

AEJMC

AMONG THE MEDIA



Newsletter of the History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Why Media History Matters

Lisa M. Burns
Chair



Quinnipiac Univ.

Every few years, my colleagues in the School of Communications at Quinnipiac University are asked, usually by an administrator, to review the core classes that we require of all majors. These discussions are often prompted by a desire to cut one of the four classes – Introduction to Media, Introduction to Media

Writing, Media Law, and Media History – in order to make room for something else. When this happens, a knot develops in my stomach and my mind starts racing because I know I will be faced with fighting to keep our Media History course in the core.

I am sure that many of you have been in similar situations. In fact, I recognize how lucky we are at Quinnipiac to have a required undergraduate media history course when many of you have to haggle with your colleagues just to offer a history course as an elective. While the benefits of a media history course are obvious to us, too often we find ourselves having to explain to administrators, colleagues, and students why media history matters. I'd like to share some of my arguments in this article, but I also ask for your help in building a strong case for media history's place in the curriculum.

The Stats. Statistics are the first thing many people go to as evidence to support their claims, especially in this age of educational assessment. When it comes to history education in the U.S., the statistics are staggering.

On the 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress test, only 12% of high school seniors scored high enough to be considered “proficient” in history. Younger students fared slightly better, with 17% of eighth graders and 20% of fourth graders rating as proficient. But given that many standardized tests, including the SATs, do not “test” historical knowledge and the increased focus on math and science starting in middle school, it is not surprising that American students know so little about history even though it is a subject they take throughout their elementary and secondary education. Most American adults wouldn't fare much better if they were quizzed on their historical knowledge. Anyone who has seen Jay Leno's “Jaywalking” segments or the game show *Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?* can attest to this fact.

What does this lack of historical knowledge mean for American society? In a *New York Times* op-ed titled “In Ignorance We Trust,” author Timothy Egan talks about the marginalization of history. He cites David McCullough's argument that younger generations of Americans are “historically illiterate.” Today's students find history boring or irrelevant to their lives. They don't recognize that “the only thing new in the world is the history you don't know,” to quote Harry Truman, or appreciate William Faulkner's famous contention that “the past is not dead – it is not even past.” This historical ignorance could have serious implications if we believe George Santayana's famous warning that “those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” What is truly frightening to me is that many students, and adults, probably

See Burns | Page 3

ONLINE
<http://aejmc.net/history>

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Voss writes about finding historical gems on social media. See page 4.

Call for Papers, Reviewers
AEJMC | PAGE 2

The History Division
Membership survey | PAGE 2

“Just Do It” Socially
PF&R column | PAGE 4

Call for Award Nominations
AJHA | PAGE 5

The Epistemology of iPhone
Teaching column | PAGE 6

The History Division
Website refinement | PAGE 8

Connect with Graduate Peers
Graduate liaisons | PAGE 9

Radio Utopia
Book excerpt | PAGE 11

2013 AEJMC CONFERENCE

History Division Call for Papers and Reviewers

The History Division invites submissions of original research papers and historiographical essays on all aspects of media history for the AEJMC 2013 convention in Washington, D.C. All research methodologies are welcome.

Papers will be evaluated on originality and importance of topic; literature review; clarity of research purpose; focus; use of evidence to support the paper's purpose and conclusions; and the degree to which the paper contributes to the field of journalism and mass communication history. The Division presents awards for the top three faculty papers.

Papers should be no more than 25 double-spaced pages, not including notes or appendices. Multiple submissions to the Division are not allowed and only one paper per author will be accepted for presentation in the History Division's research sessions. Authors should also submit a 75-word abstract. The author's name and all other identifying information must be removed from submissions.

Papers must be electronically submitted using the services of All-Academic; the website is www.allacademic.com. The deadline is 11:59 P. M. (Central Daylight Time) Monday, April 1, 2013. Authors



are encouraged to read the Uniform Paper Call for detailed submission information. The organization's website is www.aejmc.org.

Student Papers: Undergraduate and graduate students enrolled during the 2012-13 academic year may enter the Warren Price Student Paper Competition. The Price Award recognizes the History Division's best student paper and is named for Warren Price, who was the Division's first chair. Student papers should include a separate cover sheet that indicates their student status but omits the author's name or other identifying information. Students who submit top papers are eligible for small travel grants from the Edwin Emery Fund. Only full-time students not

receiving departmental travel grants are eligible for these grants.

Call for Reviewers: If you are willing to review papers for the History Division research competition, please contact Kathy Roberts Forde at fordekr@sc.edu and indicate your areas of expertise and/or interest. We will need approximately 75 reviewers for the competition. Graduate students are not eligible to serve as reviewers and, in general, reviewers should not have submitted their own research into the competition.

Contact Information: For more information, contact History Division Research Chair Kathy Roberts Forde (University of South Carolina) at fordekr@sc.edu or 803-708-2272. ■

Division releases its online membership survey

Kristin Gustafson



Membership
Chair
*Univ. of Washing-
ton-Bothell*

A 10-question online survey released in February will help the History Division identify, cultivate and expand our membership.

