

Wilson's "somewhat encyclopedic" overall history of the black press, Washburn does not attempt to chronicle all the journalists and publications that might be mentioned. Instead, he sequentially covers important eras in the evolution of the black press by focusing on key figures and newspapers, the issues they covered, and the advocacy that characterized much of their coverage.

The book leads us through significant markers in black press history—*Freedom's Journal*, the influential role of Frederick Douglass and other abolitionist editors, Ida B. Wells' crusade against lynching, the *Chicago Defender's* efforts to urge Southern blacks to move north, the *Pittsburgh Courier's* Double V campaign in World War II, and coverage of the Civil Rights movement and its impact on black newspapers, to name a few. By treating these and other stories as a continuing evolution, Washburn builds a broader understanding of the historical roles of the black press as reflected today in all media: print, broadcast, and digital.

Washburn knows when to hold back his own well-crafted writing and let black press journalists speak in their own voices as filed in their own reporting at the time or in later interviews. This adds first-hand liveliness to the journalists and their stories. Washburn is much more than a master of ceremonies, however, deftly using his own words to add background, context, and explanation to the quotes.

On a less optimistic note, Washburn seems to think—an issue also raised in PBS's *Soldiers Without Swords*—that the best days of black newspapers are past. In his introduction, Washburn mentions "the rise and fall of black newspapers," an undercurrent running to the last page, where he describes African American newspapers as "largely struggling" at the end of the twentieth century. But, as he quickly notes, black newspapers did not die as predicted after World War II, and the "distant roar" of past black reporters,

editors, and publishers—and the communities they serve—is still heard.

By attending to that roar, people of all races can gain a better understanding of the current growth of print, broadcast, and digital media targeting black audiences and reaching all people interested in news with an African American perspective.

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The Year That Defined American Journalism: 1897 and the Clash of Paradigms. W. Joseph Campbell. New York: Routledge. 2006. 317 pp. \$29.95 pbk.

W. Joseph Campbell did not set out to do a book on the journalism of 1897. But as he was researching his earlier book, *Yellow Journalism: Puncturing the Myth, Defining the Legacies* (2001), it became apparent to him that 1897 was a pivotal year in the history of the American press. It was a year in which, he says, "American journalism came face-to-face with a choice between three rival and incompatible visions or paradigms for the profession's future." That choice, in many ways, endures today.

The three options of 1897, he says, were the "new journalism" of William Randolph Hearst and his *New York Journal*; the conservative, counter-activist paradigm of Adolph Ochs and the *New York Times*; and the literary approach of Lincoln Steffens and the *New York Commercial Advertiser*. Campbell argues that it was the *Times'* model that prevailed, but only after a long battle with the activist *Journal*.

Campbell, an associate professor in American University's School of Communication, tackles his thesis that 1897 defined American journalism in six chapters—an introduction and chapters titled "1897: America at an Hour of Transition," "The Clash of Paradigms," "Exceptional Journalism's Exceptional Year," "Not a

Hoax: New Evidence in the *New York Journal's* Rescue of Evangelina Cisneros," and a brief "Conclusion."

Campbell describes 1897 as an uncommon year—a year of technological advance in which the automobile began to be a factor, although bicycles were still prevalent, and when Samuel Langley succeeded with unmanned heavier-than-air flight. It was also the year of publication of what Campbell terms "American journalism's most famous editorial"—"Is There a Santa Claus?" by Francis P. Church in the *New York Sun*.

Eighteen ninety-seven is also the year in which the motto "All the News That's Fit to Print" first appeared in the ear of the *New York Times*, and Campbell begins his chapter on "The Clash of the Paradigms" with that famous slogan. It symbolizes the *Times* positioning itself as the antithesis of the *Journal's* version of news that—perhaps—was not always fit to print.

For its part, the *Journal* committed itself to being a flamboyant "journal of action." Much of that involved covering the conflict with Cuba, most notably the Evangelina Cossío y Cisneros story, which Campbell called a case of "jail-breaking journalism" when the *Journal* engineered—and covered every possible aspect of—her rescue from a Cuban jail in 1897 during Cuba's revolt against Spanish rule. It was the *Journal's* story. In their classic journalism history text, *The Press and America*, Michael Emery and Edwin Emery point out that the *Journal* devoted thirty times as much space to that story as any other New York newspaper did.

