guthrie did most of the writing of *Big Sky* while at Harvard on a Nieman Fellowship. It was on a Nieman Fellowship, two years later, that Henry Hornsby found the time, the critical help, and the literary inspiration for the big push on *Lonesome Valley*. Both writers enjoyed the guidance and encouragement of the New England poet, critic, and teacher of craftsmanship extraordinary, Prof. Ted Morrison of the English department at Harvard. In William Sloane Associates they found a common publisher.

*Lonesome Valley* traces the efforts of young Johnny Baker, over the span of a decade, to break out of prison—out of the

prison of the parochial hollow in the Kentucky hills, out of the prison of the house of the ignorant uncle and aunt who reared him, out of the prison of the hell-fire and brimstone religion of the region.

Living the restless, mysterious years between 14 and 24 he wrestles also with the typical personality problems. His romantic experiences are half-idealistic, half-earthly. The handling of them is frank, full and, it might be said, daringly descriptive. But never is it pointlessly sordid. Subtler treatment would scarcely have done justice to the portraiture of Johnny Baker, boy and man, or of *Lonesome Valley*, American folk-region.

In a sense we have here a sociological novel. Guthrie writes, in a jacket-piece: "Much has been printed about the Kentucky mountains—and much of the much might better have gone unsaid. . . . Hornsby is honest. He is perceptive. He is no belligerent defender of the ways of mountain folk, and no supercilious critic. He simply understands." In another sense

it is a psychological novel (with a small "p"). And it has strong philosophical overtones, for one of the central problems with which Johnny is grappling is the relation of a man to his environment, in the hills and in the misty skyways above and beyond the narrow, lowering views.

But primarily the story is none of these things. Primarily it is a story of individual human experience. It is the sensitive story of a human spirit seeking to hack its way out of ugliness, ignorance, confusion and frustration, seeking to find some joy and meaning in living. Yet if he is a somewhat disjointed day dreamer to the end (of the story) he has immense spirit in the matters that really count.

Hornsby's talent for drawing characters may ripen, and his philosophy may deepen, with subsequent novels, and one must surely assume he has one or more in his system. (Characterization in *Lonesome Valley* is perhaps a trifle uneven—none is seriously deficient, but Crit, Jace and Lucindy Marcum are particularly brilliant.) But it will be hard for him (or many other writers in our language) to surpass this effort in its flair for simple, vivid imagery, for detailed observation of hills and birds and streams, for sheer word artistry and imagination.

The book cannot help inviting comparison with *Big Sky*, but the exercise can hardly hope to be structurally valid. The two are written around different axes. *Big Sky* is a horizontal book—epic and panoramic. *Lonesome Valley* is a vertical book—subjective and introspective. Guthrie, for dramatic sweep and external excitement, could rely on physical adventure—Indian fighting, fur-trapping, river flatboat navigation, the sweep of the northwestern frontier of the 1820s and '30s—as well as on love interest. Hornsby, deprived of the play of the historic and the kaleidoscopic, had to pack his objective drama into sex-romance, and, just possibly, to overwork it.

Yet such is the power of his words, such is the beauty and validity of his images, that although the first third of his book passes with little "action," in the superficial sense, the story moves without noticeable drag into stages in which events begin to crackle for Johnny Baker and Edna Hensley and Hazel Ponder. This is tribute enough for the keenness of the author's portrayal of the "holler" and its inhabitants and the inside of the mind of the mountain boy who moved in and out of *Lonesome Valley* in endless, restless search for understanding and self-fulfillment.—Dayton Daily News.

## Short Stories Set in the Far East

by Lois Sager

**A Corner of the World.** By Robert Shaplen. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. \$2.75. 245 pp.

Robert Shaplen's book of stories, *A Corner of the World*, comes at a time when the climax of violent revolution forces the Far East into the consciousness of the most reluctant American.

It is well. For even the person acutely aware that what is happening in the Orient will some day touch his own life, still sees China as a remote, confused, abstract place.

Newspaper accounts, with their cold, disparate facts about long troubled China, have served only to dull any tendency toward sympathetic understanding.

Through fiction, in five inter-related stories, a former newspaper reporter does much to change that. He makes the Far East come alive.

There in India, China and Southeast Asia you get to know people grappling with the forces in our seething, changing world, exaggerated and stripped of pretense in the revolution-ridden Far East.

In Shanghai young Crane McKenzie, an elemental sort, a discharged soldier engineer, is hell-bent on seeing Shanghai before he goes back. He falls easily into the somewhat debauched, desperate revelry of the frightened refugee colony.