Each one of the Division's nearly 400 members are encouraged to take five minutes to complete the survey: <https://catalyst.uw.edu/webq/survey/gustaf13/191807>. Results will be published in *Clio's* summer 2013 issue and available at the AEJMC convention in Washington, D.C.

"History scholarship for media and communication is more important than ever," said Kathy Roberts Forde, the History Division's vice head and research chair. She said that in recent years, the Division increased its presence through

the website, newsletter and listserv. "We are excited to hear from our members through the survey and expand our reach in the years ahead."

The survey invites members to review and prioritize the History Division's goals. It provides a venue for current members to suggest potential new members or to volunteer for the AEJMC mentor program in August. Survey results will provide a better understanding of the membership's research areas and publishing patterns, and the Division can use the data to gain insight into how people use the *Clio* newsletter and the online Media History Exchange (<http://www.mediahistoryexchange.org>).

Burns

Continued from Page 1

Why Media History Matters

do not know anything about the three historical figures I just quoted.

Those of us who teach media history can help to stem the tide of historical illiteracy. Many students find history more interesting when it is viewed through the lens of the media. Meanwhile, the popularity of historical movies and period television programs is proof that American adults aren't completely adverse to all things historical. The media, and media historians, help to bring history to life.

in its own history with today's directors, screenwriters, and actors drawing inspiration from their predecessors. For example, Quentin Tarantino has built his career on paying homage to past cinematic genres. *Django Unchained's* twist on the classic western mirrors Tarantino's earlier tributes to kung fu (*Kill Bill*), horror (*Grindhouse*), and Blackploitation (*Jackie Brown*).

For our graduates to succeed in the competitive media industries, they need a solid foundation in the history of their professions. Media history courses, whether they are general or focused on a specific industry/profession, provide students with the background they need

Holocaust). As media educators, we need to impress upon our students how their work may impact history and the responsibility that comes with having such influence.

The Jeopardy Defense. I always tell my media history students that, by the end of the semester, they will do much better on *Jeopardy* thanks to my class (I have a very long list of *Jeopardy* questions related to things covered in my course to prove it). While this focus on trivia might seem trivial to some, my definition of an educated person is a well-rounded individual who is familiar with a variety of subjects, including history, politics, and pop culture. We cover

Those of us who teach media history can help to stem the tide of historical illiteracy. Many students find history more interesting when it is viewed through the lens of the media. Meanwhile, the popularity of historical movies and period television programs is proof that American adults aren't completely adverse to all things historical. The media, and media historians, help to bring history to life.

Preparing Media Professionals. The various media industries have their own rich histories that continue to inform current practice. I contend that media history courses are an important part of professional education. While Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite have become relics of a bygone era, they still have important lessons to teach today's broadcast journalism students about things like journalistic integrity and the power of TV news. Many of the topics muckrakers wrote about are important social issues that journalists and documentarians are still investigating today. Public relations practitioners are still using some of the very same techniques developed by Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays. Musicians are constantly referencing artists and styles of the past, whether it's the Motown-vibe of Justin Timberlake's new album or the folk music roots of Mumford & Sons. Students planning careers in the music industry need to understand these connections or else face embarrassing themselves like the *American Idol* contestants who don't know the words to classic songs like "My Girl." The film industry is steeped

to be informed practitioners.

History is Happening. A related point is making students aware of the power media professionals have to shape history. This is especially true for journalists who cover history as it happens. Their stories will not only inform their immediate audiences, but may be used to help future generations learn about important people and events. Walter Cronkite's announcement of JFK's death is part of our collective memory of the assassination, just as Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein will always be associated with Watergate. Even when journalists do not become part of the story, their coverage of events like 9/11 or the Newtown shootings become part of the historical record.

Other media professions also have the power to impact how we view historical events. BP's corporate response to the Gulf oil spill or Carnival Cruise Line's handling of their recently stranded ship will become case studies for future PR practitioners. A filmmaker like Steven Spielberg has the ability to shape people's memories of historical figures (like Lincoln) and events (WWII, the

such a wide range of topics in media history that the classes become interdisciplinary without necessarily meaning to be. Some students tell me that they learned more about history in my media history class than they have in other courses because the media angle makes things more interesting. As educators, we should want our students to be well-prepared for life as well as for their professions. If they feel more comfortable at cocktail parties or family dinners because they understand a historical reference and can participate in the conversation, we have performed a valuable service. And who knows, they could also earn big bucks on *Jeopardy* some day.

For all of these reasons, I believe that media history matters and that it is an important part of a communication curriculum. Now I just need to convince my colleagues. I welcome your help in this constant battle that we all must wage in defense of media history. I will be posting a thread on the AEJMC History Division Facebook page. Please share your favorite arguments for why media history matters. ■

PROFESSIONAL FREEDOM & RESPONSIBILITY

“Just Do It” Socially

Kimberly Wilmot Voss

PF&R Chair
University of
Central Florida

In the previous newsletter, I advocated for journalism educators to use social media as a form of professional development. I believe the best way to understand the future of journalism is to engage in the communication itself.

