



American Journalists (Oxford Profiles)

By Donald A. Ritchie

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In 60 essays, this volume profiles American journalists from colonial times to the present--reporters, editors, publishers, photographers, and broadcasters--whose careers reflected major developments in their profession and in the history of the United States. In a speech to *Newsweek* correspondents in 1963, publisher Philip Graham described journalism as "the first rough draft of history." These journalists confronted and helped to shape the discussion of major issues and events in American history, from the American revolution through abolition, westward expansion, the Civil War, the civil rights movement, immigration, and the women's movement, as well as major constitutional issues involving the First Amendment protection of freedom of the press. Biographies of well-known journalists, from Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine to Walter Cronkite and Rupert Murdoch, appear alongside some who may be less familiar, such as Elias Boudinot, founder of the first Cherokee language newspaper; Abraham Cahan, editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward*; and Daniel Craig, who in the 1830s used carrier pigeons to ferry the news. Other subjects include Margaret Green Draper, the revolutionary printer; Claude Barnett, founder of the Associated Negro Press; photojournalist Margaret Bourke-White; war correspondent Ernie Pyle; and Allen Neuharth, founder of *USA Today*. Illustrations, fact boxes, and quotations from the subjects themselves make this volume an indispensable reference for students of American history as well as a fascinating read.

Journalists profiled include:

Horace Greeley
Frederick Douglass
Mark Twain
Thomas Nast
Joseph Pulitzer
Nellie Bly
William Randolph Hearst
Ida Wells-Barnett
H. L. Mencken
Dorothy Thompson
Walter Winchell
Red Smith
Edward R. Murrow
Walter Cronkite

Bernard Shaw
Cokie Roberts
Manuel de Dios Unanue
and many more

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 8 Up-From Benjamin Franklin to Cokie Roberts, these biographical sketches give readers a glimpse into the news media profession. The 56 main articles, each approximately 5 pages in length, are clearly written and arranged chronologically into four periods. Each section is supplemented by a short introduction and ends with "More American Journalists to Remember," which offers summaries on such notables as Adolph Ochs, William Cullen Bryant, and David Brinkley. The black-and-white photographs and reproductions are well chosen and often informative. The shot of a cigar-smoking H.L. Mencken sitting at a manual typewriter captures The Front Page essence of reporting in the 1920s, while a grinning Georgie Ann Geyer interviewing Yasir Arafat personifies the new face of journalism in the 1980s and '90s. All entries include a sidebar with biographical information and a list of accomplishments. The book concludes with a list of related museums and historical sites. Like sushi and avocado flavored ice cream, this book may have limited appeal, but for those so inclined it will prove a real treat.

Herman Sutter, Saint Pius X High School, Houston, TX

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From Library Journal

As a part of the publisher's series intended to introduce young readers to a wide range of professions, this volume profiles 57 American journalists from the past 300 years. Ritchie (Press Gallery, Harvard Univ., 1991), an associate U.S. Senate historian, divides his book into four parts representing significant time periods for American journalism. Each section includes biographical sketches of major journalists, along with illustrations, photographs, and suggestions for further reading. An entry on Elias Boudinot (b.1803) documents early efforts to establish a Native American press, while the profile of Manual de Dios Unanue (b.1943) records his martyrdom at the hands of drug traffickers while he served as editor of New York's Spanish-language newspaper *El Diario-La Prensa*. Including journalists from a wide range of backgrounds, this book will be a valuable addition to public libraries. Judy Solberg, George Washington Univ., Washington, D.C.

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From [Booklist](#)

Ritchie, associate historian of the U.S. Senate, provides an informative compendium of biographical sketches detailing the personal and professional lives of an array of American journalists from 1700 to the present. Celebrated journalists such as Benjamin Franklin, Horace Greeley, William Randolph Hearst, Edward R. Murrow, Walter Cronkite, Bob Woodward, and Carl Bernstein are included as expected, but Ritchie also profiles many less prominent--but no less influential--reporters, editors, columnists, photojournalists, broadcasters, and anchorpeople. Especially fascinating and refreshing is the inclusion of a number of groundbreaking female journalists and several members of the long overlooked and vastly underrated African American press. Arranged chronologically and accompanied by vintage photographs and illustrations, this lively collective biography also doubles as an invaluable introduction to the evolution of American journalism. *Margaret Flanagan*

Users Review

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