His curiosity leads him into touch with the Communist party workers. But his personal indulgence forces his flight before he actually becomes involved in the movement.

The underlying theme is much the same in the other stories.

It is a theme of the conflict of desire and fear. The desire of individual persons to identify themselves with the struggle of the masses to better themselves is resolved in fear and flight—or destruction.

An American correspondent, Archer Grayson, sickened by the death around him, flings himself before a rushing mob in a communal riot in Calcutta when he rebels against the cold indifference of his seasoned British colleagues.

Max-Robert, young, embittered Maqui soldier, wants to practice the teachings of an old liberal friend. But instead, under threat of French police, he plans to flee Hanoi.

Dr. Georg Richter, a German refugee, gives up his last chance to end his weary, tortuous flight in Macao, a "corner of the world." He defends his Socialist beliefs through action and is murdered for it.

In each of these stories Shaplen draws a glaringly sharp parallel between the passions of individuals and those of international affairs.

Repeatedly the instinctive urge to join with the force that seems morally right is dissipated through self indulgence or deflected by human inadequacy.

Guilt dogs the young engineer when he flees Shanghai after his boss finds him in bed with his wife. The off-hand affair Grayson has with a passing woman is as empty and futile as his death under the rushing feet of the mob.

And the frustration of Max-Robert's unrequited love for Marguerite is matched only by that of his unfulfilled desire to help the Annamites.

Shaplen was a reporter for *Newsweek* in the Pacific during the war and later in China, Manchuria and Southeast Asia. Last year he was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University. There he spent the year deepening his study and sifting his impressions of the Orient. He knows what he is talking about.

And, perhaps more important for a fiction writer, he has the capacity to feel and understand what he knows. He has a brilliant style, a bright gift for and fresh approach to story telling.

But the average reader cannot readily identify himself with the people in Shaplen's stories. They are a little too consciously sophisticated, purposefully intense. Most of them are actually already past the turn into disillusion and despair.

Perhaps the world is. But there is still, fortunately, too much hope and laughter to exclude either from fiction if it is to become part of the people who read it.—The Dallas News.

## Letters

### "ATOMIC HYSTERIA"

To the Editor:

In the January issue of *Nieman Reports*, in the symposium of comments which you collected on press coverage of the recent election, you were kind enough to print a letter from me calling attention to the almost incredible attempt of the Sandusky, O., *Register-Star-News* to bury the news of President Truman's visit to that city.

In coming issues of *Nieman Reports*, you may have occasion to take the press to task for the irresponsible role which it is playing in the current "atomic hysteria" emanating from Washington and from the Judith Coplon trial. If you are and you would like another contribution of a "classic example" I have one here. The Associated Press story to which I refer in this letter-to-the-editor is the most viciously unfair story that I have ever seen. It blasphemes the name of a dead man without rhyme or reason and drags into the mud the name of an honest and conscientious woman, Mrs. Emily Condon. The fact that I personally was present when Mrs. Condon made her alleged contact with an alleged Soviet agent gives me unusual authority with which to speak in this instance. It isn't often that a newspaperman happens to be present on an occasion of this sort and is able to give impartial testimony as to what actually transpired. I have taken the trouble to inform the FBI and the House Un-American Activities Committee that I was so present and of my willingness to give testimony under oath if any investigation is ever made. I do not suppose that I will ever be asked to. The damage has been done and no amount of subsequent explanation will ever retract the damage done to innocent persons.

If the New York *Daily News* or the Hearst papers had published a story like this, we would accept it, I suppose, as routine practice. But when AP does it and perfectly sound and sensible newspapers fall for it, that's a horse of a different color. A critical evaluation of this AP story, if one were to be made, would show the use of the slanting technique. Describing this gossipy FBI memorandum as "top secret" gives it an air of credence which the FBI itself probably does not give it and certainly did not claim for it. The speculation concerning Mr. Kent's death—all of it pure hokey—

is another aspect and the use of the words "In Contacting Another Agent" in the headline is positively vicious. Who was the first agent? Mrs. Condon? Mr. Kent?

I hope that learning the story behind this story causes a few of your readers to stop and realize the responsibility which they undertake when they write or publish a story like this. Incidentally, your readers do take *Nieman Reports* very seriously. I was talking with William F. Maag, Jr., publisher of the Youngstown, O., *Vindicator*, the other day and he said that he reads it faithfully and makes it required reading for all of his editors. He said he thought it the most worthwhile publication in the newspaper field, a sentiment with which I concur, and which I thought I would pass on to you. Incidentally, Mr. Maag runs a doggoned good newspaper out there.