As a reminder, digital and social media are not going away. It is neither a phase nor a passing trend. We must adjust if we are to properly educate our journalism students. Texting is more than 20 years old. More than half of all Americans use at least one social media site.¹ Sixty-six percent of online adults say they use Facebook, and 40 percent of cell phone owners use a social networking site on their phone.²

So, how do you get started? In the words of a Nike copywriter: Just Do It. If you are brand new to social media, I would start with Facebook. There are Facebook pages for both AJHA and the History Division of AEJMC. Let those of us on social media know that you have joined and you will quickly gain some journalism history friends. Social media is in large part about building audience.

It is important to remember that this is a social tool so you have to set your parameters. It is always good to have strong privacy settings. You should also decide what your policy is for being Facebook friends with students. I wait until after a student has graduated but others regularly use Facebook to

communicate with students.

While you are on Facebook, note the great historical resources. The Museum of American History posts great images to its Facebook Page. Recently, it included Rosa Parks' arrest records on the 100th anniversary of her birth and the actual menu for President Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural ball.

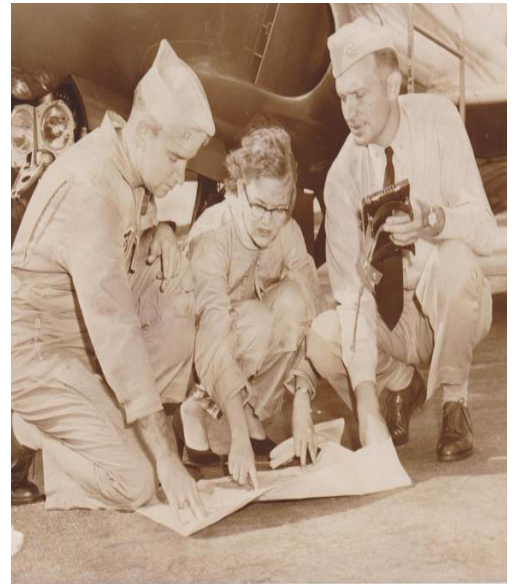
Look for local or niche history organizations that may have a presence on Facebook. For example, I regularly engage in the Facebook group “Historic Florida,” which is where I found a great image for a conference presentation. I have added my own images to the page.

Twitter is also easy to pick up on, although it overall has less privacy than Facebook. Many historical and journalism groups consistently use Twitter. Michael Fuhlhage at Auburn has posted about some interesting Twitter assignments regarding journalism history.

Many social media sites are visual in nature – which makes them a great resource for historians. The Newseum



This 1960s-era UPI wire service machine was found on Newseum Pinterest board.



I found this image of Miami Herald food editor Jeanne Voltz on her daughter's Facebook page. Voltz is getting ready to fly with the USN Blue Angeles in Miami in 1956. (Used with permission)

connections to history – including the image of a 1960s-era UPI wire service machine that is included on this page.

If you would rather stick to a more professional use of social media, give Academia.edu a try. It is a great way to both increase the diversity of your literature reviews and to make conference connections. Last Spring, I found an NCA panel through Academia.edu.

History blogs remain popular. One of my favorites is James McPherson's Media & Politics Blog. I have been blogging at Women's Page History for the past four years. I began a Facebook page for it last September and saw a significant increase in traffic to my blog. I was interviewed by a *Columbia Journalism Review* reporter this past week about my blog.

If you are interested in learning about how to write short and generating a

Voss

Continued from Page 4

“Just Do It” Socially

following, I would recommend Poynter.org. It has a wealth of resources (many are free) for using social media.

Some people note that they don't have time. I counter – make the time. The next time you update your CV, upload the presentation or paper to Academia.edu and LinkedIn. Waiting in line? Time to re-Tweet or pin to a Pinterest Board. Traveling? Check-in with FourSquare. Made an amazingly

looking meal? Take a picture with Instagram. And, don't forget that social media is social – friend, follow and join.

My next column will address some of the best uses of social media by archives and history organizations. ■

1. Somini Sengupta, “Half of America Using Social Networks,” *New York Times*, August 26, 2011.

2. Koanna Brenner, “Pew Internet: Social Networking,” Pew Research Center, November 13, 2012. <http://pewinternet.org/Commentary/2012/March/Pew-Internet-Social-Networking-full-detail.aspx>

Social Media to Get Started

- Academia.edu
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Pinterest
- Storify
- Instagram

American Journalism Historians Association (AJHA) Call for Award Nominations

The Sidney Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism History

The organization's highest honor recognizes individuals with an exemplary record of sustained achievement in journalism history through teaching, research, professional activities, or other contributions to the field of journalism history. Award winners need not be members of the AJHA. Nominations for the award are solicited annually, but the award need not be given every year. Those making nominations for the award should present, at minimum, a cover letter that explains the nominee's contributions to the field as well as a vita or brief biography of the nominee. Supporting letters for the nomination are also welcome.