The chapter on "Exceptional Journalism in Journalism's Exceptional Year" focuses largely on the work of three journalists—Richard Harding Davis, Sylvester (Harry) Scovel, and Church. Davis provided exceptional coverage of the situation in Cuba. Scovel covered Cuba, but also reported on the Klondike gold rush. The Santa Claus editorial, first published on September 21, 1897, was not

an instant success. It was not reprinted until 1902, and Church was not identified as the author until after his death in 1906. Campbell provides an extensive exploration of the Cisneros story in this chapter. Some said the story was a hoax, but Campbell finds conclusive evidence that the story was much what the *Journal* said it was.

Campbell does not consider Joseph Pulitzer a major player in the clash of journalistic paradigms. He is critical of Pulitzer's absentee ownership and thinks Pulitzer by this time was mainly interested in the business aspects of the *New York World*. The picture he paints of Pulitzer is very different from Alleyne Ireland's perspective in *Adventures with a Genius: Recollection of Joseph Pulitzer*. Yet Pulitzer and Hearst were still in head-to-head circulation competition in the 1890s. The *Times* was not in that contest until 1898, when Ochs made the decision to cut his price to 1 cent, a move Campbell says was vital to the *Times's* success.

Despite the success of Hearst and the *Journal* in 1897, it was the *Times* that prevailed in the long run. "The normative paradigm of detached, impartial statement of the news, which the *Times* came to repent in 1897, remains the defining principle of mainstream American journalism," Campbell says. He points out that the failure of the "new journalism" of Hearst failed in part because of the yellow excesses in coverage of the Spanish-American War and the public's recognition that Hearst was using his newspapers to further his own political ambitions.

Campbell does not, however, make a strong case for the influence of Steffens' *Commercial Advertiser* either in 1897 or long-term. Despite his nod to Steffens and his more literary approach to journalism, what he depicts is a two-way competition, with a third also-ran.

This book offers a different and well-documented perspective of the Yellow

Journalism era. We remember Yellow Journalism as the journalism of 1898, but Campbell makes the case that 1897, not 1898, was the defining year. In so doing, he makes a significant contribution to our understanding of journalism history and, ultimately, the journalism of today.

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Waves of Opposition: Labor and the Struggle for Democratic Radio.

Elizabeth Fones-Wolf. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006. 307 pp. \$25 pbk.

While Elizabeth Fones-Wolf's stated goal in this book was to outline efforts by labor unions to gain voice in the emerging new medium of radio of the 1920s, primarily into the 1950s, she contributes to our understanding of the social role of radio in much broader ways through excellent historical context and impressive use of a wide array of original documents.

The book gains strength as the author situates radio chronologically into a context of social transition, especially the massive unemployment of the Great Depression, World War II's infusion of women and blacks into the labor force, and post-war economic growth. She traces radio from its earliest days in the 1920s to a peak of popularity in the 1940s, and then to its decline in and after the 1950s with the development of television.

Much of the discussion by Fones-Wolf, a history professor at West Virginia University, is dedicated to labor's difficulties in gaining access to a medium dominated both in ownership and advertising dollars by large corporations, and to the unions' ultimate, albeit temporary, successes. At the heart of it all were decades of ideological and cultural war between labor and business.

"While the business version of Americanism emphasized individualism," she

says, "the unions' version stressed the 'common good,' with a focus on social justice and economic security for all."

Throughout the book, Fones-Wolf wisely places her discussion of radio's specific role in this context. Radio, of course, was different then. It was a time when sponsors controlled much of the content and often emphasized debate and point of view through panel discussions, commentaries, and interviews, as well as entertainment programming with a distinct style. The unions admittedly sought to use radio for public relations, as an organizing tool and a weapon during strikes. But they do deserve credit for efforts to gain greater content diversity by seeking a role for common people in public discussion equal to that of government and industry leaders.

The basis for this, unions and other critics argued, was that, "The air belongs to the people," not to corporations. This being the case, they said, the "freedom to listen" is a public right and an indispensable counterpoint of the constitutionally guaranteed freedom to speak. Today, this argument, of course, has expanded into common acceptance of the "public's right to know." Likewise, unions then, as today, expressed fear about the overcommercialization of broadcasting.

Many of the specific issues of this debate continue to dominate current discussions in and about the media. Unions were among the early advocates of equal rights for all races and ethnicities (even though they continued to advocate a "traditional role for women in the home"). They expressed their outspoken support for civil rights long before the court cases that spawned the movement. Further, they argued for the potential democratization effects of even newer forms of radio, including FM and non-commercial broadcasting.

By the 1940s, unions had gained a significant voice on radio, but the rise of television precipitated radio's gradual decline