Glenn Everett

### AP in Coplon Case

The foibles of the press have been numerous in the recent heyday of atomic hysteria occasioned by the release of confidential FBI reports at the trial of Judith Coplon. I suppose that one might have expected certain sections of the press to go "hog wild" over such a windfall of choice bits of character assassination.

But when even the staid Associated Press begins to fall into the hysterical parade and conservative and respectable journals play its stories with "scare" headlines, it is time to stop for a moment of reflection.

On Saturday, June 11, the Wilmington, Del., *Journal-Every Evening* played up in No. 1 spot on the front page an AP story which bore this headline: "Man Linked in Coplon Spy Case Revealed As Suicide." Three decks of subheads below carried this additional tale: "Throat-Slashed Body of Russian-Born Former State Dept. Worker Taken From Potomac—Listed in Secret Papers At Trial—FBI Documents Says Victim Got in Touch with Mrs. Condon in Effort to Contact Other Agent."

I represent the *Journal-Every Evening* as Washington correspondent and I can testify that this newspaper doesn't often go overboard on a story, nor does it em-

phasize sensationalism. I don't blame the wire editor too much, however, for falling for this one. It was an AP story out of Washington and it certainly had all the elements of a good yarn for a dull day.

He wasn't in a position to check the story and accepted it as accurate. If AP had any thought of checking the accuracy, they certainly failed. The inaccuracy of this story is almost incredible. Let the facts speak for themselves:

An FBI file memorandum introduced at the Coplon trial said that Mrs. Condon had arranged a contact with a suspected Soviet intelligence agent for Mr. Morton E. Kent, an export manager for a multi-graph addressograph company. Mr. Kent was a former State Department official, it developed, and, tragically, had committed suicide only the week before in despondency over loss of his job with this private firm. Mrs. Condon's husband, Dr. Edward U. Condon, head of the National Bureau of Standards, had been blackened by previous charges to which he had never been given an opportunity to reply.

Ah! There it was, a perfect yarn revealing the conspiratorial nature of the Red network in Washington! And perhaps Mr. Kent hadn't committed suicide at all. Maybe he had been murdered because he knew too much.

That was the story. Now let's look at the facts behind it.

When was the alleged "contact" made? Mrs. Condon said that she met George Dimitrov Sotirov of the Bulgarian Legation on November 2, 1947, at a conference on reconstruction problems of eastern European education at the Hotel Willard. That's true. I'll swear it. I was there—and I was sitting right next to Mrs. Condon.

It was, in fact, the first time I met Mrs. Condon. I was invited because I had been a magazine correspondent in Poland in 1946 and when I returned had made numerous lectures about my experiences, devoting the proceeds to a fund to aid starving university students whom I met and for whom I had formed a firm admiration. Mrs. Condon was there because she, too, was interested in education in that area, her parents having emigrated to America from what was formerly the northern edge of Austria-Hungary.

Mrs. Condon and I had a long conversation after the round-table conference concluded. She got my name and address. She also apparently got Mr. Sotirov's. He was at the meeting representing Bulgaria—but he didn't have much to say.

## Letters Con't

Two weeks later I again met the Condons, this time at a party given by the Polish Embassy. During the evening a couple of new Polish films were shown for entertainment.

Those were the movies which resulted in an Un-American Activities Committee charge against Dr. Condon that he had "attended the showing of communist propaganda films at the Polish embassy."

I sat next to Dr. Condon at the movies. The propaganda they contained was ludicrous. I think it was just as ludicrous to Dr. Condon as it was to me. Afterward the Condons offered me a ride home. I accepted (Note to FBI: I'm getting in deeper) and, we had a long conversation about communism which convinces me that the Condons are not inclined in the slightest toward communist sympathies.

Mrs. Condon was a friend of Mr. Kent, the multigraph export manager. He had an idea for meeting the European textbook shortage by multigraphing college texts. He thought he might do a little export business with the Bulgarians and Mrs. Condon looked up Mr. Sotirov's address and gave it to him.

Nothing, as far as anyone knows, came of it. In fact, export business got so bad that the company abolished its export division. Mr. Kent lost his job, brooded over it, and one day killed himself.

Then came this FBI memorandum at the Coplon trial. Judy used to get to see such tidbits, the prosecution claimed, and passed some of them on to a Russian agent, Gubitchev.

The Associated Press picked up the memorandum, played it up as a hot "top secret" report, surrounded it with a lot of cloak-and-dagger speculation—all of it pure hooey—and put it out. I have never seen a more incredible story. I hope I never do.