The Distinguished Service to Journalism History Award

It recognizes contributions by an individual outside our discipline who has made an extraordinary effort

to further significantly our understanding of, or our ability to explore, media history. Nominations are solicited annually, but the award is given only in exceptional situations. Thus, it is not given every year. Those making nominations for the award should present, at the minimum, a cover letter that explains the nominee's contributions to the field as well as a vita or brief biography of the nominee. Supporting letters for the nomination are also welcome.

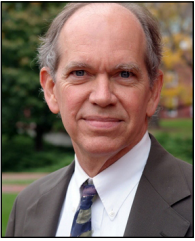
The deadline for both awards is **Friday, May 10, 2013**. Please send all material to:

Mike Conway
Indiana University School of Journalism
 Ernie Pyle Hall, Rm. 200
 940 E. 7th Street
 Bloomington, IN 47405
mtconway@indiana.edu

TEACHING STANDARDS

The Epistemology of the iPhone: Wait a Minute, Mister (Neil) Postman

**Doug
Cumming**



Teaching Chair
Washington &
Lee University

I assigned the students in one of my classes to keep a log of their individual media consumption for a day or two. One student worried that she wouldn't have much to record. She called herself a newspaper and magazine person and a TV-news watcher, naming traditional

media she consumed at home but had little time for while at college. But after completing her log, she realized that she was as hooked on the "instant gratification" of social media and mobile phone apps as any of her peers. She had just come out of the "Dark Ages" when she got an iPhone for Christmas. And already, she was dwelling in the speedy little thumb-tapping world that is mobile, digital, omnivorous, freely given and as addictive as a drug.

When she and other freshmen females had to leave their mobile phones in the dorms during rush parties at sorority houses, she nearly had a "mini heart attack" feeling for her phone to check the time: A part of her was missing. It gave them all a "lost feeling" to be without their phones, she said.

This is the world our students inhabit today, so different from just a few years ago. They wake with an alarm app, and they breathe digital vapors all day long, whenever it is allowed, until they drop off to sleep. They check Facebook, news headlines, Tumblr, email, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest. They shop without going anywhere. They watch TV or

movies on Netflix, Hulu, or YouTube. In the background, they choose their music from an automated custom-genre service like Pandora.

It is a little freaky trying to teach these students about mass media, a huge subject that has suddenly miniaturized and coiled itself like the double helix of DNA into those little devices I make them turn off during class.

I carry around with me everywhere." Another student confessed trying to avoid an awkward silence between himself and a student in the elevator by taking out his new iPhone 5 and checking his email, for the seventh time that morning in an hour. The other student did the same. And this is at a small liberal arts college that prides itself on civility and "the speaking tradition,"

This is the world our students inhabit today, so different from just a few years ago. They wake with an alarm app, and they breathe digital vapors all day long, whenever it is allowed, until they drop off to sleep. They check Facebook, news headlines, Tumblr, email, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest. They shop without going anywhere. They watch TV or movies on Netflix, Hulu, or YouTube. In the background, they choose their music from an automated custom-genre service like Pandora.

The students also realize there is something weird and amazing about the world they navigate this way. They seem to have mixed feelings about it. One student said she walks to class every morning dodging people without looking up from the screen in the palm of her hand. "I have mastered the art of walking through campus while only looking up every 30 seconds thanks to my hypnotizing fun-sized computer that

a duty to say something in passing.

In essays these 24 students wrote about their media-use logs, I notice some patterns:

1. Keeping a log opened their eyes.

They didn't realize how engrossed they had become, particularly in mobile devices, until they had to keep a log hour-by-hour. Some were "amazed." One, having her father keep a log for comparison, found the difference

Cumming

Continued from Page 6

The Epistemology of the iPhone

“drastic” in terms of time spent and type of media used. The students had been aware of the fact that mass media are “inescapable” and “ever-present.” But as one said, “I was quite unaware of just how much I personally expose myself to different forms of media throughout the day.”

2. You can't beat it for convenience, relevance, fun, efficiency. . .any way you want to look at it. The environment for this generation has been built to make consuming digital media inescapable, always there, *Semper Wi-Fi*. As time seems to accelerate every year, they appreciate the efficiency of the technology. “The iPhone is the single greatest utility tool I've ever encountered,” one student wrote. “It's so efficient to use. . .slide it out of the right pants pocket with one hand. . .press down on the top lock button with the index finger. . .check the screen for notifications. . .slide it back into the pocket. Everything that I need to do and know is essentially possible on this sleek hand-sized piece of metal. Everything.”

3. The fun and functionality are mixed, for some, with a sense of guilt. Running through their essays was a tone of confession. They have followed too much the digital devices and desires of their own hearts. Some labeled their own behavior as “addicted,” “wasted time,” and “stalking.” They felt guilty about not reading books and newspapers, although most felt they were “keeping up” with the news in real time by browsing headlines and Twitter

feeds. Most recognized that mobile news and information can distract as much as illuminate. “Distracted from distraction by distraction,” as T.S. Eliot wrote in “Burnt Norton,” a 1936 poem that, eerily, blames such distraction on “this twittering world.”