I don't blame Dr. Condon for storming down to the newspaper offices that evening with his own press release demanding an apology from J. Edgar Hoover and all concerned. He was as entitled to one as any man I ever knew.

Glenn D. Everett  
National Press Bldg.,  
Washington, D. C.

—June 13

## Publicity Before Trial

Here is something you might pass along to the man (or woman) who wrote that section of *Your Newspaper* dealing with the Chicago coverage of the Heir-ens case (pp 48-51).

If that writer doesn't already know it, the Chicago Tribune some 25 years ago was the vigorous denouncer of trial by newspaper. Witness the following editorial of July 23, 1924, quoted in Frederick Siebert's "The Rights and Privileges of the Press," p. 54:

"The injury to justice is in publicity before the trial. Newspaper trials before the case is called become an abomination. The dangerous initiative that newspapers have taken in judging and convicting out of court is journalistic lynch law. It is mob murder or mob acquittal in all but the overt act. It is mob appeal. Prosecuting attorneys now hasten to the papers with their theories and confessions. Defense attorneys do the same. Neither dare do otherwise. Halfwit juries or prejudiced juries are the result."

It really isn't surprising, I suppose, to find the same newspaper saying in July, 1946, "For the first time in newspaper history, the detailed story of how three murders were committed, naming the man who did them, was told before the murderer had confessed or was indicted." Obviously the attitude that once prevailed on the Chicago Tribune was too much like that of the English.

Charles T. Duncan  
U. of Minn. School of Journalism

## Prices and Presidents

I appreciate your giving space to my letter and to Dr. Pearson's comment.

You may be interested in noting that on July 1, when the general opinion was that Truman had lost the corn belt, the price of No. 2 Y corn at Chicago was \$2.32. On Nov. 3, the price was \$1.40.

The way prices acted thru this critical campaign period may have had more influence on political trends in the corn belt than the annual figures quoted by Dr. Pearson.

When corn prices dropped, everybody knew farmers were going to be mad at somebody. But whom?

Donald R. Murphy  
Editor, Wallaces' Farmer

## Scrapbook

Washington Post

### The Silent Press

It has been as much of a shock to us as to any of our readers to see the evidence of political venality among a number of smalltown newspaper editors and publishers in Illinois.

At least 33 have been named who at one time or another during the ousted Green administration in that state were on the state payroll. Some of them may have performed certain services to earn their pay.

In other cases checks paid out of the state's treasury were obviously compensation for sale of influence. One publisher received \$850 as a "public works laborer." His paper is called the *March of Progress*.

Several other editors and publishers received larger amounts as "messenger-clerks." Those carried on the payroll as "investigators" gathered in five-figure sums over several years.

The unethical conduct of the individuals concerned is obviously the first and foremost issue. Beyond that is a larger and broader concern: the reputation of the American newspaper press as a whole. For the fact that none of the culprits in this instance owned or operated large city newspapers is morally beside the point.

Furthermore, the distinction, if any, will be missed by the ordinary citizen. Too many Americans have an almost innate distrust of the press as it is, and are always ready to gobble up any stray "proof" that all newspapers are venal.

As a matter of fact, the ethics of every member of the press are inevitably of concern to every other member. And this makes all the more infuriating the treatment of this story.

It was broken in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the *Chicago Daily News* on April 14. Until the *Washington Post* heard about it, no other newspaper, so far as we can find out, at least none outside of the Illinois region, picked it up. Nor did either of the two chief wire services convey the story as far as Washington, if they carried it at all.

At best this looks like crass indifference to a particularly juicy bit of news. At worst it looks like a cover-up of scandal within the family.

We cannot approve of either. The newspaper press, by virtue of the First Amendment, claims special status as a

pillar of free and honest government. By the same token it has special obligations. Among these is the duty not to keep its own dirty linen from public view.

Nothing can more surely damage the reputation of the American press for honesty and accuracy than failure to acknowledge promptly and openly its own faults.

—April 27

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

## Into the Open

The nauseous story of how at least 33 Illinois editors and publishers took places on the state payroll in the Green Administration has finally been sent all over the country.

It was printed first, April 14, in the *Post-Dispatch* and the *Chicago Daily News*. The next day we carried a leading editorial entitled, "Betrayal by the Press," and a Fitzpatrick cartoon showing the dollar sign "gravy train" across the free press. The *Star-Times* printed an editorial, "Venal Papers in Illinois."

The disclosure produced mixed reaction in Illinois. Newspapers like the *Decatur Herald* and the *Carmi Democrat-Tribune* passed the facts to their readers. The latter printed a forthright denunciation of the tie-up and put over it the strong title, "The 'Fee-dom' of the Press."

On the other side, the *Olney Daily Mail* protested that it had been libelled, when the *Post-Dispatch* told that William R. McCauley of that paper received \$41,281 from 1941 to Jan. 15 last as "investigator for the State Auditor."

This depressing breakdown in professional journalistic morals then entered a period in which nothing happened and little if anything at all was said. *Editor & Publisher*, issue for April 23, took notice of it with quotations from those who had been on the state payroll. Its heading read: "Illinois Editors Defend Employment by State."

Then came a thunderbolt. The *Washington Post*, on April 27, became, so far as we know, the first large newspaper outside St. Louis and Chicago to take notice of this alliance between a political organization and a large part of the Illinois downstate press. That editorial appears under today's cartoon with its original title, "The Silent Press."

With this blow the conspiracy of silence cracked wide open. The *Associated Press*, two weeks lacking one day

after the facts were first printed, sent them to member newspapers in every large city in the country. Giving the criticized editors and publishers a chance to defend themselves, the extended AP dispatch quoted Dwight Green as well. The Governor who was swept from office last November following disclosures of bribery, payroll padding and corruption said, "Many of the gentlemen listed held prominent positions in the Administration and rendered conspicuous public service."

This is the attempted justification of those who took state money. For example, Sam Little of the *Hillsboro Journal*, who got \$19,747 as a highway "field investigator," says:

I worked for that money. I visited all newspapers from Montgomery and Macoupin counties southward, in an advisory capacity on state publication laws and methods of improving the newspapers.

This is, of course, no justification at all. The *Hillsboro* editor was supposed to do something for the Highway De-

partment; by his own statement his work was of another sort. But that is only a small part of what was wrong with such an alliance with the state payroll. Every editor worthy of his trust knows what was wrong: Papers whose editors and publishers are subsidized even in part by a political machine are not going to expose that machine.

That was proved last year when many local Illinois papers kept silent. Free editors would have spoken out. Fortunately, the facts about the Green Administration reached their readers from the outside.

There is no defense for what these editors did. They betrayed their readers. They would have betrayed them just as much if they had been Democrats in a Democratic administration.

This is a shameful chapter in American journalism and the failure of the press nationally to take it up promptly is a second blot. American newspapers will have to be truer to the people than this if they are to deserve their freedom.

—April 28

The Salt Lake Tribune

## American Press Should Find a Way to Seek Out and Punish Journalistic 'Stinkers'

A suggestion was made at a recent meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors that journalistic "stinkers" be barred from the organization. The proposal was an aftermath of the shocking revelation that 51 Illinois newspapermen had been on the pay roll of the Green administration which voters of the state turned out last November.

Honest craftsmen all over the country have been properly concerned about this case of cynical journalistic irresponsibility. At the Washington A S N E conclave, however, the "purge" suggestion was countered by a facetious proposal that its author be chairman of the committee to decide who the "stinkers" are.

Later John S. Knight of the *Knight* newspapers, speaking at the University of Missouri, expressed his concern about "self-appointed guardians of press responsibility," who advocate throwing "stinkers" out of organizations like the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Who, he asked, can define "responsibility" and who is to "brand the 'stinkers'?" Is your competitor a 'stinker' or is it a fellow who lives 2000 miles away? By what standards can they be judged?"

Mr. Knight went on to say that a code of ethics might serve as a guide, but in the final analysis every editor and publisher can observe it only to the extent that his "conscience and rectitude of character permit."

Picking up a warning against "thought control," where Mr. Knight left off, the *magazine Editor & Publisher* editorially viewed with alarm the possibility that a clique of "responsibles" might have a "little gestapo" to "spy on each other to see who steps out of line and to run the concentration camps for the 'irresponsibles.'"

As if challenging this smug, defeatist attitude, the California Newspaper Publishers' Assn. the other day adopted a resolution condemning the Illinois editors and publishers who sold out to the Green politicians. The group went further and criticized wire services for failing to carry full news accounts of the revelation. Other press associations would do well to follow the California example.

A logical step might be to turn the spotlight on the relations of newspapermen and public officials in other states. This calls for intelligence and objectivity.

## Scrapbook

Not all the 51 Illinois newspapermen are guilty of "selling out," though their accepting state money is a subject for study. Several are known to have worked for their pay, but some merely published material favorable to the Green regime. The press should draw a heavy line between legitimate employment of newspapermen in public service and secret purchase of support by politicians.