4. Atonement for whatever sense of sin they may have lies in finding a more physical way of being in the world. One student seemed to take pride in being a mix of the old and new, in that she goes places without her cellphone and avoids e-books. “I relish the feeling of opening up a new book and taking notes in the margins,” she writes. She worries about the next generation losing “people skills.” In her sociology class, she had read the book by MIT's Sherry Turkle *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. Another book-loving student said she prefers direct contact with people, so has no smart phone.

I share much of my students' excitement and amazement. I marvel at the power of wiki-knowledge, the light-speed of search engines, and the journalistic possibilities of social media. But I wonder about the way our students learn and know stuff under this regime. Neil Postman, the late great thinker about media, argued in *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* that TV presented a whole new epistemology – how we know and understand things – compared to the book-reading and writing culture through which knowledge, democracy and science had been developed for 500 years. But digital information is something new again. It is print, radio, TV, conversation and the world's libraries and newspapers, all at once. What is the epistemology of this alone-together world of our students today? I'd like to know. ■

Clio

AMONG THE MEDIA

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Recent issues of *Clio* may be accessed at <http://aejmc.net/history/>

Refinements and Expansion on the History Division Website

Keith Greenwood



Website Administrator
Univ. of Missouri

The latest feature is the addition of a contact form for communicating with division leadership. The contact form supplements the list of officers with email addresses that was already on the site. The Officers page provides easy access to email addresses if you want to send a message through an email client or through webmail access. However, both those options require shifting to a different program or browser window. The contact form simplifies the process by allowing you to send a message to a division officer from within the site instead of transferring to another

window or application.

You'll find the contact form by following the Contact Us link in the menu bar of the website. To use the contact form, select the officer you wish to contact from the pulldown menu, then enter your name, email address, subject and message in the appropriate boxes. To prevent spam, you'll also have to enter the Captcha code before sending your message.

Another feature Rss Feeds can help you stay current when new content is added to the website. Two RSS feeds are available on the site, one for new entries and one for new comments. If you have an RSS reader application configured on your computer, you should be able to just click on the link for Entries RSS or Comments RSS in the right hand column of any page on the website. If you use Google Reader, or a comparable service that is not a stand-alone application, you can subscribe to a feed by entering its URL in the reader site. For new entries on the site, use the URL <http://www.ajmc.net/history/?feed=rss2>. To subscribe to the RSS feed for new comments to the site, use the URL <http://www.ajmc.net/history/feed=comments-rss2>.

With the structure of the site pretty well set, we can turn our attention to adding content that will make the site a more usable resource for division members. I'm thinking primarily of the Resource Section of the site. This section is meant to be a collection of useful tools for teaching and

research. So far the page includes a few links for scholarly resources like the JHistory listserv, the Media History Exchange and AJHA along with Rob Rabe's online bibliography of mass communication history resources. There's a link to a First Amendment Timeline. For visual scholars and teachers, I've added a link to the Center for Civil War Photography.

There are undoubtedly a lot more useful resources out there. What are your go-to resources for journalism history? Are there resources you point your students to in your online course system? Are you looking for a resource on a particular topic? These links don't have to be strictly historical resources. Items that might help with teaching or research in general are useful too.

If every division member suggests even one link, we can really expand the list. Just send me the title of a suggested resource, along with a URL and brief description. You can email suggestions to me at greenwoodk@missouri.edu, or just use the contact form on the website. ■

Contact Us

Comments or questions are welcome.

Select the person you wish to contact from the pull-down menu.

* (denotes required field)

Person to Contact:*

Select

Name:*

E-Mail Address:*

Subject:*

Message:*

Connect with Graduate Peers

Carrie Isard and Annie Sugar

As the inaugural column for 2013, and with the AEJMC 2013 conference in Washington, DC coming into view on the horizon, we thought this would be a good opportunity to discuss in depth some strategies for connecting History Division graduate students, using some of our favorite tactics from our own experiences as graduate students in our respective programs. Our collective vision for 2013 is to create a cohesive and supportive group of history-minded emerging scholars who can come together at conferences and other times to share ideas, frustrations, tips, and the occasional beer...or two. With that in mind, here are some of our favorite ways of connecting with our peers, and some suggestions for how we envision the History Division benefiting from these tactics.

Carrie Isard



Graduate Student Liaison
Temple Univ.

As graduate students with both packed and conflicting schedules, it is often hard to make plans to connect face-to-face, but in my program, Temple's Media and Communication, we've figured out a way to

meaningfully connect with each other through social media.

Ugh...Facebook. As much as we all hate to admit it, Facebook has become one of the most pervasive and easiest ways to keep in touch and network with family, friends, and colleagues. In my department, one of our students took the initiative to set up a closed Temple M&C group where we discuss the program's courses, policies and procedures, etc., and share literature, information about conferences, swap course books, and generally support each other. This has been one of the best and most useful tools for me in that it is not only an information source, but it also functions as a cheering section and even a shoulder to cry on. Because we are all linked to the same group, we know each other by name, face, and posts, and so when we do emerge from our respective

caves to go to campus or the occasional departmental event, we all feel as though we know each other, even if we've only "met" through the group.