Having assumed that much responsibility for the morals of the fraternity, organized editors and publishers might ponder ways and means to discourage such incidents. Here, it is admitted, the ice is exceedingly thin. Mr. Knight's questions are legitimate. "Canons of Journalism" conceivably could be expanded to menace freedom and free enterprise in the newspaper field. We haven't the full solution worked out, but it would seem that small beginnings, made while the iron is hot from the Illinois scandal, could lead to a workable plan. A broad general code of decent journalism could be put into words and flagrant violators exposed and expelled from press organi-

zations. The weapon is puny, but it would be a beginning. It would be something more than keeping the head in the sand.

We can imagine that many years ago medical men argued that professional standards could not be set up and enforced for doctors without interfering with freedom. Although the profession does not effectively control all unprincipled practitioners, some "quacks" have been effectively dealt with through medical societies and state laws, and a code of ethics has gradually improved standards. The attorneys and a dozen other professions interested in good reputation, if not high standards, have adopted codes and developed a setup to deal with "stinkers" in their fraternity. Is the press less interested and able?

Most newspapers are alert to dangers to freedom of the press, especially from government. A segment of the press courageously and tirelessly dug up the facts in the Illinois case and the better papers publicized the details. If for no other reason than that such unscrupulous operators drag down the reputation of newspapers, the American press should be ready and willing to employ its great genius to insure against betrayals of this kind.

of foreign affairs and to understand America's part in them. When there is a layoff in a factory, even in the West, the workers involved should realize that the sick condition of Europe and Asia may be at least one of the causes.

In considering the admission of 200,000 displaced persons, the readers of the *Independent* were reminded that in 1907 there was one immigrant admitted for every 75 persons in this country. With the D. P.'s it will be one for each 700. If the distribution were made equally over the country, it would mean something like four in Littleton. Editor Waring felt rewarded when a rancher said that his people, who came over in 1902, were given a real welcome where they settled. Now mechanics in the local building trades have volunteered to build a house for a D. P. family.

Mr. Waring has done far more than write and print world news. A decade ago he organized a "Fireside Forum" where, month after month, thoughtful people met to discuss foreign affairs and economic problems. Then he would carry the story of the meeting in his next issue, showing local people at work on the problems of the world. A few years ago he brought together the editors of other papers who meet four times annually with scientists, labor leaders, public officials and many others to help in producing a better brand of public opinion.

The Marshall plan looked almost forbidding to people who realized that the share of an American family works out to just about what a homeowner in Littleton pays as a property tax, but the self-interest of Americans was laid before them and also the human values involved. Mr. Waring believes that a statistic clothed in flesh is powerful.

He also watches the schools, talking things over with School Board members, and protesting against incompetent teachers, if he considers it necessary. Continually, of course, he has education for world affairs in mind.

This message from an editor in Littleton, Colo., is more than exhortation and advice to those who manage other papers, large or small. It is well worth the serious attention of a large number of individuals in America. Under present conditions, it is highly necessary, for the good of this country and the world at large, for as many as possible to bend their minds to an understanding of what is going on.

—May 17

Boston Globe

## IMPORTANT TO MAIN STREET

The widely held theory that if a thing is small enough it makes not the slightest difference has been punctured by a leading article in the *New York Times* magazine. Its author, who is also the hero of the tale, is **Houstoun Waring**, editor of a weekly paper, the *Independent*, in the municipality of Littleton, Colo., which lives right down to its name, having less than 3000 inhabitants and, so far as the *World Almanac* is concerned, less than 2500.

Yet the weekly paper, administered by editor Waring, has made a name for which this leading paper of New York city gladly makes room. Mr. Waring begins by declaring his rejection of the theory that a small-town publication should attend only to local happenings, concentrating on names. He feels that a person in his position has an opportunity and an obligation far bigger than this.

That being his faith, he has been living up to it. He is sufficiently optimistic to feel that "a good proportion of the nation's weekly editors have more or less accepted the world community as an additional beat to be covered in their own special way." There are 58,000,000 people in the rural United States.

It is first necessary for an editor to disentangle himself from trivial matters. By doing so he finds that subscribers finally adjust themselves to the idea that an editor must have time to edit, think, study, attend conferences and, "above all, to read."

This small-time editor believes in the importance of local affairs, but, since both space and time have been whittled down toward nothingness, an event on the other side of the world may be of vast importance in Littleton. It may take the boys off Main St. and send them to war again. It is necessary to keep track

## Nieman Notes

1939

Irving Dilliard has just been made editorial page editor of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, which he has served for 22 years.