The History Division Facebook group has functioned in a similar way; I have been able to re-connect with friendly faces from AEJMC and AJHA through the group, and have benefitted from the content posted by our regular users. I think the best way to take this group to the next level would be to organize a students-only subgroup -- an idea that's been floating around for a while -- where, in preparation for the conference, we could all have an informal introduction to each other, share our interests, help each other prepare our talks, and organize a museum outing or two.

#Tweetsearch. I've also found Twitter to be a useful tool for connecting with my peers, especially during the dissertation process. I have had my twitter account for about a year, and I confess that for the first nine months I spent most of my time in the Twitterverse retweeting pictures of cute animals. I had no idea how to utilize hashtags, attract followers (let alone tweet at them), and because of my obvious verbosity, I could rarely compose a tweet that did not exceed the 140-character limit. My twitter account was simply another internet time waster. I'm ABD now, and what no one tells you about those three

glorious letters is just how lonely "disserting" can be. For the first few weeks, as I tried to find my research groove sifting through old issues of the *Baltimore Afro-American* and would find something cool or unexpected, or a question popped into my head, I had the urge to share the gem with someone, *anyone*, but I found my only captive audience was my dog. That's when I started doing something that sounds pretty obvious but to me was a real breakthrough in the research process -- #tweetsearch. Most of my Twitter followers are fellow graduate students, people who are both just as excited about the research process as I am, and also probably just as lonely as they work on their own projects. Through tweeting about my research, I not only have found an effective way of taking notes quickly (I have expanded my hashtag repertoire to include individuals and themes), but I've been able to connect with other graduate students who are as supportive of and interested in my work as I am in theirs.

Again, I think the History Division could harness this method of social networking to create a community of graduate students who, despite often being separated geographically, can truly "be there" for each other during the research process, both in the realm of coursework and the dissertation process. I invite you to follow me at @DocScrap to see how my tweetsearch unfolds!

Peers

Continued from Page 9

Annie Sugar



Graduate Student Liaison
Univ. of Colorado

Like Carrie, I am active on Facebook, and it is my primary social media outlet for my private life. While personal does brush up against professional for me there on a limited basis, it's more a fun distraction than

one of academic contact. Like Carrie, I enjoy the connections I am able to make on the AEJMC History Division's Facebook page and would like to see a subpage for graduate students. Unlike Carrie's program at Temple, however, my program at CU-Boulder does not have a Facebook presence that allows me to connect with my fellow students and share ideas, and so I have looked elsewhere on the web for research inspiration and opportunities.

Tumbling through time. I don't use Twitter. As a writer by nature, I find 140 characters too confining for me. For me, the better fit has been Tumblr – a blog-based social media platform that allows users to use not just text but images, video, and links of their own creation as well as what they find and share on Tumblr and elsewhere on the internet to express themselves. Each blog is a patchwork quilt of interests and information. Tumblrs can be personal and scattershot in their content or created around a theme, like an academic field. I have a Tumblr blog that I use to collect images, ideas, and information about media history, because I never know where I will find inspiration for a research topic, information on a new book's

release, a conference's call for papers, announcement of records or recordings released at an archive, or just something clever on other blogs.

Many archives, libraries, and museums maintain Tumblrs, and following them proves very fruitful. Many fellow academics and graduate students from all areas of study use the site, too, and are ready to discuss, share, collaborate, and commiserate. Like Twitter, it's good company for the lonely researcher. I invite you to check out and follow my blog at mediachronicle.tumblr.com. If you are unsure how to delve into this social media site, please feel free to email me for help.

Let us hear from you.

Of course, the best way to connect with colleagues is on a personal basis, so tell us what social media platforms and other ways you use to get to know and stay in touch with other graduate students interested in journalism and mass communication history. Perhaps you are using Instagram, or Pinterest, or some other site we haven't discussed. Perhaps you have another idea altogether. Please send us your ideas about what methods the History Division should use to network our graduate students and get them more involved as the conference approaches. And we would love your input on the best way to get socialize when we are together in Washington, DC this August! DC is Annie's old hometown, so she can't wait to show everyone around!

We welcome you to email us at Annie at anne.sugar@colorado.edu and Carrie at tuc16417@temple.edu with your thoughts and hope to hear from you soon. ■

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BOOK EXCERPT

Radio Utopia:

Postwar Audio Documentary in the Public Interest

Matthew C. Ehrlich

■ *Matthew Ehrlich's Radio Utopia* (University of Illinois Press, 2011) examines the production of audio documentaries in post-war America. The book received the 2012 Tankard Book Award from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. The following excerpt is taken from pp. 1-2 and 6-7.