John McL. Clark, publisher of the Claremont (N.H.) *Daily Eagle*, was one of three newspapermen (Erwin D. Canham and James B. Reston the others) who served on the Selecting Committee for Nieman Fellowships this Spring by appointment of Pres. James B. Conant of Harvard.

Louis M. Lyons was elected an honorary member of the Harvard chapter of Phi Beta Kappa June 20.

1940

The March 1 issue of *Vogue* named six country papers as among the best in the nation and included Hodding Carter's *Delta Democrat-Times* (Greenville, Miss.) and *Houstoun Waring's Littleton* (Colo.) *Independent*.

Besides publishing a daily, lecturing through the South, writing magazine articles and editorials, Hodding Carter began a weekly column in May which made its start in eleven Southern newspapers.

1941

The Pulitzer prize for the best editorials was shared by the *Washington Post* and the *Boston Herald*, whose editorial page is under the direction of John H. Crider.

### Harry M. Davis

With deep sorrow *Newsweek* reports the sudden death of its Science editor, Harry M. Davis, who drowned at Biloxi, Miss., last week while on a vacation. A science writer for ten of his 38 years, author of "Energy Unlimited: The Electron and Atom in Everyday Life," a Nieman Fellow, and a captain in the second world war, he was regarded by scientists and science writers as a top authority in his field.

—May 30, 1949

1942

Kenneth Stewart, professor of journalism at New York University, is teaching a Summer course at Stanford University,

where he was a member of the journalism faculty 15 years ago. One of his classroom guest speakers was *Houstoun Waring* who explained his Editorial Advisory Board plan. On June 24 Waring presented his plan also the California Publishers Association.

1945

*The Way West* is the title selected for Bud Guthrie's new novel, now in the proof-reading stage. The Kentucky Fellows had a reading of several chapters by the author on Derby Day and hail it as better even than his earlier novel, *The Big Sky*.

William H. Clark, editor of *Horticulture*, reports his 17th book under contract and 18th "being argued about."

1946

Richard E. Stockwell left the editorial page of the *Minneapolis Star* in May to become editor of *Aviation Operations*, a Conover-Mast publication.

1947

Stephen Fischer began in April writing programs for the United Nations, presented weekly by the American Broadcasting Company under the title "Two Billion Strong."

Richard E. Lauterbach is collaborating with Kenneth Stewart, '42, on a history of the *PM-Star* experiment to evaluate its contribution to the thinking and action of liberals during the 1940's.

Gilbert W. Stewart sailed June 8 for France and Switzerland to serve as press officer for the United States delegation to the Economic and Social Council, which meets in Geneva during July and August to take up the "Point Four" program put forward by President Truman in January.

1948

First American correspondent into Berlin after the lifting of the Russian blockade was Walter G. Rundle, United Press manager for Germany, whose eye-witness dispatch and byline were front page in all papers served by the UP.

Rebecca Gross, editor of the *Lock Haven* (Pa.) *Express*, started on a trip to Europe May 25.

Lois Sager, State capital correspondent of the *Dallas News* has begun a book on Texas politics at the request of a leading book publisher.

Robert Glasgow of the *Herald Tribune* city staff, moved to Chicago in May to take over the assignment of mid-West correspondent of the paper.

1949

The 1949 Fellows elected Lawrence G. Weiss of the *Boston Herald* as their representative on the Nieman Alumni Council.

All twelve Nieman Fellows completing their year at Harvard in June returned to their papers. The two foreign correspondents, Tillman Durdin of the *New York Times* and Christopher Rand of the *New York Herald Tribune*, are returning to the Far East. The other Fellows of 1948-49 were: Alan Barth, *Washington Post*; Robert R. Brunn, *Christian Science Monitor*; Grady E. Clay, Jr., *Louisville Courier-Journal*; Robert de Roos, *San Francisco Chronicle*; David B. Dreiman, *Minneapolis Star*; E. L. Holland, Jr., *Birmingham News*; Peter Lisagor, *Chicago Daily News*; Aldric Revell, *Madison* (Wis.) *Capital Times*; Lawrence G. Weiss, *Boston Herald*; C. Delbert Willis, *Fort Worth Press*.

For the next six months Tillman Durdin will be touring southeast Asia and will then move back into his old territory in China, "if I can get in."