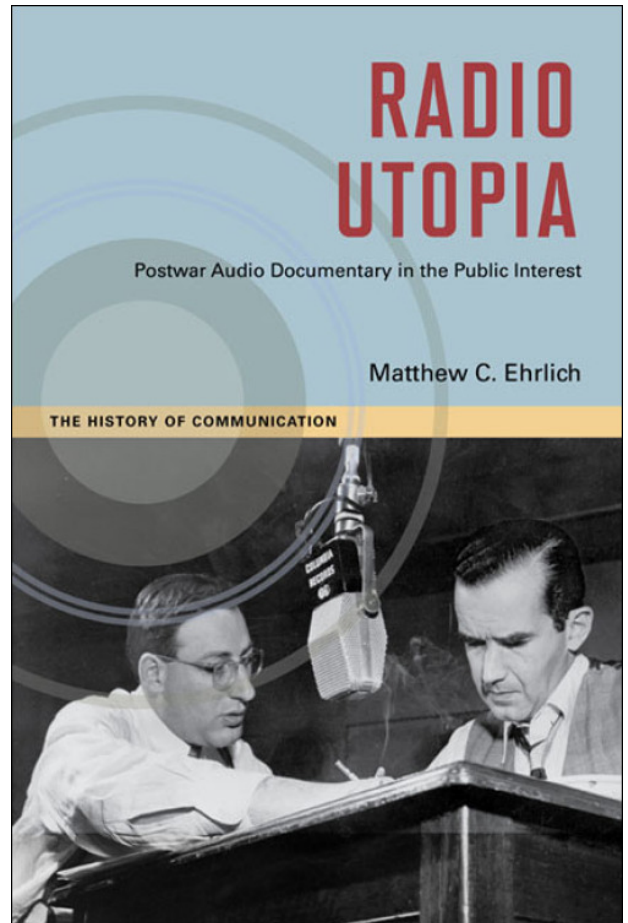
It was the spring of 1945, so the story goes, and Edward R. Murrow was holding court among a group of his colleagues in war-ravaged Europe. During World War II, radio journalism had come into its own. Murrow had helped assemble a celebrated group of reporters for CBS, the so-called “Murrow boys,” most of whom were indeed men—Eric Sevareid, William Shirer, Charles Collingwood, Howard K. Smith, and others. Some from among that group were in the room with Murrow now, all of whom “had made the antifascist cause their own, buoyed by a sense of unity at home,” as one of Murrow’s biographers later put it.¹

Also in the room was Robert Lewis Shayon, one of several radio writers and directors who had helped bolster that sense of unity. Shayon said that the Depression had made him and others “sensitive and sympathetic to justice, social ‘causes,’ and reform.”² That sensitivity had carried over to the war, during which he and his peers produced programs vilifying the enemy abroad while warning against injustice

at home. Norman Corwin had helped lead the way by airing installments of the series *An American in England* live via shortwave from London. Shayon had come to Europe as part of a War Department-sponsored tour giving other radio dramatists firsthand knowledge of how the battle was progressing. Now the war was ending, and Shayon listened as Edward R. Murrow extolled his assembled colleagues in Europe to carry on the good fight back home: “We’ve seen what radio can do for the nation in war. Now let’s go back to show what we can do in peace!”³

Radio Utopia is the story of what happened next. Journalists joined dramatists in using radio to try to remake America and the world for the better. Murrow helped form the CBS Documentary Unit with Shayon as a member, and similar efforts developed at the other networks. They produced programs advocating action on everything from juvenile

delinquency, slums, and race relations to venereal disease, atomic energy, and arms control. For a time, their efforts were encouraged by the commercial broadcasting industry, which was under pressure from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to demonstrate that it was truly serving the public interest. The head of the CBS Documentary Unit, Robert Heller, hailed the emergence of “a virtual Utopia for craftsmen who believe in radio’s usefulness as a social force.”⁴ By 1951, that “utopia” had evaporated as radio gave way to television, the war against fascism gave way to the cold war against communism, and many of radio’s most acclaimed “craftsmen”—including Heller, Shayon, and Corwin—landed in the pages of the red-



Ehrlich

Continued from Page 11

baiting publication *Red Channels*, their careers never to be the same again.

One could broadly interpret the story of postwar audio documentary in a couple of ways, each resting on the notion that power trumps utopianism. The first interpretation would be of a utopia that was lost, a golden age of invention, independence, and hope done in by greed and reactionaryism. Norman Corwin recalled seeing friends “exiled, punished, jailed, ostracized” by the blacklist while witnessing the decline of his chosen medium of radio: “I had been riding a wonderful charger—a beautiful horse, the saddle and equipage of which was furnished by a great network [CBS]—and that horse was shot out from under me.”