### HOUSTOUN WARING'S PAPER

During the annual convention of the Nebraska Press Association at Lincoln, March 18-19, the department of journalism at the University of Nebraska designated the *Littleton, Colorado Independent*, as the outstanding weekly newspaper of the year 1948. The presentation was made at a convocation of the journalism students and the award was received by *Houstoun Waring*, editor of the *Independent*, who had gone to Nebraska to speak at the NPA sessions and to the journalism students. Also in attendance was Edwin A. Bemis, CPA manager, and publisher of the *Independent*.

## 12th Selection of Nieman Fellows

The Nieman Foundation at Harvard University announces the twelfth annual award of the Lucius W. Nieman Fellowships, to twelve newspapermen.

The Fellowships provide a year of study at Harvard, where the Nieman Foundation was estab-

lished in 1938 under the terms of the will of Agnes Wahl Nieman, widow of the founder of the *Milwaukee Journal*, "to promote and elevate standards of journalism in the United States." One hundred thirty-four newspapermen have previously held Nieman Fellowships at Harvard.

The new Nieman Fellows are:

ROBERT H. FLEMING, 37, political writer, *Milwaukee Journal*. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, he was a reporter for twelve years on the Madison (Wis.) *Capital Times*, then served three years in the Army, and joined the *Journal* staff in 1946.

He plans to study government and political movements in the U. S.

WILLIAM GERMAN, 30, head of the copy desk, *San Francisco Chronicle*, is a graduate of Brooklyn College and Columbia School of Journalism. He has been on the *Chronicle*, except for war service in the Army, since 1940.

He plans to study American foreign relations and international organization.

DONALD J. GONZALES, 32, diplomatic reporter for the United Press in Washington and Lake Success, is a graduate of the University of Nebraska. After a year on the *Nebraska State Journal*, he has served the UP continuously since 1939 except for three years in the Army Air Force.

He plans to study international relations, political and economic.

HAYS GOREY, 28, city editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, is a graduate of the University of Utah and has been since 1938 reporter, night city editor and city editor of the *Tribune*.

He plans to study economics and political science.

MAX R. HALL, 39, labor reporter for the Associated Press in Washington, is a graduate of Emory University. Starting as sports writer on the *Atlanta Georgian* in 1932, he joined the AP staff in Washington in 1942 and has specialized on national labor news since 1945.

He plans to study American history and labor-management-government relations.

JOHN L. HULTENG, 28, editorial writer on the *Providence Journal*, is a graduate of the University of North Dakota and the Columbia School of Journalism. Starting on North Dakota papers in 1941 while still in college, he became night city editor of the *Grand Forks Herald* in 1946 after three years in the Army Air Force. He joined the editorial page of the *Providence Journal* in 1947.

He plans to study history and economics.

JOHN P. McCORMALLY, 26, reporter and editorial writer on the *Emporia Gazette*, began his newspaper work on William Allen White's old paper after four years in the Marines. He has worked all around the shop in the *Gazette*, and served a year in the State legislature, working for the paper as State capital correspondent at the same time.

He plans to study community relationships and American civilization.

MURREY MARDER, 29, reporter on the *Washington Post*. Starting as a copy boy on the old Philadelphia *Ledger* in 1936, he served as reporter, night city editor and assistant day city editor to 1941, when he became a combat correspondent in the Marines. He has served the *Washington Post* since 1946 as rewrite man, assistant city editor and special assignments reporter.

He plans to study European politics and economics.

CLARK R. MOLLENHOFF, 28, reporter on the *Des Moines Register*, graduated in law from Drake University. He supported a family during college on newspaper work and has continued on the *Register*, except for two years in the Navy, since 1942.

He plans to study government and public finance.

WILLIAM M. STUCKY, 32, city editor of the Lexington (Ky.) *Leader*, is a graduate of Exeter and Yale. He began newspaper work in Lexington in 1941, served four years in the Navy and became city and executive editor of the *Leader* in 1947.

He plans to study American and European history.

RICHARD J. WALLACE, JR., 34, political and editorial writer on the *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, is a graduate of the University of Memphis law school. He began newspaper work as secretary to the editor of the *Press-Scimitar* in 1934 and has been on its staff since then except for four years in the Army ending as captain.

He plans to study American history and government.

MELVIN S. WAX, 30, assistant news editor and feature writer of the Rutland (Vt.) *Herald*, is a graduate of Dartmouth, where he began newspaper work as a student, and joined the Claremont (N.H.) *Daily Eagle* after graduation in 1940. After war service in the Navy, he became sports editor of the *Rutland Herald* in 1947, later general reporter, assistant news editor and feature writer.

He plans to study the economic and social problems of northern New England.

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