⁵ Robert Lewis Shayon, who became a TV critic after leaving CBS, wrote upon the 1965 death of Edward R. Murrow that his “passing symbolized the end of a great adventure in broadcasting,” even though “the broadcasting idealism that Murrow represented died many years ago.” ⁶ The death of that idealism is a major theme of Murrow’s biographers, with one ironically contrasting his death in exile from journalism with his exuberant exhortation to his colleagues in Europe twenty years earlier: “Now let’s go home to show what we can do in *peace*!” ⁷ Such accounts underscore Murrow’s status as the “patron saint” of broadcast news and as a tragic, martyr-like figure. ⁸

A second broad interpretation of postwar documentary would be

of a utopia that never was. Such an interpretation is less likely to see Murrow as a saint than as an overrated “glory hog who played it safe, more puffery than paladin,” and as a figure

authority as opposed to serving what has been called the “democratic impulse at the heart of documentary, to let people speak for themselves.” ¹² As for the decline of radio documentary

Postwar audio documentary did serve corporate concerns, at least for a time. That time would pass, and there would be tragic or at least disillusioning consequences for some of the participants. The book’s title, *Radio Utopia*, thus can be read ironically. Nevertheless, the title also can be taken in earnest, for utopian sensibilities did underlie the era’s documentary. In his memoirs many years later, Shayon commented that contemporary observers “who view the world with a more cynical realpolitik attitude” might find such an outlook hopelessly romantic. Still, it was genuine: “idealism in the flush of military triumph over evil—amid the sense that a new world was about to be born.”

whose historical importance has been greatly exaggerated. ⁹ Similarly, the radio works of the era can be viewed as not having aged well and as today sounding “trite,” “overwrought,” “awkwardly bombastic,” and filled with “unwitting condescension.” ¹⁰ Although they condemned social prejudice, they “still kept the reins of communication in the hands of the white majority” that also largely excluded women. ¹¹ The earnest public-affairs news programs to which they gave rise privileged journalistic

and the rise of the blacklist, both are unsurprising given broadcasting’s cooptation by corporate America prior to the war and its use as a propaganda instrument during the war itself, whereas the postwar years saw the media harnessed in favor of a massive surge in consumerism at same time that liberal-minded efforts at media reform were squelched. ¹³

Each of those two interpretations is valid in its way. Postwar audio documentary did serve corporate concerns, at least for a time. That time

Ehrlich

Continued from Page 12

would pass, and there would be tragic or at least disillusioning consequences for some of the participants. The book's title, *Radio Utopia*, thus can be read ironically. Nevertheless, the title also can be taken in earnest, for utopian sensibilities did underlie the era's documentary. In his memoirs many years later, Shayon commented that contemporary observers "who view the world with a more cynical realpolitik attitude" might find such an outlook hopelessly romantic. Still, it was genuine: "idealism in the flush of military triumph over evil—amid the sense that a new world was about to be born."¹⁴ Whatever the shortcomings or limitations of the era's programs and the people who created them, they were rarely cynical. Even if the anecdote about Murrow urging his peers to show Americans what radio could accomplish in the name of peace did not happen exactly the way it was described, the record suggests that in fact the radio journalists and dramatists did do their best to "show them."

Notes

1. A.M. Sperber, *Murrow: His Life and Times* (1986; reprint, New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 254. See also Stanley Cloud and Lynne Olson, *The Murrow Boys* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996).
2. Robert Lewis Shayon, *Odyssey in Prime Time* (Philadelphia: Waymark, 2001), 12.
3. Qtd. in Sperber, *Murrow*, 254.
4. Robert P. Heller, "The Dynamic

Documentary," in *Radio and Television Writing*, rev. ed., ed. Max Wylie (New York: Rinehart, 1952), 383. Heller's essay was first published in 1949, prior to his listing in *Red Channels* and subsequent departure from CBS.

5. Norman Corwin interviewed by Douglas Bell, *Years of the Electric Ear* (Metuchen, N.J.: Directors Guild of America/Scarecrow, 1994), 135-36.

6. Robert Lewis Shayon, "Murrow's Lost Fight," *Saturday Review*, May 22, 1965, 94.

7. Sperber, *Murrow*, 704.

8. See Gary Edgerton, "The Murrow Legend as Metaphor: The Creation, Appropriation, and Usefulness of Edward R. Murrow's Life Story," *Journal of American Studies* 15.1 (1992): 75-91. See also W. Joseph Campbell, *Getting It Wrong: Ten of the Greatest Misreported Stories in American Journalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 45-67.

9. Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 162-63. For one example of a broadcasting history that disputes Murrow's importance, see Douglas Gomery, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2008).

10. David Everitt, *A Shadow of Red: Communism and the Blacklist in Radio and Television* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2007), 194.

11. Michele Hilmes, *Only Connect: A Cultural History of Broadcasting in the United States* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 2002), 133. See also Barbara Dianne Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom: Radio, War, and the Politics of Race, 1938-1948* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press,

1999).

12. Paddy Scannell, "'The Stuff of Radio': Developments in Radio Features and Documentaries before the War," in *Documentary and the Mass Media*, ed. John Corner (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), 26. For a critique of the public affairs documentary subgenre, see Patricia Aufderheide, *Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 56-65.

13. See Robert W. McChesney, *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle for the Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Gerd Horten, *Radio Goes to War: The Cultural Politics of Propaganda during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Victor Pickard, "Media Democracy Deferred: The Postwar Settlement for U.S. Communications, 1945-1949," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2008.

14. Shayon, *Odyssey in Prime Time*, 91.

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